



CITY OF COLUMBIA CITY

2026 PARKS MASTER PLAN

February 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Mayor Alex Reed
Council President Rob Forman
Councilor Lyle Bluhm
Councilor Connie Quick
Councilor Gordon Thistle

Advisory Team/Parks Committee

Coralee Aho
Katrina Claridge
Mark Gordon
Nell Harrison
Jack Hruska
Tim Lammers
SallyAnn Marson
Nechelle Robinson
Karen Shervey
Jim Wills

City Staff

Kim Karber
Rachel Brown
Nicole Chauncey
Helen Johnson
Laura Markham
Andrew Nolette
Micah Rogers
Jeremy Schaff

Consultant

Conservation Technix Inc.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Classifications & Inventory.....	4
Chapter 3: Needs Assessment.....	11
Chapter 4: Goals & Policies	34
Chapter 5: Implementation & Capital Projects.....	38
Appendix A: Assessments of Existing Parks	45
Appendix B: Community Profile	57
Appendix C: Community Engagement Process.....	63
Appendix D: Community Survey Summary.....	67
Appendix E: Open House Summary.....	89
Appendix F: Recreation Trends.....	93
Appendix G: Implementation Tools	105

LIST OF TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1 - Columbia City Park System Inventory	7
Table 2 - 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Comparison.....	24
Table 3 - NRPA Park Amenity Metrics by Jurisdiction Size	25
Table 4 - NRPA Agency Performance Metrics Comparison	31
Table 5 - Oregon Cities Park System Metrics Comparisons.....	32
Table 6 - Park Performance from Park & Recreation Providers	33
Table 7 - Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).....	41
Table B1 - Population Characteristics: Columbia City, Columbia County, Oregon.....	59
Table B2 - Changes in Racial Composition - 2013 – 2023.....	62
Figure 1 - Reasons for Visiting City Park & Recreation Facilities.....	13
Figure 2 - Sentiment of Condition of Individual Parks in Columbia City.....	13
Figure 3 - Adequacy of Existing Amenities	13
Figure 4 - Top Park Amenities of Interest	13
Figure 5 - Priority Ranking of Potential Park System Improvements.....	14
Figure 6 - Park Site Conditions Assessment Matrix	16
Figure 7 - Regional Trail Section.....	27
Figure 8 - Connector Trail Section.....	27
Figure 9 - Park / Local Trail Section (Paved).....	27
Figure 10 - Park / Local Trail Section (Primitive).....	27
Figure 11 - Summary of 20-Year Capital Program Expenditures.....	39
Figure B1 - Population Change – Actual and Projected: 1930 – 2054	60
Figure B2 - Age Group Distributions: 2010 & 2023	61
Figure F1. Median Residents per Park Based On Population Size.....	95
Figure F2. Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents based on Population Size.....	95
Figure F3. Park and Recreation Agency Staffing: Full-Time Equivalents (By Jurisdiction Population).....	96
Figure F4. Park and Recreation Agency FTEs Per 10,000 Residents.....	96
Figure F5. 2021 Total Participation Rate by Activity Category (U.S. population, ages 6+).....	98
Figure F6. Activities with the Highest 5-year Increase in Participation (average annual growth, 2018-2022)	99
Figure F7. Top Ten Activities for Oregon Resident in their Community	99
Figure F8. Types of Outdoor Recreation Areas Used	100
Figure F9. Priorities for Future Investments in their Community	100
Figure F10. Local Providers: Top 5 Challenges	100
Figure F11. User Occasions, Activity Days, and Total Net Economic Value	101
Figure F12. NRPA Park Engagement: Key Reasons for Park Visits	103



CHAPTER 1

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This citywide Parks Master Plan is an update to the Parks Master Plan adopted in 2001. This Plan serves as a blueprint for the City's park system and creates a vision for an inclusive and interconnected system of parks, recreational trails and open spaces that promotes outdoor recreation, health, and environmental conservation as integral elements of a thriving, livable Columbia City. The Parks Master Plan will guide City elected and appointed officials, management, and staff when making decisions or

taking actions regarding planning, acquiring, developing or implementing parks, open space or recreational amenities.

Additionally, this Plan provides updated system inventories, a community profile, needs analyses, and a comprehensive capital project list. It identifies a long-range plan and goals for the Columbia City park system, incorporating action items and implementation strategies over the next decade and beyond. The recommendations in this Plan are based on community input, evaluations of the existing park system, operating conditions and fiscal considerations.

PLANNING PROCESS

This Plan reflects the community’s interests and needs for parks, open space and trails. The planning process, which included several public outreach activities, encouraged public engagement to inform the development of the priorities and future direction of Columbia City’s park system.

An assessment of the park inventory became the basis for determining the current performance of the system to potential standards for parks. An overarching needs analysis was conducted for parks, recreational amenities and trails to assess current demands and project future demand accounting for population growth.

To guide the implementation of the goals of the Plan, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was developed with a set of strategies that identified costs and potential funding sources. The Plan will become a component of the City’s Comprehensive Plan and direct park system service delivery for the next 20 years

PARK SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Columbia City manages 18.6 acres of parks and open spaces and is responsible for maintaining and improving a public playground, parks, open space, bike trail and forested areas. As the steward of these valuable community assets, the City sustainably maintains these properties to protect the public investment and to provide safe, accessible parks, open space and trails. While the City of Columbia City does not provide recreation programs, the City accommodates recreational uses through its parks and the Columbia City Community Hall.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE THE 2001 PLAN

The 2001 Parks Master Plan guided City officials and staff in planning and implementing various park system improvements. The following represents a short list of the significant accomplishments realized following the adoption of the previous Plan:

- Installed picnic table and bench at Datis Park.
- Built Carolyn King Park on the water tank site.
- Added and built Veterans Park, including the Memorial Walls and the Gold Star Memorial Marker.

- Opened the Off Leash Dog Park via an agreement with the Port of Columbia County.
- Installed picnic shelter, kiosk and benches at Jim Bundy Memorial Park.
- Acquired property along McBride Creek and constructed Phase I of Rivers Walk Trail.
- Acquired Pixie Park from the Daughters of the American Revolution and installed picnic tables.
- Partnered with the Oregon Department of Transportation to create Marson’s Garden – a landscaped area along Highway 30 with the “Welcome to Columbia City” entrance sign and rose garden.

CURRENT CHALLENGES & FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As with any city-wide strategic planning effort, current community challenges provide a context for assessing and developing strategies for the future. The following macro trends are anticipated to be significant priorities over the next decade.

Continued Investments in Park and Recreation System

As the community changes, so does the interest in a range of recreational experiences. From accessible playgrounds to splash pads, from connected trails to natural areas, the diversity of offerings must adapt to meet the changing needs of the Columbia City community. Shifts in the community’s preferences will influence the demand for different experiences, and the demand for new amenities must carefully balance preserving and maintaining existing parks and natural areas. The development of new amenities may require the use or re-use of existing parkland, or additional parkland may be required to support the community’s evolving future needs.

Recreation research also explains how park distribution, proximity and conditions impact people’s desire for physical activity. Therefore, it’s crucial to re-evaluate current park designs and maintenance policies to ensure barrier-free, engaging environments while optimizing operational efficiencies. The City will continue to play a significant role in enabling healthy lifestyles for city residents, and it should continue to adapt the park system to ensure it remains accessible, inclusive, and aligned with the future recreation needs of the community.

Stewardship & Asset Management

Sustaining established park systems requires ongoing maintenance to serve the community safely and effectively. Across the country, public recreation providers consider maintenance of existing park facilities a crucial management issue. Neglected assets – from benches to playgrounds to pools – can fail structurally or operationally, posing safety risks and reducing their recreational value. Aging infrastructure might fail to meet community expectations or necessitate capital upgrades to adapt to changing community interests. Yet, many park system providers often struggle to establish adequate funding mechanisms for routine maintenance, preventative upkeep, and significant rehabilitation of existing outdoor recreation amenities nearing or at the end of their useful life.

To address these issues, this Plan includes condition assessments of City parks establishing a baseline of current conditions. This information will inform facility, maintenance, and operations policies and guide improvements. Proper maintenance practices prevent deterioration, thereby reducing long-term capital and operating costs, maintaining safety standards, improving public perception, and enabling community use of recreational assets.

Active Older Adults

Older adults, 55 years plus, make up 42% of Columbia City's population, while 19% is under 18 years old. Nationwide, active seniors are often looking at retirement age differently, and many are transitioning to new careers, finding ways to engage with their community, and focusing on their health and fitness. To meet the needs of these active senior residents, Columbia City will need to consider how the City's park facilities can meet the needs of this age group, while providing for the needs of other age groups.

Accessibility & Inclusivity

Ensuring social equity remains at the forefront of municipal parks and recreation systems is paramount. Prioritizing accessibility and inclusion is essential, particularly in adaptive recreation and accessibility upgrades for parks and amenities. The City must continue finding solutions that provide safe and equitable access for users of all abilities to parks, trails and recreational opportunities.

Fiscal Challenges

As a small, stable city, steady pressure exists on capital and operating funding sources to maintain and provide City services and amenities. This Plan is structured with these

constraints in mind and considers listed capital projects for their potential to leverage other funding sources, effects of future maintenance and operations demands, and estimated development costs.

GUIDING DOCUMENTS

This Plan is one of several documents that comprise Columbia City's long-range planning and policy framework. Past community plans and other relevant documents were reviewed for policy direction and goals related to parks and recreational opportunities across the City, including the following:

- Policy Goals & Objectives 2025-2026
- Columbia City 2019 Comprehensive Plan
- Columbia City 2001 Parks Master Plan
- Recent City budgets

PLAN CONTENTS

The remainder of this Parks Master Plan is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Community Profile – overviews Columbia City and its demographics.
- Chapter 3: Community Engagement – highlights the methods used to engage the Columbia City community in the development of the Plan.
- Chapter 4: Classifications & Inventory – describes the inventory and classifications for the existing park system.
- Chapter 5: Recreational Needs Assessment – describes community feedback, trends, local needs, and potential improvements for parks and open space.
- Chapter 6: Goals & Objectives – provides a policy framework for the park system grouped by major themes.
- Chapter 7: Implementation – describes a range of strategies to consider in the implementation of the Plan and provides a program for addressing park and facility enhancement or expansion projects over a 20-year time horizon.
- Appendices: Provides technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, public outreach, and funding options, among others.



CHAPTER 2

Classifications & Inventory

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Parkland classification helps guide the planning of recreational needs for the community. These classifications also reflect standards that inform future acquisitions and development decisions and operations and maintenance expectations of developed facilities or natural lands. Classifying parkland allows the City to evaluate its needs and plan for an efficient, cost-effective, and usable park system that minimizes conflicts between park users and adjacent land uses.

Columbia City's park system comprises a hierarchy of various park types, each offering different recreational

opportunities and natural environmental functions. The parks system is intended to serve the range of community needs. The classification characteristics serve as general guidelines addressing the size and use of each park. The following five classifications encompass the City's parkland types:

- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks
- Special Use Facilities
- Open Space / Natural Areas
- Trails

Each park classification defines the site’s function, amenities, and recreational uses. City-owned pocket and neighborhood parks provide outdoor recreation opportunities that offer a range of activities. Special-use facilities are specialized park sites or facilities designed for unique and primary purposes. Open space areas may vary in diverse natural characteristics and ecological functions, though they may not always provide public access or recreational value. The following descriptive guidelines offer the typical composition of each park classification.

Neighborhood Park

Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home recreational opportunities. These parks provide active and passive recreation for people within approximately one-mile of the park. Typical amenities in a neighborhood park may include walking trails, playground equipment, picnic areas, picnic shelters, open lawn areas, shade trees, small sports courts or skate spots, and benches. Parking and restrooms (permanent or portable) may be an option for neighborhood parks with significant recreational amenities supporting more extended visits.

Neighborhood parks should be located and designed based on the scale and type of surrounding uses. During site master planning, parks in locations with higher residential density should be designed with more durable features and facilities that can withstand more intensive use.

Columbia City’s Neighborhood Parks include:

- Jim Bundy Park
- Harvard Park



Harvard Park

Pocket Park

Pocket parks are small parks, typically less than a half-acre in size, that offer limited outdoor recreation options. Due to their lack of amenities, these public spaces are usually walk-to parklets and support short-term visits. Pocket parks may contain a single play apparatus, a picnic table, a bench, and shade trees. The intended service area for a pocket park is a ¼-mile walking distance.

Columbia City’s Pocket Parks include:

- Carolyn King Park
- Datis Park
- Pixie Park



Carolyn King Park

Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities typically include single-purpose recreational areas or stand-alone sites designed to support a specific, specialized use. This classification can include stand-alone sports field complexes, community centers, skate parks, off-leash dog parks, and historical or cultural significance sites, such as memorials, historical landmarks and structures. Specialized facilities may also be provided within a park of another classification.

Columbia City’s Special Use Facilities include:

- Off Leash Dog Park
- Marson’s Garden
- Veterans Memorial Park



Carolyn King Park

Open Space / Natural Areas

Open space includes wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, creeks or headwaters, and riparian corridors with some potential for passive recreation compatible with resource protection. Open space promotes health and wellness by providing a natural, physical, and mental refuge from the urbanized, built environment, but not all open spaces provide public access. In some cases, these are environmentally sensitive areas and can include wildlife habitats or unique and/or sensitive species. Conservation areas that are resource-based lands set aside to protect a sensitive natural area also can be considered open space. Typically, these environmentally sensitive open spaces are linear, following creeks, ravines, ridges, or similar narrow landforms. Columbia City has some city-owned open space along the McBride Creek riparian corridor as part of the Rivers Walk Trail property. This conserved land provides valuable ecosystem services and should be able to accommodate a trail corridor.



Rivers Walk Open Space

Trails

While not a traditional classification of parklands, trails offer a corridor of access, whether on land or water, providing recreational and/or transportation functions. Trails accommodate outdoor recreation and access to nature, as well as connections across city destinations. The Rivers Walk Trail, while only partially developed, could eventually connect trail users from city properties to Dalton Lake Nature Preserve along a right-of-way street alignment. Open space and natural areas often can support natural or paved pathways to enhance outdoor opportunities. Chapter 5 includes additional information about trail system elements.



Bike Path

PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY

The City of Columbia City provides and maintains a modest park system that supports a range of recreational experiences. The park, trail and open space inventory identifies the outdoor recreational assets within the City. Columbia City’s park system provides seven park facilities and two trails within City open space. Table 3 summarizes Columbia City’s parkland inventory.

Appendix A includes site-specific inventory information and recommendations for public parklands managed by Columbia City. The following map shows the location of existing parks, open spaces and trails within the City. The last section provides an overview of other nearby recreational opportunities.

Table 1 - Columbia City Park System Inventory

	Park Acreage	Amenities													
		Playground	Pickleball/Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Open Field (Informal)	Sport Field	Pathways/Trails	Dog Park	Beach / River Viewpoint	Parking (dedicated & street)	Restrooms (building & portable)	Picnic Area / Benches / Tables	Picnic Shelter	Shoreline	Natural Areas
Neighborhood Parks															
Harvard Park	0.39	●									●				
Jim Bundy Memorial Park	2.86					●			●	●	●	●		●	
Pocket Parks															
Carolyn King Park	0.06					●					●				
Datis Park	0.14							●			●		●		
Pixie Park	0.31							●	●		●		●		
Special Use															
Marson's Garden (Welcome sign)	0.33														
Off Leash Dog Park	0.84						●		●		●				
Veterans Memorial Park	0.39					●				●	●				
Open Space															
Rivers Walk Trail	7.89					●								●	
Bike Path	5.39					●								●	
Non-City Facilities															
Columbia City Elementary School	1.92	●		●	●				●						
Count of Parks with Each Amenity		8	2	4	1	1	13	1	2	14	7	8	4	3	13
TOTAL CITY-MANAGED ACREAGE	18.6														
Trails (miles)	1.0														



Map 1: Existing Parks & Open Space

NEARBY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Several public agencies own and manage recreational resources in the wider Columbia City region. Facilities include school grounds, parks, trails, and other attractions. Though some of these facilities are not located within city limits, their proximity to Columbia City residents makes them important components of the broader recreation ecosystem.

Columbia City Elementary School

The St. Helens School District (SHSD) serves Columbia City residents. Outdoor facilities at the Columbia City Elementary School include a playground with climbing structure, swings and monkey bars, open grass area with backstop, walking track, and a basketball court. The site also houses the Columbia City Community Library.

Caples House Museum Complex

Owned and operated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Caples House represents an Early Classical Revival wood structure, originally the home and medical office of Dr. Charles Caples. The 1870 historic home, on the National Register of Historic Places, and its grounds are open to the public for an admission fee from March to October. Dr. Caples founded the town of Columbia City in 1852. The home, ground and out buildings are maintained as museums and a tea room. The Knapp Social Center is used for weddings and events.

Trestle Beach

Recreational river access location on the Port of Columbia County property for beach enjoyment. Parking is available through the Knife River Industrial Park access gate. The Trestle Beach recreational area is accessed by walking along the beach, down river from the parking area. Hours are maintained by gate opening and closing times, posted on the Port's website.

Rutherford Parkway

Connecting the City of St. Helens to Columbia City, the Rutherford Parkway enters the City at the south end of 4th Street. The paved pathway connects St. Helens from a trailhead at Oak Crest and Oregon Street, traveling north along the Dalton Lake Nature Preserve to the end of 4th Street in Columbia City. The Parkway provides connections to trails into the Dalton Lake Nature Preserve.

Dalton Lake Nature Preserve

The Preserve is bordered by the Columbia River and the Rutherford Parkway between St. Helens and Columbia City.

The Dalton Lake area has been overseen by the City of St. Helens from the Oregon Department of Transportation under a Cooperative Management Agreement since 2009. Trails leading into the natural area start from the Rutherford Park just south of its terminus at the Columbia City border.

St. Helens Marina

The Marina offers docking facilities and a boat ramp that offers easy access to the Multnomah Channel and Columbia River. It is a private, full-service marina located off N. River Street in neighboring St. Helens. The marina store can provide fuel, fishing supplies, recreational equipment and basic groceries. The Marina is across the water from the Sand Island Marine Park on Saint Helens Bar.

Columbia Botanical Gardens

A natural area in St. Helens with a nature trail that winds through part of the site. The gardens were constructed at the site of an old rock quarry. Parking is available in a gravel pull-off along Belton Road. The site is managed as a St. Helen's open space facility.

Alderidge Equestrian Center

A private equestrian center, located seven miles north of Columbia City, offering lessons, training, dressage, and birthday parties.

Beaver Falls Trail

Near Clatskanie, Oregon, this 0.6-mile out-and-back trail to the Beaver Falls that spill over an overhang of a wide basalt 'amphitheater'.

Columbia County Parks, Forests & Recreation

Columbia County offers five campgrounds, three river parks, a dog park, three trail systems and two boat launch facilities. This county park system of 24 forests, parks and trails is situated to provide outdoor recreation to surrounding metropolitan communities.

L.L. Stub Stewart State Park

A 1,800-acre state park located about 40 miles west of Columbia City, Stub Stewart State Park offers a variety of camping opportunities and 30 miles of trails for hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. Day use activities include an off-leash dog area, picnicking facilities, two disc golf courses, an amphitheater, restrooms and two meeting halls. Year-round camping facilities include cabins, yurts, tent and RV hook-up sites, hike-in primitive tent sites, playground, and a horse camp with stalls and corrals. The 21-mile paved Banks-Vernonia State Trail passes through the park and connects to its trails.

Lewis and Clark National Wildlife Refuge

A 35,000-acre refuge with tidelands and open water featuring many fish species and wintering wildfowl. The NWR includes over 20 islands stretching over 27 miles of the Columbia River. The Refuge is only accessible by boat. The Refuge works to maintain the biological integrity of the greater Columbia River estuary.

Julia Butler Hansen National Wildlife Refuge

Established as a refuge for the Columbian white-tailed deer in 1972, the Refuge contains over 6,000 acres. Visitors can enjoy day-use recreational activities such as wildlife watching, photography, boating, biking, birding, fishing, hiking, hunting (in season) and an auto tour.



CHAPTER 3

Needs Assessment

This chapter describes trends, community feedback, local needs, and potential improvements for the City's parks, trails, and open space.

The park system planning process assesses outdoor recreational needs and priorities for park facilities, active use areas, and trails in Columbia City. The park assessment includes a discussion of specific local needs with consideration given to the City's broader park system. Public input and information on park inventory conditions also were heavily relied upon in the planning process.

PARK & RECREATION TRENDS

National Trends

A review of several recognized park and recreation resources provide a background on national, state, and regional trends, market demands, and agency comparisons. These outdoor recreation trends, combined with community interests in parks, trails, and open space and an assessment of current conditions and levels of service, help identify and shape recommendations for park system improvements. Examining current recreation trends can help inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities that may enhance the community and create a more vibrant parks system as it moves into the future.

The following national and state data highlights some of the current park usage trends and may frame future considerations for Columbia City's park system. Additional trend data and summaries are provided in Appendix F.

- 90% of U.S. adults believe that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local governments. ⁽¹⁾
- 84% of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live. ⁽¹⁾
- Running, jogging, and trail running are the most popular outdoor activities across the nation, based on levels of participation, followed by hiking, fishing, biking, and camping. ⁽²⁾
- A significantly higher percentage of seniors (ages 55+) are participating in outdoor recreation. In 2022, the senior participation rate hit a record high of 35% and is rising. ⁽²⁾
- Participation nearly doubled for pickleball in 2022, increasing by 86% year-over-year. In 2022 for the first time in over seven years, every racquet sport increased its total participation number compared to the previous year. ⁽³⁾
- Wildlife viewing and paddle sport participation increased statewide by 28% since 2017. ⁽⁴⁾
- Nationally, outdoor recreation economic activity increased 19% from 2020 to 2022, while the overall U.S. economy only saw a 5.9% increase. ⁽⁵⁾

Sources:

- (1) 2022 American Engagement with Parks Report, National Recreation and Park Association
- (2) 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, Outdoor Foundation
- (3) 2023 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, Sports and Fitness Industry Association
- (4) 2022 Assessment of Resident Demand, Washington State 2023 Recreation & Conservation Plan (draft)
- (5) 2022 Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account data, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

State Recreation Trends

The 2025-2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), entitled "Balance and Engagement: Sustaining the Benefits for all Oregonians", constitutes Oregon's basic five-year plan for outdoor recreation.

The Plan surveyed counties to gather their park system funding priorities. For Columbia County, the "Close-to-Home Priorities" included:

- Children's playgrounds and play areas made of natural materials (logs, water, sand, boulders, hills, trees)
- Children's playgrounds and play areas built with manufactured structures like swing sets, slides, and climbing apparatus
- Restrooms
- "Dispersed-Area Priorities" for Columbia County included:
- Accessibility and opportunities for people with disabilities
- RV/trailer campgrounds and facilities
- Interpretive displays

COMMUNITY INSIGHTS

Beyond the broader perspectives of national and state recreation trends, local needs were explored through a community survey and a public open house meeting to gather feedback on priorities, interests, and future needs for Columbia City's park system.

