



King County

K.C. Date Received _____

CONSERVATION FUTURES (CFT) 2017 ANNUAL COLLECTIONS APPLICATION FOR FUNDS

PROJECT NAME Cougar Mountain Additions

Applicant Jurisdiction(s): King County Parks

Open Space System: Cougar Mountain, WRIA 8

(Name of larger connected system, if any, such as Cedar River Greenway, Mountains to Sound, a Regional Trail, etc.)

Acquisition Project Size: 104 acres (Target parcels - 74 acres) **CFT Application Amount:** \$625,000

(Size in acres and proposed number of parcel(s) if a multi-parcel proposal)

(Dollar amount of CFT grant requested)

Type of Acquisition(s): Fee Title Conservation Easement Other: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Date: March 9, 2016

PROJECT SUMMARY:

(In the space below, provide a brief but comprehensive description of the project. This should include the overall watershed, reach, trail or open space system if appropriate and specific targeted parcels and how they are significant individually and as part of an overall system.)

This project is to acquire 74 acres on the northeastern edge of Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park connecting the park to the Talus Natural Area and Harvey Manning Park. It fills a large gap of private undeveloped land between Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park and high-density developments in the City of Issaquah. This area has been a conservation priority for King County Parks, City of Issaquah, Issaquah Alps Trails Club and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust for decades. This project is supported by the Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park Master Plan and Issaquah Area Wildlife and Recreational Trails Plan. In recent years King County was awarded \$1.1 million to acquire a key parcel off of Newport Way that provides trail access on the east side of Cougar Mountain and is very close to a regional transit center. King County is currently designing a trailhead/parking area on the new parcel and applying for funding to construct the trailhead. Acquisition of these priority parcels would allow trail connections from the adjacent developments to Cougar Mountain trails. Second priority parcels identified in this project would protect large undeveloped forested parcels adjacent to the north of Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park that are an important for trail connections and wildlife habitat.

1. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Please review the attached evaluation criteria. For the **proposed acquisition parcel(s)**, please mark those criteria that apply and thoroughly, yet succinctly, describe **in the space below** how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria. Please clearly describe how these criteria might be met at a landscape level, and how they apply to individual parcels. If restoration is part of the plan, please briefly describe the current condition and the hoped for restored condition that is the goal of the acquisition.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A. Wildlife habitat or rare plant reserve | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> E. Historic/cultural resources |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B. Salmon habitat and aquatic resources | <input type="checkbox"/> F. Urban passive-use natural area/greenbelt |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> C. Scenic resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> G. Park/open space or natural corridor addition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> D. Community separator | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> H. Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs |

Wildlife habitat

The project site is located on the northeast edge of King County Parks' Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park and at the western city limits of the City of Issaquah. Cougar Mountain Park contains over 3,000 acres of open space lands/wildlife habitat resources and Issaquah owns approx. 365 acres of adjoining open space to the park, known as the Talus Natural Area. The forests in the park and project area are diverse including older mixed coniferous and deciduous trees. This diverse forest ecosystem provides habitat that is increasingly rare in the suburban fringe located outside of the park boundaries. The park and vegetation type is home to a variety of species ranging from the occasional cougar, black bear, bobcat, deer, raccoon, pileated woodpecker and other smaller wildlife species. Additionally, there is evidence of wildlife movement on the larger landscape, especially the larger mammals, between Cougar and Squak mountains. The proposed property acquisitions would increase habitat values and would provide a buffer between the developing Talus Development and Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park.

Salmon habitat and aquatic resources

This project includes steep forested hillsides in the upper part of the Tibbets Creek Basin in the Cedar-Sammamish Watershed. Although there are no identified streams on the target properties, they provide important forested land cover that filters water in a densely developed area that eventually flows to Tibbets Creek and into Lake Sammamish. The 2014 Blueprint for the Restoration and Enhancement of Lake Sammamish Kokanee Tributaries has a goal to have a self-sustaining kokanee spawning population that is maintained by natural habitat-forming processes. This project helps achieve that goal by protecting forested uplands.

