

Attachment 2:
Project Descriptions of DNRP's 2015 Parks Levy – Regional Open Space Acquisition Proposals

WRIA 8: Emerald Necklace Trail (Connie Blumen, Parks) **REQUESTING ONLY PARKS LEVY**

PL Request	\$25,000
CFT Request (CFT match status)	\$0 (N/A)
Subtotal: CFT + PL Request	\$25,000

Total Project Cost	\$25,000
Funding Already Secured	City of Sammamish or TDR may be available later for supporting feasibility studies, ordering title reports and conducting appraisals and subsequently help fund fee or easement acquisitions.
Additional Funding Sought	None at this time
Will current funding request allow project completion?	No – feasibility only

PROJECT SUMMARY:

This grant request is for initial acquisition feasibility work associated with the proposed “Emerald Necklace” trail effort to create a continuous 28-mile trail that would encircle the Sammamish plateau within, and adjacent to, the City of Sammamish and unincorporated rural zoned lands to the east.. This trail proposed trail project would connect to many trails that are currently located on public lands within the City of Sammamish and the regional trails that surround the City. Approximately 80% of the proposed Emerald Necklace trail is already in place. This project would focus on a portion of the proposed “missing link” sections.

Grant funds acquired would be used for such purposes as an acquisition feasibility study scoping possible trail routes and researching landowner issues/constraints, etc. With identification of initial targets, remaining funds could go toward landowner outreach, acquisition staff time, assessments of value, appraisals, and/or potentially extending offers for land in fee or trail conservation easements contingent on obtaining necessary funding. Initial focus on acquisitions north of the County’s Soaring Eagle Park to the City’s Evan Creek Preserve, through the upper Patterson Creek area on lands owned by WADNR and King County

This project involves a partnership between King County, the City of Sammamish, Sammamish Friends, Issaquah Alps Trail Club and the Mountains to Sound Greenway. This trail would add to a set of existing trails (involving a combination of backcountry and regional trails and sidewalk/roadside linkages) that already ring much of the Sammamish Plateau.

1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve

The Wildlife Habitat Network as designated in the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) runs through, and adjacent to, a large majority of public lands located within the Emerald Necklape

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corridor, including King County's Patterson Creek Natural Area, and Soaring Eagle, Grand Ridge and Duthie Hill Parks. Wildlife habitat networks are made of natural vegetation linking priority species wildlife habitat with critical areas, their buffers, trails and parks/open space. Conservation of more lands within the project corridor would conserve more segments of the Wildlife Network and decrease fragmentation consistent with KCCP Policy E-410,

The wildlife inhabiting the target area is typical of west side mature second growth forest habitats and thus includes a variety of migratory and resident birds, mammals, amphibians and fish. Species known to use this general area include: black bear, cougar, coyote, bobcat, mule deer, raccoon, mountain beaver, barred owls, pileated woodpecker, Pacific tree frog, Pacific giant salamander and red-legged frogs. These are Species of Local Importance as designated in KCCP Policy E-436.

B. *Salmon habitat or aquatic resources*

The streams originating in Sammamish and traversing sections of the Emerald Necklace are major spawning areas for the Lake Sammamish native kokanee population. The project focus area (and much of the existing trail corridor area) lies primarily within the Patterson Creek basin system which supports coho, Chinook, steelhead/rainbow and cutthroat trout. According to estimates from the WA ST Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, Patterson Creek accounts for 15% of the total coho salmon production in the Snoqualmie Watershed (WRIA 7). Portions of the target project area also lie within the Evans Creek, a sub area of Bear Creek Basin; it is considered a "satellite" area for chinook salmon in which chinook are present most years but are less abundant than in core areas. Evans Creek is home to chinook as well as substantial populations of coho and sockeye salmon.

C. *Scenic resources*

The Emerald Necklace corridor is an integral part of the Mountains to Sound Greenway (MTSG) and adding linkages to these would be consistent with MTSG's goal of protecting open space lands within the Greenway's boundaries. In addition, the target parcels provide panoramic views of the valley and Cascade foothills and mountains to the east.

D. *Community separator*

Conservation of lands within the project area will contribute to achieving a contiguous greenbelt and urban separator between the City of Sammamish and rural unincorporated King County along the designated urban growth boundary,, adding to the large acreage of largely connected King County Park lands that provide a visual and functional separation between the development of Issaquah, Sammamish, Fall City, and Preston; and other public lands within rural King County and along the I-90 corridor..