Survey Results

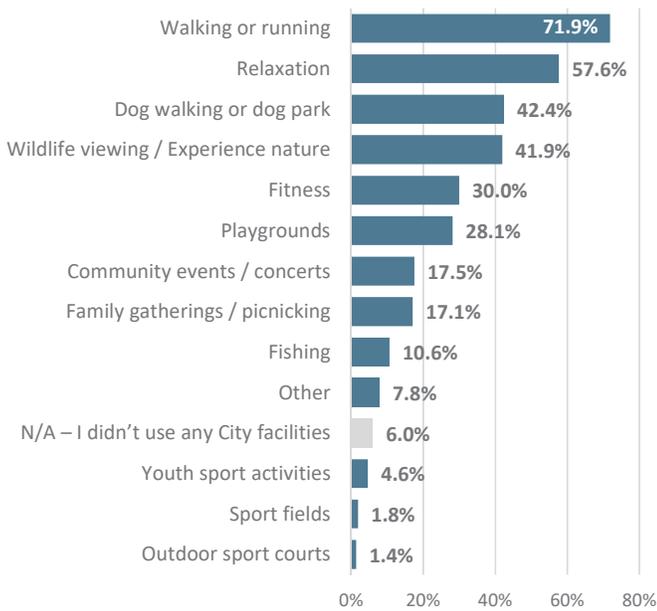
The community survey confirmed that Columbia City residents strongly value their local parks, recreation options and open space opportunities. Nearly all respondents (92%) feel that local parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Columbia City. Sixty percent of respondents overall feel that they are essential; while an additional 32% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential.

Key Findings:

Residents of Columbia City frequently use the city's parks and recreation facilities, with nearly half visiting at least once a week, if not every day.

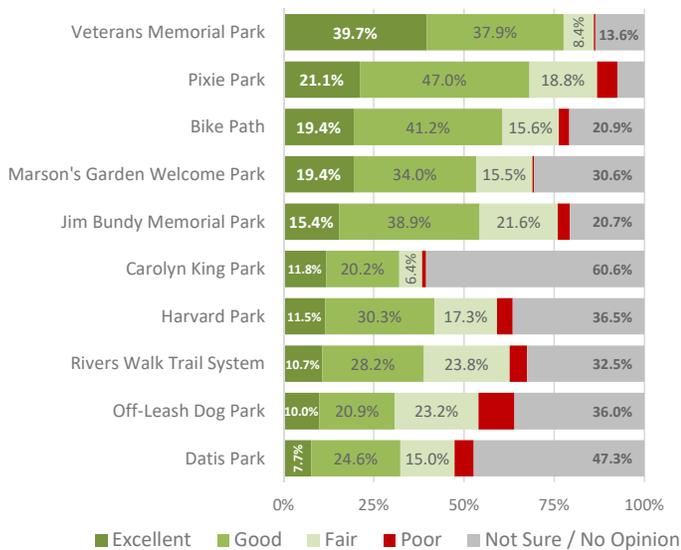
Respondents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons, but the most frequently cited reason is to walk or run (71.9%). Relaxation was the motivation for 57.6% of respondents. Nearly half of residents have visited to walk a dog (42%) or for wildlife viewing (42%). These reasons for visiting parks were popular across all age groups.

Figure 1 - Reasons for Visiting City Park & Recreation Facilities



Most residents are somewhat to very satisfied with Columbia parks and open spaces (80%). However, one in six survey respondents are either somewhat (14%) or very dissatisfied (4%) in the city's park and recreation system. Large majorities of respondents rate the condition of Veterans Memorial Park (86%), Pixie Park (87%), Jim Bundy Memorial Park (76%), and the Bike Path (76%) as fair, good or excellent.

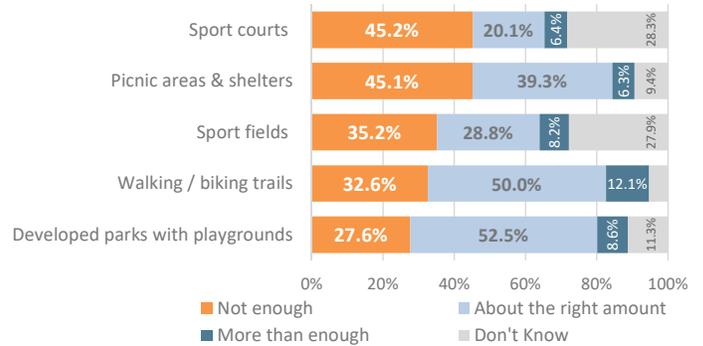
Figure 2 - Sentiment of Condition of Individual Parks in Columbia City



Residents were somewhat divided on whether they feel the City provides enough park, trails, and recreation facilities. Just less than half of survey respondents would like to see more sports courts (45%) and more picnic areas (45%),

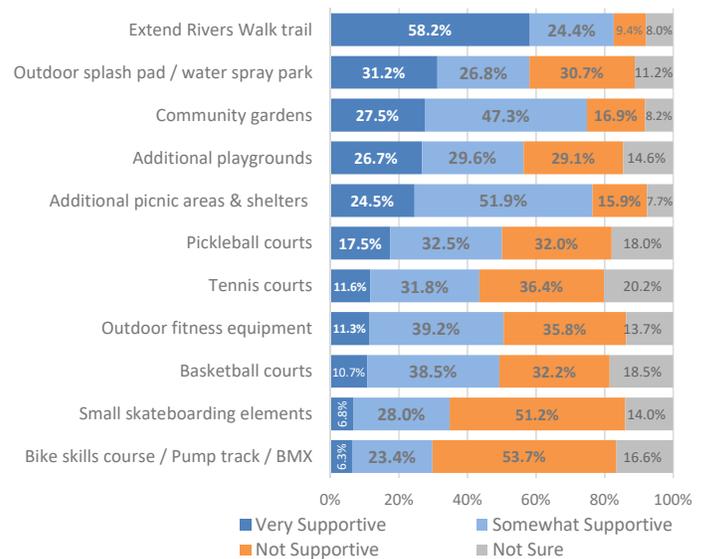
while one-third would like the City to provide more sports fields (35%), and more walking and biking trails (33%), see Figure 3.

Figure 3 - Adequacy of Existing Amenities



The survey asked residents about their support for a variety of potential additions to the park system. Approximately half of residents were either very interested or somewhat interested in all listed amenities. As shown in Figure 4, large majorities of respondents were either very or somewhat interested in extending the Rivers Walk Trail (83%), adding picnic areas and shelters (76%), and community gardens (75%). Respondents with children were also more interested in additional playgrounds and a splash pad.

Figure 4 - Top Park Amenities of Interest

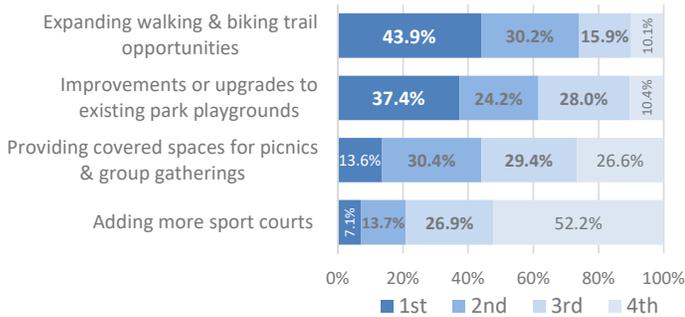


The survey asked residents which of four general park investments would best meet their needs. Half of respondents chose an extended trail system for walking and cycling, while approximately 20-25% chose either a large community park or a smaller neighborhood park. Few (5%) of residents chose undeveloped and natural open spaces with limited or no improvements. Respondents from

households with children were more likely to prioritize developing a large community park compared to those without.

Respondents were also asked to rank a list of potential park system improvements. They identified expanding trail opportunities as their top priority, followed by improving and upgrading existing parks, see Figure 5. Providing covered spaces for picnic and group gatherings was the third highest ranked priority. Adding more sports courts was ranked as the lowest average priority by respondents.

Figure 5 - Priority Ranking of Potential Park System Improvements



Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see Columbia City do to improve parks, trails, and/or programming. While respondents provided 161 specific comments and ideas, a few themes emerged:

- **Trails:** Many respondents voiced their support for expanding, improving, and maintaining walking and nature trails, especially the Rivers Walk Trail. Respondents would like to see improvements to Rivers Walk that include extending the trail, widening and improving the condition of the existing trails and vegetation management.
- **River Access:** There is interest in improving access to the Columbia River. Suggestions include improving safety (Pixie Park), providing life jackets, and enhancing access for fishing, boating, and walking.
- **General Maintenance:** Several comments suggested the need for more or enhanced maintenance, including weeding, tree/shrub trimming, and dog waste pickup.
- **Parking:** Respondents want additional parking, especially neat Veterans Park and Pixie Park.
- **Recreation Facilities:** Many respondents requested that the City develop new, or improve existing, recreation facilities in the community such as pickleball and tennis courts, all-weather covered areas (picnic shelters), skate park, and an off-leash dog park on the west side of route 30.
- **Playgrounds:** Multiple respondents requested improvements to playgrounds, including updated equipment at Harvard Park.

The full list of write-in comments is provided in Appendix D.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING PARK CONDITIONS

The overall condition of park infrastructure and amenities is one measure of park adequacy and assurance of public safety. Proper stewardship of park infrastructure requires developing a long-term maintenance and capital plan to ensure the safety of park users that aligns with community needs and allocates limited funding resources properly. General park infrastructure include walkways, parking lots, restrooms, drainage and irrigation, lighting systems and vegetation. Amenities include picnic shelters, play equipment, site furnishings, sport courts, sports fields and other recreational assets. Deferred maintenance over a long time period can result in unusable amenities when perceived as unsafe or undesirable by park patrons. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines also provide a measure of acceptable condition.

The current conditions of the Columbia City park system were assessed to identify existing site maintenance issues and opportunities for future capital improvements. In May of 2025, the consulting landscape architect conducted site visits to all the park and trail facilities owned and managed by the City. These site visits provided visual observations of current conditions throughout the park system. The park assessment includes a discussion of specific local needs with consideration given to existing City park infrastructure. Assessments are documented for each individual park facility. Features and amenities are rated based on visible condition (good, fair or poor) and a matrix of all sites with their ratings is created to help visualize system-wide considerations.

The assessment included walkways, parking lots, park furniture, general landscape plantings, signs, playgrounds, and other amenities. The following conditions assessment matrix (Figure 10) summarizes the results of these assessments. These ratings inform project prioritization strategies for park improvements, identifying funding strategies, and updating the Park Capital Improvement Plan. Park amenity conditions were also averaged across park elements to indicate which types of elements are in greater need for significant upgrades, renovations or overall improvements.

The matrix on the following page indicates the types of amenities within each park facility, and park infrastructure and amenities are rated based on the following scale:

- 1 – Good Condition:** Generally, amenities in ‘good’ condition offer full functionality and do not need repairs. Good facilities have playable sports surfaces and equipment, working fixtures, and fully intact safety features (railings, fences, etc.). Good facilities may have minor cosmetic defects and encourage area residents to use the park.
- 2 – Fair:** In general, amenities in ‘fair’ condition are mainly functional, but need minor or moderate repairs. Fair facilities have play surfaces, equipment, fixtures, and safety features that are operational and allow play, but have deficiencies or periods where they are unusable. Fair facilities remain essential amenities for the community but may slightly discourage the use of the park by residents given the current condition.
- 3 – Poor:** In general, amenities in ‘poor’ condition are largely or completely unusable. They need significant repairs to be functional. Some examples include athletic fields that are too uneven for ball games, irreparably broken features, buildings that need structural retrofitting, etc. Poor facilities discourage residents from using the park and may present safety issues if left open or operational.

Good conditions should be the goal for the management and stewardship of park facilities. Where infrastructure or amenities are rated as ‘fair,’ strategies should be developed for repair or restoration. Park features, structures, amenities, or landscapes rated as ‘poor’ should receive immediate attention and be prioritized for near-term maintenance, capital repairs, or a new capital project. Facilities in poor condition should also be evaluated and taken out of operation if they are deemed unsafe.

Figure 6 - Park Site Conditions Assessment Matrix

Site Name	Park Average	Recreation Amenities				Site Amenities				Park Structures			Vegetation			ADA	
		Playgrounds	Pathways / Trails	Off-Leash Dog Park	Waterfront/ Boat Ramp	Site Furnishings	Lighting (Y/N)	Signage	Parking Areas	Restrooms	Picnic Shelters	Kiosks	Natural Turfgrass	Park Trees	Landscaped Beds	Natural Areas	Compliance
Park																	
Carolyn King Park	1.5		1			2	Y	2			1				1		2
Datis Park	2.3				2	2	N										3
Harvard Park	2.7	3				2	N										3
Jim Bundy Memorial Park	1.3		1			2	N		1		1	1				1	2
Off Leash Dog Park	1.8			1		2	N		1								3
Pixie Park	1.9		2		1	2	Y	2	1			2					3
Veterans Memorial Park	1.1		1			1	1	1	2	1		1	1	1			1
Trail																	
Rivers Walk	1.8		2					1	N							1	3
Bike Path	1.2		1			2		1	N			1	1				1
Special Use/Open Space																	
Marson's Garden - City Welcome Sign	1.5						2	1	Y								
Averages	1.7	3.0	1.3	1.0	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.3
School District Facility																	
Columbia City School	1.0	1															

PARK & TRAIL CONDITIONS SUMMARY

Park Structures

The park system has very few structures. The picnic shelter at Jim Bundy Memorial Park, picnic table roof at Carolyn King Park, and the Pixie Park entry sign. Each of these structures should be regularly inspected for maintenance and repair needs. Major changes or replacements, when needed, could be coordinated with other site improvements for efficiency and ADA compliance.

Playgrounds

The Harvard Park playground contains a play structure, jungle gym, swings, seesaw, spinner and balance beam. The equipment is aging and will need replacement soon. Also, the wood chip fall safety surface appears to be too shallow to provide the specified cushioning targeted for public playgrounds. When the play equipment is replaced (or sooner) the playground area within the fall zones for any equipment should be excavated and all old material removed. Engineered wood fiber, as the replacement material, should be at least 15" in depth.

Site Furnishings

Site furnishings like picnic tables, benches, bike racks, lighting, signage, bollards could all be coordinated to a unified park design standard that allows for simpler repairs and replacements. Standardizing site furnishings help distinguish public city parks from private spaces and ensures that those site furnishings meet ADA guidelines. Both Harvard Park and Jim Bundy Memorial Park have a variety of park benches, with different styles. Many are not on accessible routes. As these benches are replaced, they should be situated on accessible routes and consist of a standardized style consistent throughout the park system. Additional benches installed along trail routes also can provide periodic points of rest and respite.

Parking & Entrances

Jim Bundy Memorial Park and Pixie Park have designated paved parking areas that serve as main entrances for these parks. Paved parking areas in Jim Bundy and Pixie parks should have fresh paint designating the parking spaces to help keep orient cars for the most efficient spacing. Also, Veterans Memorial Park has one designated handicapped parking space (access from Highway 30 is prohibited). Other visitors must drive to Mattie Street to park on-street to use the paved pathways to get to the Park. If the City should decide to create a unified signage system for all its parks, a park identification sign should be located at these parking areas. These main entrances should have universally accessible routes into their park

spaces with ADA-compliant site furnishings provided as well.

Paved Pathways & Natural Trails

Pavement management is one of the asset management tasks that park systems must heed to ensure that walking surfaces are solid and safe. Tripping hazards that arise from root upheavals and cracking should be addressed prior to becoming causes for injury. Most of the pavement and pathways in parks were in good condition. The stairway at Pixie Park is being undermined from erosion and may need replacement in the near future. Prior to any major repair, the access to the beach should be analyzed for a more accessible route from the parking area to the beach.

The Rivers Walk Trail was overgrown at approximately 1/5th of a mile from the pathway at Mattie Street. More frequent brush cutting will be needed to keep that trail in a condition that is acceptable to most trail users.

Park Trees & Landscapes

Overall, the trees and landscape planting beds on the parks were in good condition. It was very clear that parks are well-cared for. As some park areas may go through upgrades and their landscape plantings are redesigned, planting patterns should focus on low maintenance techniques as well as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles. For example, at Harvard Park, shade trees and open grass lawn would be more conducive to free play. The existing shrubbery does not enhance the park landscape and can create visual barriers from just outside the park. The Japanese barberry is a very "unfriendly" shrub species to have in a public park, especially adjacent to a childrens' play area. This barberry species is also a non-native and does little to support the natural habitat. Japanese barberry is also used as a hedge planting at Datis Park. Aesthetically, its red foliage may be distracting from the dramatic view to the River. If a landscape renovation program were implemented in the park system, the slope at Datis Park could be revegetated with more appropriate native shrub species such as salal.

Mown Grass Lawn Areas

For the extent of its recreational amenities and park spaces, Columbia City has a disproportionate amount of grass to mow. The primary area with lots of grass to cut is along the bike path. With a 36"-wide mowing deck, this is a time-consuming process. The City may want to consider purchasing a wider mower to reduce labor or perhaps a native meadow approach to reduce the mowing area by half.

Park Signs & Wayfinding

There are a variety of signs that identify park facilities with different styles and visibility. Some spaces had signs that were somewhat obscure (Carolyn King Park). A unified sign style would be beneficial to help convey city ownership of the park facilities. In addition, wayfinding signs would be helpful as Rivers Walk Trail develops into a potential connected trail system.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

Public parks are required to provide reasonable universal access to avoid discrimination of persons with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidelines for compliance in places of public accommodation. While this Plan does not investigate ADA non-compliance in detail, some highlights are noted. Access to parks, playgrounds and restrooms are the highest priority for parks to provide use to all residents and visitors. The Columbia City park system only has one public playground, at Harvard Park, located at the south end of the park. No accessible route is provided to the playground or its benches. Compliance with ADA guidelines should be followed when that park is renovated with new play equipment and upgraded ADA-compliant benches on accessible routes.

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)

Principles of design to foster safe public spaces known as CPTED include maintaining good visibility across different active use areas to allow park users to see movement and occupancy and be able to anticipate encounters with other park users. Most of the park spaces in Columbia City are clearly visible from the public streets and have good visibility. As some parks are planned for upgrades, consideration should be given to maintaining good sight distances, avoiding dense hedges and shrubbery that creates blind corners.

Public / Private Property Interfaces

Park boundaries in natural areas and trails through public rights-of-way may need clear delineation to communicate where the public access is endorsed and where private property should be respected. The paved pathways that lead to Veterans Memorial Park from Mattie Street are mostly separated from private homes by solid wood fencing. The bike path travels along the powerline alignment with US 30/Columbia River Highway with only a few sites lacking clear public/private delineation. As future park improvements are considered, it may be beneficial to consider perimeter fencing to provide clear boundaries for public park property.

PARK SYSTEM GAP ANALYSIS

Understanding the known gaps in the park system and evaluating the City's existing levels of service for parks will provide a foundation for strategic planning to ensure that tomorrow's residents have equitable access to a balanced distribution of parks, trails, and recreation amenities to stay healthy and active. To better understand the distribution of existing recreation amenities and where acquisition efforts should be considered, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the community's current access to various recreation opportunities.

The gap analysis used travelsheds for each park classification, which represents a geographic area that can be reached from specific points for specific travel distances. Park system travelsheds are calculated as travel distances along the road network starting from known and accessible access points at each park and defined as each park classification as follows:

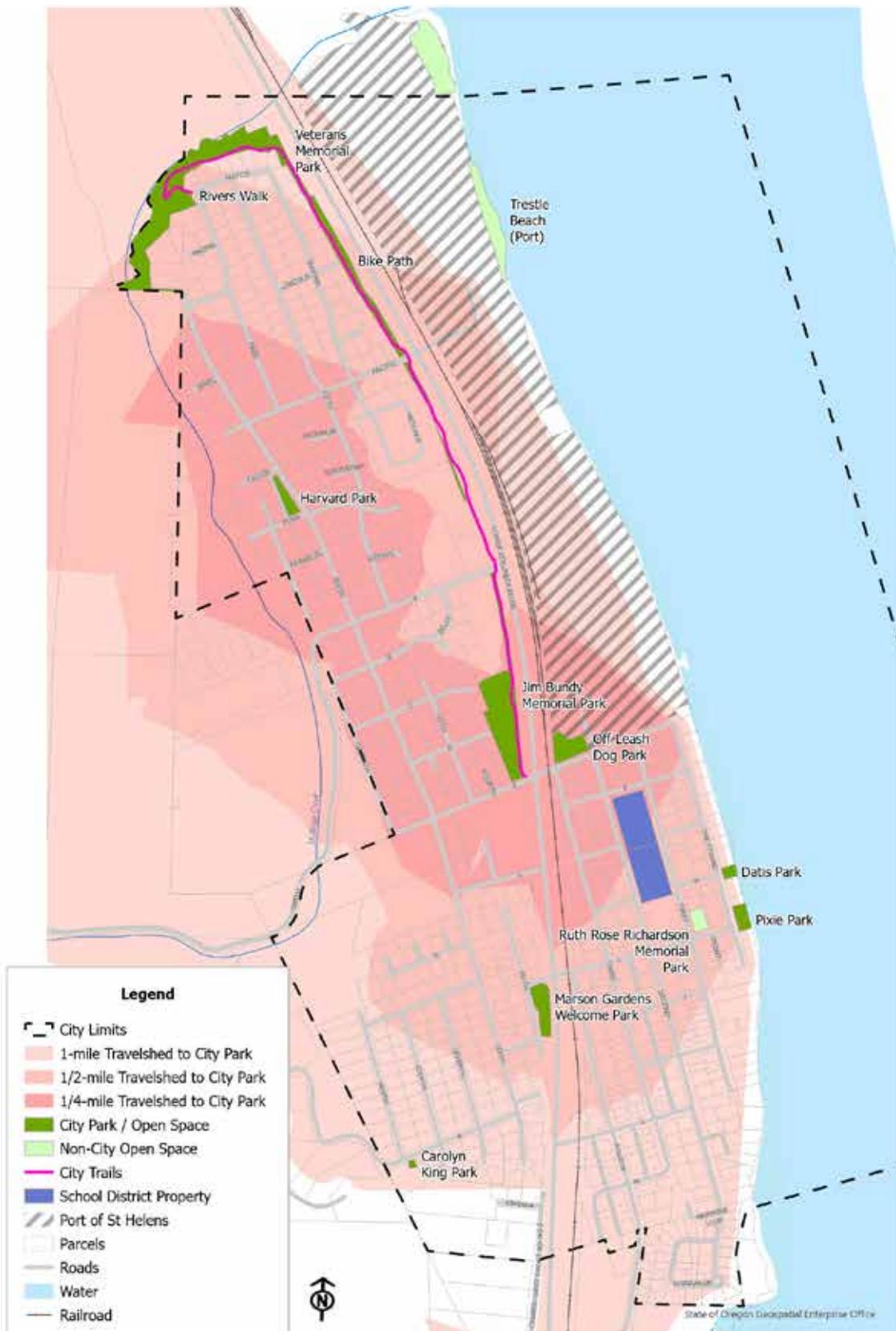
- For pocket/mini parks, travelsheds were derived using a ¼-mile service area with travel distances calculated along the road network starting from known and accessible access points at each park.
- For neighborhood parks, travelsheds were derived using a ¼-mile primary, plus ½-mile and 1-mile secondary service areas with travel distances calculated along the road network starting from known and accessible park entries.