Scenic resources

This project is located on a prominent northeast-facing ridge that is highly visible to the I-90 westbound and southbound SR 900 traveler, as well as being visible from the City of Issaquah's Gilman Boulevard commercial zones and Squak Mountain residential neighborhoods. The Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park Master Plan encourages the preservation of open space lands to protect scenic and visual resources. The park provides an important open space area that preserves the natural character of a regional, King County, and City scenic resource. The Master Plan further states "View corridors should be preserved through acquisition, dedications, and/or view shed easements to maintain the integrity of the park..." One of the goals of the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust is: "Enhance scenic beauty along Interstate 90 and byways." Acquisition of these parcels would preserve this important regional scenic asset. The trails proposed for preservation provide views through forest of Lake Sammamish & Cascades.

Historic/cultural resources

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park enjoys a rich history from the Native Americans to early European-heritage settlers, from coal mining to logging, to present day developments. Some historians believe that the Precipice Trail corridor may date back 8,000 years to the original Native American trail in the area: the Duwamish Trail. The trail was an overland route from Puget Sound up and over the Cascade Range. The Duwamish Tribe shared the mountain resources with the Sammamish and Snoqualmie for gathering wild roots, plants and berries, as well as game and other animals. More recently, the Precipice Trail route is linked to the historic Military Road. Many of these historic and cultural resources are being overwhelmed and lost due to the construction of new developments occurring in the area. Acquisition of these parcels would be one more step to help preserve Cougar Mountain's early history.

Park/open space or natural corridor addition

This project is a high priority for addition to the Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park. The target parcels fill a significant gap adjacent to the Park that provides a buffer between high-density developments in the City of

Issaquah. Acquisition removes the threat of development and conserves important wildlife habitat and scenic resources.

Passive recreation opportunity/unmet needs

This project will preserve and enhance hiking opportunities in an area with adjacent high-density development. The City of Issaquah is currently planning for 650 new dwelling units to be developed adjacent to this project area and there is/will be a **critical need** for low-impact recreation. The new trail access and potential trailhead on the recently-acquired property off of Newport Way provides a significant access point to this increasing population.

2. ADDITIONAL FACTORS

*For the **proposed acquisition parcel(s)**, please mark all criteria that apply and thoroughly, yet succinctly, describe **in the space below** how the proposed acquisition satisfies each marked criteria.*

- A. Educational/interpretive opportunity
- B. Threat of loss of open space resources
- C. Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed
- D. Partnerships - Describe any public or private partnerships that will enhance this project
- E. Is the property identified in an adopted park, open space, comprehensive, or community plan?
- F. Transferable Development Credits (TDC) participation

Threat of loss of open space resources

If the properties within the scope of this project were developed with residential development, the open space connector between the Talus Development Project and Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park would disappear. Although the project parcels have not been developed to date, the Talus Development will increase pressure for these sites to develop thus eliminating this critical open space buffer located between the park and the Talus Development. Additionally with development of these parcels, scenic and visual resources from the I-90 and SR 900 corridors would be adversely affected and, most importantly, a culturally and historically significant trail connection between Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park and the City of Issaquah would be lost forever.

Ownership complexity/willing seller(s)/ownership interest proposed

Most of the priority parcels have a willing seller. King County staff has spoken with nearly all the landowners of target parcels and confirmed their willingness to discuss sale with King County in the future. The City of Issaquah recently requested and King County supports this area to be removed from the City's Potential Annexation Area.

Partnerships

King County is supported by many partners on this project and it would be a significant win for them all. Various local, state and federal agencies with public land management responsibilities along the I-90 corridor have formed a partnership known as the "Issaquah Alps" and Upper Snoqualmie River Valley Interagency Committee. The Interagency Committee was created to ensure that a consistent management approach is maintained for these inter-jurisdictional public lands located from Cougar Mountain to Snoqualmie Pass. Also, critical to the Interagency Committee is the partnerships it has forged with various organizations including the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Washington Trails Association, Volunteers for Outdoor Washington, Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club, Backcountry Horsemen, Friends of the Trail, etc. The results of these public and private partnerships have provided the support necessary for critical property acquisitions that have improved wildlife habitat values (terrestrial and aquatic); increased open space recreational opportunities; protection of scenic and visual corridors; and, increased historic/cultural interpretive opportunities along the I-90 corridor. This project proposal is a continuation of efforts by the public agencies and private partnerships.

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

This project is identified as a high priority acquisition in the Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park Master Site Plan (adopted by the King County Council in September 1994). Additionally, the City of Issaquah 2004 Comprehensive Plan – Parks Element/Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Plan identifies the need to protect and preserve natural and scenic resources through property acquisition or implementation of other protective measures.

