Master Plan for Titlow Park
Metro Parks Tacoma with SiteWorkshop
January 11, 2010
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INTRODUCTION & DECISION MAKING CONTEXT

As Tacoma’s only beach park on the west side, one with a rich cultural and environmental history, Titlow Park serves a broad public and as such, is designated one of the City’s five Signature Parks. The park is popular for bird watchers, walkers, picnickers and scuba divers, but also includes several other recreational amenities including courts, playgrounds, Titlow Lodge and currently, a 50m swimming pool. While the Lodge will remain and be improved, the swimming pool will be replaced by a new pool at Kandle Park.

Consistent with the responsibility that comes with planning for a Signature Park, the Master Plan for Titlow Park is based on an intensive community involvement process. This included three public meetings; stakeholder group meetings; and a steering committee comprised of community, business, city and non-governmental agencies. The master plan process involved a three step approach: 1) understanding, background research and analysis, 2) exploring design alternatives and 3) deciding on a final direction to guide future improvements to the park.

Community meetings were organized at each step of the process. These meetings, which were held at the existing Lodge building in the park, were well attended by members of the community. Numerous stakeholder meetings were also held throughout the course of the project. These were primarily conducted on a one-on-one basis. They included meetings with neighborhood councils, businesses and business districts, BNSF Railroad, salmon enhancement groups, Metro Parks (recreations, events, forestry and maintenance staff), city, county and state agencies (growth management, fish & wildlife, public works) and community organizations.

The Master Plan was also presented to the Board of Park Commissioners for approvals of the plan. Presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners was the final step in the process of approval of the Master Plan.
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Introduction & Context

Tacoma’s only West Side Beach Park

Shoreline view looking east
PARK ORIGINS
The story of Titlow Park begins in 1903 when local attorney Aaron R Titlow purchased 30 acres of land on Tacoma’s west side. Ultimately he owned over 80 acres on which he developed a waterfront resort. Built in 1911, the central feature of the resort was the 3 1/2 story Swiss-chalet style Hotel Hesperides designed by prominent Tacoma architect Frederick Heath. Initially very successful, the construction of a Northern Pacific Railroad rail line between the hotel and the Puget Sound in 1913 negatively impacted business. In 1926, three years after Titlow’s death, the Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma purchased 53 acres of Titlow’s land. An additional 30 acres, including the Hotel Hesperides, was purchased in 1928. The Park Board changed the name of the hotel to the Titlow Beach Lodge.

LAGOON & LODGE
Originally, the railroad constructed a bridge across the entrance to Titlow lagoon but as part of early park development efforts the bridge was removed in 1931 and replaced with fill dirt. Two 40-inch pipes passed through the fill to allow water from Puget Sound to flow in and out of the lagoon with the tides. A second significant change occurred in 1938 when the Works Progress Administration removed the top two floors of the Lodge and reroofed the building. At the same time trails, roads, shelters and playground facilities were added to the park.

TACOMA OUTBOARD ASSOCIATION
In 1951 the Tacoma Outboard Association (TOA) began a relationship with the Park District that still exists today. Originally leasing the old Titlow Beach dock, the TOA moved their facilities to the northern end of the park in 1954 and in 1957 shared plans to further develop the northern most section of Titlow Beach. Plans included an oil mat and ballast road from 6th Avenue to the clubhouse, enlargement of the clubhouse facilities and the establishment of a caretaker to reduce vandalism.

NEW AMENITIES
The 1950’s and ’60s saw further changes at the park. In 1955 the Girl Scouts constructed a picnic shelter at Hidden Beach and Tacoma’s first outdoor, heated swimming pool opened at Titlow Park. In 1963 a new
master plan directed the construction of a restroom building near the play field, a wading pool next to the salt water swimming pool and a restroom west of the railroad tracks near the day camp area as well as the removal of the old Titlow dock and bathhouse and the purchase of the “Irwin Property” on the west side of the railroad tracks.

**NATURAL AREAS**
More recent changes have focused on protecting and improving the natural environment of Titlow Park. Salmon have long been important at Titlow Park and during the 1980’s were even raised and released in the lagoon. In 1994 the Titlow Beach Marine Preserve was established and Crystal Spring Creek was brought to the surface in 2006 as part of a City of Tacoma stream day-lighting program. In 2008 Metro Parks received a state grant to determine whether Titlow’s ponds could be restored as refuge for imperiled salmon. Biologists would like to create a 'pocket estuary’ for Chinook and chum salmon.
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND
Existing Conditions

EXISTING CONDITIONS
Titlow Park is a complex landscape with three distinct areas, each with a different character and usage pattern. Primary destinations within the park are found in Areas A and C, while the forested trails of Area B stitch the two together. Area A is the traditional focus of park activities, while Area C has a strong beach and nature association. Together, these three areas form one of Tacoma’s most diverse parks - effectively meshing a variety of active recreation with a rich natural environment. For a more detailed analysis see the background document titled, Pre-Design Issues Inventory Report.

AREA A: SOUTH ACTIVITY ZONE & LAGOON
Area A contains the primary activity areas including playgrounds, gathering areas, the Lodge and swimming pool. Many in the community consider this to be “the park,” with the other areas “the beach” or the “forest.” Area A is home to the park’s only play courts, a sunny lawn with views at the north picnic area, a damp play field and the majority of the park’s parking.

The lagoon is the focal point in the area. It provides minimal habitat for native species, but is capable of significant contributions to endangered salmon. The upper lagoon retains more of its natural form and health, while a small creek has been recently daylight and outfalls into the lagoon.

AREA B: CENTRAL & NORTH FORESTS
Area B includes the forested areas east of the railroad tracks. As referenced in the Guidelines section, these forests contain a matrix of wetlands, streams and trails. Despite the presence of sensitive species, these forests are significantly degraded by invasive species and vandalism. The area also includes a “meadow” in the central forest, a small parking lot and a gated access road to the private club, which splits the two forests.