Composite maps of all of the parks illustrate the entirety of City parks to the ¼-mile and ½-mile travelsheds. Maps 2 through 4 illustrate the application of the distribution criteria from existing parks. Areas in white do not have a public park within reasonable distance of their home (e.g., ½-mile). The illustrated 'travelshed' for each existing Columbia City park highlights that most areas within the City currently do have the desired proximity to a local park. However, striving to provide a neighborhood park within a reasonable distance (e.g., ½-mile) may require acquiring new park properties to serve future residences within the urban growth boundary.

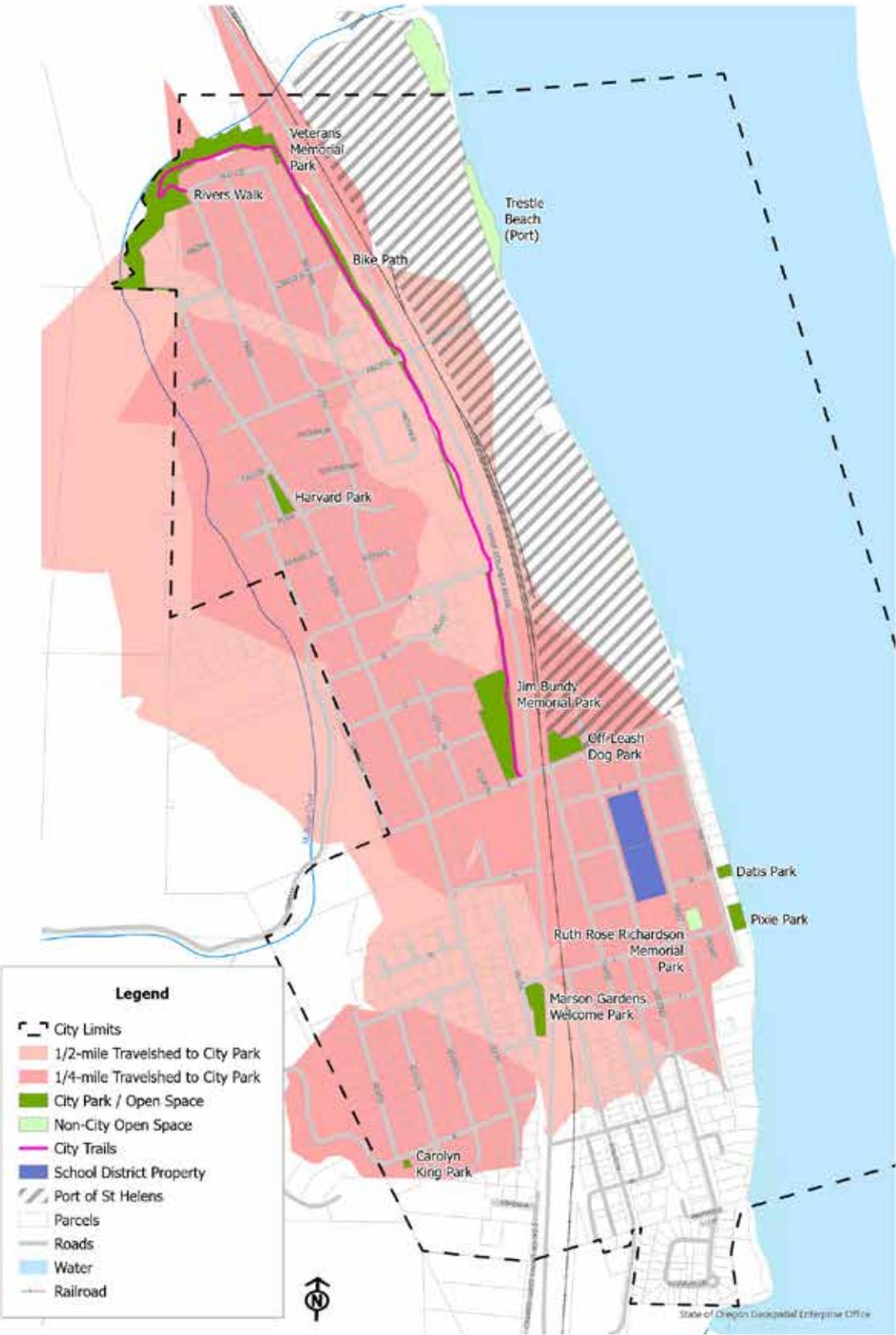
Since acquisition opportunities are limited in Columbia City, the City should consider focusing acquisition opportunities in the targeted locations shown on Map 5 and, as funding allows, to fill gaps and ensure an equitable distribution of park facilities. Also, if the City's growth boundary or city limits are expanded to the north in the future, the City should pursue the acquisition of a large, flat property to accommodate another neighborhood park that could contain a variety of recreation options including sport fields and sport courts. While these generalized acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited.



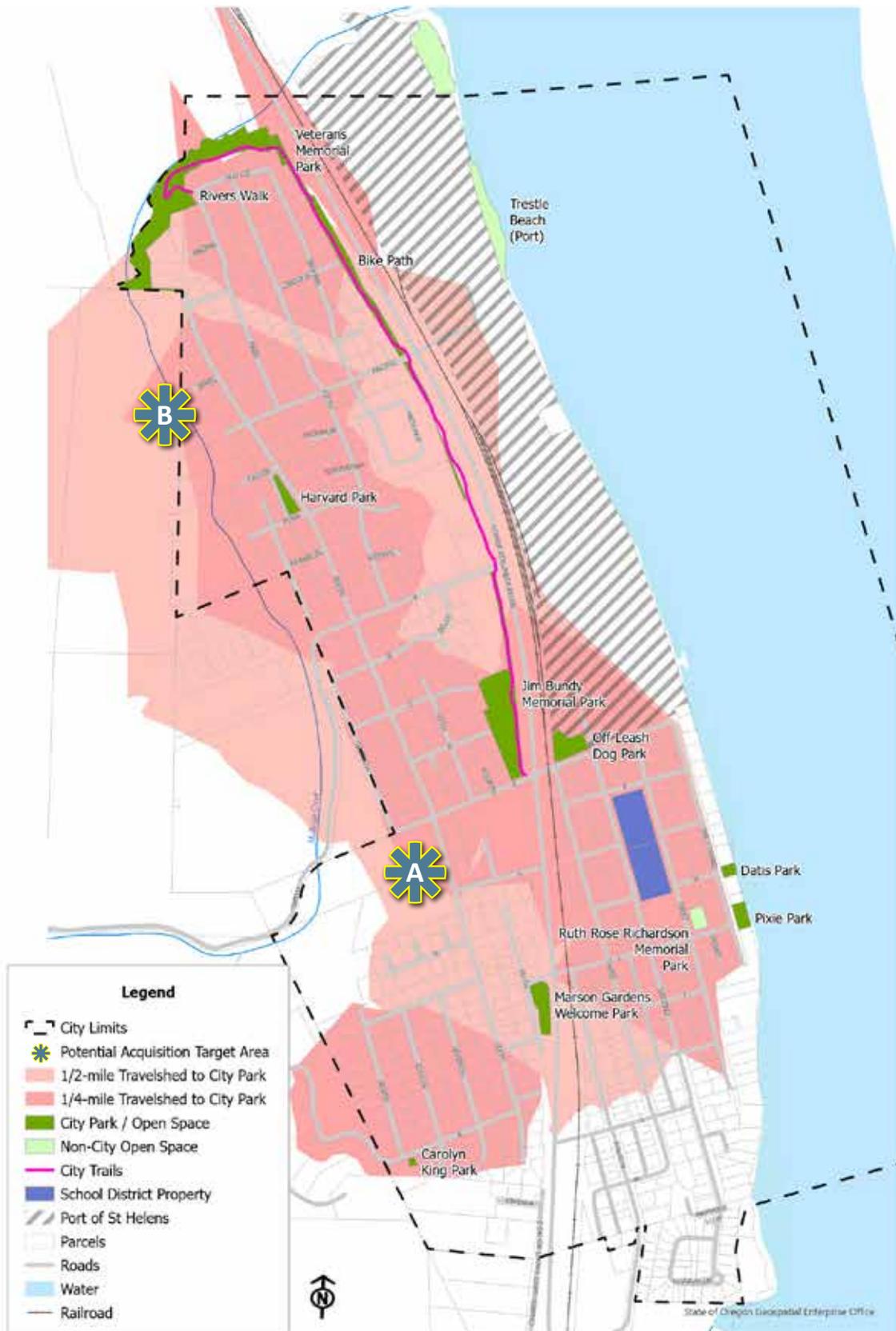
Map 2: Travelsheds for Pocket Parks (1/4-mile)



Map 3: Travelsheds for Neighborhood Parks (1/4-, 1/2-, 1-mile)



Map 4: Travelsheds for Neighborhood & Pocket Parks (1/4-, 1/2-mile)



Map 5: Potential Target Acquisition Areas

BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

A number of organizations and non-profits have documented the overall health and wellness benefits provided by parks, open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land published a report called *The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*. This report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and assisting with stormwater control.



Physical Activity Benefits

Residents in communities with increased access to parks, recreation, natural areas and trails have more opportunities for physical activity, both through recreation and active transportation. By participating in physical activity, residents can reduce their risk of being or becoming overweight or obese, decrease their likelihood of suffering from chronic diseases, such as heart disease and type-2 diabetes, and improve their levels of stress. Nearby access to parks has been shown to increase levels of physical activity. According to the National Park and Recreation Association, the majority of people of all ages who visit parks are physically active during their visit. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that greater access to parks leads to 25% more people exercising three or more days per week.



Community Benefits

Park and recreation facilities provide opportunities to engage with family, friends, and neighbors, thereby increasing social capital and community cohesion, which can improve residents' mental health and overall well-being. People who feel that they are connected to their community and those who participate in recreational, community and other activities are more likely to have better mental and physical health and to live longer lives. Access to parks and recreational facilities has also been linked to reductions in crime, particularly juvenile delinquency.



Economic Benefits

Parks and recreation facilities can bring positive economic impacts through increased property values, increased attractiveness for businesses and workers (quality of life), and through direct increases in employment opportunities.

In Oregon, outdoor recreation generates \$8.3 billion in consumer spending, creates 73,900 direct jobs and results in \$4.4 billion in outdoor recreation wages. According to the 2023 Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account published by the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation can grow jobs and drive the economy through management and investment in parks, waters and trails as an interconnected system designed to sustain economic dividends for citizens.

LEVELS OF SERVICE

Service metrics provide a benchmark for measuring the City’s performance in meeting community expectations for the provisions of parks and outdoor recreation amenities. A level of service is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting an adopted standard or other metric in the park system. A review of current levels of service (LOS) guides the assessment of current quantities and qualities of park amenities in Columbia City, allowing for comparisons with other agencies across the country.

Traditionally, measurements have focused on acres of parkland per capita. While this metric is valuable, it should not be used exclusively. Instead, it serves as a starting point for exploring a range of customized and diverse approaches to evaluating the City’s current LOS across various metrics. By considering a variety of factors, such as park accessibility, facility quality, amenity offerings, and community satisfaction, a more comprehensive understanding of park service provision can be achieved. This holistic approach ensures that the needs and preferences of the community are effectively addressed, and that parks and recreational facilities remain vital components of Columbia City’s quality of life.

National Recreation & Parks Association Agency Performance Review

The 2025 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review and accompanying Park Metrics provide comprehensive park and recreation-related data to inform park and recreation professionals and key stakeholders about the state of the industry. The

2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States, as reported between 2022 and 2024. These data provide guidance to inform decisions and demonstrate the full breadth of service offerings and responsibilities of park and recreation agencies across the United States. This comparison of nationwide data with Columbia City can provide guiding insights rather than target benchmarks.

The NRPA data are used to compare different park and recreation providers in communities across the country; however, the Park Metrics database relies on self-reporting by municipalities. Some agencies only include developed, active parks, while others include natural lands with limited or no improvements, amenities, or access. The comparative standards in the table on the following page should be viewed with this variability in mind.

Acres-based Approach

The NRPA Agency Performance Review provides a comparative of parkland acreage metrics across a range of jurisdiction population sizes. Parkland refers to both maintained parks and open space areas, such as natural areas, parks and plazas. The current population of Columbia City fits within the NRPA category of ‘communities under 20,000’ people. For that population category, the median is 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The current parkland acreage per 1,000 residents in Columbia City is 9.6 acres per 1,000 residents, slightly lower than the median and below the lower quartile of 12.9 acres per 1,000 residents for comparably-sized communities – based on a total parkland inventory of 18.6 acres.

Table 2 - 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Comparison

Metric	All Agencies	Jurisdictions Less than 20,000 Pop.	Columbia City
Residents per Park	2,411	1,001	195
Total Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents	10.2	12.9	9.6
Miles of Trails	16	4.0	1.2
Park & Recreation Staffing (FTEs)	59.2	13.8	0.6
FTEs per 10,000 Residents	8.6	13.7	3.1
Annual Operating Expenses	\$7,225,000	\$1,452,000	\$184,294
Operating Expenses per Capita	\$103	\$140	\$95

Park Amenity Metrics

Looking at the provision of recreational amenities within the park system provides another perspective on the adequacy of park service delivery. From the NRPA Park Metrics data, twelve amenities were compared with the median values from an aggregate of all agencies across the country, as well as from similarly-sized jurisdictions to that of Columbia City, see Table 3. The comparisons indicate that Columbia City is not deficient in playgrounds or dog parks as highlighted in green in the adjacent column. However, the City provide no diamond fields, rectangular (soccer) fields, synthetic turf fields, pickleball courts, tennis courts, splash pads, and basketball courts, among other amenities, compared to the median of other agencies reporting. Given Columbia City’s modest park system and small population, these comparisons are understandable and to be expected.

As a caveat, the use of numeric standards is a limited tool to assess how well the City is delivering park and recreation services, since the numeric values alone neglect any recognition for the quality of the facilities or their distribution (i.e., the ease to which residents have reasonable, proximate access to park sites). Residents were particularly interested in the availability of trails, parks within a reasonable distance from their homes, and various park enhancements. The City should utilize these metrics to develop and amend the parks Capital Improvements Plan to put forward and execute on projects that aim to expand the capacity of the system and meet community needs.

Table 3 - NRPA Park Amenity Metrics by Jurisdiction Size

Amenities	All Agencies	Jurisdictions Less than 20,000 Pop.	Columbia City
Amenity	Number of People per Amenity		
Playgrounds	3,737	2,000	1,949
Diamond fields	4,749	1,958	NA
Rectangular fields	5,946	2,578	NA
Rectangular fields (synthetic)	46,833	11,028	NA
Community Gardens	35,065	8,800	NA
Dog parks	47,247	10,188	1,949
Splash pad/spray grounds	49,392	13,391	NA
Skate parks	55,772	10,776	NA
Tennis courts (outdoor)	6,794	3,500	NA
Pickleball courts (outdoor)	10,419	3,483	NA
Multi-use courts (outdoor)	23,739	3,900	NA
Basketbal courts (outdoor)	8,500	4,479	NA

meet/exceed median comparables
 below median comparables

OTHER PARK SYSTEM RECOMMENDATIONS

Accessibility Improvements

Minor improvements to access, such as providing ramped entrances to playgrounds or stable surface access to site furnishings, are necessary to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensure universal accessibility. The capital project list assumes that each new improvement within a park will be designed with ADA compliance in mind. The City should make improvements to existing parks as needed to ensure proper maintenance, usability and quality of park features and grounds.

Wayfinding, Signage & Communications

Parks, trails, and other public open spaces are the primary targets for unifying an urban environment into a cohesive, accessible, and connected community through an identifiable wayfinding program. Columbia City should pursue a comprehensive wayfinding program that includes both visual graphic standards and site furnishing standards. Colors, sign types, and information can help users navigate the outdoor recreation experiences offered by the City.

Also, to broaden public awareness, the City's website should be expanded to facilitate quick links to popular destinations and be designed with mobile users in mind, either through a mobile-friendly site or a web-based application. The City should consider introducing and utilizing QR codes or comparable technology on signage as a means to share with or receive information from visitors about maintenance, restoration or monitoring data.

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Trails and paths provide people with valuable links between parks, schools, and other destinations. Expanding trail system connections was identified as one of the priorities during the community engagement process, and, in the community survey, residents showed strong support for expanding, improving, and maintaining walking and nature trails, especially the Rivers Walk Trail. Investing in trails is essential to maintaining a healthy and livable community by enhancing walking and biking opportunities.

Trail Trends

Walking and hiking remain the most popular recreational activities both nationally and regionally. Over the past decade, national recreation studies have consistently ranked walking and hiking as the top form of outdoor recreation (see Appendix F for summaries of recreation trends). The 2019 COVID pandemic significantly impacted outdoor recreation, with trail use surging as many people turned to walking and bicycling for their daily exercise. This shift led to increased usage and crowded trailhead parking, challenging local and regional park agencies. The annual study from the National Recreation and Parks Association of how Americans use their parks determined that people who live near parks and recreation facilities are more likely to arrive at that park by walking, biking or running, with walking being the most common method of transport.

Additionally, with the rapid increase in electric-assist bikes and mobility devices and the potential for user conflicts due to increased speeds, Columbia City should stay informed on best management practices to ensure safety for all trail users and promote trail etiquette through signage on any existing or future shared-use trails.

Trail Types

Recreational trail classification systems are usually designed around a tiered network comprising three primary trail categories: Regional, Connector, and Park/Local Trails. Each category serves a distinct purpose and caters to varying levels or intensities of use, which dictates the trail width, material, and recommended support facilities. While Columbia City does not yet have enough distinct trail types to warrant a classification system, the following categories may be useful in determining the scale of future trail projects.

Regional Trails

Regional trails form the backbone of a trail network, providing long-distance routes that connect multiple

cities and significant recreational areas. These trails are designed for high-intensity use and to accommodate various activities, including walking, running, cycling, and sometimes equestrian activities. Due to their extensive reach and heavy usage, regional trails typically feature:

- **Wider Paths:** Regional trails often have 12 feet or more widths to support multiple users simultaneously.
- **Durable Surfaces:** Paved or hard-packed surfaces to withstand heavy traffic and accommodate all-weather use. Boardwalks, elevated spans, or other appropriate surfacing to traverse sensitive areas.
- **Support Facilities:** Ample amenities such as restrooms, water stations, seating areas, and informative signage to enhance user experience and safety.

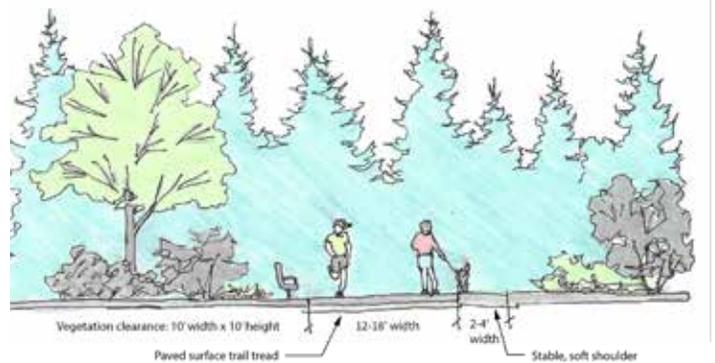


Figure 7 - Regional Trail Section

Connector Trails

Connector trails serve as vital links between regional trails, parks, and other points of interest. These trails support moderate to high usage and are crucial for creating a cohesive network. Key characteristics include:

- **Moderate Width:** Typically, 8-12 feet to balance usability and environmental impact.
- **Varied Surfaces:** Depending on the surrounding environment and anticipated use, surfaces may range from paved to compacted gravel. Stable surfaces accommodate strollers/wheeled access even if not fully ADA compliant. Boardwalks, elevated spans, or other appropriate surfacing to traverse sensitive areas.
- **Basic Facilities:** Essential amenities include benches, directional signs, and occasional restrooms or water fountains.

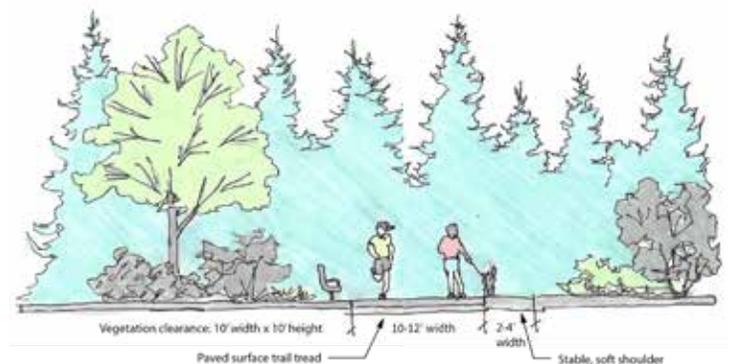


Figure 8 - Connector Trail Section

Park/Local Trails

Park/local trails are designed for more localized, lower-intensity use within parks, neighborhoods, and community areas. These trails prioritize accessibility and recreational enjoyment for residents and visitors, featuring:

- **Narrower Paths:** Usually 4-8 feet wide, sufficient for walkers, runners, and casual cyclists.
- **Soft or Natural Surfaces:** Including dirt, mulch, or grass to blend seamlessly with the natural surroundings.
- **Minimal Facilities:** Focus on maintaining the natural environment, with limited but essential amenities such as benches and waste disposal stations.

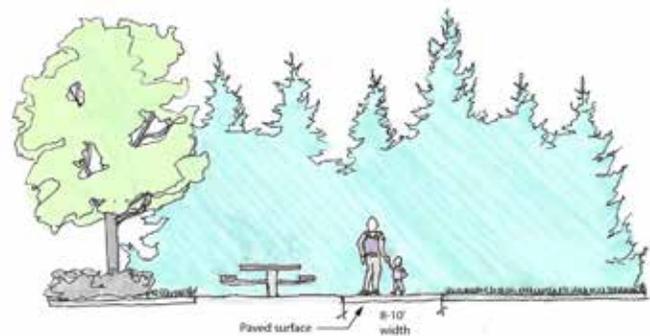


Figure 9 - Park / Local Trail Section (Paved)

This tiered approach supports a wide range of activities and ensures a comprehensive and interconnected trail network that accommodates various recreational needs. The strategic development and maintenance of these trails are essential for fostering community health, recreation, and environmental stewardship.

Specific trail alignments must be determined through a site plan engineering and review process that considers

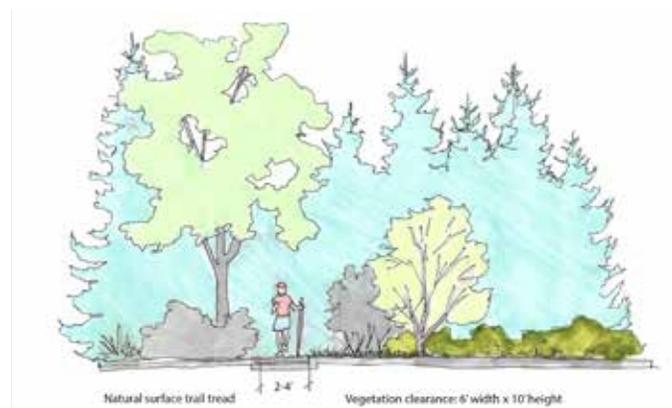


Figure 10 - Park / Local Trail Section (Primitive)

appropriate trail design characteristics in conjunction with natural resource sensitivities, as well as applicability for universal access. Trails are built infrastructure and often involve some grading, soil displacement, potential vegetation removal, and improvements for trailheads and access. While trails can be designed for minimal environmental impact, their alignment and design require site-specific solutions that balance the intended purpose of the trail with meeting applicable land use and environmental codes and regulations.

