

Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) Two-Year Road Map

Purpose:

The ROSS project will stitch together the many activities underway to conserve and enhance open space and contribute to the ecological, economic, social, recreational and aesthetic vitality of the Central Puget Sound region.

Objectives:

Develop an alliance between a broad spectrum of agencies and organizations to form and implement a Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) that will achieve a multi-dimensional, integrated set of objectives for regional open space planning in the Central Puget Sound.

- Create a broad regional community to attract resources in support of open space.
- Formulate regional priorities for open space planning and implementation that balances diverse interests.
- Build upon prior planning and analysis such as Vision 2040 and the Cascade Agenda to create a connected regional open space network and identify strategies to enact the vision for open space in the region.

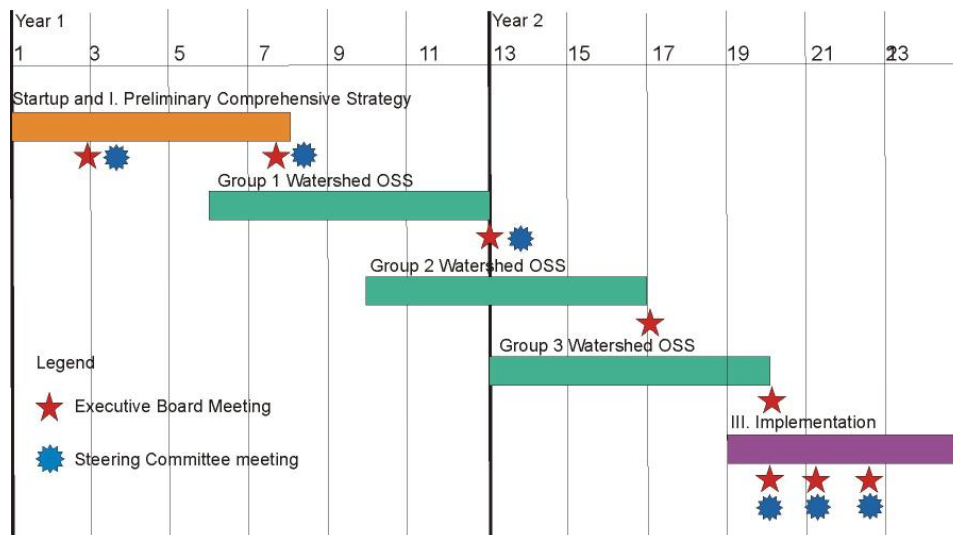
Anticipated Outcomes:

- Improved regional scale implementation of open space strategies with an enhanced awareness of regional goals and priorities,
- Improved partnerships and communication among organizations and agencies,
- Synchronization of isolated initiatives,
- A more integrated or strategic graphic mapping analysis of gaps and opportunities,
- Identification of challenges and pathways to forming an integrated open space system, and
- Evaluation of ecosystem service values that lead to increased resources for open space conservation and enhancement.

Process:

The first step of the ROSS project is to develop an overarching Preliminary Comprehensive Strategy. This Strategy will help set the framework for how to synchronize efforts and conduct open space studies in individual communities. Then, strategies for each watershed will be developed and the preliminary strategy will be revised into a final Regional Open Space Strategy that ensures interlinking, regional objectives for open space are incorporated into future open space investment considerations.

ROSS TWO-YEAR WORK SCHEDULE:



Background:

With the generous support of the Bullitt Foundation, the University of Washington Green Futures Lab (GFL) and Northwest Center for Livable Communities (NWCLC) conducted a scoping study to develop a Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) that includes King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish Counties. The Cedar River Watershed was used as a test case and a number of regional leaders in government and community organizations expressed support for a two year initiative to establish a collaborative, landscape scale open space strategy.

There are many applicable plans and activities in the Central Puget Sound that the ROSS can support and coordinate rather than developing anew. The scoping process revealed that work must involve inter-jurisdictional collaboration, include non-profits and other stakeholders, and address all scales (local-regional) if open space objectives are to be met. The 'watershed' is considered the proper unit of analysis as it represents fundamental ecological processes and crosses political boundaries to secure collaboration.