Transferable Development Credits participation

This project is just outside of the current Transferable Development Rights Sending Area because it has been in the Potential Annexation Area (PAA) for the City of Issaquah. The City requested and King County supports the request to have this area removed from the PAA. Once the area is removed from the PAA, the zoning will become RA-5 and then the project area will be eligible to be a sending area. The City of Issaquah and King County have an interlocal agreement for the transfer of development rights.

3. STEWARDSHIP AND MAINTENANCE

How will the property be stewarded and maintained? Does the property lend itself to volunteer stewardship opportunities? How will ongoing stewardship and maintenance efforts be funded?

King County Parks’ maintenance work would be funded with Parks Levy operating funds. Depending on opportunity and site plans, there may be capital or operating work on site which is eligible for specific trail or restoration grants; or for recreational amenity development with local stakeholder groups through Parks’ Community Grants Program.

Typical King County maintenance includes regular site inspections to identify and address any issues arising on site in regard to public health and safety, property encroachments, natural resource damage, infrastructure damage, trail condition, etc. If a parking area is developed on site, then inspections and maintenance are much higher in frequency to ensure appropriate use of the parking area. King County anticipates partnership with local stakeholder groups such as Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, and Washington Trails Association.

4. PROJECT BUDGET

1) TOTAL CFT APPLICATION AMOUNT^a	CFT: \$625,000
2) TOTAL PEL APPLICATION AMOUNT^b	PEL: \$625,000

^aAllowable CFT acquisition costs (Ordinance 14714): The disbursement of funds shall be made only for capital project expenditures that include costs of acquiring real property, including interests in real property, and the following costs: the cost of related relocation of eligible occupants, cost of appraisal, cost of appraisal review, costs of title insurance, closing costs, pro rata real estate taxes, recording fees, compensating tax, hazardous waste substances reports, directly related staff costs and related legal and administrative costs, but shall not include the cost of preparing applications for conservation futures funds.

^bKing County projects only, if applicable.

Estimation of property value:

Briefly note how land values have been estimated (i.e., appraisal, property tax assessment, asking price, letter of value or other means).

Estimated value for priority parcels is \$1,113,000. This estimate is based on prior appraisals on 5 ownerships within the project area. New appraisals are currently underway on 11 of the priority parcels.

PROJECT COSTS	ESTIMATED DOLLAR AMOUNT OR RANGE
Total property interest value	\$1,155,000
Title and appraisal work	\$75,000
Closing, fees, taxes	\$5,000
Relocation	\$0
Hazardous waste reports	\$0
Directly related staff, administration and legal costs	\$15,000
Total Project Costs (CFT and other funds)	\$1,250,000

MATCHING FUNDS: Existing Sources (CFT can only provide a maximum of 50% of anticipated project costs)	DATE (Expended or Committed)	DOLLAR AMOUNT (Expended or Committed)
King County Parks Levy	2016 request currently submitted.	\$625,000
Total CFT Funds Previously Received <i>This Project</i>		\$0
Total Matching Funds and Past CFT Funds <i>Currently Identified</i>		\$0
Unidentified Remaining Match Need		\$0

Unidentified remaining match need: What funds are anticipated and what is the time frame?

Please briefly discuss how the unidentified remaining match need above will be met.

5. IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS

Ongoing partnerships with local groups such as Issaquah Alps Trail Club, Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust, and Washington Trail Association contribute valuable volunteer stewardship and trail work to lands in this area. No specific work is identified as an “in-kind contribution” under this grant.

6. ATTACHED MAPS (Two maps are now required: 1) site map and 2) general location map; you may also include one additional map, aerial photo or site photo)

