INTRODUCTION

This transition plan is a guiding document for Metro Parks Tacoma to assist in making capital and program decisions which align with the agency’s Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility Policy and Federal law. This document is actively managed with updates facilitated by the agency’s ADA Coordinator and ADA Compliance Officer (the agency Executive Director is the ADA Compliance Officer of record). The ADA Coordinator works with agency leadership to integrate accessibility information into budget, work plan and other management practices to consistently advance this plan.

The plan is reviewed at least biennially in conjunction with the budget and work plan development cycle by the Asset Management and Inventory Work Team.

BACKGROUND

In early 2008, Metro Parks Tacoma committed to revisit and assess operations and facilities to ensure compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991. The agency’s original documents were reviewed but given that much had changed in the past twenty years, the agency decided to perform a new self-evaluation and develop a new transition plan.

Although original accessibility guidelines applicable to local municipalities were published in 1991, several additions related to recreation facilities in particular were added in the years of 2000-2004. Given these additions, and parallels between these guidelines and the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines (which are applied to a building if any federal monies or uses are involved), a combined version of the ADA-ABA was introduced in 2004. During this timeframe, outdoor standards were also created to apply ADA standards to outdoor natural environments in addition to built structures. These standards are known as the Federal Outdoor Area Technical Guidelines. Although they only are enforceable for federal facilities at this time, they provide Metro Parks Tacoma with best practice guidelines to meet our policy and philosophy direction. The combined ADA-ABA guidelines resulted in the 2010 Accessibility Standards which were adopted as one comprehensive universal standard for federal and local jurisdiction in July, 2010 and posted to the Federal Register in Sept, 2010. The 2010 Accessibility Standards became enforceable March, 2012.

MPT facilities are audited for compliance with the 2010 Accessibility Standards and Federal Outdoor Area Technical Guidelines. This transition plan is a summary of the findings of those audits, adjusted for advancements made in since 2009, and an outline of next steps for the agency to eventually address all audit findings.

TRANSITION PLAN

This document is a summary of the priorities and actions which came out of the agency self-evaluation and facility audits. There are other agency documents which contribute to the full Transition Plan Package. They include:

1. An agency manual for staff that demonstrates sustained compliance with self-evaluation and program guidelines.
2. The individual facility audits on file with subsequent improvement recommendations.
3. The Capital Improvement Program Plan, including timeline and funding for capital expenditures recommended in this Transition Plan.

When constructing new park facilities, the 2010 Accessibility Standards must be followed in design and construction. Metro Parks Tacoma utilizes a comprehensive capital projects process to imbed compliance into the process (see Planning\CPG Documents\Capital Program Reports for complete process flowcharts that allow for ADA review during design, development and construction). The 2010 Accessibility Standards are the primary guidelines for achieving compliance unless a more stringent local standard exists. Local standards can never be less stringent than what the 2010 Accessibility Standards require however they can increase requirements for the agency. The State of Washington has adopted ANSI 117 and includes accessibility guidelines in the State Building Code.

When it comes to altering or improving existing facilities, Metro Parks Tacoma must ensure that the part we alter or improve complies with the 2010 Accessibility Standards.

This transition plan addresses current Metro Parks Tacoma facilities that do not meet 2010 Accessibility Standards and best practices found in the Federal Outdoor Area Technical Guidelines per the audits performed by agency staff. All audits are on file and are available for review upon request. Metro Parks Tacoma updates audits after capital improvements are done at park facilities. No audit shall be older than four years old; older audits must be updated prior to capital improvements occurring at a park facility.

GENERAL FINDINGS

The priority areas for improvements for Metro Parks Tacoma are defined in the agency manual; section 4.0, it states that the priority for improvements are:

1. regional impact/number of users potentially impacted;
2. the existence of identified restrictions to program access;
3. the existence of designated funds to make the improvements at a location.

In addition, improvements related to the following have the longest history of applicable accessibility guidelines (and therefore the highest expectation of compliance) and tend to impact the users experience the greatest. They should, therefore, be given the highest amount of attention for each park/facility classification.