AREA C: WEST FOREST & BEACHES
Area C includes everything west of the railroad tracks and includes areas commonly referred to as the TOA, Hidden Beach and Kay’s House. The west forest is in good health, but includes several derelict structures that attract illegal activity like campfires and drinking in the park. Upland access to Area C is by the vehicle bridge to the north and the “South Access Drive” running alongside the southern tracks. Both require maintenance and are contingent upon BNSF.
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Existing Conditions

Figure 2 - Existing Conditions Plan
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Regulatory Constraints

SHORELINES, WETLANDS AND FORESTS

Titlow Park contains two marine shorelines (Tacoma Narrows Central Waterway and Titlow Lagoon Wetland), 25 freshwater wetlands, and four streams (Crystal Springs, Titlow Park Gulch, Pedestrian Bridge Gulch and TOA Gulch). Of the 25 freshwater wetlands, 17 were classified into five separate wetland mosaic systems. A portion of the shoreline along Titlow Park is designated as a Marine Preserve Area. Cliff habitat, mature forest, snag habitat, pileated woodpecker habitat including a nest snag, a bald eagle nest, purple martin nest boxes, eel grass beds, fish forage habitat including documented surf smelt spawning areas and potential surf smelt/sand lance spawning areas are found within Titlow Park. (For more detail, see the Wetland Delineation and Fish & Wildlife Habitat Report.)

REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS

The City of Tacoma currently regulates and defines wetlands, streams, and fish and wildlife habitat areas in the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), Title 13.11 and shorelines in TMC 13.10 and the Shoreline Master Plan. Impacts to these features will require a Development Permit and a Shoreline Permit from the City of Tacoma. A conditional use permit may be required for work outside of the shoreline district. The Development Permit would require a habitat management plan to be prepared for Titlow Park with coordination, review and approval by the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW).

Federal and state agencies with jurisdiction over impacts to wetlands and shorelines located on and near the site include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the WDFW, and the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology). The Corps regulates wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and the shoreline under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Impacts to wetland, streams and the shorelines below the ordinary high water mark would require Individual or Nationwide Permits from the Corps and are also regulated by WDFW, which may require a Hydraulic Project Approval for the site. Ecology regulates wetland, and streams under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, and Shoreline under the Shoreline Management Act. Impacts to wetland or shorelines may require a Water Quality Certification, Coastal Zones Management Certification and approval of the City of Tacoma Shorelines Permit.
**WETLANDS**
Consisting of Category II-III wetlands, including a Category II coastal lagoon. Buffers range from 75’-150’, including a 115’ marine buffer on the lagoon and shoreline.

**STREAMS**
Four forested perennial streams with buffers ranging from 100’-150’.
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Planning History

RECENT PLANNING HISTORY

In 1993, MPT staff completed a master plan for Titlow Park. It describes the existing conditions and program components on the site at that time and makes a series of recommendations for improvements. The plan became the basis for subsequent applications for State funding and capital improvements that were made in the late 2001. Since that time there have been relatively few subsequent capital improvements at Titlow Park.

At its meeting Nov. 10, 2008 the Metro Parks Board of Commissioners directed staff to begin a master planning process for Titlow Park with the assumption that the existing swimming pool will be removed at some time in the future. The new Master Plan was desired to re-examine general policy toward physical development based on several significant changes that have occurred since 1993:

**Bond Program**

In 2005 Tacoma voters approved a Capital Park Bond program that included $3 million for improvements at Titlow Park

**Titlow Pool**

Following a study of options in 2007-08, the Park Board directed Metro Parks to begin work on a replacement swimming pool for Titlow Pool at the Kandle Park site. While Titlow Pool is likely to continue operation in the near-term, the direction to staff is to develop a Master Plan without a pool.

**Salmon Habitat**

In 2009, the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group and the People for Puget Sound were successful in obtaining a State grant to study restoration of the Titlow Park shoreline and estuary lagoon for the purpose of improving habitat for juvenile salmon as well as other species. The study is being carried out this year and additional funding for implementation is likely based on the significance of the Titlow site as salmon habitat.

**Railroad Right of Way**

The last remaining home at “Hidden Beach” west of the BNSF railroad line (referred to as “Kay’s House”) has come into the possession of Metro Parks and is no longer used as a residence. There are questions about the future of the residence and the access driveway which is a provisional permit on BNSF right of way.
I. OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

Planning History

Titlow Lodge
Several assessments of condition and proposals for improvements to the Lodge Building have been put forward, but no action has, as yet, been taken.

Revenue Generation
In 2008 a Revenue Task Force (RTF) was created under Metro Parks Business Advisory Council. The RTF made several recommendations for possible commercial development at Titlow Park that might be considered as possible sources of future revenue.

Private Club (Tacoma Outboard Association)
Since 1954, the northwestern part of the park has been leased to the Tacoma Outboard Association (TOA) and used as a private boating club. TOA’s lease is up at the close of 2009, which opens the future use of the area to discussion.

Safety and Security
Many parts of Titlow Park are tucked away from well-traveled paths and are sometimes used for illegal activities like campfires and drinking. Recently, many regular park visitors have acknowledged more serious crimes in the park and are concerned about safety.

Inventory, Survey & Analysis
Work on this master plan began in the spring of 2009 with MPT staff preparing a “Pre-Design Inventory Issues Report” a copy of which is provided as Background Document #2. Subsequently the Tacoma surveying and engineering firm AHBL was retained to prepare topographic mapping of the site and delineate the wetlands and shoreline boundaries. A Wildlife Habitat Report was also prepared describing regulated habitats at the site. Copies of those reports are provided as Background Document #3. AHBL also conducted a separate Forest and Habitat Assessment Report, which is Background Document #4 to this master plan.
II. MASTER PLAN

MASTER PLAN
The Titlow Park Master Plan envisions a park built around the cultural and natural history of the western slope of Tacoma. Priority is placed on stewardship and enhancement of existing natural resources for habitat, environmental education and public enjoyment. Traditional cultural resources such as the Titlow Lodge, private boating club, and the extensive trail system are to be preserved, enhanced, and integrated into the natural setting. New public amenities are to be created and new play opportunities added in place of the swimming pool. Public safety and maintenance efficiency are also prioritized.