Other findings highlighted that the regulatory frameworks for open space are progressive, but the complexity and layering of regulation is difficult for landowners to interpret and approach. Therefore, efficiencies are to be had in integrating recreational, ecological, community development, resource management, public health, and educational objectives. In addition, the ROSS will be most effective if it contains elements that assist funding entities in establishing priorities and identifying key opportunities to support open space investments.

Task Description:

The overall task is to develop an initiative that helps identify and clarify the true value of open space and builds support for the formation of a distinct and coherent regional network. Methods in conducting this work will be diverse, and will include ecological economics, in addition to traditional physical planning, citizen engagement, and collaborative multi-jurisdictional regional governance.

The initiative also will involve a significant level of outreach and education to ensure that the value of such a network is communicated more effectively through contact with multiple agencies and organizations, engaging the public, and undertaking a program to provide information on open space issues in the region.

Associated planning will involve:

- Identifying problems and opportunities;
- Clarifying roles for key players;
- Overlaying the various needs, efforts, and ideas associated with open space; and
- Establishing goals, objectives, and spatial and operational concepts.

Early implementation will include acquiring resources and staffing and enacting actions that optimize resource allocations and streamline the implementation of high-value projects.

Priorities for open space at the regional scale may be based on an aggregate of previously established "targets" that would expand on existing efforts to reflect a broader representation of open space needs. On-the-ground information and public input from a series of workshops and studies in the watersheds of the region will support the mapping of a Regional Open Space Network as well as the missing links or elements in that network.

Organizational Structure:

There will be a wide representation of issue-specific stakeholders and experts on Technical Advisory Committees dedicated to topic areas that address the key aspects of open space. Watershed-level Taskforces will help tailor the planning and implementation of the ROSS to specific communities. A Steering Committee will ensure that these elements are integrated together to form an open space strategy that touches upon all interests without losing the ability to facilitate implementation. The Executive Committee will provide political support from individuals and organizations with positive reputations among the full spectrum of interests.

A draft two year work program and organization chart are included on page 3 and 4.

Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS) Two-Year Work Program

2012 Actions	Topic	Organization	Deadline
1. Formation of ROSS leadership/committees and organizational structure.	Partnerships	ROSS Executive Committee	February 2012
2. Establish website and social networking presence (facebook, twitter, linkedin) with weekly blog posts.	Outreach	ROSS Staff	January 2012
3. Prepare & distribute newsletters and press releases at key junctures in planning process.	Outreach	ROSS Staff & Partners	Ongoing
4. Secure additional funding & staff resources for ROSS two year work program.	Securing Resources	ROSS Staff & Partners	June 2012
5. Develop Preliminary Comprehensive Strategy (PCS) that: outlines the characteristics of a regional open space network and the missing elements; provides early visualizations to support outreach; identifies strategies to overcome institutional barriers; clarifies the need for additional investment and opportunities to secure funding; and cultivates champions and partnerships for outreach, planning & implementation.	Strategy Development	ROSS Staff & Partners	August 2012
6. Complete open space strategy for two pilot watersheds (e.g. Duwamish & Puyallup).	Strategy Development	Group 1 Watershed Taskforce	December 2012
2013 Actions	Topic	Organization	Timeframe
7. Complete pilot open space strategy for two additional watersheds.	Strategy Development	Group 2 Watershed Taskforce	March 2013
8. Complete pilot open space strategy for two additional watersheds.	Strategy Development	Group 3 Watershed Taskforce	June 2013
9. Complete pilot open space strategy for two-three additional watersheds.	Strategy Development	Group 4 Watershed Taskforce	September 2013
10. Finalize integrated ROSS with prioritized actions; recommendations for future coordination; and tools for open space enhancement at policy, planning, and project level.	Strategy Development	All	December 2013
2014 Actions	Topic	Organization	Timeframe
11. Formally integrate ROSS into agency, organization, or coalition of organizations.	Project Implementation	TBD	TBD
12. Specific Projects (TBD based on Final ROSS). Early concepts include linking projects to improve resource sharing and acquire additional funds, filling missing links in the open space network, or a legislative action to establish a regional open space investment district that can allocate funds.	Project Implementation	TBD	TBD

Regional Open Space Strategy (ROSS)

DRAFT Committee Structure & Organizational Framework

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