






How well is the region protecting and enhancing its open spaces?

The central Puget Sound region's spectacular open space network provides the foundation for the region's economy and quality of life. However, a strong economy is accelerating growth and development, which puts pressure on these open spaces.

This Trend summarizes findings from the [2024 Open Space Trends Report](#). The report reviews key data to assess how the region's open spaces are evolving and to monitor progress. It includes information on tree canopy cover, urban open space, regional trails, farmland, working forests, aquatic systems and natural lands. Many organizations, including cities, counties and nongovernmental organizations, have been working to conserve and enhance open space in the region. In 2018, PSRC mapped the open space network in King, Kitsap, Pierce and Snohomish counties for the [Regional Open Space Conservation Plan](#). The plan identified priority actions needed to increase access to and sustain open spaces for the long term.

Since the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan was issued in 2018, the region has experienced both gains and losses in open space.

How the region is doing on open space trends

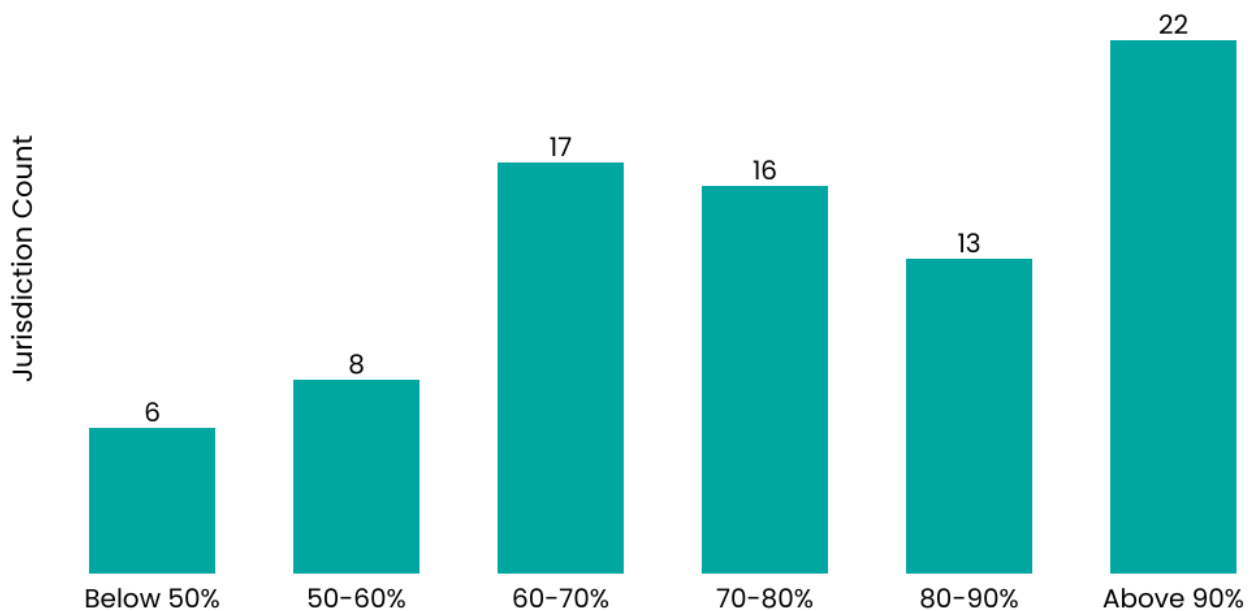
-  **Regional Trails:** Gaps in the regional trail network are being filled. About 30 miles of trails have been added since 2018.
-  **Urban Open Space:** Gaps in access to parks are slowly being filled. See the next page for more information.
-  **Farmland:** While the region is losing farmland through conversion to development (a trend noted in the 2018 plan), the loss appears to be slowing, and farmland outside the urban area is largely being maintained.
-  **Working Forests:** Acres of forest cover within designated working forest lands increased about 2% between 2010 and 2016.
-  **Aquatic Systems and Natural Lands:** A more in-depth analysis is needed to understand trends for aquatic systems and natural lands.

Urban open space

Urban open space is the system of parks and green spaces that provide recreational, aesthetic, environmental and health benefits within a walkable distance to the region’s urban residents. Neighborhood and community parks, passive recreational areas and neighborhood tree canopy help provide these benefits, especially to people living in cities and urban areas. The importance of urban open spaces becomes critical as housing and jobs are concentrated in regional centers and transit station areas.

The Trust for Public Land has developed [ParkServe](#), a parks database and mapping tool that identifies the percentage of a city’s population that lives within a 10-minute walk of a park and where there are gaps in access. It provides mapping and information for most jurisdictions in the region. ParkServe data indicates that 72% of the urban population in the central Puget Sound region lives within a 10-minute walk of a park.

Cities by Percentage of Population Within a 10-Minute Walk of a Park



Source: Trust for Public Land, ParkServe Database, 2016-2018

Additional information on urban open space and other open space categories is available in the [2024 Open Space Trends Report](#).