1. Parking
2. Routes of Access
3. Program Services
4. Restrooms
Given this criteria, the priority focus for Metro Parks Tacoma is improvements to its Regional Parks and Attractions.

1. Each Regional Park or Attraction shall include a copy of the ADA audit with their site Master Plan, and identify resources to address audit findings within that Master Plan.

2. Point Defiance and Ruston Way are owned by the City of Tacoma. The interagency agreement must include language about the joint responsibility to find funding to remove barriers.

Programmed Facilities, and Signature and Community Parks are of next importance for improvements. Indoor facilities take precedence over outdoor facilities. It is our intention to have facilities classified as such per the Strategic Parks and Program Services Plan to be improved to effectively meet all of the applicable accessibility standards.

Neighborhood Parks, Open Space and Gardens shall be subject to the Program Access Test. These shall be the lowest priority; however any alterations that are made must include accessibility improvements within the scope of the improvement.

The Program Access Test looks at the geographic equity of similar facilities and determines which parks or spaces, with similar amenities, should be improved to bring at least 1/3 of the spaces up to accessibility standards. This document makes those recommendations.

REGIONAL PARKS & ATTRACTIONS:

These facilities have the highest number of visitors, are especially popular with persons with disabilities, have the highest frequency of recorded complaints, and require the highest level of consideration.

1. Point Defiance Park & Ruston Way – Metro Parks Tacoma has been maintaining these facilities on behalf of the City of Tacoma since the early 1900’s. The parks are in need of capital repairs beyond what maintenance can provide. The audits for these parks were provided to staff of the MPT-COT Property Transition Team. The team is using these audits during negotiations to identify a capital improvements funding plan. It is anticipated that in 2015-2016 long-term ownership of the site should be resolved and the Master Plan for Point Defiance Park will be advanced with the opportunity for accessibility improvements.

   a. The Pagoda in Point Defiance Park was renovated in 2012 and brought up to current safety and legal standards.

   b. Pedestrian waterfront access will be improved in 2015-2016. Any phase of improvement will include compliance with federal and state accessibility standards.

   c. A Master Plan for Point Defiance Park will be adopted in 2015. All phases of improvement to achieve the Master Plan will address outstanding accessibility issues.
d. The picnic and restroom facilities within Point Defiance Park offer limited accessibility, are not on routes, and are a priority for improvement given the high number of outdoor facility rentals centralized at this location.

e. Ruston Way has had limited improvements. Old Town Dock and Restrooms were renovated and opened in 2014. Point Ruston installed an accessible Waterwalk as well. There are several audit findings along Ruston Way that the MPT-COT Property Transition Team continue to seek funding to address. Some improvements will be made with MPT’s 2014 Capital Improvement Bond.

2. Each of the Metro Parks Tacoma operated attractions has integrated their accessibility findings into facility master plans & work plans. Each of the facilities began work to address maintenance and program findings in 2010, isolating out long term capital needs which are listed in individual facility, master and/or business plans.
   a. Meadow Park – Capital needs related to restroom and concessionaire facilities on the course are identified and will be addressed 2015-2018 per the CIP.
   b. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium – Capital needs related to route & handrail system system-wide and the Rocky Shores Exhibit are being addressed through the 2014 Capital Improvement Bond, primarily 2015-2018.
   d. WW Seymour Conservatory – No major corrective capital needs; however long term parking demand needs to be resolved.
   e. Fort Nisqually – No major corrective capital needs. Route transitions need to be improved and maintained. Fort Nisqually will benefit from soil remediation activities in 2016 and route transitions will be reviewed and improved at that time.
   f. Boathouse Marina – Improvements to the boat locker facilities and pier amenities remain. This site is receiving improvements in 2015-2018 that will address findings.

3. In order to operate with the highest level of respect for the customer experience, each of the attractions reviewed operations and program modification protocols. Program guidelines & declarations regarding the following are available at each site and a method to inform and train visitor service staff is in place.
   a. Service Animals
   b. Motorized Transportation Devices
   c. Standard procedures for accommodations
   d. Accessibility information on websites
   e. Rental guidelines
4. Large special events hosted within our regional parks or attractions are also highly attended and need special consideration. Metro Parks Tacoma has adopted protocols and guidelines for Metro Parks Tacoma sponsored events, and for permitted events which occur on Metro Parks Tacoma properties. Tools have been created to help event producers meet their obligation to plan for and publicize their accommodations for persons with disabilities.

