

Setting Aside Permanent Open Space

How Smart Growth Can Protect Our Natural Environment

A benefit to planned development is protecting valuable open space at the start of a project. YarrowBay has committed to setting aside vast amounts of land for open space, ensuring that the natural beauty, recreation opportunities, and essence of Black Diamond remains strong long into the future. Through a combination of land conveyance and conservation easements, these properties will be preserved as open space in perpetuity.



This preservation of open space is a key component of the Black Diamond Urban Growth Area Agreement (BDUGAA) which the City of Black Diamond, YarrowBay’s predecessors and King County entered into in 1996. The BDUGAA required approximately 1668 acres of open space be dedicated. As of today, approximately 1,237 acres of open space have already been conveyed in fee ownership to King County or the City of Black Diamond without any land out of the MPDs.

Because these acres have already been dedicated as open space to the appropriate entities, and because that requirement stems from the BDUGAA, these acres of open space are included in our overall MPD “project area.” From there, figuring out the open space percentage associated with The Villages and Lawson Hills MPDs is a fairly simple calculation.

Total Project Area

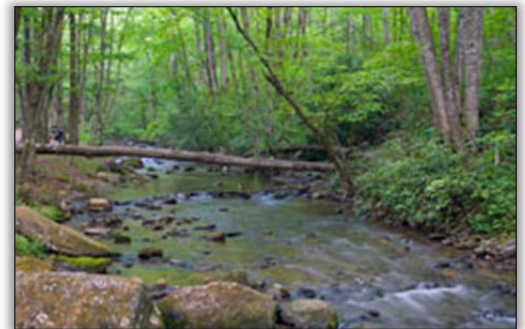
1,237 acres of open space set aside as part of the project
1,196 total acres on The Villages
371 total acres on Lawson Hills
2,804 acres of total project area

Total Open Space

1,237 acres of open space set aside
481 acres of open space on The Villages
153 acres of open space on Lawson Hills
1,871 acres of total open space

The end result is that the City and surrounding King County area enjoys approximately 2/3 open space across the entire MPD area.

Open spaces are a combination of the natural and the manicured - the informal and the formal - the active and the passive - depending upon their location and functions. Manicured open spaces will be planted with indigenous or regional plant species in order to fit the climate and character of the area.



The natural open space system, in the form of wetlands, streams, and their surrounding buffer areas, are a major key to long-term environmental sustainability in The Villages and Lawson Hills. Natural open spaces provide wildlife movement corridors and important habitat. In some instances, they will support local environmental education initiatives from the schools.

YarrowBay is proud of the vast amount of open space that we’ve been able to preserve. We know that this was part of a larger accomplishment, a vision established more than 15 years ago to identify opportunities that provide multiple benefits to the people in this area including housing, services, schools and open space. We are glad to be a part of that vision.