

Attachment 3: Open Space Standards

Overview of Seattle’s Existing Open Space Standards

Excerpted below are open space goals, criteria and definitions from the *City of Seattle’s 2005 Comprehensive Plan* and *Seattle’s Parks and Recreation 2011 Development Plan*. These goals, criteria and definitions may be updated during the current Comprehensive Plan update process, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*, and/or during *Parks’ 2016 Development Plan* update process.

Short overview

Seattle measures its open space in several ways:

1. Citywide - ‘Breathing Room’ considers the total amount of open space available to all.
2. Single Family Residential areas – ‘Usable Open Space’ distribution based and must be 10,000 square feet or larger.
3. Within the Urban Village boundaries – ‘Open Space’ and ‘Village Commons’; Population and distribution based applied to Urban Center Villages, Hub Urban Villages and Residential Urban Villages and must be 10,000 square feet or larger.
4. Service Area (GAP analysis map) – Distribution based of 1/8 mile, 1/4 mile, 1/2 mile depending on Single Family Residential or Urban Village location and must be 10,000 square feet or larger.
The 2014 GAP map is sent as a separate document.

Comparison of Open Space Standards from other jurisdictions

The national aspirational standard for open space is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Of note below, San Francisco’s Park Land Standard is based upon the amount of land the department could reasonably acquire and finance over the next 20 years. All of the standards are meant to be aspirational.

City	Open Space Standard	"Apples to Apples" X acres per 1,000 residents
Seattle Citywide ‘Breathing Room’ Open Space - Desirable	1 acre per 100 residents	10 acres
Seattle Citywide ‘Breathing Room’ Open Space - Acceptable	1/3 acre per 100 residents	3.33 acres
Seattle Urban Village ‘Open Space’	One acre per 1,000 households	1 acre
San Francisco Park Improvement Standard	4.32 acres per 1,000 residents	4.32 acres
San Francisco Park Land Standard	0.11 acres per 1,000 residents	0.11 acres
Portland Parks 2020 Vision	20 acres per 1,000 residents	20 acres
Chicago Park District Open Space Standard - Community Level	2 acres per 1,000 residents	2 acres
Chicago Park District Open Space Standard - existing Citywide	4.13 acres per 1,000 residents	4.13 acres
Chicago Park District Open Space Standard - Long-term goal	5 acres per 1,000 residents	5 acres
Denver Parks Department "Game Plan" to strive towards	10 acres per 1,000 residents	10 acres
STAR Communities Rating System: High population density	6.8 acres per 1,000 residents	6.8
Intermediate – High population density	7.3 acres per 1,000 residents	7.3
Intermediate – Low population density	13.5 acres per 1,000 residents	13.5

Low population density	20.3 acres per 1,000 residents	20.3
National Average	10 acres per 1,000 residents	10 acres

City Open Space Goals (*City of Seattle's 2005 Comprehensive Plan and Seattle's Parks and Recreation 2011 Development Plan*)

	GOAL	AREA
BREATHING ROOM OPEN SPACE	<i>Desirable:</i> 1 acre per 100 residents <i>Acceptable:</i> 1/3 acre per 100 residents	Citywide
USABLE OPEN SPACE	1/4 to 1/2 acre within 1/4 to 1/2 mile of every resident	Areas outside Urban Villages
STAR Communities	<i>High or Intermediate-High population density:</i> 85% within 1/2 mile walking distance <i>Intermediate-Low, or Low population density:</i> 70% within 1/2 mile walking distance	Community wide

Usable Open Space in Primarily Single Family Residential Areas (*Seattle's Parks and Recreation 2011 Development Plan*)

SINGLE FAMILY USABLE OPEN SPACE	<i>Desirable:</i> 1/2 acre of Usable Open Space within 1/2 mile of Seattle households in primarily single-family areas. <i>Acceptable:</i> 1/2 acre within 1 mile of community approved offset to lack of Usable Open Space.
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Urban Village Open Space Goals (*City of Seattle's 2005 Comprehensive Plan*)

	URBAN CENTER VILLAGES	HUB URBAN VILLAGES	RESIDENTIAL URBAN VILLAGES
URBAN VILLAGE OPEN SPACE POPULATION BASED GOALS	One acre of Village Open Space per 1,000 households and one acre of Village Open Space per 10,000 jobs in each Urban Center or in the four contiguous Urban Centers that comprise the center city, considered as a whole.	One acre of Village Open Space per 1,000 households.	Same as for Hub Urban Villages.
URBAN VILLAGE OPEN SPACE DISTRIBUTION GOALS	All locations in the village within approximately 1/8 mile of Village Open Space.	Same as for Urban Center Villages.	For moderate and high density areas: All locations within 1/8 mile of Village Open Space that is between 1/4- and 1-acre in size, or within 1/4 mile of Village Open Space that is greater than 1 acre. For low density areas: All locations within 1/4 mile of any qualifying Village Open Space.
QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR URBAN VILLAGE OPEN SPACE	Dedicated open spaces of at least 10,000 square feet in size, publicly accessible, and usable for recreation and social activities.	Same as for Urban Center Villages.	Same as for Urban Center and Hub Villages.
VILLAGE COMMONS	At least one usable open space of at least one acre in size where the existing and target households total 2,500 or more.	At least one usable open space of at least one acre in size.	At least one usable open space of at least one acre in size where overall residential density is ten households per gross acre or more.

DEFINITIONS

Offsets

Seattle's Parks and Recreation 2011 Development Plan refers to offsets such as school grounds, recreation facilities, green streets, boulevards and trails in conjunction with the definitions of Breathing Room and Usable Open Space. Offsets, in this context, are meant as open spaces that may not be owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation that are still used or experienced similarly to City operated parks and natural areas/greenbelts. While offsets are not considered as Breathing Room or Usable Open Space, they can provide open space for passive or active recreation or enjoyment and sometimes fill gaps in Breathing Room and Usable Open Space for residents who use the playground at their local school, stroll along a tree-lined boulevard or exercise indoors at a community center.

Breathing Room Open Space

Definition: Combined acreage of all dedicated open spaces (parks, natural areas and greenbelts, trails, and boulevards,) but not including tidelands and shorelands (submerged park lands.)

Offsets: School grounds, green streets, boulevard, trail, etc.

Usable Open Space

Definition: Relatively level and open, easily accessible, primarily green open space available for drop-in use (can be part of larger citywide park space). Urban Village Open Space can be considered a type of Usable Open Space, and is defined in the City of Seattle's 2005 Comprehensive Plan as "Publicly owned or dedicated open space that is easily accessible and intended to serve the immediate urban village. This encompasses various types of open space for passive enjoyment as well as activity and includes green areas and hard surfaced urban plazas, street parks, and pocket parks. Dedicated open spaces should be at least 10,000 square feet in size."

Offsets: School grounds, recreation facilities, green streets, boulevards and trails.

Natural Areas and Greenbelts - *Note, these definitions were taken from Parks Classification Policy, which was updated in January, 2015.*

Definition: Natural Areas are park sites established for the protection and stewardship of wildlife, habitat and other natural systems support functions. Some natural areas are accessible for low-impact use. Minimal infrastructure may include access and signage, where it will not adversely impact habitat or natural systems functions. Larger natural areas may have small sections developed to serve a community park function. Large Natural Area/Greenbelts may be divided into subareas based on vegetation, habitat, restoration status, wildlife area designation, recreation use area, etc. in order to better differentiate resource needs and use priorities.