5. Universal Playgrounds - The 2010 Accessibility Standards state that ground surfacing must be inspected and maintained regularly to ensure compliance with ASTM F 1951 standard. The play area use level determines the appropriateness of the selection (see 1008.2.6). Currently, Metro Parks Tacoma uses all available surfacing including loose fill engineered wood fiber, rubber tile, and poured in place surfacing. Metro Parks Tacoma agrees with on-going studies that reveal that there is no perfect playground surface in regards to playground surfacing that is firm, stable and slip-resistant, while meeting safety and maintenance criteria. While this issue is being reviewed by the National Center on Accessibility, Metro Parks Tacoma has adopted the following practical guidelines for equitable distribution of accessible play spaces.

   a. All signature parks shall be developed with a high regard for universal design. Rubber tile and poured-in-place surfacing will be used, as appropriate, because they have the highest level of firmness and stability. The play features selected will allow for the highest level of play for children of all abilities.

   b. Neighborhood parks, which are not designed for long term play visit experiences or universal play, may continue to use engineered wood fiber for safety and maintenance cost value.

   c. Selected community parks will be designated for improvement based on the application of the program access test and a desire to provide equitable distribution of universally designed play spaces or features such as high back swings.

   d. Metro Parks Tacoma will continue to review new materials introduced into the market which may provide greater safety, accessibility, and maintenance viability.

   e. In addition, fall zone surfacing with the highest safety rating for elevated play features (such as swings and stand-alone slides offered in a separate play place) will continue to be the priority, regardless of park classification.
COMMUNITY, URBAN & SIGNATURE PARKS

By definition (as listed in the 2012 Strategic Plan Update), these parks serve the broadest local community with a greater number of amenities and are more appropriately used for group, community, and family functions than neighborhood parks. Community and Signature Parks have paths/accessible routes to all services within the park. These parks provide the 4 accessibility priorities of: parking, routes, amenity or program access, and restrooms. The routes are maintained as Classification 3 or higher on the Trail Management Plan. In addition, where naturalized hiking trails (Classification 2 of the Trail Management Plan) are provided, a trailhead sign provides all the required trail characteristics information.

Signature Community Parks are destinations. They are also geographically accessible across the District. For this reason, these parks will have playgrounds that follow universal design principles. This is primarily distinguished by accessible surfacing, greater ground level play with interactive features, a high-back swing, shade features and routes to and between features. Ramps compared to transfer platform and steps are preferred. SERA Campus and Wright Park are examples.

1. The Urban and Signature Community Parks:
   a. Community Signature Parks:
      i. SERA Campus is being reclassified as a Community Signature Park in place of Manitou Park (Community Park) in the South Tacoma planning area. The campus is under development. A universally designed spray and play plaza was added in 2014.
      ii. Wapato Park – requires an additional phase of work to improve group picnic and playground accessibility.
      iii. Norpoint Park – requires improvements to the trail system, benches and signage in field/natural area as well as greater ground play and accessibility surfacing for universal access to the playground.
      iv. Titlow Park – a new playground / sprayground was developed in 2013. The new features are accessible. The lodge side of the lagoon requires improvements to the restroom and group picnic shelter, signage and improvements to trail system to bring the park into compliance.
      v. Stewart Heights – Improve parking lot compliance/drop off zone; improve basketball court, and related bench and picnic facilities are required.
      vi. Wright Park – requires improvements for parking, picnic pads and benches throughout park, and new drinking fountains
      vii. Thea’s Park – Improve route and picnic access in the park.
2. Community Parks designed in 2009-2010 and scheduled for construction in 2011-2012 were reviewed for compliance with 2010 Accessibility standards. Brown’s Point Athletic Complex and Kandle Park were all finished in 2011-2012. Franklin Park was improved and a majority of accessibility features were corrected or installed in 2013.

   a. Browns Point Lighthouse will receive improvements in 2015-2016. Accessibility improvements will be made to this hillside park.
   b. Most of the Metro Parks Tacoma Community Parks received considerable improvements with the 2005 Bond funds. There were some aspects of the parks, however, which were not included in the scope of improvements. In order to bring the parks completely up to standards, an additional scope of work needs to be done within the 2015-2024 Capital Bond Program. These parks include: Dash Point Park, Jefferson Park, Lincoln Eldridge Park, McKinley Park, McKinley Playfield, Portland Ave Park, South Park, Stanley Playfield, and Vassault Park.