Existing Trail Inventory

The City of Columbia City currently connects to the City of St. Helens from 4th Street along Rutherford Parkway. The City's Bike Trail follows the alignment of ODOT's right of way along Route 30 for approximately one mile. The Rivers Walk Trail travels along McBride Creek from Veterans Memorial Park. A more fully developed network of trails and pathways could significantly enhance the City's walkability.

As Columbia City's parks redevelop and/or add recreational amenities, those parks should be improved to include paved pathways that connect the various outdoor recreation amenities. These internal park pathways are essential for universal accessibility and ADA compliance. They can also enhance recreational opportunities and provide convenient access points to adjacent neighborhoods, fostering greater connectivity within the community.

Trail System Design

Trail systems may include different trails tailored to different conditions and user needs. Establishing guidelines for trail planning and developing trail design standards helps create a cohesive trail system. This approach directs the appropriate establishment of new trails and guides the maintenance and upgrades of existing trails. Establishing and reinforcing a recreational trail classification enables a framework for trail design and facilitates the prioritization of proposed trail enhancements and development.

The following recommendations provide general planning-level guidelines for future trail system considerations. A comprehensive non-motorized trail system plan may be necessary to provide more alignment and design details, priorities for implementation, and coordination with the City's transportation planning, including cost estimates for implementation.

Cross Sections, Access & Alignments

Future trail network growth must balance optimal user experience and connectivity with practical considerations like cost, regulatory compliance, and availability. Alignments should consider interim solutions, such as wider sidewalks or routes that utilize existing or planned sanitary sewer, water, stormwater, or dry utility corridors. Ensuring local trails connect to regional, connector, or park trails is crucial for reducing reliance on trailheads and enhancing access.

Trailheads

Safe, convenient entryways expand trail network access and are essential for a successful system. Trailheads typically include parking, kiosks, and signage and may also feature site furnishings like trash receptacles, benches, restrooms, drinking fountains, bike repair stations, and bike racks. Recent trailhead installations have included electric bike charging stations to support alternative transportation modes. Trailheads can be located within public parks and open spaces or provided through interagency agreements with partners (e.g., county, school district). Specific designs and layouts should consider intended user groups and unique site conditions.

Areas of Respite

Rest areas along trail segments enhance the user experience by offering places to rest, enjoy natural settings, or socialize. These areas, distinct from trailheads, can include pull-offs with benches or picnic tables, observation platforms, or interpretive signs. They should be integrated into the emergency response system with identifying codes for locator information.

Trail Signs & Wayfinding

Enhanced signage and consistent brand identification can significantly increase awareness of recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. A coordinated signage system is essential for facilitating a successful trail network. This system should inform, orient, and educate users about the trail system and appropriate trail etiquette. A comprehensive and consistent signage system includes:

- **Directional and Regulatory Signs:** Clearly indicate directions and regulatory information to ensure user safety and compliance with trail rules.
- **Trail User Etiquette and Hierarchy Signs:** Educate users on proper trail behavior and right-of-way practices to promote safety and courtesy among different trail users.
- **Continuous Route Signage:** Provide route identification and wayfinding to help users navigate the trail network seamlessly.
- **Mileage Markers:** Display periodic information regarding distances to areas of interest, helping users gauge their progress and plan their trips.

- **Warning Signs:** Alert users to upcoming trail transitions, potential conflicts with motor vehicles, and other hazards to ensure safety.
- **Interpretive Information:** Offer educational content about the ecological, historical, and cultural features along the trails, enhancing the user experience.
- **QR Codes:** Provide links to additional information and resources, allowing users to access more detailed content via smartphones.

Trail System Recommendations

As with transportation planning, recreational trail planning should prioritize connectivity as a performance metric rather than mileage or mileage per capita. Relying on a mileage standard or metric for level of service for paths within Columbia City will result in limited and inadequate assessment of community needs, with little consideration for improved connectivity. The community survey and online open house comments supported additional trail development and walking opportunities.

As illustrated on Map 6: Proposed Recreational Trail System, future recreational trail connections reflect community interests and preferences from surveys and other engagements. The proposed trail system includes an extension of the Rivers Walk Trail to Pacific Street and on-street linkage across the city and a connection to the path along Rutherford Parkway into Dalton Lake Nature Preserve. Another connection on the north end of the city links Veterans Memorial Park with Trestle Beach with an under/over pass of Highway 30 and the railroad track.

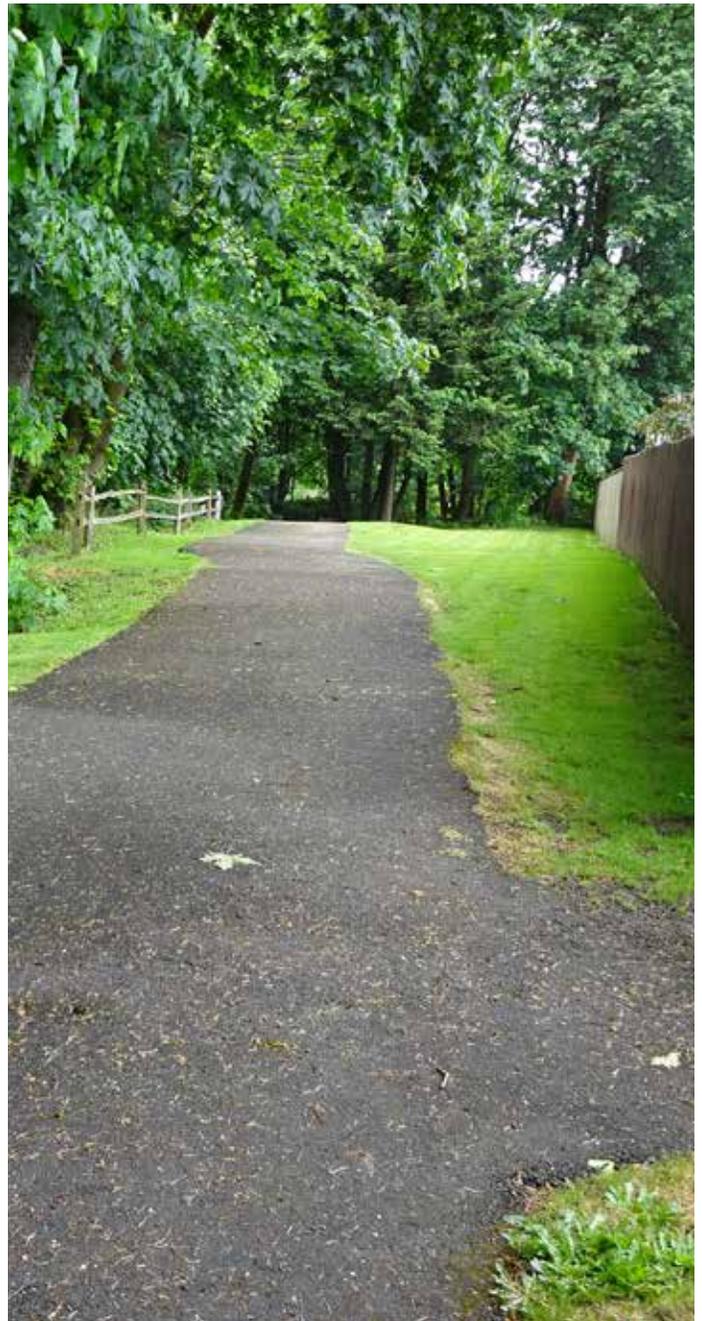
Achieving future recreational trail connections will require coordination with transportation improvements and future land development. The City also should continue to coordinate with Columbia County, the City of St. Helens and area partners to consider future opportunities for regional trail connections linking Columbia City to other communities.

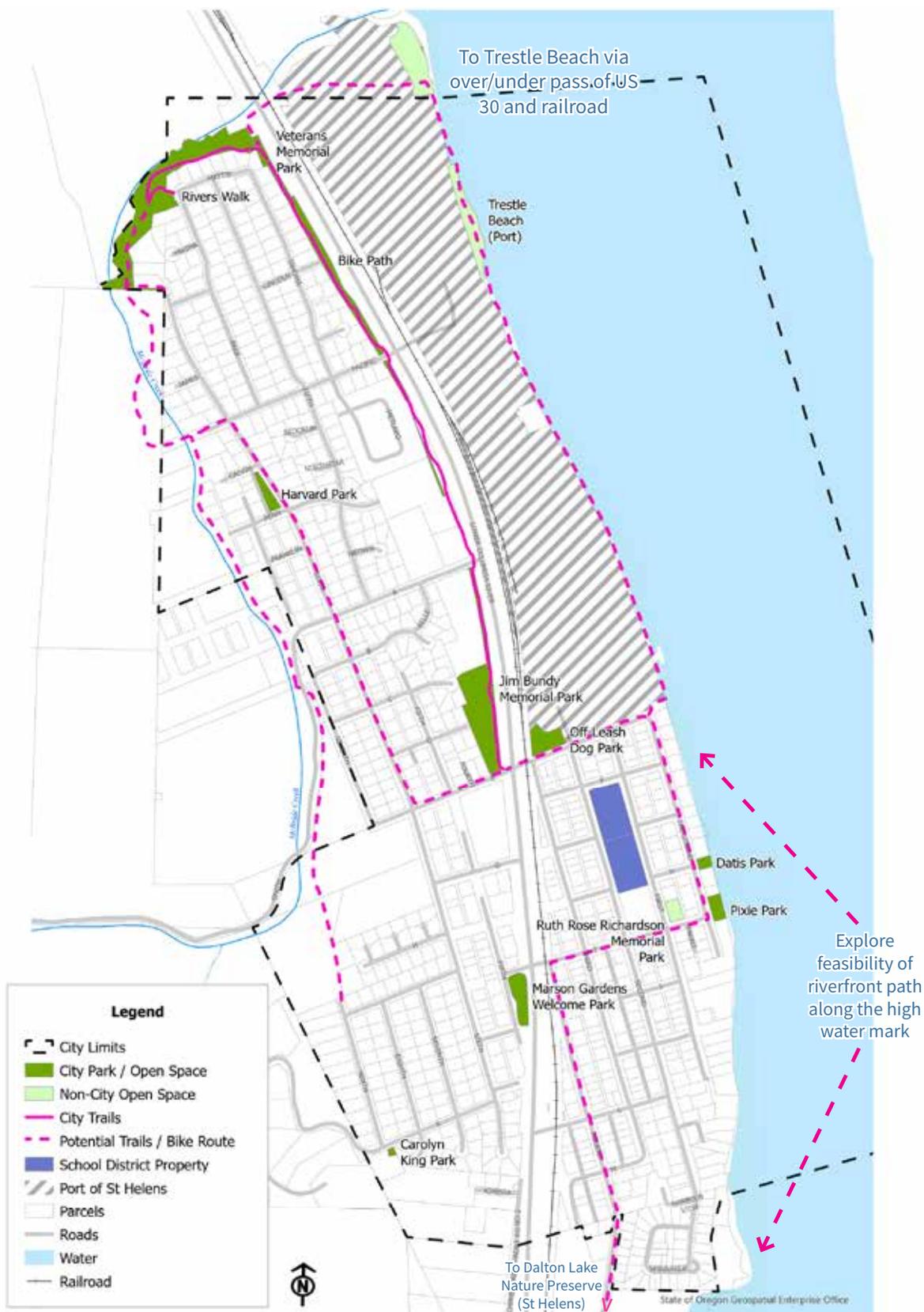
Acquisitions & Development for Trail Connections

Additional trail connections, sidewalk improvements, and bike lanes are needed to link destinations and promote walkability and healthier lifestyles. The City should actively pursue the acquisition of easements, corridors and parcels to create comprehensive linkages for Columbia City's recreational trail system. Coordination between parks and transportation funding sources is essential for planning the most appropriate links. The City also should require new developments to provide bike and pedestrian access to contribute to a city-wide network, and it should aim to implement ADA guidelines for trails where reasonable.

Trail System Signage

As the trail network grows, it is recommended that detailed trail signage standards, wayfinding signage for trails and associated facilities, and informational maps and materials identifying existing and planned trail facilities, be designed and implemented to improve user experiences. This signage system could be coordinated with park signage styles, colors, fonts and materials to provide a uniform look to Columbia City's public spaces.





Map 6: Proposed Recreational Trail System

PARK OPERATIONS

The provision of parks services generally fall within Columbia City’s Public Works Department. Park Operations, in general, are tasked with providing a variety of outdoor recreational amenities that includes acquisition, development, planning, maintenance, and enhancement of park lands and trails. The Public Works staff address on-going maintenance and repair of support facilities in addition to their responsibilities for stormwater, sewer, water, roads and other city-wide infrastructure.

This park system update considers the level of staffing for Columbia City park operations and maintenance through comparisons with both nation-wide park and recreation providers, as well as some selected cities within Oregon to ascertain the existing work load measured against capacity.

National Park & Recreation Agency Comparisons

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) 2024 Agency Performance Review provides metrics that offer perspectives on comparisons for the Columbia City park system. Selected findings from this nationwide benchmarking tool illustrates comparison metrics with national medians and with park and recreation provider jurisdictions within similar population size brackets.

It should be noted that park and recreation providers can vary greatly across the country in terms of services, infrastructure, and system-wide parklands. Using NRPA metrics provides a “first flush” at examining how Columbia City currently is providing for and operating park and recreation facilities.

From the NRPA metrics, the smallest community size is “under 20,000”, so the overview of NRPA agency performance metrics does not fairly compare Columbia City as a park system to other park and recreation providers across the nation. With a population of under 2,000 residents, Columbia City’s level of service

expectantly falls slightly below parkland acreage per resident (9.5 acres/1,000) compared to the typical agency in jurisdictions with less than 20,000 residents (12.6 acres/1,000).

Looking across the spectrum of park and recreation providers as different population sizes, Columbia City’s approximate 0.6 FTEs are well below the median for jurisdictions with less than 20,000 residents. Communities within the ‘under 20,000’ category have a median of 13.8 park and recreation FTEs. However, Columbia City’s measure of residents per park facility (195) indicates much less population pressure on existing park acreage compared to the other agencies.

Looking at operating expenditures per capita, Columbia City invests approximately \$94.56 into its parks system per resident compared to other ‘under 20,000 populated’ communities that spend \$139.87 per capita. The NRPA Agency Performance Report also offers an examination of the differing levels of investment in public park systems across the span of different community populations. Park and recreation agencies serving larger populations tend to have lower operating expenditures ratios than do agencies serving small- and medium-sized jurisdictions. The typical park and recreation agency serving a jurisdiction with less than 20,000 people spends a median of \$9,512 per acre of park and non-park sites. Columbia City’s spending per acreage of park facilities is reasonably comparable at \$9,908.

Annual operating expenditures for Columbia City (\$184,294) also are much lower than other NRPA agencies that ranged from \$1.4 to \$7.2 million. The annual park operating budget was about 12% compared to other communities under 20,000 residents. Considering the gap in community size that creates a wide range in comparative data, there may be more value in comparing Columbia City with similar-sized cities in Oregon. As Columbia City considers redevelopment and future park system investments, the demand to provide new and more complex park facilities to its system will affect its comparisons with other similar-sized communities.

Table 4 - NRPA Agency Performance Metrics Comparison

Metric	All Agencies	Jurisdictions Less than 20,000 Pop.	Cornelius
Residents per Park	2,411	1,001	195
Annual Operating Expenses	\$7,225,000	\$1,452,000	\$184,294
Operating Expenses per Capita	\$103	\$140	\$95
Operating Expenses per Parkland Acre	\$8,577	\$9,512	\$9,908
Operating Expenses per FTE	\$118,150	\$107,982	\$307,157
Park & Recreation Staffing (FTEs)	59.2	13.8	0.6
FTEs per 10,000 Residents	8.6	13.7	3.1

Oregon Cities Park Provider Comparisons

Park and recreation operations and resource needs can be highly variable, particularly at different population sizes and residential densities. A more refined comparison of park metrics was prepared using several cities in Oregon with population sizes similar to that of Columbia City. The selected cities also contained some aspects of potential future growth that was predicted to trigger their future park system expansion.

Table 5 - Oregon Cities Park System Metrics Comparisons

Performance Measure	Columbia City	Wood Village	Vale**	North Plains	Coquille	Dayton
Population (2024 PSU)	1,946	4,018	2,665	3,815	1,870	5,165
Park & Recreation Total Budget*	\$184,294	\$1,062,658	\$139,233	\$420,913	\$144,491	180,892
Spending per Resident	\$94.70	\$242.23	\$52.25	\$124.60	\$77.27	\$35.02
Annual Capital Spending (5-yr average)	-	\$832,500	\$14,248	0	\$813,948	-
Capital Spending per Resident	-	\$189.77	\$5.35	0	\$435.27	-
Park & Recreation FTE	0.6*	1	-	1.2	-	0.7
Park & Rec FTE per 10,000 Population	3.1	2.3	-	3.6	-	1.4
Total Developed Parks (acres)	18.6	25	24	10.5	19.1	9.5
Park Acres per 1,000 Population	9.6	5.7	9.0	3.1	10.2	1.8
Total Parks & Natural Areas (acres)	18.6	25	24.0	10.5	169.12	9.5
Parkland Acres per 1,000 Population	9.6	5.7	9.0	3.1	90.4	1.8
Parkland Acres per FTE	31.0	25.0	-	8.75	-	13.6
Square Miles (land only)	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.1	2.8	0.8
Population Density (pop./sq. mi.)	1,678	4,667	2,338	3,099	678	6,456
Park Facilities (number)	10	2	6	6	8	7

* park FTE quantity is based on average park labor hours performed by PW staff, tracked annually

**The City of Vale has a public pool that comprises most of its P&R operating budget.

Even with comparisons of similar-sized cities in Oregon, the variability of park systems and operational differences can vary on a number of aspects. Capital spending across these park agencies were highly variable from year to year based on project schedules, funding resources, etc. Some systems do not provide any measurable recreation programming, while others invest highly in community-sponsored events, activities, and facilities. While the performance metrics illustrate that Columbia City is providing an adequate labor force for its current system, new projects and expanded activities likely will trigger the need for additional maintenance FTEs.

Scanning the comparative metrics from these five other communities offers a more realistic look at levels of service and amounts of financial investment. While there are some diverse ranges, it should be noted that capital spending

can vary significantly with pending park projects that may be underwritten by outside grant funding and triggered by waves of new residential development.

Asset Management & Life Cycle Planning

As part of Park Operations, the management of physical assets requires proactive planning to capture cost efficiencies. Tracking repairs, maintenance tasks, routine operations and seasonal work can help forecast the needs for future labor resources as the system grows. While Columbia City’s park system is small, integrating an asset management program could provide accurate data for how future park amenities will need to be managed and staffed. This Plan recommends developing a detailed

list of the assets at each park site and evaluating asset conditions annually. This task creates a framework for long-term management of the Columbia City park system. Detailed inventories with conditions tracking will help predict replacement needs, monitor safe use, and assist in assigning maintenance frequency.

Most built park amenities have limited life spans. Buildings, play equipment, pavement, etc. can be tracked from installation dates. As repairs are needed, those assets can have predictable replacement dates that are added to the capital facilities program. Life-cycle planning can help avoid extra time spent repairing outdated amenities and foster more cost-effective labor resource use.

Beyond managing park assets to ensure a safe and enjoyable park infrastructure, the asset management system can be utilized to track more accurately the labor hours required to perform the many tasks involved in caring for park facilities. Active tracking can much better predict the ability to reach targeted levels of service for keeping parks clean and in good condition.

Staffing Needs

The assessments and comparisons of park conditions have indicated that Columbia City is currently handling the maintenance of its park system. However, any expansion in park amenities without a matching increase in available labor will predictably strain the multi-tasking responsibilities of the Public Works staff.

While an asset management tracking system could provide the most accurate predictions that would be specific for labor needs for the Columbia City park system, some measurements from composite park staffing references may shed light on approximate future staffing needs. Compiled from a series of other park providers, the table below offers an estimated labor needs for several types of planned park facilities.

Table 6 - Park Performance from Park & Recreation Providers

Parks Cost / Acre (2015-2019)	5-Yr Average
Greenspaces Labor Hours per Acre	21
Greenspaces Cost per Acre	\$620
Neighborhood Parks Labor Hours per Acre	152
Neighborhood Parks Cost per Acre	\$5,469
Community Parks Labor Hours per Acre	111
Community Parks Cost per Acre	\$3,800
Regional Parks Labor Hours per Acre	98
Regional Parks Cost per Acre	\$3,174

When a typical neighborhood park is fully developed and averages about 4 acres of developed amenities, one full-time employee could be expected to provide adequate maintenance services for four neighborhood parks. Tasks include litter control, mowing, landscape maintenance, playground inspections and would assume time for travelling to and from each park. With predicted greater acreage and higher expected levels of public use, a newly added community park may require more than one FTE to provide the expected level of service. Depending on its size and variety of provided amenities, community parks can require 0.75 to 1.25 FTEs for each park. Special Use areas like riverfront spaces, dog parks, and active sports fields generally accommodate large and repeated numbers of users, generating more wear and tear and triggering higher litter control needs. These highly visible and important public spaces will need special attention from Park crews.

Currently, park maintenance is shared among several public works crew members. Specialized horticultural, grounds and arboricultural skills or training may be out-sourced on an as-needed basis. For example, as existing irrigation systems are upgraded and landscaping improvements implemented along with other park improvements, it could be valuable to encourage skill development that addresses more-focused park infrastructures both green and built. Turf management and horticultural classes can provide valuable knowledge about timing and implementation of a wide variety of landscape practices (mowing heights, irrigation intervals, fertilization timing, etc.).

The 20-year capital facilities plan should be coordinated with the planning and budgeting of future staffing resources to coordinate any growth of Columbia City park system.



CHAPTER 4

Goals & Policies

This chapter outlines the goals, objectives and policies to guide Columbia City’s long-term planning for investments in and the management of the park system. The goals and objectives described in this chapter define the park and recreation services that Columbia City aims to provide. These goals and objectives were derived from input received throughout the planning process, from city staff and officials, community members and stakeholders.

The City’s Comprehensive Plan (revised in 2019) follows statewide planning goals and provides the overarching direction for the City, while these goals and objectives focus efforts toward tangible park system achievements.

Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goal 8 on Recreation Planning states:

“The requirements for meeting such needs, now and in the future, shall be planned for by governmental agencies having responsibility for recreation areas, facilities and opportunities: (1) in coordination with

private enterprise; (2) in appropriate proportions; and (3) in such quantity, quality and locations as is consistent with the availability of the resources to meet such requirements. State and federal agency recreation plans shall be coordinated with local and regional recreational needs and plans.”

Taken together, the goals and policies provide a framework for the Parks Master Plan. A goal is a general statement describing an outcome the City wishes to provide. Goals typically do not change over time unless community values shift. Policies are more specific, measurable statements that describe a means to achieving the stated goals. Policies reflect adopted practices intended to implement and achieve the goals. Near-term recommendations are specific and measurable actions or projects intended to implement and achieve the goals and are contained within the needs assessment and implementation chapters of the Plan.

These goals are in alignment with the National Recreation and Parks Association's Three Pillars, which are foundational concepts adopted in 2012. These core values (listed below) are crucial to improving the quality of life for all Americans by inspiring the protection of natural resources, increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating and empowering citizens to improve the livability of their communities.