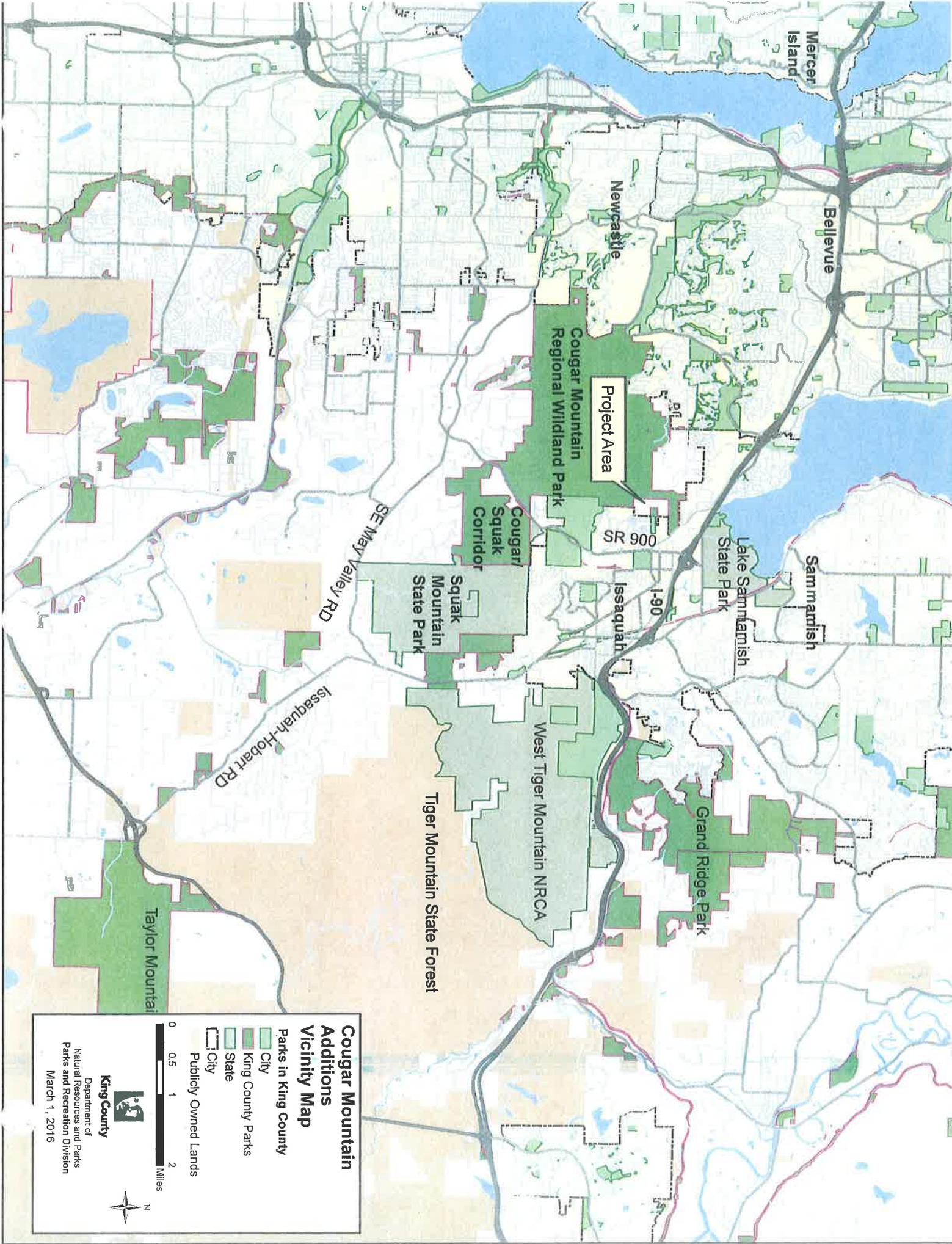
8 ½ x 11” maps are preferred, but 11 x 17” is acceptable if folded and hole-punched for insertion into a three-ring binder.

Site Map that shows the following:

- Each parcel proposed for acquisition in yellow or distinct shading and an indication of any parcel proposed for less than fee simple acquisition, such as a conservation easement;
- Location of any proposed development to the site such as parking, trails or other facilities;
- Location of any proposed site restoration;
- Existing adjacent public (local, state or federal) parks or open spaces labeled and shown in dark green or distinct shading.

Location Map that shows the following:

- Other permanently protected open spaces (private, non-profit, institutional, etc.) shown in light green or distinct shading;
- Major water courses such as creeks, rivers, lakes or wetlands;
- Major roads, arterial roads or regional trails.
- *Map scale: This map should show approximately a ten-mile radius around the proposed acquisition(s).*