HIGHLY PROGRAMMED FACILITIES

Specialized Facility

Tacoma Nature Center is a unique, highly used site that is not an enterprise. It does not have its own capital fund. Outstanding capital needs related accessibility include the facility entrance, visual alarms, men’s restroom configuration and elevator compliance. Improvements to correct all of these items are scheduled for 2015-2016.

Multi-Purpose Community Centers

Metro Parks Tacoma has highly utilized centers which are designed to serve a quadrant of the city. Because of the diversity of programs offered and percentage of the population they are meant to serve, they are required to be fully compliant. These are new, or newer facilities, which were subject to the original guidelines when constructed and should not have outstanding issues.

   1. The Center at Norpoint was primarily designed to meet accessibility needs, and only minor modifications are needed to correct areas where our state law was not as stringent as the ADA requirements. Most of the facility needs are addressed through program modifications and maintenance, however the locker rooms need modified, parking improvements must be made, and doors should be replaced. This is the second general fund facility priority. Improvements are scheduled for 2017-2018.
2. South Tacoma Activity and Recreation (STAR) Center was opened in 2012. This center has been designed and reviewed in accordance with 2010 standards. There are future phases to the campus that will be developed with universal accessibility in mind.

Older Multi-Purpose Centers, constructed before 1991, have been updated through additions and modifications. Some are owned or operated by partners.

1. Peoples Center is owned by the City of Tacoma. The City of Tacoma just authorized and completed a capital improvement project to bring this site up to the 2010 Standards. The ADA parking stalls and route are still outstanding and are being negotiated with the City through the operating contract.

2. Portland Avenue Community Center is owned by Metro Parks Tacoma. Metro Parks Tacoma completed a 4-Centers bond project in 2011 to address a majority of the sites accessibility limitations; however there are some restroom modifications, including replacement of doors that have not been made because they require major renovations. Improvements to the drop off zone, reception counter, and drinking fountain are also pending. This is the third facility priority due to the clientele base.

3. South Park Community Center is owned by Metro Parks Tacoma however it is now leased to a private operator. It was renovated as part of the 4-Centers bond project in 2011 to address a majority of the site’s accessibility limitations; there are some restroom modifications that still need to be made and will be negotiated with the current operator.

**Sports Complexes**

Metro Parks Tacoma’s Sports Complexes (Peck, Heidelberg, SERA) are used to facilitate the youth and adult sports program. The 2010 Accessibility Guidelines require a route from parking to the sports field – this includes each of the fields where a team may be assigned. Although the field surface isn’t to be changed, a route, and the ability for someone in a wheelchair to sit with teammates or be a spectator is a requirement.

All three complexes need improvements to meet this guideline. Bond funds are allocated to field improvements at Heidelberg and Peck Fields; the scope of work will be identified during the 2015-2016 biennium.

- SERA complex has the greatest needs for restroom and dugout improvements. No funding for these improvements has been identified.
- Heidelberg and Peck’s greatest requirements relate to improved entrance access from parking, route surfacing and restroom improvements. 2005 and 2014 Capital Improvement Bond funds are available for this project.
There are additional outlying fields. The fields are commonly in community parks, like at Vassault and Stewart Heights, which provide an accessible route and receive a higher level of maintenance. If outlying fields are in neighborhood parks, they are not maintained to the same level as in community parks unless they are highly programmed. If fields in neighborhood parks are to be programmed for practices and games by Metro Parks Tacoma, accessibility standards will be met or teams will be given the option to be placed at a field which meets all of the accessibility standards.