- **Conservation:** Public parks are critical to preserving communities' natural resources and wildlife habitats, which offer significant social and economic benefits.
- **Health & Wellness:** Park and recreation departments lead the nation in improving the overall health and wellness of citizens, and fighting obesity.
- **Social Equity:** Universal access to public parks and recreation is fundamental to all, not just a privilege for a few.

These goals and values are reflected in this Plan, which will guide future efforts for Columbia City.



GOAL 1: FOSTER A HEALTHY & ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Objective: Provide a system of parks, trails and open spaces that meets current and future needs for active and passive recreation and enhances the community's livability.

Policies

- 1.1. Provide a diversity of park facilities and a balance of opportunities for both passive and active recreation that meets the needs of different age groups, abilities and interests.
- 1.2. Design and maintain parks, trails and amenities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age; beyond compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Upgrade existing parks to remove any physical barriers.
- 1.3. Develop and enhance neighborhood parks to provide active and passive recreational opportunities for residents.
- 1.4. Pursue the replacement of Harvard Park playground equipment with grant assistance from Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to sustain this important recreation resource in the community.
- 1.5. Cooperatively involve private parties, the Port, school district, and state and federal agencies in the development of local recreational resources.
- 1.6. Utilize available State and Federal funds for acquisition and improvement of parks and bike paths whenever possible.
- 1.7. Identify, prioritize and acquire lands for inclusion into the parks system based on factors such as contribution to level of service, connectivity or recreational opportunities for existing and future residents.
- 1.8. Standardize the use of graphics and signage to establish a consistent identity at all parks, trailheads and other recreational amenities.

GOAL 2: PROMOTE & ENHANCE COLUMBIA CITY'S SENSE OF PLACE

Objective: Utilize new and existing recreational facilities to enhance community activity and civic pride.

Policies

- 2.1. Encourage and promote volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, local non-profits, faith organizations and businesses.
- 2.2. Communicate the value of the City's investment in parks and open space and provide information to the public about park and recreation funding and the stewardship of tax dollars.
- 2.3. Use a variety of methods and media to publicize and increase resident awareness about recreational opportunities available citywide.
- 2.4. Regularly update the city website to provide easy access to information about parks, activities and maps along with ensuring the website follows best practices for accessibility and inclusion.
- 2.5. Explore and evaluate opportunities to enhance shoreline access and amenities for passive recreation and to preserve public access to the Columbia River as the defining edge of the City's east side.
- 2.6. Explore options for improved, safer pedestrian and vehicular access to Trestle Beach in partnership with the Port of Columbia County.
- 2.7. Encourage the preservation of the Caples House Museum in their original character. Support the activities of the Daughters of the American Revolution in promoting the interpretation of these historic resources.

GOAL 3: PROTECT & ENHANCE COLUMBIA CITY'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Objective: Preserve distinctive natural areas and features for their scenic, recreation and habitat value, as well as their contribution to Columbia City's riverfront setting.

Policies

- 3.1. Develop tree planting guidelines and protocols to determine planting locations and species selection to foster resilient plant communities that can recover from disturbances and adapt to climate change and its impacts, such as forest fire and drought.
- 3.2. Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space, including the use of conservation easements, development agreements and partnerships with public agencies.
- 3.3. Pursue opportunities to provide and expand appropriate public access (e.g. trails, viewpoints and wildlife viewing areas) within natural areas to support passive recreation.
- 3.4. Provide a continuous system of open space and wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions. Connect open spaces to provide corridors and greenways, wherever feasible.
- 3.5. Coordinate with Columbia County, State agencies, school district and private landowners to preserve and restore natural areas along McBride Creek and the Columbia River for environmental and recreational use.
- 3.6. Develop a stewardship program for open spaces to preserve, enhance, and/or maintain sensitive natural areas and bodies of water.
- 3.7. Require a vegetated buffer and greenway along the edge of the urban growth boundary where residential development is adjacent to the Class 1 McBride Creek as a linear park to include passive amenities such as trails.

GOAL 4: DEVELOP A TRAIL NETWORK TO CONNECT PARKS, NEIGHBORHOODS & PUBLIC AMENITIES

Goal 4: Preserve and protect significant natural resource areas and features.

Policies

- 4.1. Connect the community to nature, parks and open spaces through a system of local trails and paths for walking and bicycling.
- 4.2. Ensure trail connectivity is accessible to strollers/wheels, if feasible, even if full ADA compliance is not achievable.
- 4.3. Work with regional agencies, utilities and private landholders to secure trail rights-of-way and easements and access to open space for trail connections.
- 4.4. Integrate the planning for and prioritization of recreational trails with the City's Transportation System Plan for connections within rights-of-way, utilizing the classifications and conceptual alignments provided within this Plan.
- 4.5. Pursue the extension and development of the Rivers Walk Trail and install benches for periodic areas of respite.
- 4.6. Work with the Oregon Department of Transportation, Burlington Northern Railroad and the Port of Columbia County to pursue a pedestrian crossing to connect Veterans Memorial Park to Trestle Beach
- 4.7. Integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the land development review process; require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate trail segments as part of the project.
- 4.8. Prepare development standards for trails and open space to provide adequate recreational facilities and accommodate pedestrians and bicycle users.
- 4.9. Whenever feasible, locate trailheads at or in conjunction with park sites, schools, and other community facilities to enhance local access and minimize redundant supporting infrastructure.
- 4.10. Provide trailhead facilities, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, kiosks and other amenities.

CHAPTER 5

Implementation & Capital Projects

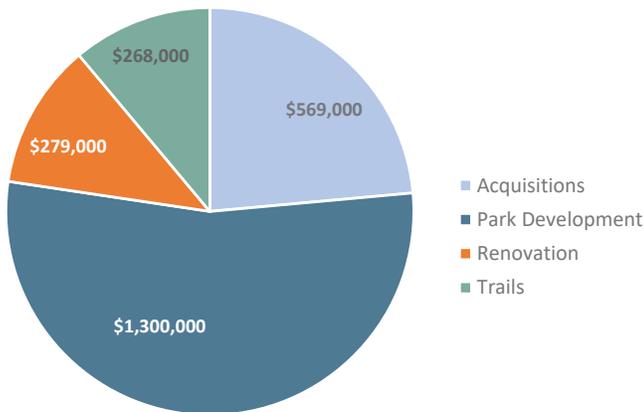


The preceding chapters provided an overview of Columbia City’s park system, along with goals and policies to guide future planning, development, and operations. This chapter focuses on specific project actions, including the proposed 20-year capital project list, and offers recommendations on additional strategies for successful implementation.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Parks Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlines capital projects planned for the next 20 years. These projects focus on the maintenance, acquisition, and development of parks, recreational amenities, and trails, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) required improvements. Survey results and other feedback have shown that Columbia City residents prioritize park facility upgrades and enhanced trail connections, and the CIP reflects these preferences. Figure 11 provides a summary of the aggregate capital expenditures by project category for the next two decades.

Figure 11 - Summary of 20-Year Capital Program Expenditures



Overall, the projected costs for projects identified in the 20-year CIP total over \$2.4 million. As these projects are phased in over the next decade, the planning-level project costs have been adjusted for an annual inflation rate of 5%. The proposed project list focuses primarily on improving existing facilities through timely repairs, replacements, and upgrades to maintain a healthy and safe park system for Columbia City.

Project Recommendations

Investment and improvement projects for the Columbia City park system are offered for near-term, mid-term, and long-term timelines.

Near-term (3-5 years) projects include:

- Harvard Park Renovations
 - Playground upgrade
 - Picnic Shelter
 - ADA & access improvements
- Wayfinding, Signage & Benches for Respite at Rivers Walk Trail

Mid-term (5-10 years) projects include:

- Jim Bundy Memorial Park Renovations
 - Playground installation
 - ADA & access improvements
 - Sport court installation (if additional land is available)
- Pixie Park Renovations
 - Parking improvements
 - ADA & access improvements
- Veterans Memorial Park picnic shelter
- Rivers Walk Pocket Park Development
- Trail Connections & Easements
- Parkland Acquisition
- System-wide Enhancements, including parking, signage and ADA improvements

Long-term (11-20 years) projects include:

- ADA enhancements and picnic shelter at Datis Park
- Parkland Acquisition
- Trail Connections
- System-wide Enhancements

Other accessibility enhancements will ensure universal accessibility, improve access to playgrounds and site furnishings, and conform to ADA guidelines. In general, the City will make necessary improvements to existing parks to ensure proper maintenance, usability, and quality of park features and grounds.

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Columbia City Parks Master Plan 20-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Inflation factor of 5% added to outgoing years to address rising rates and construction costs (rounded to \$1000).

Project Name	Description	Project Type	2025 Cost	Opinion	2026-27	2028-29	2030-31	2032-33	2034-35	2036-45	Totals
PARK IMPROVEMENTS											
Datis Park	ADA access route	D	\$15,000							\$31,000	\$31,000
	ADA furnishings: bench & picnic table	D	\$7,500							\$16,000	\$16,000
	Small picnic shelter	D	\$55,000							\$114,000	\$114,000
Harvard Park	Play equipment replacement	R	\$175,000			\$203,000					\$203,000
	ADA access routes	D	\$25,000		\$26,000						\$26,000
	ADA furnishings: bench & picnic table	D	\$7,500		\$8,000						\$8,000
	Small picnic shelter with path	D	\$75,000			\$87,000					\$87,000
	Shade tree plantings	D	\$5,000			\$6,000					\$6,000
Jim Bundy Memorial Park	New playground	D	\$250,000					\$352,000			\$352,000
	ADA access route	D	\$20,000					\$28,000			\$28,000
	ADA furnishings: bench & picnic table	D	\$7,500					\$11,000			\$11,000
	Multi-sport court installation striped for basketball, tennis & pickleball	D	\$90,000					\$127,000			\$127,000
Pixie Park	ADA access route	R	\$30,000				\$38,000				\$38,000
	ADA furnishings: bench & picnic table	D	\$7,500				\$10,000				\$10,000
	Extended parking	R	\$30,000				\$38,000				\$38,000
Veterans Memorial Park	Small picnic shelter with path	D	\$75,000						\$116,000		\$116,000
Rivers Walk Pocket Park	Small picnic shelter with path, benches & signage	D	\$110,000						\$171,000		\$171,000
Systemwide Enhancements	Wayfinding & signage (design & install updated signs)	D	\$45,000						\$70,000		\$70,000
	Renovate accessible routes, ADA-compliant benches & tables	D	\$35,000						\$54,000	\$73,000	\$127,000
Total Park Improvements			\$1,065,000		\$34,000	\$296,000	\$86,000	\$518,000	\$411,000	\$234,000	\$1,579,000
PARK ACQUISITIONS (* Acquisition target areas are estimations and will require due diligence & negotiation with current landowners)											
Neighborhood Park	Acquisition in Gap Area A (1-1.5 acres)	A	\$350,000				\$468,000				\$468,000
Rivers Walk Open Space Addition	Acquisition in Gap Area B (trail easement only)	A	\$60,000						\$101,000		\$101,000
Total Park Acquisitions			\$410,000		\$0	\$0	\$468,000	\$0	\$101,000	\$0	\$569,000
TRAILS											
Bike Path	ADA picnic tables (2)	D	\$10,000					15000			\$15,000
	ADA benches (2)	D	\$5,000					8000			\$8,000
Rivers Walk	Wayfinding signage	D	\$5,000		\$5,000						\$5,000
Highway 30 Crossing	Linkage from Veterans Memorial Park to Trestle Beach	A/D		TBD							\$0
On-Street Pathway from Rivers Walk to Dalton Lake	Acquisitions/easements & development for trail alignment	A/D		TBD							\$0
Trail System Acquisitions/Easements	Additional acquisitions or easements to support trail alignments	A	\$100,000					\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$120,000
Trail System Management	Surfacing & structure repairs or rehabilitations	R	\$200,000						\$40,000	\$80,000	\$120,000
Total Trail Projects			\$320,000		\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$53,000	\$80,000	\$130,000	\$268,000
Total CIP Projects			\$1,795,000		\$39,000	\$296,000	\$554,000	\$571,000	\$592,000	\$364,000	\$2,416,000

- Acquisition A
- Planning/Permitting P
- Renovation/Repair R
- Development/Expansion D

NOTES:
 This list identifies planning-level cost estimates and does not assume the value of volunteer or other non-City contributions. Detailed engineering, design and/or costing may be necessary for projects noted.
 This list is not an official budget and is intended as a guiding document for City staff in the preparation of departmental budgets.

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

IMPLEMENTATION & FINANCIAL TOOLS

A number of strategies exist to enhance and expand park service delivery for the City of Columbia City; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community will is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in this Plan to life, and the City Council has demonstrated its willingness in the past to support park opportunities and a high quality of life for local residents.

The recommendations for park services noted in this Plan may trigger the need for funding beyond current allocations and for additional staffing, operations, and maintenance responsibilities. Given that the operating and capital budget for park planning and maintenance is finite, additional resources may be needed to leverage, supplement, and support the implementation of proposed initiatives and projects. While grants and other efficiencies may help, these alone will not be enough to realize many ideas noted in this Plan.

The following recommendations and strategies are presented to offer near-term direction to realize these projects and as a means to continue dialogue between City leadership, local residents, and potential partners. Additionally, a review of potential implementation tools is included as Appendix G, which addresses local financing, federal and state grant and conservation programs, acquisition methods and others.

Enhanced Local Funding

The potential to bundle several projects from the Park Capital Improvement Plan or take advantage of unique opportunities, such as land acquisition for trail or park development, may warrant a review of debt implications and operating costs for the City, along with the need to conduct polling of voter support for such projects. To finance a large capital project, the City could explore the use and timing of General Obligation (G.O.) bonds, which are debt instruments sold by the City to fund new facilities or to make improvements to existing facilities. Bonds are repaid with property tax revenue generated by a special levy that is outside the limits imposed by ballot Measures #5 (1990) and #50 (1997). Voters must approve G.O. Bond sales either in a General Election, or in another election in which a minimum of 50% of registered voters participate. G.O. Bond revenues may not be used for operations, maintenance or repairs, but they may be used for renovations to existing facilities.

Urban Renewal District – Tax Increment Financing

Urban renewal allows for the use of tax increment financing, a funding source that is unique to urban renewal, to fund its projects. In general, urban renewal projects can include construction or improvement of streets, utilities, and other public facilities; assistance for rehabilitation or redevelopment of property; acquisition and re-sale of property (site assembly) from willing sellers; and improvements to public spaces including parks and open spaces.

Parks Utility Fee

A parks utility fee is an ongoing fee (often billed monthly) that provides revenue for the needs of the park system. When charged by a city, such a fee can be an additional line item on an existing utility bill. The revenue received can be used for both operational and capital needs, and it can be pledged to the debt service of revenue bonds. Establishment of a parks utility fee in Oregon requires compliance with legal requirements at both state and local levels. Several jurisdictions across Oregon have implemented and utilized a parks utility fee as supplemental funding to maintain and enhance their park systems. Columbia City could consider enacting a parks utility fee for the purpose of providing for the operation and maintenance of City parks and to ensure adequate resources are available for the sound and timely maintenance of existing recreation amenities.

System Development Charges (SDCs)

Park System Development Charges (SDCs) are fees paid by new development to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from the new growth. Park SDCs can only be used for parkland acquisition, planning and/or development. They cannot be used for operations and maintenance of parks and facilities. The City of Columbia City currently assesses a System Development Charges (SDC) for parks.

Local Option Levies

Local option levies are separate property tax levies that can be assessed to fund capital improvements or operations and maintenance activities. Such levies are outside of the City's permanent tax rate limit, subject to the combined rate limit imposed under Measure #5. Local option levies require voter approval and are subject to the double majority (50% voter turnout and 50% approval) requirement of Measure #5. If used to fund capital

improvements, revenues can be used to secure bonds or complete one or more projects on a pay-as-you-go basis, over a period of up to 10 years. Operations and maintenance levies are limited to a period of five years.

Parkland Donations & Dedications

Land donations from development projects, individuals, or conservation organizations could occur to complement the acquisition of park and open space lands in the City or as the City expands its UGB. Gift deeds or bequests from philanthropic-minded landowners could allow for lands to come into City ownership upon the death of the owner or as a tax-deductible charitable donation. Parkland dedication by a developer could occur in exchange for Park SDCs or as part of a planned development where public open space is a key design for the layout and marketing of a new residential project. Any potential dedication must be vetted by the City Administrator and Public Works Departments to ensure that such land is located in an area of need or can expand an existing City property and can be developed appropriately with site amenities meeting the intent of this Plan.

Grants & Appropriations

Several state, federal and private grant programs are available on a competitive basis, including those offered by the Oregon State Parks & Recreation Department (such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund). Pursuing grants is not a cure-all for park system funding, since grants are both competitive and often require a significant percentage of local funds to match the request to the granting agency, which depending on the grant program can be as much as 50% of the total project budget. Columbia City should continue to leverage its local resources to the greatest extent by pursuing grants independently and in cooperation with other local partners.

Appropriations from state or federal sources, though rare, can supplement projects with partial funding. State and federal funding allocations are particularly relevant on regional transportation projects, and the likelihood for appropriations could be increased if multiple partners are collaborating on projects.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships are increasingly necessary for local agencies to leverage their limited resources in providing park and recreation services to the community. Corporate sponsorships, health organization grants, conservation stewardship programs and non-profit organizations are just a few examples of partnerships where collaboration provides value to both partners. The

City has existing partners in the Port of Columbia County for the off-leash dog park. The City should continue to explore additional and expanded partnerships to help implement these Plan recommendations. Coordination with local sport leagues and potential providers of recreation activities and classes should be ongoing to assess the range and type of recreation options in demand within Columbia City and to maximize use of community facilities, such as the Community Hall and other park spaces.

Volunteer & Community-based Action

Successful volunteer efforts – through volunteer groups, students, neighborhood groups, or sport and service organizations – can result in significant site improvements and can allow community members to gain a sense of ownership in the park system. Volunteers and community groups like the St Helens Garden Club already contribute to a variety of community improvements, such as Veterans Park clean-ups, among others. In addition to the existing city webpage on volunteering, Columbia City should expand, update and promote lists of specific volunteer-appropriate projects on the website and social media platforms, and via partnerships with school district.

While supporting organized groups and community-minded individuals adds value to the Columbia City park system, volunteer coordination requires a substantial amount of staff time. Additional resources may be necessary to expand volunteer coordination to more fully utilize the community's willingness to support park improvement efforts.

Other Implementation Tools

Appendix G identifies other implementation tools, such as voter-approved funding, grants and acquisition tactics, that the City could utilize to further the implementation of the projects noted in the Park Improvement Plan projects List.

APPENDIX A

Assessments of Existing Parks

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK



CAROLYN KING PARK

Pocket Park
0.6 acres

Design Opportunities

- Small mini park with picnic table & views to River with water storage tanks in the background.
- Consider a native tree or two to screen water tanks and provide habitat and shade.

Management Considerations

- Very neat, clean and simple park space.

Amenities

- Picnic table with roof
- Paved path to table
- Memorial bench
- Park identification on picnic table roof
- Grass
- Shrubs
- Retaining wall
- Views to Columbia River
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Trash receptacle park rules sign



DATIS PARK

Pocket Park
0.14 acres

Design Opportunities

- Pocket park currently functions as an overlook with no beach access provided.
- Potential location for a gazebo with seating to accommodate a few people gathering to view the River with an ADA paved path.
- Japanese barberry hedge is non-native and invasive species. Very uncomfortable to trim and maintain. Consider replacing with native low-growing shrubs to discourage access on slope while maintaining views to River.

Management Considerations

- Currently, no ADA access.

Amenities

- Park identification sign
- Bench with back & armrests
- Open grass area
- Japanese barberry hedge
- Steep slope
- View to and across Columbia River
- No beach access



HARVARD PARK

Neighborhood Park
0.39 acres

Design Opportunities

- Play equipment is clearly aging. Plan for upgrade/replacement.
- Landscape plantings are haphazard and high maintenance. Consider a landscape planting design that simplifies the park and avoid non-native shrubs (like Japanese barberry).
- Park has no ADA access or accommodation. A master plan for the park could address new play equipment layouts, play safety material replacement, shade tree additions, removal of barberry, simplified park landscape design, and addition of ADA access routes.

Management Considerations

- Wood chips as playground surfacing are not deep enough to provide fall safety attenuation. Minimum 15" depth is required, and wood chips need to be engineered wood fiber.
- Japanese barberry hedge is non-native and invasive species. Very uncomfortable to trim and maintain. Not an appropriate planting near a children's play area.

Amenities

- Play structure
- Jungle gym
- Spinner
- Swings (2 tot & 2 strap)
- Seesaw
- Benches
- Picnic table
- Open grass area
- Ornamental trees
- Shrubs



JIM BUNDY MEMORIAL PARK

Neighborhood Park
2.86 acres

Design Opportunities

- Bench placements limit ADA access to only a few of the seating options.

Management Considerations

- Add painted lines for parking space designation and a designated handicapped space.
- If the portable toilet will not be re-installed, remove or re-purpose the fence enclosure for same.

Amenities

- Parking
- Bike path 'trailhead'
- Picnic shelter with 2 tables
- Paved paths (asphalt & crushed rock)
- Benches
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Trash receptacle
- Kiosk
- Park identification sign
- Forested area
- Grass (along bike path)
- Bike path
- Bike path sign



MARSON'S GARDEN

Special Use Facility
0.33 acres

Design Opportunities

- None noted.

Management Considerations

- Mount for flagpole spotlight is disconnected – needs repair.

Amenities

- Welcome sign
- Flagpole with lighting
- Rose garden on steep slope
- Shade trees (on slope)
- Park identification sign
- Open grass area
- Water & electric outlets
- Overhead utility lines



OFF LEASH DOG PARK (Leased from Port)

Special Use Facility
0.84 acres

Design Opportunities

- Consider adding a few shade trees to interior dog areas.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Parking
- Small & all dogs areas
- Chain link Fencing
- Double-gates entry
- Dog waste bag dispensers (2)
- Trash receptacles (2)
- “fire hydrant”
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Little library
- Park rules sign
- Grass
- Woodchip entry area
- Perimeter trees



PIXIE PARK

Pocket Park
0.31 acres

Design Opportunities

- Consider approaches to adding ADA access to some amenities.
- Consider adding a native shade tree to one side of open grass area (without blocking view to River).

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Parking
- Beachfront on River
- Picnic tables in grass
- Benches along entry walk
- Steps to beach
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Trash receptacle
- Park identification on entry timbers
- Grass
- Post & chain fence with hedge



VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK

Special Use Facility
0.39 acres

Design Opportunities

- Good ADA access throughout.
- Side entries from Tahoma Street are subtle.

Management Considerations

- Very well-maintained.

Amenities

- Handicapped parking space
- Portable toilet
- Paved pathways
- Numerous memorials
- Flagpoles
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Ornamental planting beds
- Grass
- Ornamental trees
- Benches
- Picnic tables
- Drinking fountain
- Park identification sign
- End of bike path



BIKE PATH

Special Use Facility

5.39 acres

Design Opportunities

- Wayfinding and branding signage could be planned to coordinate this amenity with other parks and natural areas - with mileage information, destinations, connections and directions provided.
- Replacement benches should be ADA-compliant and have accessible routes to connect them to the trail.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Starts at Jim Bundy
- Ends at Mattie & Park
- Paved path along Lower Columbia Highway
- Benches (non-ADA)
- Bike path identification sign
- Lewis & Clark interpretive kiosk



RIVERS WALK TRAIL

Trail & Open Space
7.89 acres

Design Opportunities

- Informational and directional trail signs could help users discern length and condition of trail.
- Trail corridor and trail tread could be widened to be more accommodating to trail users without worrying about encroaching vegetation.