G. *Park/open space or natural corridor addition*

These target parcels could create additions and connections to: King County's Ravenhill Open Space site (26 acres): Soaring Eagle Park (600 acres), Patterson Creek Natural Area (205 acres); land currently owned by WA ST Dept. of Natural Resources (approx. 180 acres) that may come into County ownership in the near future, as well as the City of Sammamish's Beaver Lake Preserve (67 acres). The lands lie within the Patterson Creek Basin of the Snoqualmie Watershed; described as a strategic open space focus area in the King County 2010 Parks/Open Space Plan. Lastly, much of the Emerald Necklace trail corridor is within the proposed King County Regional Trail corridor segment identified as the East Plateau Trail; other future linkages would connect to the existing East Lake Sammamish Regional Trail.

H. *Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs:*

Lands conserved under this Emerald Necklace project proposal would allow for an extension of the existing trail system, mostly under public ownership. Soaring Eagle Park currently contains approximately 12 miles of backcountry trails used by equestrians, hikers, runners, and mountain bikers. Beaver Lake Preserve contains another 12 miles of trails. The City of Sammamish's population is approximately 50,000 and the City of Issaquah's is about 32,000; thus the proposed Emerald Necklace trail system would serve as a multifaceted trail system surrounding a fairly extensive urban core as well as serve as a regional attraction that has easy access along the I-90 corridor, making it accessible to over 1 million people.

2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

A. *Educational/interpretive opportunity*

Since the target Emerald Necklace parcels would be an addition to a large network of connected public lands there are excellent opportunities to build upon interpretive messaging; possible themes include educational information about the area's cultural history and natural resources (fish and wildlife habitat value, importance of invasive control and forest and riparian area restoration).

B. *Threat of loss of open space resources*

If these properties are sold to a private landowner who intends to develop or log the property, it would reduce the likelihood of conserving habitat and future trail connections between key public lands. This project area is a critical section of the remaining 20% of "missing link" portion needed to be preserved in order to complete the Emerald Necklace trail network. The forest cover on the target parcels could be impacted and fragmented by clearing or development, impacting the riparian corridor for both Patterson and Evans Creeks. Additionally, the target properties contain significant wetlands.

C. *Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed*

Several of the target properties have been identified as priorities for acquisition since the King County Parks first acquired Soaring Eagle Park (formerly known as Section 36 Regional park) in 1993 and developed the first Master Plan in 1997. Sammamish Friends, the stakeholder group that initiated this effort has contacted owners of about a dozen properties considered top priorities to implement the Emerald Necklace vision. There has been initial interest expressed by some of those landowners. If this grant funding was awarded further suitability assessments could occur to narrow acquisition priorities and landowner discussions could be taken to the next level, likely creating more landowner interest.

D. *Partnerships*

This project involves a partnership between King County, the City of Sammamish, Sammamish Friends, Issaquah Alps Trail Club and the Mountains to Sound Greenway. Sammamish Walks and Sammamish Backyard Wildlife Habitat are also project supporters. The City of Sammamish City Council has expressed initial support of \$50,000 to match grant funds to further advance this initiative and has expressed a desire to partner with King County in applying for CFT funding in 2015 for 2016 funding for acquisition of lands and easements. The City of Sammamish owns some of the connecting links in the Emerald Necklace corridor (Evans Creek Preserve, a portion of

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Soaring Eagle Park, Beaver Lake Preserve, Trossachs Boulevard Trail Easement, and various other trail and open space segments).

E. *Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?*

Both the King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) and the 2004 King County Parks, Trails, Natural Areas and Open Space Plan (Park Plan) contain policies that direct acquisition, planning, and stewardship of King County Parks. The acquisition of these parcels is consistent with the following policies:

Park Plan Policies (Policy F-101 PAD 117) direct Parks to:

- be a regional provider of open spaces with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural resources and provide recreation, education and interpretive opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat and scenic beauty,
- have a regional trail network that offers recreation options and migration corridors for wildlife,
- focus regional open space efforts on the natural watershed systems and regional systems such as the wildlife habitat network and Mountains to Sound Greenway,

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Chapter (Ch. 6) of the 2012 KCCP states:

- Open space sites should be acquired when identified in the King County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan...to protect contiguous tracts of working resource lands or ecological resources. (Policy P-119)
- KC Parks should facilitate educational and interpretive programs that further the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the natural, cultural and recreational resources. (P-105)
- King County will preserve wildlife corridors and riparian habitat, as well as open space areas separating Urban and Rural Areas as part of its open space system. (P-103)
- King County will continue to provide and manage a backcountry trail system on its lands in collaboration with other public and private landholders. (P-108)
- Trails should be acquired when identified in King County Trails Plans, the Regional Trails Needs Report or when identified as part of a regional community trail network. (P-120)