**Pools**

Metro Parks Tacoma has two outdoor leisure pools, The Pool at Stewart Heights, which was built under the 1991 ADA Accessibility Standards and the Pool at Kandle Park, which was developed under the 2010 standards. Sloped entries were added at Kandle and Stewart Heights Pools in 2014. Further, proper entry supports for the spa at Eastside Pool, the Center at Norpoint and the bubble pools at Kandle and Stewart Heights were added in 2014.

At the Pool at Stewart Heights, the party room restroom poses the most difficult design to correct. It was designed to 1991 standards and is accepted under safe harbor provided in the 2010 Accessibility Standards. The parking and drop-off at the Pool at Stewart Heights needs attention to provide an accessible route to services.

Metro Parks Tacoma maintains the cooperatively owned Eastside Pool. The locker room received improvements in 2013. The building itself is under consideration for reconstruction and any further improvements will be on hold until that determination is made.

Two centers have pools. People’s Center Pool will be re-constructed in 2015-2016 by the City of Tacoma who is the owner of the building. The new pool will meet accessibility standards. The Center at Norpoint has a functional and compliant pool and spa. The locker rooms have some design improvements that are needed, and are addressed in the centers audit.

**Main Headquarters Building**

This facility is the primary location for general business such as park permitting, sport and program registrations, human resources, and public meetings. This is the fourth facility priority.

1. Public meeting spaces must offer assistive listening services and be arranged in a manner to allows all members of the community to express their opinions and engage in the public process equally.
   a. Although an accessible layout has been defined for the Board Room, design improvements are recommended due to limitations of the fixed seating, and sloped flooring.
   b. Each public meeting/conference room has a posted accessible layout.
2. Public access areas, including parking, route, entrance, lobby, restroom and public meeting spaces are maintained accordingly.
   a. Signs offering assistance with human resource postings, program information and permitting is in place.
   b. Customer counters invite face to face interactions.

3. Customer Service at the Main Headquarters test, and answer, the TTY telephone relay device. The number for this device is posted on each program guide released quarterly/seasonally and with any listing of district wide phone numbers.

4. Improvements to the elevator, doors, drinking fountain and board room are pending in the 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Program.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood Parks offer some, but not as many, of the amenities of a community park. Sometimes neighborhood parks fill geographic holes between community parks, and other times, they overlap. When looking at neighborhood parks by planning area quadrant as defined by the Strategic Parks and Program Services Plan, we can recommend improvements based on the Program Access Test.

Northeast Tacoma Quadrant

There are 3 Neighborhood Parks in NE Tacoma.

- Browns Point Playfield offers play and sports facilities available at the Browns Point Athletic Complex and picnicking available at Browns Point Lighthouse (improvements in the 2011-2012 biennium).
- Alderwood and NE Tacoma serve a different area of the quadrant, and one of two should be made fully accessible. Both offer playground and picnicking, however Alderwood has 95% of its improvements in place. NE Tacoma offers baseball, but that program is moving to the new athletic complex. The baseball field, as provided and used by Soundview Little League, is totally non-compliant. It should be corrected or removed from the inventory. If MPT has a role in providing a baseball program there, we should improve it or have the ability to schedule at the Browns Point Athletic Complex.

Determination: Finalize Alderwood’s recommended improvements to parking and add the trailhead sign. This improvement is not scheduled in 2015-2016, but will be explored as part of the small capital and natural area capital plan. If sports remain at Northeast Tacoma Playfield, the field requires attention through the athletic sports field funding program to be designed and deployed in partnership with Tacoma Schools and Soundview Little League.
**Southeast Tacoma Quadrant**

There are 8 Neighborhood Parks in SE Tacoma.

- Sawyer Tot Lot is covered by play and picnic facilities at Lincoln Eldridge.
- Alling Park is covered by play and picnic facilities at Wapato Park
- Ryan’s Park, Fern Hill, and Blueberry are all in the same area of the quadrant. Blueberry does not offer a playground, and Fern Hill has better access than Ryan’s Park.
- Cloverdale is fairly isolated; it’s closest park is Stewart Heights. Swan Creek development for amenities is not yet determined. Cloverdale received improvements in 2012 to increase accessibility.
- Rogers Park is covered by play and sport facilities at McKinley Park and Playfield.
- Roosevelt Park is covered by walking and picnic amenities at Portland Avenue Playfield.