Management Considerations

- Regular maintenance needed to control vegetation along pathway.

Amenities

- Crushed rock trail starts along paved path from Veterans Park
- Path switchbacks down to creek
- Natural area

APPENDIX B

Community Profile

Community Profile

LOCATION

Columbia City is a small community of just under 2,000 residents in northwestern Oregon, about 30 miles northwest of Portland. Sitting along the banks of the Columbia River in Columbia County, the city enjoys a temperate climate typical of the Pacific Northwest. Columbia City is bordered by the Columbia River to the east; the City of St. Helens to the south; wooded hills and unincorporated Columbia County lands to the west; and the City of Rainier further north along U.S. Highway 30.

The City's community services are centered on I Street, and include a post office, community hall, library, museum, and Pixie Park along the Columbia River. Residential neighborhoods stretch from the river to the west of

Highway 30 and are primarily made up of single family homes. Columbia City includes very limited commercial areas – most commercial services are located in nearby St. Helens. The Columbia City Industrial Park operated by the Port of Columbia County provides industrial lands with access to the river and rail lines.

HISTORY

Columbia City, Oregon, has a history deeply rooted in the Native peoples who lived, fished, and traded along the lower Columbia River for thousands of years. The Clatskanie, Multnomah, and other Chinookan-speaking tribes established a lasting cultural and economic presence that remains central to the region's heritage.

European exploration of the area began in the late 18th century, with expeditions by traders and fur companies along the Columbia River. The arrival of Lewis and Clark in 1805 marked a pivotal moment of contact and documentation of the region’s natural abundance and strategic location. Early European settlement in the 19th century transformed the area into a hub for timber, milling, and shipping.

Columbia City was platted in 1867 during Oregon’s timber boom and incorporated in 1926. Its riverfront supported sawmills and industries that relied on the Columbia River for transport and trade. Between 1917 and 1920, the City saw the completion of Highway 30, improving access to Portland, Astoria, and communities in between, as well as the siting of the Sommarstrom Shipbuilding Company which operated along the waterfront during World War I, providing critical wartime production and employment. In the postwar years, the creation of the Port of Columbia County (originally the Port of St. Helens) expanded regional opportunities for shipping, storage, and industry, reinforcing the city’s long-standing connection to the river and commerce. Later, the Dyno Nobel (now Columbia River Nitrogen) fertilizer plant became a major presence.

The 20th century also brought gradual residential growth as families sought a quieter, small-town community within commuting distance of Portland. Today, Columbia City is primarily a residential community known for its small-town character, scenic river views, and proximity to regional employment centers.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Columbia City is a small residential community home to families with children and a growing number of retirees drawn to the city’s quiet neighborhoods and natural beauty. The community’s population is predominantly White, though diversity has gradually increased in recent years, reflecting broader regional trends. Columbia City residents are generally well educated and enjoy strong employment and income levels comparable to those across Columbia County and the state. The city experienced steady population growth between 1990 and 2010 and has continued to expand at a moderate pace since then though projections for future growth are modest.

Table B1 - Population Characteristics: Columbia City, Columbia County, Oregon

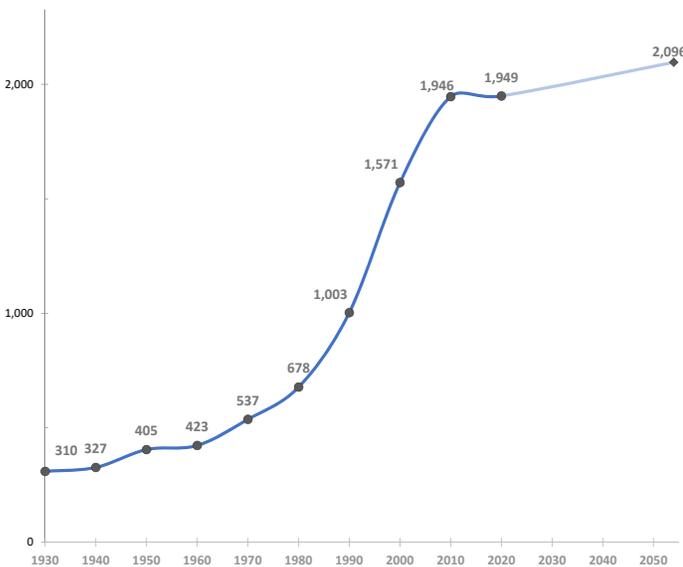
Demographics	Columbia City	Columbia County	Oregon
Population Characteristics			
Population (2024) ¹	1,946	53,639	4,267,261
Population (2020) ²	1,949	52,589	4,237,256
Population (2010) ³	1,946	49,351	3,831,074
Population (2000) ⁴	1,571	43,560	3,421,399
Percent Change (2000-24)	23.9%	23.1%	24.7%
Average Annual Growth Rate (2000-2024)	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Persons with Disabilities (%) ⁵	10.5%	16.7%	15.1%
Household Characteristics (2019-23) ⁵			
Households	723	20,710	1,701,548
Percent with children	30.6%	28.5%	27.6%
Median Household Income	\$100,912	\$86,359	\$80,426
Average Household Size	2.49	2.55	2.43
Average Family Size	2.96	2.93	2.98
Owner Occupancy Rate	90.0%	75.7%	63.4%
Age Groups (2018-22) ⁶			
Median Age	49.9	43.2	40.1
Population < 5 years of age	2.5%	5.0%	5.0%
Population < 18 years of age	19.4%	20.5%	20.2%
Population 18 - 64 years of age	55.6%	59.9%	61.2%
Population > 65 years of age	25.0%	19.6%	18.6%

Population Growth

Columbia City has grown significantly since its incorporation in 1926, when it was a small community of roughly three hundred residents. The city’s early development was tied to the region’s timber and manufacturing industries, which provided a foundation for its economy. The City has since transitioned to a primarily residential community that attracts families and retirees seeking a small-town feel, scenic views, and an easy commute to larger nearby cities. The city experienced its most rapid period of growth between 1990, when the population was 1,003 residents, and 2010, when it reached 1,946 residents. Some of this growth was due to the annexation and development of residential neighborhoods, including River Club Estates and Columbia View Heights. Today, Columbia City is home to approximately 1,950 residents.

The Portland State University Population Research Center projects that Columbia County’s population will continue to grow in the coming decades, with Columbia City forecasted to see a small share of that growth through an increase of roughly 150 residents (8%) by 2054. This forecast reflects Columbia City’s constrained growth potential, as it has limited undeveloped residential land and limited opportunities to expand. With this modest growth, the City will need to plan thoughtfully for how to balance recreational needs with limited growth in its tax base and less available land, to ensure residents have access to parks and recreation opportunities.⁵

Figure B1 - Population Change – Actual and Projected: 1930 – 2054



Age Group Distribution

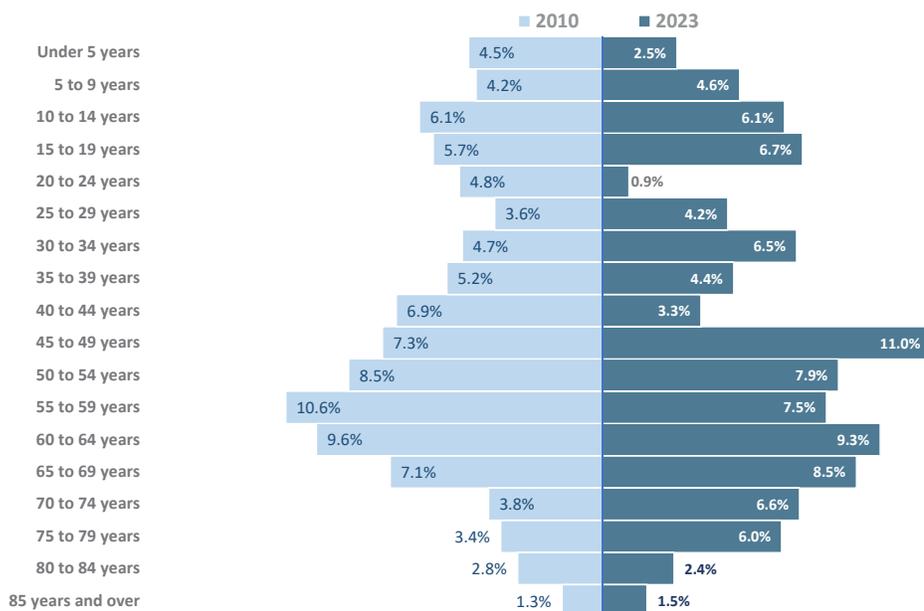
Columbia City’s demographic makeup reflects a community of predominantly middle- and retirement aged adults. Roughly 60% of the City’s residents are over the age of 45, compared to about 42% of residents across Oregon. Children and teens make up less than 20% of the population, and less than one-third of Columbia City households include children under the age of 18.

Children under 5 years, who are potential users of preschool and tot programs as well as park facilities like playgrounds and trails (in strollers) make up 3% of the population, see Figure B2. These individuals are also future participants in youth activities. Children between 5 and 14 years of age make up current youth program participants. About 11% of the city’s population is in this age range. Teens and young adults, age 15 to 24 years, are in transition from youth program to adult programs and participate in teen/young adult programs where available. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers. About 8% percent of Columbia City’s residents are teens and young adults.

Approximately 11% of residents are between 25 to 34 years of age, representing individuals who are entering long-term relationships and establishing families. Additionally, 27% of the population is between 35 and 54 years of age. These residents, who range from those with young children to empty nesters, enjoy a wide range of adult programs and park facilities. This age group also represents the city’s largest 20-year age group.

Older adults, ages 55 years and older, make up 42% of Columbia City’s population. This group represents users of adult and senior programs. These residents may be approaching retirement or already retired and may be spending time with grandchildren. This group also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Figure B2 - Age Group Distributions: 2010 & 2023



Household Characteristics ⁷

In 2023, the average household in Columbia City was 2.49 people, lower than the county (2.55) but on par with the statewide (2.43) average. The average family was larger, at 2.96 people. Of the 723 households in the city, 31% were families with children under 18 and 24% were individuals living alone. Most city households own their home (90%), higher than the average across Columbia County (76%), while 10% rent.

Employment & Education ⁷

Columbia City’s community is relatively well-educated. In 2023, 94% of residents over 25 years of age held a high school degree or higher, surpassing the county and statewide averages (90% and 92% respectively). One in five (21%) residents over 25 have attained a Bachelor’s degree or higher, on par with countywide rates (19%) but significantly lower than statewide rates (36%).

About 57% of Columbia City’s working age population (those 16 years and over) are in the labor force. In 2023, the city’s unemployment rate stood at 1.4%, which was much lower than that Columbia County (4.4%) and Oregon (5.4%).

City residents are employed in a range of industries. Nearly a quarter (24%) work in education, health, and social services. About 17% of residents work in manufacturing while another 10-12% of residents work in each of the construction, retail trade, and transportation and warehousing sectors. Nearly a quarter of City residents are employed by the local, state, and federal government, including local school districts.

Higher levels of employment and educational attainment positively correlate with both the income and health status of a community – both of which have further impacts on the use and need for park and recreation facilities, as described in the next two sections.

Income & Poverty ⁷

A community’s household income level can impact the types of recreational services prioritized by community members and their ability to pay for them. In 2023, the median household income in Columbia City was \$100,912. This income level was about \$14,500 (17%) higher than the median income for Columbia County households. Higher income households have an increased ability and willingness to pay for recreation and leisure services and often face fewer barriers to participation. Approximately 52% of Columbia City’s households have incomes in the higher income brackets (\$100,000 and greater), higher than the county average (40%).

Also, it is essential to consider the needs of lower-income residents, who may encounter barriers to physical activity due to reduced access to parks and recreational facilities, a lack of transportation options, a lack of time, and poor health. Lower-income residents may also be less financially able to afford recreational service fees or pay for services like childcare that can make physical activity possible. According to the 2023 American Community Survey data from the US Census, 14% of households in Columbia City earn less than \$25,000 annually and 7% of local families live below the poverty level (\$26,500 for a family of four), slightly more than county rates (5%).

Racial & Language Diversity

The City’s planning for future park and recreational opportunities should consider how best to meet the recreational needs of its community members. In 2023, the vast majority (96%) of Columbia City’s residents identified as White. Approximately 7% of residents identify as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of race, and 3% of residents speak Spanish at home. Though racial diversity has increased slightly over the past decade (from 2.1% of residents identifying as a race other than White in 2013 to 4.3% in 2023), the City remains relatively homogenous.

Should the City’s diversity increase significantly in the future, the City should consider whether this diversity brings new recreational needs, whether in park amenities, programming, or communications.

Table B2 - Changes in Racial Composition - 2013 – 2023

Racial Identification	2013 ⁸	2023 ⁷
White	97.9%	95.7%
Some other race	0.2%	0.0%
Two or more races	1.4%	3.7%
Asian	0.5%	0.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.0%	0.0%
Black or African American	0.0%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3.0%	7.1%

People Living with Disabilities ⁹

Maintaining a park system that caters to residents of all abilities is essential for complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensuring inclusivity. Approximately 10.5% of Columbia City’s population (190 persons) reports living with a disability that interferes with life activities, which is lower than county and state averages (17% and 15% respectively). Columbia City

should consider community needs to create inclusive and accessible parks, facilities, programs, and communications, enabling everyone to participate in recreation activities.

Health Status

A community’s overall health directly impacts its residents’ engagement in recreational and physical activities. Access to appropriate and convenient green spaces, recreational opportunities, and active transportation facilities plays a vital role in encouraging an active lifestyle. While specific health data for the Columbia City’s residents is not readily available, the 2025 County Health Rankings indicate that Columbia County ranks slightly better than the average Oregon county for both population health and community conditions.¹⁰ These rankings reflect the county’s health outcomes, including average relative number of poor health days for residents, as well as factors like health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and the physical environment.

In Columbia County, approximately 80% of adults aged 20 and older engage in leisure-time physical activity, on par with the average rate for the State of Oregon and higher than the U.S. average (77%). However, only 59% of Columbia County residents have access to adequate exercise opportunities, including parks or recreation facilities, significantly lower than the national (84%) and statewide (88%) averages. This suggests that the County could benefit from additional, well-distributed places for residents to participate in physical activities, making it easier for local residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles. As the community continues to prioritize health and well-being, fostering a supportive environment with accessible recreational opportunities is crucial in maintaining the good relative health of Columbia County’s residents.

Sources

- 1: 2023 Portland State University Certified Population Estimates
- 2: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.
- 3: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.
- 4: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census.
- 5: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
- 6: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

- 7 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, 2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
- 10 Data on the health status of Columbia County and State of Oregon residents taken from: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. “Oregon Rankings Data”. County Health Rankings. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/oregon/columbia?year=2025#population-health>. Accessed July 2025.

APPENDIX C

Community Engagement Process

Community Engagement

Community engagement played an essential role in developing the 2026 Parks Master Plan. Several outreach methods were used to connect with the community, seek their input, and provide information about the Plan through convenient online and in-person activities. Public outreach methods were varied and included:

- Mail and online community-wide survey
- Meetings with the Parks Committee, Park Advisory Committee and City Council
- Columbia City website & newsletter
- Multiple social media postings

Community Survey

A community-wide, mail and online survey was conducted to assess the recreational needs and priorities of Columbia City residents. The survey was mailed to all 854 households within the city limits on June 2, 2025, and reminder postcards were mailed to all households on June 13, 2025. The survey also was accessible from the City website and promoted in the City Newsletter. The survey was closed on July 1, 2025, and the full dataset was compiled and reviewed. Overall, 236 surveys were completed and returned (27.5% response rate).

Residents were asked about future improvements and the types of recreational amenities they would like to see considered for the park system. Survey respondents were asked about:

- Performance and quality of programs and parks;
- Usage of City parks and recreation facilities;
- Overall satisfaction with the value of services being delivered by the City;
- Opinions about the need for various park, recreation, and trail improvements; and
- Priorities for future recreation amenities and offerings.

Significant survey findings are noted below, and a more detailed discussion of results can be found in the needs assessment chapter covering parks, open space and trails.

Major Survey Findings:

- Nearly all respondents (92%) feel that public parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Columbia City.
- Residents of Columbia City frequently use the city's parks and recreation facilities, with nearly half visiting at least once a week, if not every day.

EXPAND WALKING TRAILS
83% Support & Top Priority

PROVIDE OUTDOOR SPLASHPAD
58% Support

UPGRADED & ADDITIONAL PLAYGROUNDS
56% Support

ADD PICNIC SHELTERS
76% Support

PROVIDE MORE SPORT COURTS
47% Support

UPGRADE EXISTING PARKS
2nd Highest Priority



- The most common reasons for park visits included walking or running or to relax. Nearly half of respondents have visited to walk a dog or for wildlife viewing. Respondents who do not visit parks more often feel there are not enough restrooms, have age or physical limitations, or don't know what is offered.
- Residents are generally satisfied with the parks and recreation system overall and with the condition of each of the City's parks.
- Residents identified expanding trail opportunities as their top priority, followed by improving and upgrading existing park playgrounds.
- Large majorities of respondents were either very or somewhat interested in extending the Rivers Walk Trail, adding picnic areas and shelters, and community gardens.
- Approximately two-thirds of respondents were supportive of a reduction in the number of mini parks to better focus limited resources and maintenance efforts.

The complete summary is provided in Appendix D.

Open House Meeting

The City of Columbia City hosted an informal, in-person open house on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Community Hall. This event was used as a way to inform people about the citywide Parks Master Plan project and gather community feedback for potential park system enhancements. The project team prepared informational displays, which included project overview, parks and outdoor recreation enhancements, recreational trail alignments, and potential park project and investment ideas.

Attendees received an overview of community engagement findings and were briefed on how to participate during the open house. Using sticky notes, participants commented on potential projects and shared ideas by writing or drawing on a conceptual recreational trail system. Attendees also utilized dots to identify priority amenities and projects and contribute additional comments or ideas.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members and record their comments. City staff and project team staff engaged with attendees to identify general needs and interests for parks and recreation opportunities in Columbia City. Ten people reviewed the materials and provided comments. Summary notes from the open house can be found in Appendix E.

Committee Meetings

A Parks Committee and a Park Advisory Committee provided feedback on developing the Parks Master Plan at three meetings during 2025 and early 2026. The first session occurred on May 10, 2025, immediately after initiating the planning project. The Committees received an overview of the planning process and shared their perspectives on specific challenges, opportunities, and ideas pertaining to City parks, trails, and recreational opportunities. Subsequent sessions occurred on October 7, 2025 and January 2026, and these were used to review public feedback and solicit direction from the Committees on priorities and recommendations for the new Parks Master Plan.

Other Outreach

In addition to the direct outreach opportunities described above, the Columbia City community was informed about the planning process through a variety of media platforms. The following methods were used to share information about the project and provide opportunities to participate and offer their comments:

- City website
- City newsletter
- Social media via Facebook

The City of Columbia City, Oregon
October 13 · 🌐

Come provide your input on Columbia City Parks at the open house tomorrow, Tuesday, October 14, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Hall.

Columbia City Parks Master Plan Open House
October 2025

Help shape the future of Columbia City's parks and open spaces!

The City of Columbia City is preparing a citywide Parks Master Plan as a blueprint for park and open space improvements. Community input plays an important role in the planning process, and **we want to hear from you!** Drop in between 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. on October 14th to share your thoughts.

Attend the informal Master Plan Open House to learn more about the plan, review results from the recent survey, and provide your feedback on the future of Columbia City's parks and open space.

For more information
Contact us at 509-397-4010 or via email: KKarber@columbia-city.org
Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColumbiaCityOR>
City website: <https://columbia-city.org/>

Citywide Parks Master Plan Open House
October 14, 2025; 6:30pm
Community Hall
1850 2nd St.

Use the QR code or visit columbia-city.org to view City park information.

The City has nearly 20 acres across 7 public parks that serve Columbia City residents and visitors, plus the Rivers Walk Trail and Bike Path.

Like Comment Share

PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX D

Community Survey Summary

To: Kim Karber, City Administrator
From: Steve Duh, Conservation Technix, Inc.
Date: July 23, 2025
Re: **Columbia City Parks Master Plan**
Community Survey Summary Results

Conservation Technix is pleased to present the results of a survey of the general population of the City of Columbia City that assesses residents' recreational needs and priorities.

KEY FINDINGS

Columbia City residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities.

Nearly all respondents (92%) think parks and recreation are important or essential to quality of life in Columbia City. Very few, about 8%, feel they are useful, but not necessary, or not important at all.

Residents visit Columbia City parks frequently to participate in a range of activities.

Residents of Columbia City frequently use the city's parks and recreation facilities, with more nearly half visiting at least once a week, if not every day. The most common reasons for park visits included walking or running or to relax. Nearly half of respondents have visited to walk a dog or for wildlife viewing. Respondents who do not visit parks more often feel there are not enough restrooms, have age or physical limitations, or don't know what is offered.

While residents prioritize maintaining existing parks and facilities, they are generally supportive of improving the City's park and recreation system as well.

Residents are generally satisfied with the parks and recreation system overall and with the condition of each of the City's parks. Large majorities of respondents were either very or somewhat interested in extending the River's Walk Trail, adding picnic areas and shelters, and community gardens. Residents identified expanding trail opportunities as their top priority, followed by improving and upgrading existing park playgrounds. Approximately two-thirds of respondents were supportive of a reduction in the number of mini parks to better focus limited resources and maintenance efforts.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In close collaboration with City of Columbia City staff, Conservation Technix developed the 15-question survey that was estimated to take less than ten minutes to complete.

The survey was mailed to all 854 households within the city limits of Columbia City on June 2, 2025, and reminder postcards were mailed to all households on June 13, 2025. An additional reminder was included in the City newsletter. The survey was accessible from the City website also. The survey was closed on July 1, 2025, and the full dataset was compiled and reviewed. Overall, 236 surveys were completed and returned (27.5% response rate, 6% margin of error).

This report includes findings on general community opinions. Since the survey was open to the general public and respondents were not selected through statistical sampling methods, the results are not necessarily representative of all City residents. Survey responses significantly underrepresent residents under 55 years of age and over-represent residents over the age of 65. See Figure 1 below for age demographics for the survey respondents, as well as comparative percentages for Columbia City's population.

Figure 1. Age demographics of survey respondents

Age group	Survey Respondents	Columbia City	
		All	Over 20
Under 20	0.5%	20%	--
20 to 34	7%	12%	15%
35 to 44	13%	8%	10%
45 to 54	8%	19%	24%
55 to 64	16%	17%	21%
65 to 74	32%	15%	19%
75 and older	23%	10%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

This report includes findings of community opinions based on the survey responses. Each section also notes differences between different demographic groups, where applicable. However, the limited number of responses prevents determining whether any differences between age groups and household makeup are statistically significant. Percentages in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

DETAILED FINDINGS

Usage and satisfaction of parks and recreation facilities

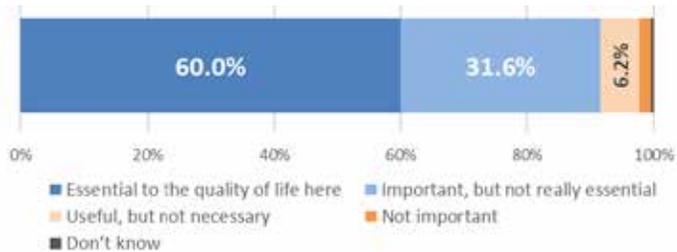
How much do residents value parks and recreation?