F. *Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation*

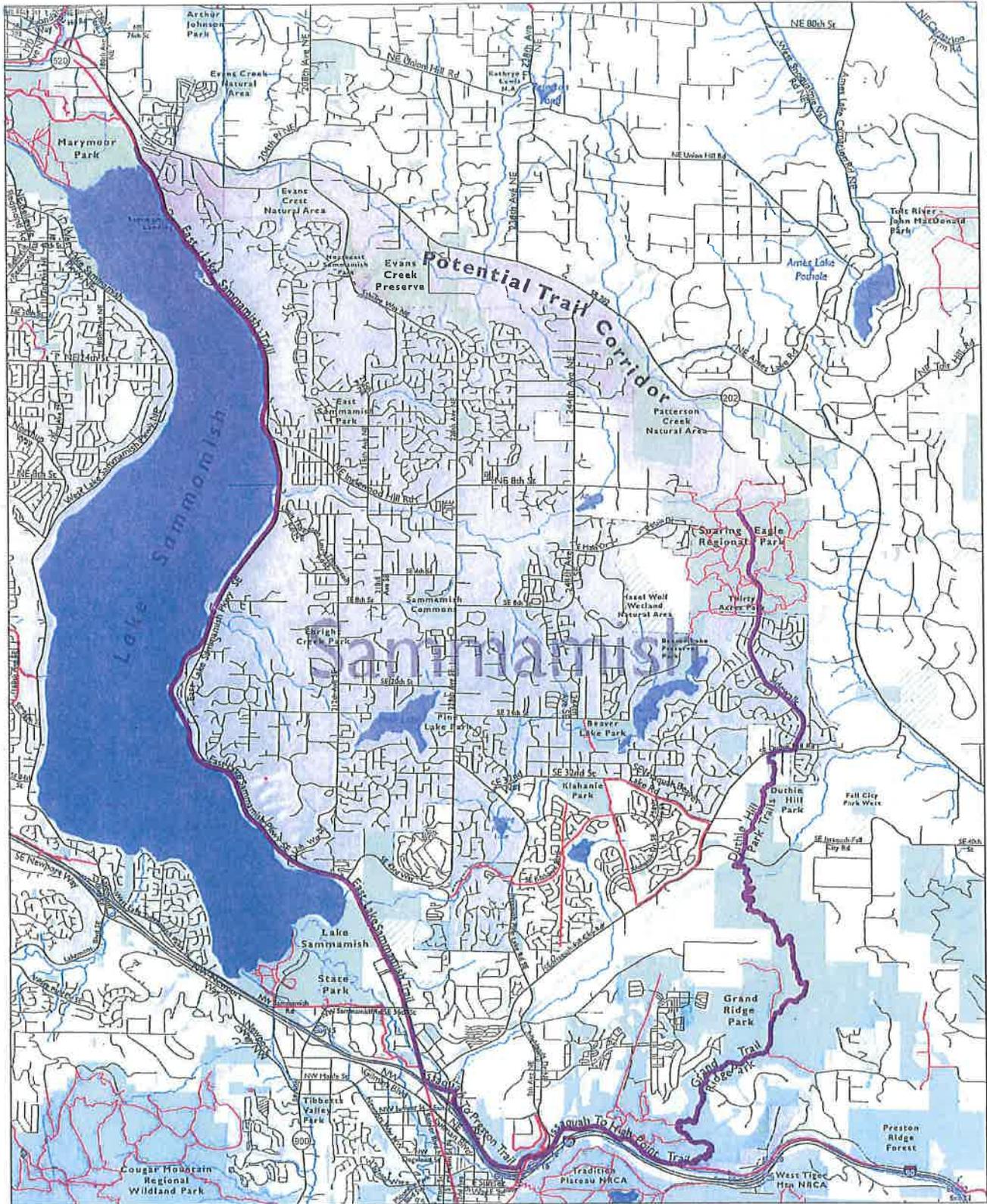
The proposed project target is located in an a 700+ acre area of rural forests and pasturelands within the Patterson Creek watershed near the City of Sammamish that has been designated at TDR "sending site" under a 2011 TDR agreement between King County and the City of Sammamish.

3. STEWARDSHIP AND MAINTENANCE

This property would be an addition to an existing KC Park site, thus stewardship would primarily involve the expansion of work already carried out by KC Parks staff funded by the Parks Levy. In addition, several user groups would likely be interested and willing to support and assist with site monitoring, restoration and trail construction and maintenance projects through volunteer events, and via the Park Adopt- a-Park and Park Ambassador Programs. Groups that have participated in the types of stewardship activities on adjacent lands include the Washington Trails Association, Issaquah Alps Trail Club, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance Mountains to Sound Greenway, and equestrian groups (Backcountry Horsemen and the Sammamish Saddle Club).