A1: South Activity Zone
The goals for this area are to consolidate the active and constructed features around the north picnic area and the Lodge. This includes new play and spray areas, a restored creek channel, refurbished ball courts and improvements to the Lodge and grounds. These are improvements that could be accomplished with the pool and lagoon as they are today.

A2: Lagoon & Fish Passage
The goals for this area are focused around restoration of Titlow Lagoon and its outfall as a healthy habitat for a variety of native wildlife including threatened Chinook salmon. Improvements should integrate public recreation and education with habitat enhancements. In addition to restoring the Lagoon and fish passage, improvements will include removal of the existing swimming pool, parking reconfiguration, field drainage improvements, and relocated restroom, group picnic and gathering areas.

B: Central & North Forest
The goals for this area are to improve the health of the forests and wetlands, while also addressing public safety and maintenance of the area. Proposed improvements include forest and habitat restoration efforts and trail consolidation and improvements. Public safety is addressed by improving an existing parking lot and adding a maintenance building, which will also make park operations more efficient.

C: West Forest & Beaches
The goals for this area are focused on providing safe public access to forest and beach areas. Proposed improvements include an enhanced public access at the north beach area and removal of several existing structures. The private boating club (TOA) will remain on the site and the existing driveway access from the south is to be formalized with BNSF.

Park-wide Improvements
General Master Plan recommendations throughout the park include the development of directional, interpretive, and policy signage; improving safety with additional railroad fencing, upgrades to site furnishings, and the creation of a Natural Areas management plan.
II. MASTER PLAN
Area A.1: South Activity Zone

AREA A1: SOUTH ACTIVITY ZONE

The South Activity Zone is the location of Titlow Park’s most active, people oriented park facilities. It also includes the estuary lagoons and two streams which have great potential for salmon habitat enhancement. Improvements proposed for Area A1 are those that can occur independent of the ambitious re-structuring of the lagoon and fish passage described as Area A2 below.

Master Plan Recommendations

Area A1.1 - Playground, Sprayground & Courts
The master plan recommends improvements in the actively-used area of the Park north of the existing swimming pool. This sunny area is away from wetland buffers, suitable for development, and centrally located.
- Expand on the existing north picnic area with a new play and spray area that extend from the former wading pool. Re-use north end of the pool building for restrooms and sprayground mechanical systems.
- Provide several picnic areas near the new play / spray areas to accommodate a range of group sizes.
- Restore and lengthen creek channel at the north edge of the area improve stream health and to better integrate with picnic and play areas.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $1,250,000

Area A1.2 - Lodge Building Improvements
The lodge building will continue to serve as a facility for recreation programs and day-rentals. Based on the assessment conducted during master planning, any improvements will also retain the building’s architectural character. Proposed improvements are intended to preserve the structure, extend service life, meet accessibility, life safety, and energy codes, facilitate ongoing maintenance, and make the structure a desirable venue for public events.
- Update exterior roofing, gutters and flashing; window and door restoration / replacements, and a range of interior upgrades.
- Replace the previously-removed exterior deck on the west side of the building is also proposed.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $350,000
Area A1.3 - Lodge Site Improvements
Park areas near the Lodge are in need of significant upgrades that will improve the appearance of the Lodge and create a “front door” setting for the park.

- Create a more formal vehicle entry to the Lodge area. Parking and drop-offs are to be reorganized to focus on the front porch of the Lodge.
- Remove the existing storage garage and provide replacement storage in a new building directly adjacent to the existing City sewer lift station. Provide plantings and other improvements to improve the appearance of the area.
- Reduce impervious surfaces, treat run-off on-site and serve the parking needs of the area.
- Remove the existing older poplar trees and replace with new trees that are more appropriate and longer lived.
- Create a patio and garden court to provide extensions of the interior space, creating flexible outdoor spaces.
- Re-surface basketball and tennis courts.
- Plantings should be designed to refer back to the historic hotel setting.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $700,000
II. MASTER PLAN
Area A1: South Activity Zone

Master Plan: Play and Spray Area

- Restored Creek Channel
- Small Picnic Shelters
- Swings
- Playground
- Play Plaza
- Tables
- Sprayground
- Restroom
- Court Play
- Entry Feature
II. MASTER PLAN
Area A.1: South Activity Zone

Master Plan: Pool Restroom Remodel - Draft Concept

Master Plan: Lodge Landscape Improvements
AREA A2: LAGOON & FISH PASSAGE

Restoration of historic fish passage and estuary habitat areas are considered regionally significant in helping restore salmon habitat and will be central to the future of Titlow Park. Envisioned is an ambitious program of improvements that includes construction of an opening in the BNSF Railroad berm, deepening and re-contouring the Lagoon itself. These improvements have been supported by South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) People for Puget Sound (PPS) and others contributing to this Master Plan. In undertaking the lagoon project several other parts of the site will be affected and are described below.