Virtually all respondents (92%) feel that local parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Columbia City. Sixty percent of respondents overall feel that they are essential; while an additional 32% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential, see Figure 2. Only about 8% of respondents believe parks are useful, but not important, or not important.

Residents of all ages value parks and recreation similarly – there were minimal differences based on age, area of residence, and household makeup.

Figure 2. When you think about what contributes to quality of life in Columbia City, would you say city parks and recreation opportunities are...

Response options		
Essential to the quality of life here	60%	92%
Important, but not really necessary	32%	
Useful, but not important	6%	
Not important or don't know	2%	



How often do residents use City parks and recreation facilities?

Respondents were asked how often they visit a City park or open space in a typical year. Approximately 47% visit at least once a week, if not every day, see Figure 3. Another 26% visit one to three times per month, while about 20% visit a few times per year. Very few respondents (7%) do not visit a park at all.

Survey respondents showed consistent usage of parks by age and location of residence compared to the total set of respondents. Respondents with children were more likely to visit at least once per week.

Figure 3. In a typical year, how often did you visit or use Columbia City's parks or open space?



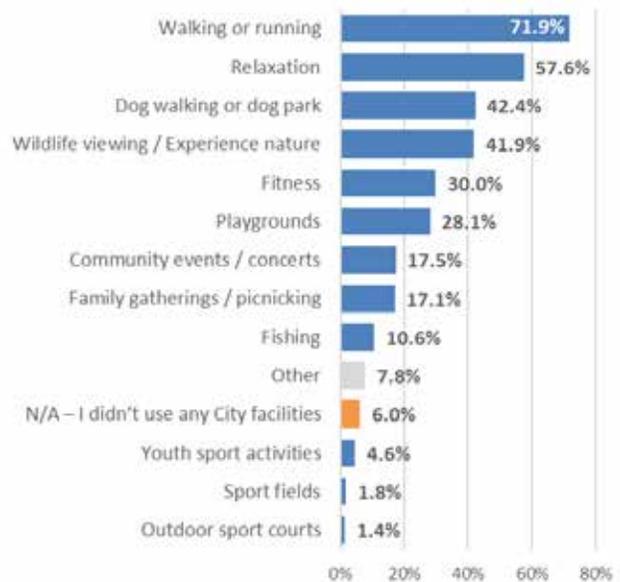
Why do residents visit Columbia City’s parks and recreation facilities?

Respondents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons, but the most frequently cited reasons to walk or run (61%) and to relax (58%). Nearly half of residents have visited to walk a dog (42%) or for wildlife viewing (42%). Between 15% and 30% have visited for fitness (30%), playgrounds (28%), community events (18%), or a family gathering or picnic (17%). Fewer than one in nine respondents chose fishing, youth sports, sports fields, or sports courts, as a primary reason why they visit local parks.

Respondents under the age of 55 were more likely than older residents to visit for playgrounds, fitness, and family gatherings or picnics. However, many activities, including running and walking, relaxation, dog walking, and wildlife viewing are similarly popular across all age groups.

Respondents with children in their home were generally more likely to visit parks for playgrounds and family gatherings or picnics, compared to respondents without children in the home. There were no significant differences between residents by location.

Figure 4. What are the main reasons your household visits Columbia City parks or recreation facilities?



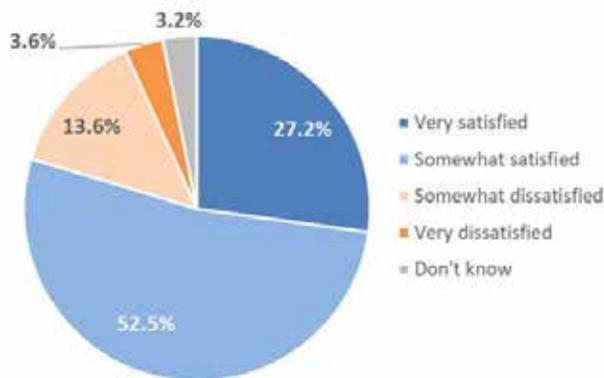
Satisfaction with existing recreation and parks

Are residents satisfied with Columbia City’s recreation, parks, and open spaces?

Most residents are somewhat to very satisfied with Columbia City’s parks and open spaces (80%). However, one in six survey respondents are either somewhat (14%) or very dissatisfied (4%) in the city’s park and recreation system, see Figure 5.

There were no significant differences in satisfaction between residents of various ages or between residents living in various areas of the city. Respondents with children indicated a slightly higher level of dissatisfaction with the City’s parks and open space.

Figure 5. Rate your household’s satisfaction with Columbia City’s parks or open space.

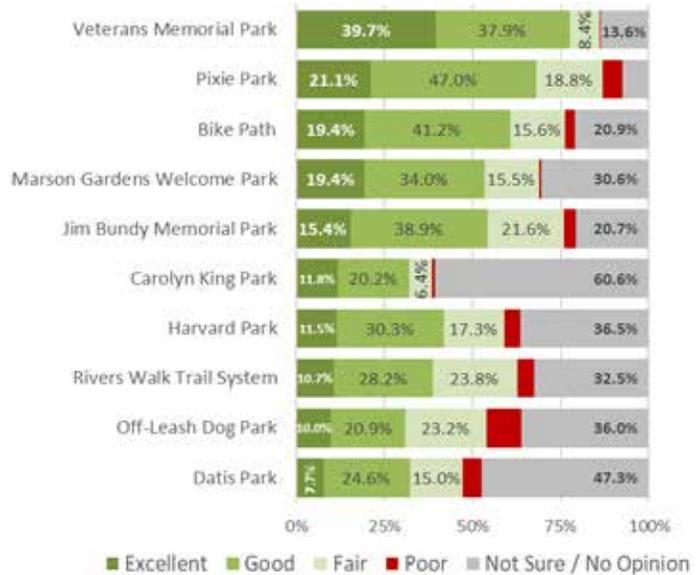


How would residents rate the condition of parks they have visited?

Survey respondents who have an opinion generally rate the condition of Columbia City’s individual parks as fair, good, or excellent, as shown in Figure 6. Large majorities of respondents rate the condition of Veterans Memorial Park (86%), Pixie Park (87%), Jim Bundy Memorial Park (76%), and the Bike Path (76%) as fair, good, or excellent. Fewer respondents expressed an opinion about the condition about other city parks. Looking just at those who rated each park, approximately 10% were dissatisfied with the condition of Datis Park and 16% were dissatisfied with the condition of the Off-Leash Dog Park.

There were no significant differences between respondents based on age, children in the home, or location.

Figure 6. How would you rate the condition (maintenance) of each of the following parks?



Why don't residents visit more often?

When asked why they do not visit Columbia City’s parks and open spaces more often, over one-third (36%) responded that they do visit often. The largest percentages of respondents do not visit more because they feel there are not enough restrooms (15%), have age or physical limitations (15%), or don’t know what is offered (15%), or see Figure 7.

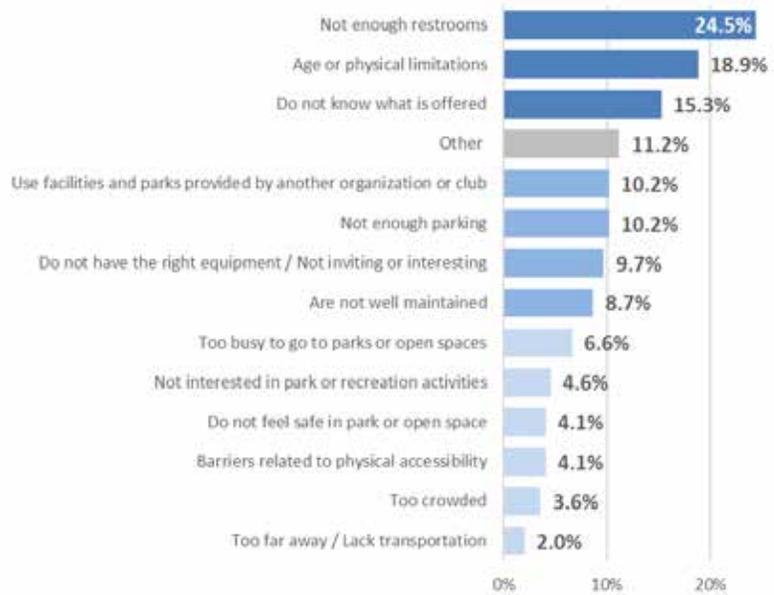
Smaller percentages of respondents noted that parks do not have the right equipment (10%), have insufficient parking (10%), or are not well maintained (9%), or they use parks or facilities provided by other cities or organizations (10%).

Some residents are too busy (7%), are generally not interested (5%), do not feel safe (4%), or face accessibility barriers (4%), suggesting that further improvements may not increase their use of parks.

Respondents between 20 and 55 years of age and those with children more often noted that parks are not well maintained, don’t have the right equipment, and there are not enough restrooms.

In addition, 22 respondents wrote in responses citing concerns about the lack of sport courts, the condition of playgrounds, the amount of dog waste or off-leash dogs. Other comments noted the small number or small size of city parks and limited parking at parks.

Figure 7. Please CHECK ALL the reasons why your household does not use Columbia City’s parks or open spaces more often..



Does the number of existing park and recreation amenities meet residents’ needs?

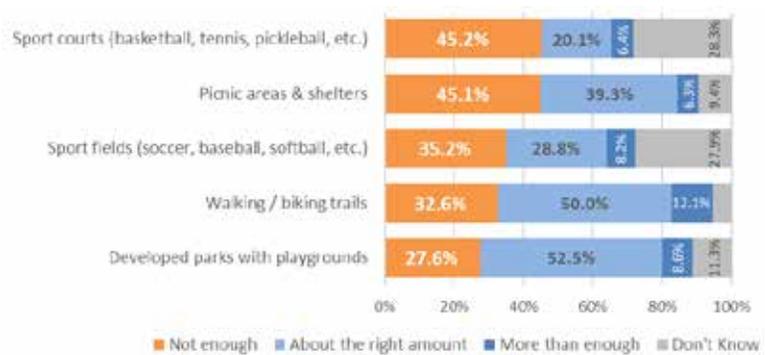
Residents were somewhat divided on whether they feel the City provides enough park, trails, and recreation facilities.

Just less than half of survey respondents would like to see more sport courts (45%) and picnic areas (45%), while one-third would like the City to provide more sports fields (47%) walking and biking trails (33%), see Figure 8.

Smaller percentages of respondents think that the City does not provide enough developed parks with playgrounds (28%).

Respondents between 20 and 44 years of age and those with children in their home were generally more likely than other respondents to feel there are not enough sport courts, sport fields, parks with playgrounds and picnic areas. There were no significant differences between respondents based on location.

Figure 8. When it comes to meeting your households parks or recreation facilities needs, how would you rate the availability of each of the following?



Investment Priorities

What park and recreation amenities would residents support adding in Columbia City?

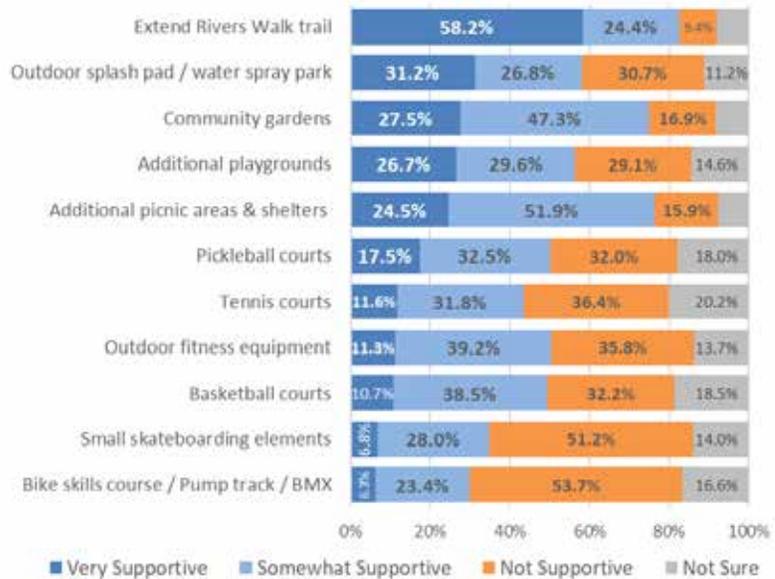
The survey asked residents about their support for a variety of potential additions to the park system. Approximately half of respondents were either very interested or somewhat interested in all listed amenities, except three (tennis courts, skateboarding elements and a bike skills course).

As shown in Figure 9, large majorities of respondents were either very or somewhat interested in extending the River’s Walk Trail (83%), adding picnic areas and shelters (76%), and community gardens (75%).

Roughly half of respondents were also interested in an outdoor splash pad (58%), additional playgrounds (56%), pickleball courts (50%), and basketball courts (50%).

Respondents between 20 and 44 years of age were somewhat more supportive of additional playgrounds, picnic areas, pickleball, splash pad, skate elements and a bike skills course. Respondents with children were more supportive of additional playgrounds and a splash pad. There were no significant differences between respondents based on location.

Figure 9. The following list includes additional amenities that the City of Columbia City could consider adding to the park system. Please indicate your level of interest for each.

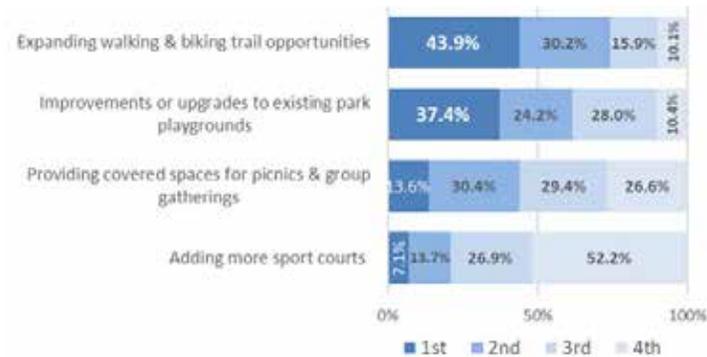


What park and recreation investments would residents prioritize?

Respondents were also asked to rank a list of four potential park system improvements. They identified expanding trail opportunities as their top priority, followed by improving and upgrading existing park playgrounds, see Figure 10. Providing covered spaces for picnics and group gatherings was the third highest ranked priority. Adding more sport courts was ranked as the lowest average priority by respondents.

Respondents with children were more likely than those without children to rate “improvements or upgrades to existing park playgrounds” as their top priority. No other significant differences exist by age, household composition or location.

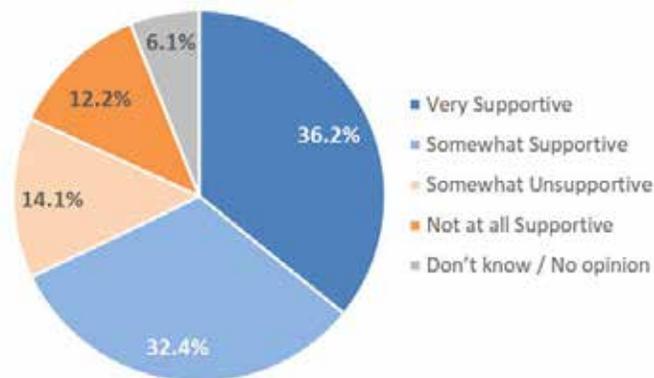
Figure 10. For the following list, indicate how you would rank the priority for each (1st priority is highest and 4th priority is lowest).



Would residents support a reduction in mini parks in Columbia City to focus limited resources?

Survey respondents were asked whether they would support a reduction in the number of mini parks to better focus limited resources and maintenance efforts. Responses were mostly split between being very supportive (36%), somewhat supportive (32%), and either somewhat unsupportive or not at all supportive (26%), see Figure 11. The spread in responses could suggest that additional communication from the City is necessary to frame a community dialogue around this issue.

Figure 11. Currently, Columbia City manages several mini parks that offer limited opportunities for recreation. If the City were to explore reducing the number of small parks in its inventory with the goal to improve the efficiency of park maintenance and focus on priority park investments at the remaining park sites, how would you rate your support for approach?



Respondents with children were more likely than those without children to be very or somewhat supportive reducing the number of mini parks to focus on park investments at remaining City parks. There were no significant differences in opinion based on age or location.

Do residents have specific improvements they would like to see?

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of Columbia City do to improve park, trail, and/or recreation options. While respondents provided 161 specific comments and ideas, a few themes emerged:

- **Trails:** Many respondents voiced their support for expanding, improving, and maintaining walking and biking trails, especially the River’s Walk Trail. Respondents would like to see

improvements to River’s Walk that include extending the trail, widening and improving the condition of the existing trail, and vegetation management.

- **River Access:** There is interest in improving access to the Columbia River. Suggestions include improving safety (Pixie Park), providing life jackets, and enhancing access for fishing, boating, and walking.
- **General Maintenance:** Several comments suggested the need for more or enhanced maintenance, including weeding, tree/shrub trimming, and dog waste pickup. Some respondents suggested the need for ‘dogs on leash’ signs and enforcement for dog owners to pick up pet waste.
- **Parking:** Respondents want additional parking, especially near Veterans Park and Pixie Park.
- **Recreation Facilities:** Many respondents requested that the City develop new, or improve existing, recreation facilities such as pickleball and tennis courts, all-weather covered areas (picnic shelters), skate park, and an off-leash dog park on the west side of US 30.
- **Playgrounds:** Multiple respondents requested improvements to playgrounds, including updated equipment at Harvard Park.

The full list of write-in comments is provided in Appendix 2.

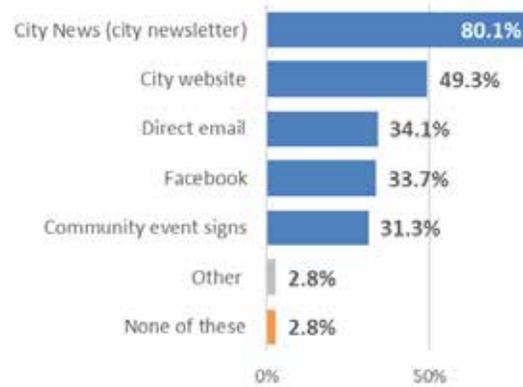
Communication preferences

How do residents want to hear about Columbia City’s parks, programs, and events?

A large majority of respondents (80%) prefer to learn about City parks, amenities, and special events through the City News newsletter. Between one-third and half of respondents prefer information from the the City website (50%), direct email (34%), Facebook (33%), or community event signs (31%), see Figure 12. These methods were popular across all age groups; however, respondents between 20 and 44 years of age were slightly more interested in communications via Facebook and those between 55 and 64 were slightly more interested in communications via the City website.

Residents without children at home and those over age 55 were more likely to prefer communication via the City newsletter. There were no significant differences in communication preferences by location.

Figure 12. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about Columbia City’s parks and amenities.

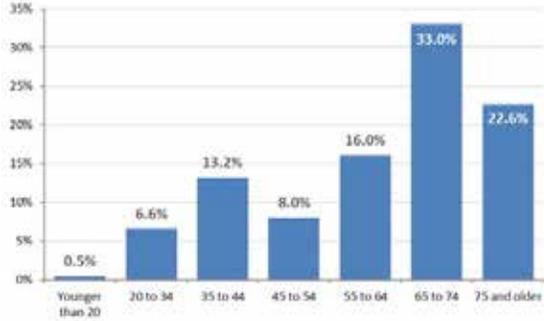


Demographics

Age groups

Just over one half of survey respondents were over 65 years of age (56%), see Figure 13. Another 24% of respondents were between 45 and 64 years of age. Approximately 20% of respondents were 44 years old or younger.

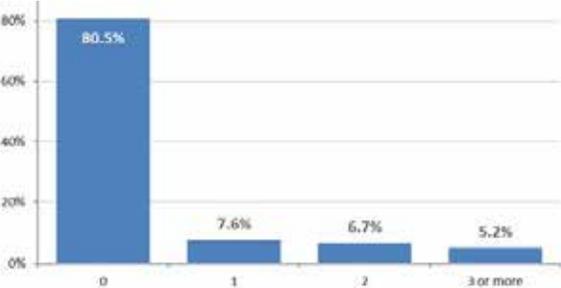
Figure 13. Age of survey respondents



Number of children in household

A large majority (80%) of respondents to the survey live in households with no children under 18, while about 20% live in a household with either one (8%), two (7%), or three or more (5%) children, see Figure 14.

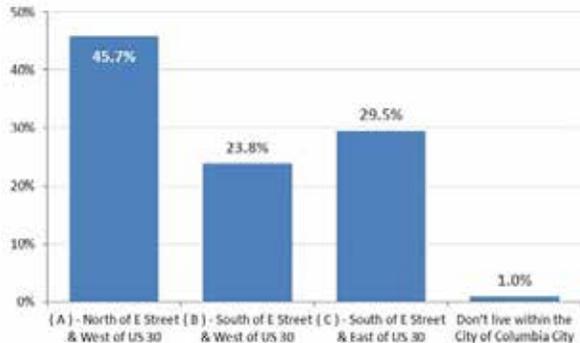
Figure 14. Number of children in respondent's household



Location of residence

Nearly all survey respondents live within the City of Columbia City. About 46% of respondents live to north of E Street and west of US 30 (map area A). Another 30% live south of E Street and east of US 30 (map area C), while 24% live south of E Street and west of US 30 (map area B). Only 1% of respondents indicated that they live outside of Columbia City's city limits.

Figure 15. Where respondents live



ATTACHMENT 1. SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Community Survey on Parks and Recreation

Dear Columbia City Resident:

The City of Columbia City has started a community-led process to update its citywide Parks Master Plan. We need your help to determine how to prioritize projects and what we should focus on to keep our parks and activities thriving into the future. As an initial step, the City is conducting this short survey to assess the community's recreation needs. We ask that you consider your needs for the future as you evaluate recreation amenities. Your opinions are important to the City.

The survey has 15 questions and will only take a few minutes to complete. Save a stamp; use the link or QR code to take this survey online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ColumbiaCityParks>



Hurry! Survey closes June 30

1. When you think about what contributes to the quality of life in Columbia City, would you say that city parks and recreation opportunities are...

- Essential to the quality of life here
- Important, but not essential
- Useful, but not necessary
- Not important
- Don't Know

2. In a typical year, how often did you visit or use Columbia City's parks or open space?

- Everyday
- At least once a week
- Two or more times a month
- About once a month
- A few times over the year
- Do not visit facilities / parks / open spaces
- Don't know

3. When it comes to meeting your households parks or recreation facilities needs, how would you rate the availability of each of the following? (Check only one box in each row)

	More than Enough	About the Right Amount	Not Enough	Don't Know
Developed parks with playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Walking / biking trails	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Picnic areas & shelters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport fields (soccer, baseball, softball, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sport courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Rate your household's satisfaction with Columbia City's parks or open space.

- Very Satisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- Don't Know

Save a stamp! Use the QR code and take this survey online:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ColumbiaCityParks>
 Or send it back in the enclosed Return-Reply envelope provided. Thanks for participating!