Determination: *Include Fern Hill’s recommended improvements for accessible amenities at the park when next phase improvements are done through small capital funding; advance Master Plan improvements at Lincoln Eldridge, Wapato Park, Stewart Heights, McKinley Park and Portland Avenue Playfield so the Community Parks in the area are fully accessible.*

**Southwest Tacoma Quadrant**

There are 3 Neighborhood Parks in SW Tacoma.

- Wapato Hills has amenities greater than most neighborhood parks and meets accessibility criteria now.
- Lincoln Heights does not have any degree of accessibility. That area is served by South Park.
- Oakland-Madrona received recent improvement that increased accessibility.

Determination: *Finalize Wapato Hill’s recommended improvements for accessible amenities at the park by completing and signing the trail system; this is a joint MPT-COT project scheduled for 2014-2015. Manitou received improvements in 2012, but major accessibility improvements occurred in 2014 at the SERA Campus in order to provide this area with a high level of universal play.*

**Northwest Tacoma Quadrant**

There are 16 Neighborhood Parks in NW Tacoma.

- Garfield Park is newly constructed with added ADA parking and entrance route; it has the best access between N. Slope, Old Town and itself within this part of the quadrant. Ruston Way is also close by.
- Wright Park provides the accessible play and picnic and sport requirements not available at Neighbors Park. People’s Park did receive improvements in 2012 and alterations are all accessible.
- There are 6 parks in the Central Neighborhood of the NW Tacoma Quadrant: Lots for Tots, Ferry, Stanley, McCarver, Sheridan and Irving. New accessible playground and picnic amenities were added at McCarver Park. McCarver has accessible parking and more community amenities and is preferred over Ferry, Lots for Tots and Stanley. Irving was updated in 2012 to provide access but has limited amenities; Sheridan provides an accessible play experience.
- Delong offers walking opportunities in a natural seating. These programs are provided in an accessible manner at both Franklin and Jefferson Parks.
- Kandle Park (newly constructed) offers accessible picnic and play that covers the limited accessibility features at Puget Park & Optimist.
- Vassault Park playground and picnic opportunities are limited; this is a community park that needs attention within the 2015-2024 capital bond. Both Jane Clark & Baltimore Park received improvements that increased accessibility when updated in 2013.

Determination: Garfield Park and McCarver Park were all improved for accessibility in 2011-2012. Some outstanding ADA recommendations remain at Ferry Park. These are not scheduled for 2013-2014. By finishing updates to community parks (Franklin, Jefferson, Kandle, and Vassault) and maintaining Garfield, People, Baltimore and McCarver, the accessibility needs under the program access test will be fulfilled.

These are improvement focus areas for 2015-2016, to be addressed as funding is available:

PARKING

For neighborhood parks identified for accessibility designation, and all community parks, parking needs must be considered. When parking is only provided on-street and not on MPT property, we will work with the City of Tacoma to recommend and prioritize the needed street improvements. These improvements will primarily be done in conjunction with other park improvement projects at the designated park location.

On the street parking for Wright Park, South Park, and Jefferson Park are priorities.

Vassault Park and Lincoln Eldridge Park need on-site parking lot improvements.

Neighborhood Parks that need parking to meet the program access test include Ferry Park and Fern Hill Park.

When parking lots are resurfaced or restriped, findings related to parking markings and signage will be corrected.
TRAILS & SIGNAGE

The Metro Parks Tacoma Trail System is diverse. Trails can be in any classification of park. The type of trail depends solely on the natural environment and degree of development. When Metro Parks Tacoma has a naturalized trail within a park, MPT will apply the Outdoor Area Technical Guidelines for Trails. When it is in a developed park, or a developed area of the park, standards for walking paths and accessible routes shall be applied. In 2010, a Trail Classification System, related to accessibility factors and use, was created and applied to MPT parks. Measures to develop, maintain, sign and improve trails in accordance with this system is one of the areas of emphasis for the 2015-2016 budget cycle, with parks with large and well utilized trails systems, and program demand, as the priority.