Master Plan Recommendations

Area A2.1 - Lagoon Improvements
To provide effective habitat, the existing Lagoon should be deepened. A variety of complex shoreline conditions should be created and native plantings should be installed on the Lagoon banks. The following specific improvements are envisioned:

- Deepen the bottom of the Lagoon so its bottom provides standing water on the lowest tides and is connected under the railroad to tidal influences for fish passage.
- Reshape and revegetate the lower lagoon to provide a variety of habitat edges.
- Rebuild the connection between lagoons, including a new outfall and bridge, and bank/vegetation restoration.
- Revise the public pathway system accordingly. Provide viewing areas and interpretive graphics.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $1,300,000

Area A2.2 - South Field Improvements & Restroom
In design of lagoon and fish passage improvements the possibility of using excess soils to raise the level of the field and improve its drainage following lagoon construction should be investigated. The master plan envisions the following improvements in consort with lagoon restoration:

- Improve field drainage through grading. Create a salt marsh channel to facilitate field drainage.
- Replace the existing restroom building with a new restroom closer to 6th Ave to serve day programs, divers and other activity at the south end of the Park.
- Add a new covered, reservable picnic space.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $540,000
II. MASTER PLAN
Area A2: Lagoon & Fish Passage

- Lagoon & Fish Passage
- Parking
- Reconfiguration
- Exercise Station, Typ.
- 6th Ave Restroom
- Reservable Picnic Shelter
- Pedestrian Bridges
- Rail Bridge
- Upper Lagoon
- Lower Lagoon
- BNSF Rail
- 6th Ave.
- A2.1
- A2.2
- A2.3
- A2.4
- Stormwater Rain Gardens
- Picnic Area
- Parking Reconfiguration

Lagoon & Fish Passage
II. MASTER PLAN

Area A.2: Lagoon & Fish Passage

Lagoon and Fish Passage Site Plan
II. MASTER PLAN

Area A.2 - Lagoon & Fish Passage

Area A2.3 - Fish Passage & Bridges
The lagoon is proposed to be re-connected to the Tacoma Narrows through a free-flowing channel running under a new railway bridge, as developed by SPSSEG.

- Enable unencumbered tidal exchange to revitalize the lagoon ecosystem.
- Utilize bridges for continued rail and pedestrian passage, including a walk under the rail to the beach.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $2,200,000.

Area A2.4 - Pool Removal & Parking
Expansion of the Lagoon as described above will result in removal of the existing Titlow swimming pool, its pool house, and some of the associated parking. The master plan envisions the following specific actions in that area:

- Remove the existing swimming pool and deck areas as well as the majority of the pool house. A small addition on the north end of the existing pool building would remain as described in A1.1 above.
- Reorganize parking to reduce impervious surfaces and treat run-off before it enters the lagoon. The total number of parking spaces may be reduced following pool removal.
- Modify the park pathway system to accommodate the new Lagoon shoreline. Add picnic areas in select locations, and buffer the shore with native plantings.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $1,000,000.
II. MASTER PLAN
Area B: Central & North Forests

AREA B: CENTRAL & NORTH FORESTS

The Central and North Forests contain a matrix of wetlands, perennial streams and forests of alder, maple and douglas fir. There is a significant trail system including several informal social trails, some of which lead to homeless encampments and other places of suspect use. It is desirable to maintain the natural character of the forest while emphasizing safety and security. Proposed improvements encourage increased visibility and legitimate public use. Key components are the reworking of the north parking lot and consolidating the trail system.

Master Plan Recommendations

Area B1 - Central & North Forest Restoration

Emphasis will be placed on creating an improved program of forest stewardship.

- Restore native wetland and forest vegetation through an organized and methodical plan of removing competing invasive and non-native plants. Assist MPT staff through the development of a citizen volunteer program and utilization of existing restoration resources.
- Consolidate and improve the trail system, adding boardwalks where feasible to enhance wetland function and all-season access. Close informal “social” trails and direct users to an established system.
- Re-imagine the central meadow as a Park amenity. Discontinue the storage of maintenance materials and restore the area’s vegetation.
- Identify active uses for the meadow which bring more users into the center of the Park and are wildlife friendly.
- Support on-leash dog-walking and consider an un-fenced and designated off-leash area with limited hours of use.
- Allow for a future trail connection to the north that might someday connect to the regional trail system.

Estimated Construction Cost: $620,000.

Area B2 - Access Road & Parking

General public use of the north parking lot and walking access to the Hidden Beach area is to be signed and encouraged. Visibility into the lot from 6th Ave. is critical to success. The following specific improvements are proposed:

- Eliminate approximately 5 “trouble” parking spaces along entry road by shifting the gate closer to 6th Ave. Add more parking stalls to the north side of the access road and make them visible from the street.
- Improve the parking lot and make it welcoming by providing signage, lighting, and clearing to improve sightlines.
II. MASTER PLAN
Area B: Central & North Forests

- Work with TOA and Tacoma Police and Fire to provide an automated gate to facilitate park surveillance and emergency access.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $160,000.

**Area B3 - Maintenance Building**
There is an area along the small maintenance access road near 6th Ave. that could be an appropriate site for a new maintenance building. The building would replace the existing three car garage in Area C which will be removed.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $125,000.
II. MASTER PLAN

Area C: West Forest & Beaches

AREA C: WEST FOREST & BEACHES
This area includes all park areas west of the railroad tracks. Public access is limited and many of the existing structures are in poor condition and do not conform to current codes. The Master Plan focuses on providing safe public access, improving habitat quality, continued use by the private boating club (TOA) and removing older park structures that do benefit the public. Importantly, the master plan recommends that the 60 year lease relationship between TOA and Metro Parks be continued.

Master Plan Recommendations

Area C1 – Boating Club & North Beach Access
The master plan recommends that the boating club use be continued with expanded provisions for public access and use of the site. The proposed boating club lease area will be such that a public pedestrian pathway and small day use area are provided.

• Develop a fenced access pathway beneath the bridge on the west side of the tracks to the North Beach area.
• Modify the existing railroad bridge to provide safe pedestrian passage.
• Conduct an engineering inspection and analysis of the existing bridge and assess the costs and benefits of making improvements that will increase the capacity for use by heavy vehicles.
• Develop a small day use area and consider improvements to the existing picnic shelter. Remove the existing “barge” and restore natural beach.
• Establish a location for portable toilets for park visitors.
• Work with TOA to improve the public face of the private club through fencing, landscaping, signage, etc.
• Estimated Construction Cost: $175,000.