Project Area

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park

Cougar Squak Corridor

Squak Mountain State Park

West Tiger Mountain NRCA

Tiger Mountain State Forest

Grand Ridge Park

Lake Sammamish State Park

Sammamish

Bellevue

Newcastle

SE May Valley Rd

Issaquah-Hobart Rd

Taylor Mountain

Cougar Mountain Additions Vicinity Map

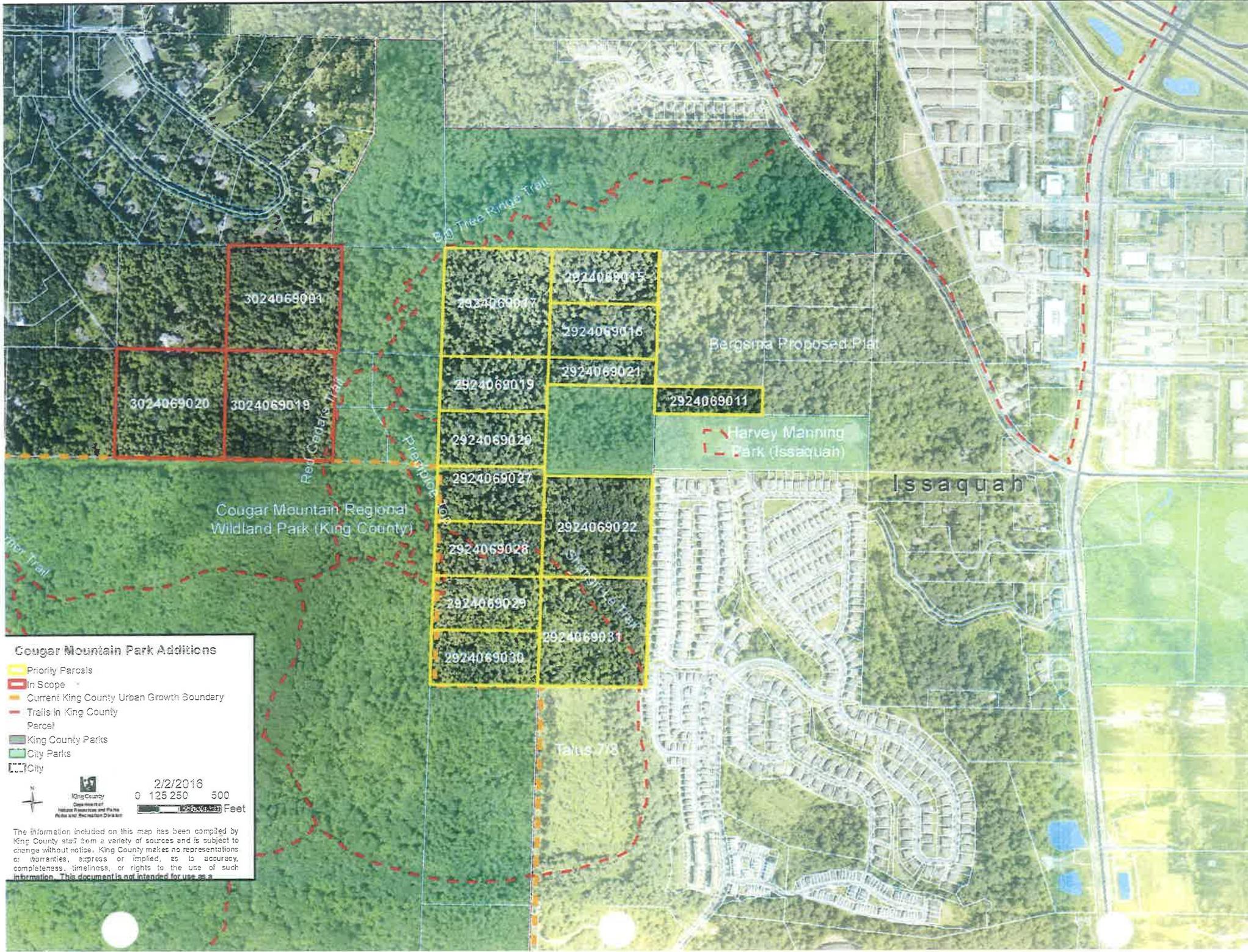
King County
 Department of Natural Resources and Parks
 Parks and Recreation Division
 March 1, 2016

Legend:

- City
- King County Parks
- State
- City
- Publicly Owned Lands

Scale: 0 to 2 Miles

North Arrow



Cougar Mountain Park Additions

- Priority Parcels
- In Scope
- Current King County Urban Growth Boundary
- Trails in King County Parcel
- King County Parks
- City Parks
- City

2/2/2016
0 125 250 500
Feet

The information included on this map has been compiled by King County staff from a variety of sources and is subject to change without notice. King County makes no representations or warranties, express or implied, as to accuracy, completeness, timeliness, or rights to the use of such information. This document is not intended for use as a