Emerald Necklace

Our dream - a trail around the Sammamish Plateau



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|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Emerald Necklace | Existing Trails | Land Ownership |
| Existing Route | Local Trail | Private |
| Proposed Corridor | Regional Trail | Conserved Private |
| City of Sammamish Boundary | | Public |

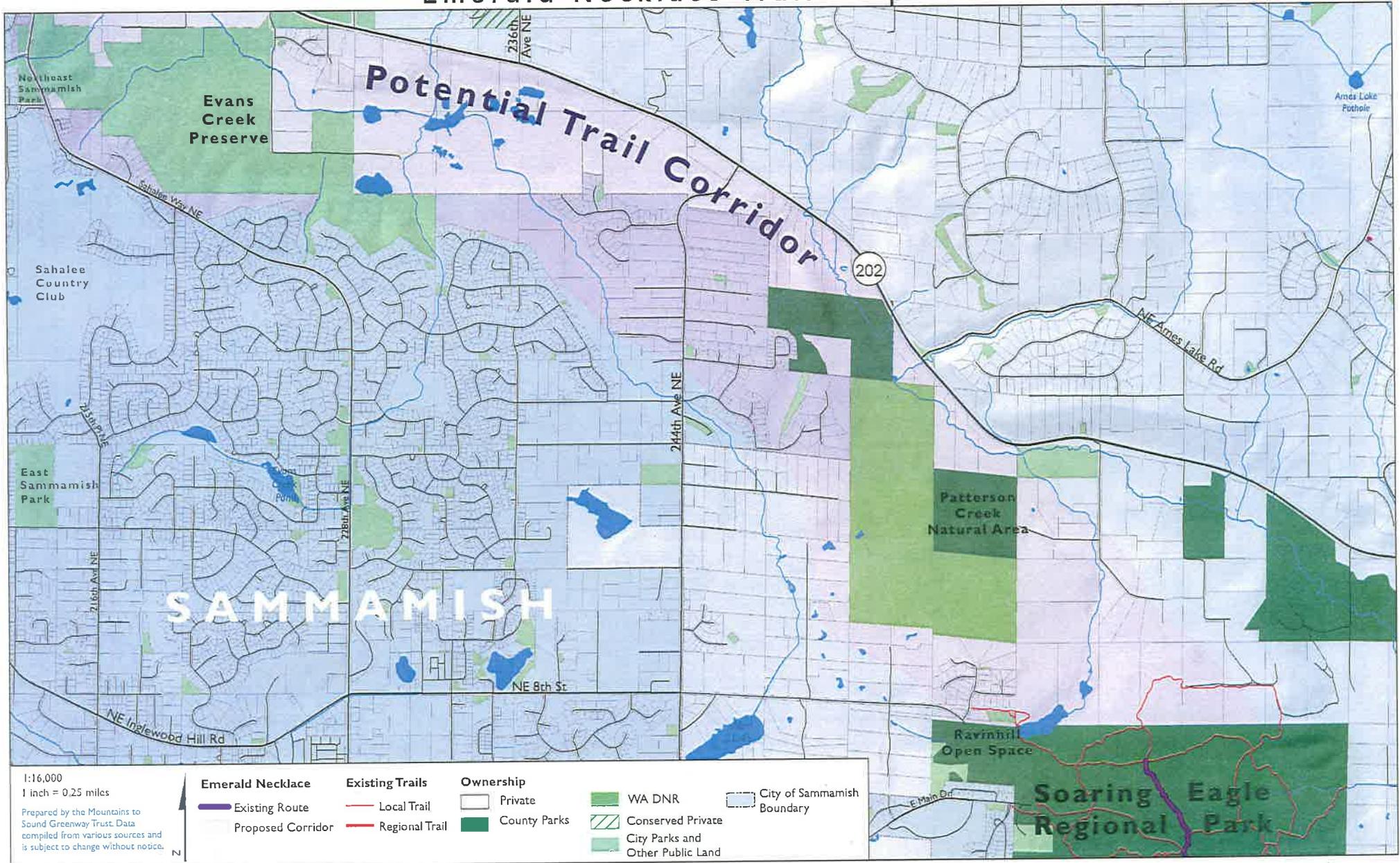


Prepared by the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust. Data compiled from various sources and is subject to change without notice. October 2013

Prepared for Sammamish Friends, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides opportunities for Sammamish residents and neighbors to preserve and enhance our habitat and to enrich our community. Please visit us at <http://www.sammamishfriends.org>



Emerald Necklace Trail Proposal



1:16,000
 1 inch = 0.25 miles
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