Area C2 - West Forest, Hidden Beach & Kay’s House
The master plan places emphasis on restoring this part of the site and providing safe trails and beach access.

• Remove the existing restroom, day-use shelter, and other unused furniture items located in the forest.
• Consolidate the existing trail system for safety and improve access point to Hidden beach from the bluff.
• Remove the existing residence (Kay’s House) and garage and replace with a picnic meadow and a viewing deck on the foundation of the old home.
• Provide a location for a portable restroom. Improve the maintenance access drive through the site and allow for a turnaround for for emergency and police vehicles.
• Estimated Construction Cost: $475,000.
**Area C3 - South Access Path**
The south access path exists on BNSF right of way. Metro Parks has a limited permit for access to the park but the corridor is heavily used by pedestrians accessing the Hidden Beach area. Citizens attending public meetings have encouraged Metro Parks to work with BNSF to establish a corridor that allows continued safe, legal park access.

- Install a safety fence, suitable to BNSF along the active rail line separating the public from the tracks.
- Provide signage indicating the private nature of BNSF rail lines.
- Make minor modifications to the existing rail berm and riprap accommodate clear passage west of the new fence.
- Consider measures necessary to accommodate loss of vehicle access. This could include modifications to the TOA bridge to accommodate heavy vehicles.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $75,000.

**Area C4 - 6th Ave. Street End**
Public park improvements at the foot of 6th Ave. are owned by the City of Tacoma, but maintained by Metro Parks. During the development of this master plan, the City and Metro Parks have discussed the transfer of park properties from the City to MPT. Regardless of future ownership, the master plan suggests several significant modifications.

- Maintain and enhance the existing 6th Ave. Street End public amenities, including a freeze-proof shower.
- Improve the existing ramp connecting the to the beach.
- Consider the environmental trade-offs from removing existing off-shore piling. Take the cultural / historic perspective and nest boxes and dive sites into account.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $30,000.

**Area C5 - Dive Park, Artificial Reef Project**
- Work with local dive clubs and others to encourage off-shore habitat modifications that make the underwater dive experience more rewarding.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $750,000

**Area C6 - South Beach Restoration**
- Work with environmental agencies to explore ways to rebuild the beach profile from pier to Kay’s House, restoring natural functions consistent with lagoon enhancement.
- Estimated Construction Cost: $375,000.
II. MASTER PLAN
Area C: West Forest & Beaches

- View Deck
- Picnic Meadow
- Maintenance Drive
- Beach Access
- Bridges, Fish Passage & beach Access
- South Access Path

Master Plan: “Kay’s House” Picnic Meadow & South Access Path
II. MASTER PLAN

Area C: West Forest & Beaches
## II. MASTER PLAN

### Cost Summary

**ESTIMATE OF PROBABLE COSTS - SUMMARY**

| Park Size: 72.5 acres (3,156,853sf) |

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<th>Subtotal / Markup</th>
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### NOTES

1. Estimates are based on 2010 Construction Costs. No Escalation is Applied for Future Years.
2. Lodge building estimate prepared by BOE Architects
3. Lagoon restoration and fish passage prepared by Parametrix
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III. GUIDELINES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Beach Stewardship

BEACH STEWARDSHIP

Metro Parks will continue its management of the Titlow Beach Marine Preserve in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife under the Marine Protected Areas Program. Under that program tidelands will be managed to prevent harvesting of all marine life forms with the exception of recreational salmon fishing subject to State regulations. The following are specific actions recommended by the Master Plan:

Interpretive Programs: Metro Parks will work through the Tacoma Nature Center and associated environmental organizations to expand environmental education programs and provide interpretive signage to explain the dynamics of the beach, forest, lagoon, and wetland habitats.

Beach Enhancement: Metro Parks will explore ways to provide public access to the beach consistent with maintaining dynamic beach systems. Existing feeder bluffs and upland vegetation will be maintained and enhanced, while “soft” shore protection alternatives will be explored where erosion protection is required. It is also recommended to rebuild the south beach area to restore the sediment starved shore.

Offshore Structures: Metro Parks will cooperate with other agencies in evaluating the removal of toxic pilings and other offshore structures which are, in some ways, detrimental to the marine habitat. The pilings and beach are also home to sensitive bird and feeder fish species, which may suggest the pilings are best left undisturbed. If appropriate, should pilings be removed, new underwater structures may be installed to enhance habitat and provide opportunities for recreational divers to observe marine flora and fauna in a protected environment.

Underwater Park: As appropriate, Metro Parks will cooperate with local recreational dive clubs and others to promote opportunities for enhanced underwater park facilities and safe recreational dive sites at Titlow Beach. New restrooms and enhancements to shore side facilities at the foot of 6th Street will be designed to facilitate use by recreational divers year round.
III. BACKGROUND & RECOMMENDATIONS

Forest & Wetland Restoration

FOREST & WETLAND RESTORATION

Titlow park contains two marine shorelines (Tacoma Narrows Central Waterway and Titlow Lagoon Wetland), 25 freshwater wetlands, and four streams (Crystal Springs, Titlow Park Gulch, Pedestrian Bridge Gulch, and TOA Gulch). Of the 25 freshwater wetlands, 17 were classified into five separate wetland mosaic systems. A portion of the shoreline along Titlow Park is designated as a Marine Preserve Area. Cliff habitat, mature forest, pileated woodpecker habitat including a nest snag, a bald eagle nest, purple martin nest boxes, eel grass beds, fish forage habitat including documented surf smelt spawning areas and potential surf smelt/sand lance spawning areas were identified on or adjacent to the site.