Point Defiance, Wapato, Swan Creek and Wright Park walking/trail system signage was developed in 2012.

Titlow Park, McKinley Park and Oak Tree Park were priorities for trail development and signage in 2013-2014.

Puget Creek, Julia’s Gulch and Wapato Hills are open space areas with trail components that will be under review and/or construction in 2015/16. Program determinations need to be made about demand and geographic equity during this biennium.

Trail Classification System

- Class 1 - undeveloped with no program – no accessibility application
- Class 2 – hiking, naturalized experience – We follow the Outdoor Technical Guidelines for natural trails, trail head signs and trailhead amenities, when provided, need to comply.
- Class 3 – trails are maintained as paths with compacted pieced surface materials to ADA standards. We follow the 2010 Accessibility Standards to the maximum extent feasible and refer to the Outdoor Technical Guidelines for soft surface walking trail requirements.
- Class 4 – hard surface trails that connect to amenities following ADA trail and route requirements. We follow the 2010 Accessibility Standards for routes.
- Class 5 – multi-model transportation paths following all applicable accessibility guidelines for walking, biking, and other recreational modes of movement. Shared Use Guidelines included in PROWAG and AASHTO (American Association of State of Highway Transportation Officials) standards are followed.

Open space, by itself, does not have any accessibility guidelines. When Metro Parks Tacoma offers a trail system, we identify what people can expect on the trail through the Trails and Signage requirements. Class 1 Trails are unofficially created by users and not maintained as a program MPT offers citizens. If MPT is offering hiking on natural trails within an Open Space, MPT will follow the accessibility guidelines for such. If trails are offered, then parking, trash, signage or any other amenity offered at the trailhead must be accessible. The Nature Education Plan supports additional programming at Oak Tree Park, Wapato Hills, and Swan Creek, which are already identified for continual trail improvements. Metro Parks Tacoma continues to make trails an area of emphasis, and the
classification or use of unofficial trails may change. If it does than accessibility measures associated with higher trail classifications must be considered as well.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Gardening is a program that many citizens enjoy. Gardening has an increased emphasis as a community activity for its social, economic and cultural value. Metro Parks Tacoma has seven community gardens in our inventory. Some are within a park and have some measure of accessibility to them (ie Franklin, and Neighbor’s Park). A new garden was developed at McCarver Park in 2011. Swan Creek garden was developed and opened in 2012.

Metro Parks Tacoma also offers one “stand” alone garden which was not designed for accessibility and would require significant investment to meet accessibility standards.

Although Metro Parks Tacoma is the owner and operator of these sites, The Pierce Conservation District’s Harvest Pierce County Program has taken the lead on developing a Community Garden program throughout the County. For existing sites, the Program Access Test was applied to see which sites should be updated to provide equitable geographic access to community gardening. There are several new sites being designed and opened each year which include accessibility features in the design and potentially meet the Program Access Test for any given area.

The MPT Parks Department works closely with Harvest Pierce County to review collaborative sites to determine if and when sites may need improvements.

COMMUNICATIONS

The agency shall continue to communicate effectively with individuals who are visually impaired/blind or have limited hearing, who have limited dexterity, and who have limited cognitive capacity or learning disabilities. Expansions in this area in 2015-2016, include:

1. Improvements to the district website and high interest attraction pages, as well as pages which describe inclusion services, and specialized and adaptive recreation. These improvements shall include such things as font size changers, picture tags, and more audio files. Review of the website will include readability, use of screen readers, and keyboard only functionality.

2. Exploration of ways to enhance the interpretative experience in audio, visual and tactile methods.

3. Captioning for district video-production.

4. Increased signage to inform and direct.

5. Maintenance of accessibility content related to all attractions and District philosophy and decisions.

6. Ability for all alternative communication requests to be processes timely and effectively district-wide.
7. Exploration of exhibit enhancement, including more multiple visual and audio options for visitors to experience passive or self-directed programming.

8. Use of technology such as QR codes for linking physical site experiences to audio files for more multi-sensory information input opportunities.