The Park contains 46 acres of forested habitat consisting of six separate vegetative cover types including Madrone/Douglas Fir, Alder, Douglas Fir/Alder, Alder Regeneration, Big Leaf Maple, and Douglas Fir/Big Leaf Maple. The western forest contains two wetlands, and a bald eagle nest and roosting trees. The north forest contains two stream channels and associated wetlands. The central forest contains a pileated woodpecker nest snag and wetlands. Protection of the bald eagle and pileated woodpecker habitat with a formal habitat management plan will be required by City of Tacoma Codes.

In general, the north and west forests are well developed, have recruitment of young trees, and include good canopy cover and subcanopy layers. Yet, invasive species are present in pockets. It is recommended that ivy be removed from the groundcover and from tree trunks, and that groundcover be replaced with native shrub species. Additionally, the west forest contains concrete fire pads, a covered picnic shelter, and an abandoned restroom. These facilities are not anticipated to be used in the future, and it is recommended that they be removed, and that the area be planted with native understory species typical of the stand.

The central forest is young, has low tree species diversity, invasive species within the understory, and soils that have been degraded through clearing and grading. Large-scale rehabilitation of the central forest would be ideal, with goals focused on increasing habitat diversity, visual appeal, restoration of hydrologic conditions between the wetlands, stream restoration, and removal of invasive species.
FISH PASSAGE & LAGOON ENHANCEMENT

Lagoon & Habitat Enhancement
The Titlow Park Master Plan was carried out as a cooperative effort between Metro Parks and groups with an interest in protection and enhancement of Puget Sound marine habitats and specifically threatened Chinook salmon.

- South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) participated throughout the park master planning process and led a coordinated parallel effort to design an enhanced fish passage and improved habitat conditions within the Titlow Lagoon. A consultant report prepared by Parametrix Inc. for SPSSEG is provided in Background Document #9.
- People for Puget Sound (PPS) also participated throughout the study. They supported the planning effort through sponsorship of public information events at the Park during planning and conducted a park user survey during the summer of 2009.
- Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Pierce County Community Salmon Fund provided funding for the work carried out by SPSSEG and PPS.

Habitat Enhancement Planning Objectives
The objectives of our joint planning effort were to:
- Identify and describe improvements to the Titlow Lagoon and shoreline areas that are habitat enhancement for salmon and other species.
- Develop a park plan that is compatible with proposed habitat enhancements and balances the interests for public recreation with those for wildlife.
- Define a phased strategy of improvements that can occur over time and that lead to a shared vision for future park and habitat improvements.
- Describe habitat improvements and shoreline mitigation work that can support Metro Parks improvements under its current capital bond project.

Importance of Titlow Lagoon
During the preparation of the master plan, SPSSEG and PPS provided Metro Parks and the Steering Committee with information describing the importance of Titlow Lagoon as part of habitat restoration efforts in the South Sound. Prior to development, the estuary lagoon played
a significant role in providing protected habitat for young salmon migrating through the Tacoma Narrows. With human development, filling, and isolation of the Lagoon from the Narrows by the railroad berm most of this habitat has been eliminated.

**Bridge Option Preferred for Fish Passage**

During the course of master planning several options were explored for establishing a fish passage between the Narrows and the Lagoon. These are described in Background Document #9. From the perspective of both recreation and habitat objectives, the option involving a railroad bridge and natural channel is much preferred over options involving culvert pipes and is recommended in this Master Plan. In addition to enhanced fish passage, the bridge option allows for a pedestrian under-crossing of the railroad which expands public access to the beach and improves railroad safety.

**Expansion & Modification of the Lagoon**

The master plan shows how expanding and modifying the depth and bank configuration of the main Lagoon can better integrate habitat with public park use. The depth of the Lagoon would be increased as recommended in Background Document #9 to allow some water level to be maintained even on low tides. The banks would be modified to more natural configuration and planted with native plants. From a habitat perspective it is desirable to establish natural vegetation that can overhang the intertidal zone. Some level of protective fencing that discourages human use of the banks of the Lagoon will be necessary, particularly during vegetation establishment. Public access points and view corridors will need to be established.

Elimination of the tidal weir between the south and north Lagoon will modify water levels in the north Lagoon. Removal of non-native plants, and re-shaping of some of the existing banks as well as planting of new native species is desirable and should be coordinated with development of adjacent park trails and meadow areas. Two new estuary channels or drainage swales are proposed in the master plan. One runs south from the Lagoon along the existing railroad berm and would
provide drainage from the south field area west of the Lodge. The other would extend east from the main Lagoon into the Playground / Sprayground area. In both cases, the depth and profile of the channel and will need to be designed to avoid collection of stagnant water and the banks of these channels will need to be planted with native habitat plantings.

**Supplemental Beach Enhancement**
To further improve habitat qualities for salmon and other species, SPSSEG has suggested that it may be desirable to re-construct the eroded beach south of the new fish passage. That part of the beach is currently eroding and does not receive sufficient new material from adjacent feeder bluffs. In the long term it may be desirable for Metro Parks to participate with other agencies to establish a beach re-construction and beach feeding program on the water side of the railroad berm. There are currently several significant regulatory obstacles to beach expansion and feeding programs so it is unlikely this will be accomplished in the near future.

**Trails and Interpretive Graphics**
In addition to providing enhanced habitat for threatened Puget Sound Chinook salmon the proposed changes to Titlow Lagoon will create a significant opportunity to provide public information concerning salmon recovery. The improved Lagoon and trail system will also create a venue for future environmental education programs. The pathway system around the Lagoon should be designed to provide selected views into habitat areas while protecting a significant portion of the shoreline from human impact. An interpretive graphic program should be included as part of Lagoon improvements.
III. BACKGROUND & RECOMMENDATIONS

PARK MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

Park Maintenance and Operations Storage
The master plan proposes replacement of two park maintenance and storage buildings currently located at Titlow Park:

- The master plan recommends removing the existing 3-bay residential garage located at the Kay’s House site along with removal of the existing residence. The building is currently used as a storage location for park maintenance crews and an equivalent space will be required to replace it.
- The master plan proposes removal of the existing small garage located to the south and west of the front entry to the Lodge. That building is currently used to store equipment used in Metro Parks’ Outdoor Adventure programs. A replacement space of similar size will be required.

Park Maintenance Garage: A new maintenance garage building of approximately 20’ x 35’ is shown located off of a service drive in the Central Forest area just north of actively developed park areas and close to 6th Avenue. The site has better access and is more central to the park than the current one, and a small garage building can be designed to be screened from 6th Avenue. The building must be capable of being locked and secure when not in use and will require utility services. No significant outdoor storage yard areas are required. The driveway apron in front of the building may be utilized for temporary parking of grounds equipment during daytime maintenance operations.

Recreation Storage Building: To replace the storage capability of the current garage a new replacement building is proposed to be located immediately to the west of the existing sewer pump station building east of the Lodge. The building should be designed to provide access into the Lodge service court from its north side. The south side of the building should be designed to visually tie to the existing City pump building. Appropriate landscaping should be provided to draw visual attention away from these buildings and toward the front of the Lodge. Development of this building represents an opportunity to work with the City to provide an architecturally integrated facility that screens existing emergency generator equipment enhances landscaping, and improves the appearance of the Park and Lodge.
PRIVATE BOATING CLUB RECOMMENDATIONS

Metro Parks should continue to manage Titlow Park to include facilities for a private boating club. The existing lease with Tacoma Outboard Association (TOA) will be renewed for at least one year while TOA and Metro Parks refine the terms of a longer lease agreement. Specific issues that will influence the longer term relationship include the following considerations:

Public Access: Expand public access to the north beach area as described elsewhere in this plan. This may require modifications to the lease boundaries, fencing and site access.

Public Use of Private Facilities: Joint marketing of membership opportunities to all Metro Parks Tacoma district residents consistent with membership criteria and limits.

Joint Programming: Joint promotion of programs and expanded public use of the private boating club facilities in ways that serve the public interest of the residents of Tacoma.

Land Use and Building Code Compliance: Metro Parks and TOA understand that much of the current use of the site for a private boating club is a non-conforming use under the Tacoma Land Use Code. Compliance with all land use and building permit requirements is necessary and could place significant restrictions on future development at the site.

Improved Infrastructure: Access and utility services should be brought into compliance with current codes and standards. The infrastructure costs necessary to support the private boating club activity should be borne by the boating club, and not by the public.
LODGE BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The existing Lodge building will be preserved and enhanced. It will continue to serve the community as a day-rental venue and location for recreation programs conducted by Metro Parks and others. For the near-term, Metro Parks plans to continue basing a summer day camp programs and youth Outdoor Adventure programs at the Lodge as it has in the recent past. There is a desire to expand programmed use of the building in the future to take greater advantage of the asset but no specific programs or partners have been identified.

Alternative Use Options: During the course of master planning several alternative futures for the Lodge were discussed. These included earlier proposals for commercial leases or use as a permanent location for third party environmental education programs. None of those ideas appear to have specific advocates or obvious economic incentive at present. This lead the planning team and Steering Committee to conclude that the building will continue to serve the community much as it has in the past.

Physical Repairs and Alterations: During the course of developing the Master Plan, a physical study of the building was conducted and a list of building deficiencies and needed repairs was prepared. (See Background Document #8 in Volume 2) Metro Parks will begin immediately to implement the most needed repairs so the building can continue to serve the park and community. Included among these repairs will be repair / replacement of deteriorated windows and doors, roofing, gutters and downspouts, and repair of exterior decks and handrails. Several modifications are necessary to bring the building into compliance with current accessibility codes. The most significant proposal for a change to the building will be the addition of a deck to the west side of the building, replacing a similar deck at that location in the original building.

Historic Preservation: The potential of seeking historic landmark status for the building was also discussed during master planning, but no immediate action is anticipated. Future repairs and modifications to the building should seek to preserve the existing historic character.
TITLOW POOL

As an outgrowth of the 2005 capital park bond program, Metro Parks explored options for replacement of the existing swimming pool and pool building at Titlow Park in 2006-07. Those studies lead Metro Parks to decide to discontinue pool operations at Titlow in the long term. In November of 2008 the Park Board directed MPT staff to prepare a master plan for Titlow Park without a pool, which led to this master planning effort.

Plans for a replacement pool are being prepared for the Kandle Park site (N. 26th @ N. Shirley St.). That facility should be ready to serve the public in 2011 or 2012. Until that time, Metro Parks intends to maintain pool operations at Titlow. A small capital project was carried out in the spring of 2009 to correct the worst of the leaking and to resolve safety code issues so the pool can continue to operate in the near-term. The master plan shows expansion of the Titlow Lagoon and modification of parking in the area currently occupied by the pool and pool house.

Operation of the existing community wading pool was discontinued in 2008 and the pool was de-commissioned in 2009. The master plan describes replacement of the wading pool with a new Sprayground. The small building addition on the north end of the existing pool building is proposed to be retained for use as a public restroom and mechanical space to support the new Sprayground.
III. BACKGROUND & RECOMMENDATIONS

ELECTRICAL / LIGHTING

North Beach / TOA: At the 6th Avenue entrance to the North Beach TOA a new electrical service drop (100A, 120/240V, 1Ph, 3W) will be provided to serve new security lights and an electric gate with card reader. The electric gate will be provided with Opticom radio controls to allow emergency vehicle access. Lighting will be low-level 13’-0’, fluted, concrete, light poles with 175 watt metal halide Acorn style light fixtures matching Park District standards.

Sprayground/Parking Area: The parking area adjacent to the new sprayground will be provided with security lighting consisting of low-level 13’-0’, fluted, concrete, light poles with 175 watt metal halide Acorn style light fixtures matching Park District standards.

There is an existing electrical service located in the existing pool building available to serve the new sprayground. A new electrical panel will be provided from the existing electrical service in the pool building addition to remain and the new sprayground equipment will connect to the new electrical panel.

Lodge Area: The parking area adjacent to the Lodge Building will be provided with security lighting consisting of low-level 13’-0’, fluted, concrete, light poles with 175 watt metal halide Acorn style light fixtures matching Park District standards.

6th Ave. Restroom Building: The new restroom building located near the 6th Ave. will have a new electrical service (100A, 120/240V, 1Ph, 3W) provided from 6th Avenue to the new restroom building. Lights in the new restroom building will be vandal resistant, fluorescent light fixtures with automatic occupancy sensor controls. Exterior building lighting will be fluorescent, wall mounted, sharp cut-off, light fixtures with timeclock and photocell control. Receptacles for the restroom building will be 125V, 20A, GFI type.
Play & Spray Area
The existing water and sewer service to the pool building would be adjusted to serve the north end of the existing pool building that will remain to house the spray mechanical system and restrooms. The proposed parking lot along 6th Avenue, south of the spray ground will require storm water collection, treatment facilities, and can discharge to either the lagoon or City Storm system in 6th Avenue.

Lodge Area
The Lodge site Improvements will require storm water collection, treatment facilities, and would discharge to the City Storm system in 6th Avenue.

Lagoon
The Lagoon improvements would require the removal of the existing 10-inch gravity sanitary sewer line that serves a portion of the existing pool building and the bathroom facility on the west side of the railroad. Since the pool building will be removed and the spray park served by the existing sewer lateral in 6th Avenue and the bathroom on the west side of the railroad will be removed, the demolition of the 10-inch gravity sewer line would not require replacement since only “sani-can” style restrooms are proposed in the master plan. The Lagoon improvements would need to maintain and adjust the existing storm drainage outfalls into the Lagoon. Similarly, the Lagoon improvements will require the adjustment of the City Storm Trunk line that is located along the south end lagoon, either maintaining the outfall at the proposed rail bridge or a new outfall into the Lagoon.

South Field and Restroom
The South Field Improvements and Restroom will require the adjustment of the existing restroom’s water and sewer services. The field improvements will require the addition/adjustment of storm facilities to drain this area.

Based upon the City of Tacoma’s current stormwater codes, for sites that are located in the Western Slopes watershed, storm water flow control (detention) is required for sites that meet the City of Tacoma’s
minimum threshold for flow control AND that discharge directly or indirectly to a creek or gulch system. Sites that meet the minimum threshold for flow control but are piped all the way to a marine outfall are exempt from flow control if capacity can be demonstrated in the downstream conveyance system.

Basic water quality treatment facilities will be required for new and replaced pollution generating impervious areas such as parking lots. New and replaced pollution generating areas that discharge to the Lagoon would require enhanced treatment for metals removal or oil control.

Even though the projects will be constructed independently of each other the performance goals and standards for the determination of required storm improvements based on the addition or reduction of impervious areas will be considered cumulative.
RAILROAD SAFETY

As Titlow Park develops, Metro Parks will need to remain conscious of the ongoing need to keep the public safe from the operating Burlington Northern SantaFe (BNSF) rail lines through the park. During the master planning process MPT staff met twice on site with representatives of BNSF and the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (WUTC) to discuss ongoing issues related to rail safety.

Rail Right of Way Fence in General
Throughout the park the existing chain link fencing which separates the park from the rail right of way is in poor condition. Metro Parks will need to repair any openings and the worst parts of the existing fence. Where new construction interfaces with the rail right of way, fencing may need to be totally replaced. For cost and security reasons, most fence repair should be with new chain link fencing constructed to WSDOT standards, but in higher visibility areas other options may be appropriate. The objective should be to eliminate unofficial and unauthorized trespass on or across the active rail line by the public.

South Access Path
Safe pedestrian access to the site of Kay’s House and Hidden Beach from 6th Ave. via the south access path should be preserved if at all possible. Recognizing that the access drive is part of the BNSF right of way and that the current access permit held by Metro Parks is not specifically stated to be for the purpose of general public pedestrian access, the community has repeatedly encouraged Metro Parks to work with BNSF to create a safe public pedestrian corridor.

With that as an objective, Metro Parks will apply for grant funds from WUTC and permission from BNSF to erect a barrier fence between the driveway and the active rail line so safe use by pedestrian park users can be allowed:
  • The minimum offset distance for a safety barrier / fence is 8’ 6”’. The barrier preferred by BNSF will be a 6 ft. high chain link fence of similar specifications to those used by WSDOT on the State highway system.
  • The effect of this action is likely to be the elimination of vehicle access from the south, restricting use by park
maintenance personnel, TOA, construction contractors, utilities, and emergency responders to the bridge overcrossing at the north end of the park which has a 10 Ton load limit.

- Subsequent construction of the Fish Passage described elsewhere in this report would modify the drive and safety barrier further. A pedestrian bridge is shown as a way of maintaining the pedestrian connection following construction of the fish passage. It is unlikely that vehicle access would be restored.

**North Beach Access**
New fencing will be required to establish a safe pedestrian corridor between the BNSF rail line and TOA boat ramp operating area. Fencing in that area should be configured to discourage the current practice of accessing the north beach area on the existing rail lines. Fencing in that area should also block off informal trails leading across the rail line from uplands to the East.

**TOA Bridge Pedestrian Barriers**
As has been mentioned elsewhere in this report, the bridge rails at the existing vehicle bridge providing access to the TOA site do not meet current safety standards and will need to be modified to accommodate pedestrian use. Such modification should be done in conjunction with rail line fencing to exclude Park visitors from the rail lines.