5. How would you rate the condition (maintenance) of each of the following parks?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure / No Opinion
Carolyn King Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Dotis Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Harvard Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Jim Bundy Memorial Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marson Gardens Welcome Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pixie Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Rivers Walk Trail System	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Veterans Memorial Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Bike Path	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Off-Leash Dog Park	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. What are the main reasons your household visits Columbia City parks or recreation facilities? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport fields |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor sport courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walking or running | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife viewing / Experience nature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking or dog park | <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family gatherings / picnicking | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community events / concerts | <input type="checkbox"/> N/A – I didn't use any Columbia City facilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth sport activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

7. Please CHECK ALL the reasons why your household does not use Columbia City's parks or open spaces more often. (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> N/A - Does not apply; I/we use them often | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not have the right equipment / Not inviting or interesting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age or physical limitations | <input type="checkbox"/> Do not feel safe in park or open space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are not well maintained | <input type="checkbox"/> Too busy to go to parks or open spaces |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barriers related to physical accessibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Too crowded |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too far away / Lack transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Not interested in park or recreation activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough parking | <input type="checkbox"/> Use facilities and parks provided by another city, organization, or private club |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough restrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do not know what is offered | |



Community Survey on Park & Recreation

Survey closes June 30!

8. Columbia City must prioritize limited funding to address citywide park system needs. The following list includes park amenities that Columbia City could consider adding to the park system. Please indicate whether you would be very supportive, somewhat supportive, not sure, or not supportive of each.

	Very Supportive	Somewhat Supportive	Not Supportive	Not Sure
Additional playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional picnic areas & shelters for group gatherings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Basketball courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tennis courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pickleball courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community gardens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor fitness equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor splash pad / water spray park	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Small skateboarding elements (ramps, bumps, rails)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bike skills course / Pump track / BMX	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extend Rivers Walk trail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. For following list, rank the priority for each (1st is highest and 4th is lowest). Use each ranking only once.

	Select each priority ONLY ONCE . Highest priority → Lowest priority				Don't know / No opinion
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
Improvements or upgrades to existing park playgrounds	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adding more sport courts (basketball, pickleball, volleyball, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Expanding walking & biking trail opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing covered spaces for picnics & group gatherings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Currently, Columbia City manages several mini parks that offer limited opportunities for recreation. If the City were to explore reducing the number of small parks in its inventory with the goal to improve the efficiency of park maintenance and focus on priority park investments at the remaining park sites, how would you rate your support for approach?

- Very Supportive
- Somewhat Supportive
- Somewhat Unsupportive
- Not at all Supportive
- Don't know / No opinion

11. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about Columbia City’s parks and amenities. (check all that apply).

- City website
- City News (city newsletter)
- Facebook
- Direct email
- Community event signs
- None of these
- Other: _____

12. If you wanted Columbia City to do just one thing to improve park, trail, and/or recreation options, what would it be?

The following questions help us understand whether we have gathered responses from a broad segment of the community. It’s important that you provide a response to each question.

13. How many children under age 18 live in your household?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

14. What is your age?

- Younger than 20
- 20 to 34
- 35 to 44
- 45 to 54
- 55 to 64
- 65 and 74
- 75 and older

15. Using the map, in which section of Columbia City do you live?

- (A) - North of E Street & West of US 30
- (B) - South of E Street & West of US 30
- (C) - South of E Street & East of US 30
- Don't live within the City of Columbia City



Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!
 Your input will help guide the development of Columbia City’s 2026 Parks Master Plan.

Save a stamp! Take this survey online with the QR code or at:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ColumbiaCityParks>

Learn more about Columbia City parks, trails and amenities and stay informed about the Parks Master Plan process at <https://columbia-city.org/>

**Survey closes
June 30!**



The City of Columbia City is using the services of a consultant team who specializes in park and recreation planning. Please return your completed survey in the enclosed Return-Reply Envelope addressed to: Conservation Technix Inc., PO Box 12736, Portland, OR 97212

ATTACHMENT 2. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Question 6. What are the main reasons your household visits Columbia City parks or recreation facilities? (open-ended other responses)

- Pickleball
- River just for fun
- Watching special events river activity Christmas boats / Rose Festival fleet
- Pull weeds at Veteran's Park
- Visit with neighbors
- Ship watching, welcoming entrance to Columbia City
- Bathroom
- Yard maintenance
- I use the bike path.
- Daughter practices her pitching
- Biking and kiteboarding
- Biking
- The upkeep is very poor in Pixie Park and there is zero regulation or control or courtesy for neighborhood.
- If their were courts available for sports we would use them!
- Biking/skating
- Seldom use because they for he most part are not secluded, spacious or inviting.
- Only used Pixie park

Question 7. Please CHECK ALL the reasons why your household does not use Columbia City's parks or open spaces more often. (open-ended responses)

- There are no pickleball courts
- We only walk west of Hwy 30
- I enjoy my own open space
- lack of shade. Would like to see trees
- No kids, older, use all for walking
- No dock for rowboat, kayaks, SUP
- Location - Bundy is close but next to the highway
- Not enough info of where parks are located
- Dog sit
- Enjoy my own backyard
- Limited space = limited walking
- We like the walking trail along river in St.Helens.
- Walking mostly by them. Single

- We just use the walking path and river walk
- Skatepark, sports courts
- Lots of poop at dog park.
- The upkeep in Pixie is poor and there are people using drugs we see them from the top of the hill parking all night or using for a drug drop off there is no rules present or enforced making it an easy place to come.
- Want safer/well maintained playground and kid/adult courts/fields sport areas
- Off leash dogs have become a problem
- Playground structure not in great condition
- Existing parks are too small to provide rest, interest or solitude that I would look for
- There needs to be parking at the beginning of the walking trail

Question 11. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about Columbia City's parks and amenities. (open-ended responses)

- Not interested!
- Text
- Mail
- Text
- Just maintain the parks do not add.
- No pickle ball. Town too small 4 noise

Question 12. If you wanted Columbia City to do just one thing to improve park, trail, and/or recreation options, what would it be? (open-ended responses)

- provide rest rooms
- I really like the idea of expanding the river walk to be more family friendly.
- Put a portapotty at Veteran's Memorial Park
- Improve the hand rail going down to the water at Pixie Park. It's too wide, my hand has slipped several times and the steps can be tricky to navigate. I end up just kinda running.
- I would like to see Ruth Rose Richardson become a City park. It is close to Pixie - great place for picnic tables and playground equipment, even a covered picnic area for groups to meet.
- Exercise equipment - pull-up bars, dip bars
- Build nice pickleball courts. It is really fun for all ages. Very good for the community.
- Community garden
- Kayak launch area
- Keep them mowed and cleaned up a little better
- Don't use city parks

- Make the parks more inviting! Maintenance/mowing and landscaping
- You are doing a good job - thank you. Perhaps more upgrades, benches to the River Walk from Veterans Park
- Maintain current parks - mowing and shrub trimming especially at Harvard Park and Jim Bundy Park. Include weed control and tree trimming
- Ordinance to keep people from planting trees that block others' view of the river - why we love it here
- Continue to maintain well
- add restrooms!
- I love the idea of a community garden
- A. Move 25mph speed sign in front of power pole (across from Harvard Park). B. Clean up Bundy Park and develop picnic area under covered area
- Let people know where the places are located
- Safety on the trail from Columbia City to St Helens. Shade and water fountain at the dog park
- parking
- Maintenance! Keep weeds and trails safe. The Rivers Walk is unsafe, path eroding, path too narrow and too steep for most of the elderly residents
- Improve Pixie Park
- Utilize Port property to connect to trestle along a river walk/bluff to enjoy during high tide with tables, picnic options, benches. Understand the backside of pellet mill makes this complicated but a pass through would be great. They don't use the dock.
- Covered spaces
- Just staying on top of safety with maintenance.
- Keep them well maintained.
- "No skate parks, brings graffiti. I wish they maintained a more natural look to the park areas, and that they had water fountains.
- How much was spent on the entire cost of the survey? is there a location that could be a future site for a community center of our own in Columbia City? Probably would cost too much to operate and maintain, but put it on the wish list. :)"
- More shelters/event space
- Clear hiking trails
- Be able to walk the river end to end!
- Fishing availability at Columbia River Beach
- Think it is important to have open spaces throughout the city for children (and adults) to rest, play. Bundy Park might be 'mowed' more often - know it is difficult.
- Maintenance doesn't seem to be a priority- could someone do some weeding once in a while? And use some environmentally safe weed n' feed on grass areas?
- Cameras at the dog park
- Spray for bugs
- Disc golf course please!
- Expand the bike/walking trails

- Trash and dog bags at Datis Park, picnic tables, covered area for shade or rain!
- Public restroom - with locks and daily cleaning
- Focus on Harvard Park and Jim Bundy Park. Harvard Park - update all of the playground equipment, picnic tables, more family friendly. Jim Bundy - preserve wildflowers (Trilliums), trim trees, picnic tables.
- Have residents 1) trim their trees and shrubs along street and 2) park with all parks of car or RV off the right of way to give runners and walkers room!
- Get rid of the dog park. Dogs don't need parks.
- Need better water access, small dock, and parking for paddle/oar craft May through October.
- Clean dog park - make people accountable
- Create another access point to the river other than Pixie Park that has a fishing dock
- More walking trails / amount or improvements to existing trails
- More walking path
- Improve the River Walk
- Create opportunities for kids to get exercise and space to run
- Improve access to Columbia River and connect beach to rivers walk with access under Highway 30. Complete rivers walk along creek and connect with 9th Street.
- More benches, rest places
- More garbage cans
- Maintaining them would be awesome!
- Access to some kind of fishing in Columbia River
- Try to secure access or improve a location to river or proximity to it.
- To put lights in Jim Bundy Park. So dark.
- Clean and maintain what exists now. Upgrading what exists is also important.
- Develop a park with space for events, picnics, parties, etc. Water/restrooms/cover/etc.
- Add some covered shelter at Pixie Park (maybe)
- - Easy fix at Harvard Park with gravel, trash service, low maintenance upgrades. - Focus and create a space along Hwy 30 for family picnics, events, etc. Thank you for asking the taxpayers!
- Add lights to Jim Bundy Park. This would be especially nice in the wintertime when it gets dark earlier. Would also be a nice safety measure.
- Consolidate to a bigger park - playground - picnic - expand / prioritize Pixie Park - no use of the park above - parking?
- Less but improve what's left.
- Can't think of any. City has been doing a great job for such a small town!
- Parking accessibility
- Wish people were friendlier!
- Much improved maintenance
- Stairs and Pixie Park to beach are dangerous. Veteran Park is large enough to put a covered picnic area and expand the playground w/ more equipment! Not enough equipment and gets too crowded at times. I would love an annual Community Picnic under a new covered area with picnic tables. Dog park is gross and not maintained well.

- Expand walking trails and access to wildlife and green spaces and also more beach access
- Add a life jacket station to Pixie Park before someone drowns.
- A more contiguous water trail. More accessible.
- Family activity areas - tables, etc.
- Stop wasting money on worthless surveys!!
- Covered picnic areas with places to grill
- More playgrounds
- Outhouses or restroom facilities
- Coverings
- Have water available - for drinking - for dogs. I know you said only one thing but each park needs a portapotty.
- A permanent public restroom - not all portapotties
- Extend bike/walking trails, but I don't know if that could be done.
- Improve walking trails / more walking trails
- Keep our children safe. Don't increase city taxes - many of us are on fixed incomes. Thank you.
- Limit parks so that the best of them could be better maintained without depending on volunteers
- Garbage cans in more locations
- Keep what we have maintained. I also would be interested in what the younger people want - playgrounds, bike park, etc.
- More volunteer opportunities to help or instruction on helping with things like invasive plants.
- Undercover recreational areas so you can have coffee with friends while your kids or dogs played even in drizzly weather
- Smooth out and extend the bike/walking trail along the highway. It be nice if it was usable for scooters and roller blades/skates. As of right now, it is too rough for those modes of recreation.
- More cool stuff at Bundy Park
- another park w/ playground! I have six kids and my kids really wish there were more available playgrounds.
- Pick the most loved and eliminate the unused or very small parks.
- Additional trails
- Add playgrounds for kids to a few current parks
- Trail system improvements
- Add a skateboard park to keep kids busy on spare time; instead of getting in trouble.
- Could you please add permanent shade/rain covered area to the dog park?
- Keep the grass areas mowed, weed free, and somewhat green throughout the summer.
- Drinking fountains.
- More volunteers. I've been doing a small bit but I'm 73. No one wants to take over. City workers help hauling bags of yard (forest) waste away or flower clean up. I so appreciate this-just a phone call away!
- Improve the River Walk trail, added benches and clean up the path. It gets overgrow so fast.
- Control the rodent/ground squirrel population that is going to lead to an injury from the massive holes they dig. They are also destroying home foundations.

- Take more advantage of the river somehow near the area owned by the Port of Columbia County.
- Expand walking trails
- nothing at this time.
- Better option for all ages of kids play.
- Splash pad, pickleball, need more things for kids to enjoy, picnic area for families
- N/A
- More officers driving around ensuring our safety! One full time officer is just not enough.
- Nothing. The parks and spaces are usable, clean and maintained. Keep it up with the good poop bags
- Make those who bring their dogs to the park to clean up their dogs shit. So awful.
- More trails, more playgrounds, better communication about what is available.
- More picnic/restroom facilities
- My kids would appreciate an extra amenity at Harvard Park. I would appreciate an extended river walk
- Improve parking and traffic flow related to Pixie Park, as well as increase recreation options by making The Strand a one way street with the other lane being for pedestrian traffic. There are too many pedestrians using the street for there to be two way traffic without sidewalks.
- We lack playgrounds for young children.
- mow veterans park at least every 2 weeks.
- Expand riverwalk
- Better parking around Veterans Park
- more diverse foliage
- Have water available.
- We do need a place to hold outdoor party with family that is covered.
- maintain/upgrade/expand play structure at Harvard Park
- Stop the pellet mill from spewing its dust on play equipment and everything in sector A ! (see map)
- Control parking and set rules. Life guard posts and maintenance regularly. Protect the neighbors and crest rules and actually enforce them. Actively clean and maintain parks.
- Add tennis/pickleball courts for adults.
- More playground equipment
- Improve playground
- I walk either by myself or with my dog. When I take my dog, I find it extremely convenient to have dog poop bags with the garbage cans in Jim Bundy & Carolyn King parks. I rarely walk to the Veterans Park. I knew there was a trail by McBride Creek, I had NO idea it was that long! I will definitely go out to check it out this weekend! I guess the only thought is, if there is no dog poop/garbage can along that trail, that would be an improvement for me.
- Improve walking trail along the river walk (by the memorial park)
- Create more options for the youth.
- Extend and clean up walking trails
- Better restroom availability

-
- Would like to have another dog park on the west side of hwy 30.
 - More “leash your pet” signs would be helpful! Otherwise you guys do a great job and maintaining our parks. Thank you!
 - Another Dog Park on the WEST side of Hwy 30
 - Additional covered areas with picnic tables at other parks.
 - Add a fishing dock & beach access at Datis Park. Also put the picnic table back there. It has been gone for about a year and a half and is missed!
 - Replace or improve the Harvard Park playground equipment.
 - Connect the bike/walking path to trestle beach access make path loop back towards Columbia City on the beach side
 - I’d love to see some sports facilities for the kids.
 - Mow more often and pick up the grass
 - Playground improvements
 - Fix the path and clean up pixie park
 - Find the space to create a real, centralized park experience.
 - Lights
 - Nothing
 - Reduce the maintenance needed to maintain parks. Too small of staff, not enuf \$, too few volunteers to maintain the parks.
 - Tennis court
 - Ensure existing parks are maintained safe for children with most current safety practices and included on regular police patrols.
 - is there a map or list of trails
 - Better grounds maintenance.
 - Bathrooms at dog park & Pixie
 - City walking/running events
 - The playground at Harvard Park is in need of a redo. It’s currently unsafe as is with all of the exposed metal.
 - More playgrounds with parking
 - Don’t add new parks. Maintain what you have
 - Improve river access for walking and viewing and tie the beach into Rivers Walk
 - At the dog park; Mow, empty the trash cans & renew the playground chips more frequently & Install a portable potty
 - Maintenance, appropriate/proper trimming and pruning, upkeep

APPENDIX E

Open House #1 Summary



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT NUMBER: #25-160PLN ISSUE DATE: October 16, 2025
 PROJECT NAME: Columbia City Parks Master Plan

RECORDED BY: Steve Duh
 TO: FILE
 PRESENT: Members of the public
 City staff
 Project team members from Conservation Technix

SUBJECT: Parks Master Plan: Open House Meeting Notes (October 14, 2025)

The City of Columbia City sponsored an informal open house on Tuesday, October 14, 2025 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Community Hall. This event was used as a way to inform people about the citywide Parks Master Plan project and gather community feedback for potential park system enhancements. The project team prepared informational displays, which included project overview, parks and outdoor recreation enhancements, recreational trail alignments, and potential park project and investment ideas.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members and record their comments. City staff and project team staff engaged with attendees to identify general needs and interests for parks and recreation opportunities in Columbia City. Approximately 10 people reviewed the materials and provided comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following represents a summary of the comments received during the community event.

Potential Project Ideas

- Support for noted project ideas for Jim Bundy Park (adding playground), Pixie Park (repairing beach access), and Rivers Walk Trail (adding picnic shelter near entrance).
- Add life jacket station at Pixie Park
- Add year round (permanent) restrooms
- Buy the Ruth Rose Richardson site for the city
- Harvard Park – add spray park, more picnic tables or picnic shelter, better play equipment, fencing behind the arborvitae to keep kids out of driveway, and add adult fitness equipment

Investment Priorities (dot exercise)

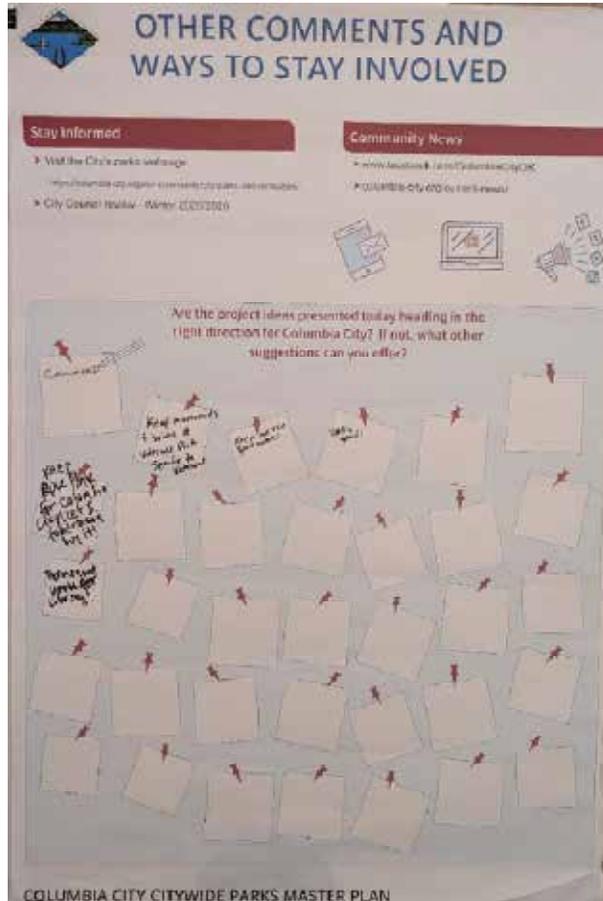
- 5 – Renovate playground at Harvard Park
- 5 – Additional picnic shelters
- 4 – Improve and expand Rivers Walk Trail
- 4 – Additional walking and biking trails

Parks Master Plan: Open House Meeting Notes (October 14, 2025)

Columbia City Parks Master Plan

Project Number #25-160PLN

Page 3



Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

-- End of Notes --

cc: Kim Karber, City Administrator
File

APPENDIX F

Recreation Trends

The following summaries from recognized park and recreation resources provide background on national, state and local park and recreation trends. Examining current recreation trends may inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities to enhance programs and services.

2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review

In the 2025 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review and its accompanying Park Metrics share comprehensive park and recreation-related data collected and analyzed to inform park and recreation professionals and key stakeholders about the state of the industry. The 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 900 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported from 2022 to 2024. These resources provide guidance to inform decisions and demonstrate the full breadth of service offerings and responsibilities of park and recreation agencies throughout the United States. This data can offer a perspective for Columbia City to compare their service provision to other agencies across the country. However, every park and recreation agency has its own unique characteristics, combination of responsibilities and community composition. This comparison of nationwide data can provide guiding insights rather than target benchmarks. The agency performance report indicated recent trends in staffing and volunteers for park and recreation agencies show that numbers of authorized full-time positions has steadily rebounded since 2011.

Key Findings & Characteristics

Park facilities and operations vary greatly across the nation. The typical agency participating in the NRPA park metric survey serves a jurisdiction of approximately 45,000 people, but population size varies widely across all responding jurisdictions. The typical park and recreation agency has jurisdiction over 22 parks comprising over 571 acres. When including non-park sites (such as city halls and roadway medians), the median management scale for park agencies increases to 30 sites encompassing 676 acres. Park facilities also have a range of service levels in terms of acres of parkland per population and residents per park. These metrics are categorized by the agency's population size.

Park Facilities

The typical park and recreation agency has:

- One park for every 2,411 residents
- 82% of agencies offer fee-based programs
- 10.2 acres of park land for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction
- \$103.13 operating expenditures per capita
- 8.6 full-time equivalent employees per 10,000 residents
- 94% of agencies have playgrounds
- An average of 17 miles of trails across all agencies

Figure F1. Median Residents per Park Based On Population Size

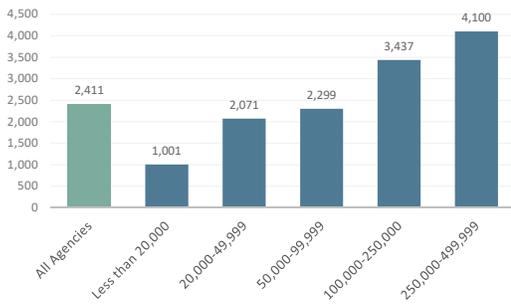
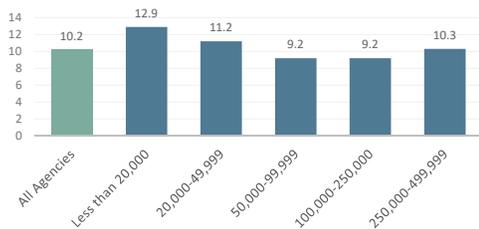


Figure F2. Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents based on Population Size



A large majority of park and recreation agencies provide playgrounds (94%) as their most common facility in their portfolio of outdoor assets. Eighty-five percent have diamond fields (baseball, softball), 84 percent have standalone basketball courts and 83 percent have rectangular fields (soccer, field hockey, lacrosse). Other common facilities include tennis courts (72%) and dog parks (68%).

Currently, 45 percent of agencies report providing pickleball courts in their inventory. National trends indicate pickleball as the fastest growing sport so it is expected that this percentage will rapidly change in the future.

The typical park and recreation agency that manages or maintains trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking has 17 miles of trails. Agencies serving less than 20,000 residents have a median of 4 miles of trails under their care.

Park and recreation agencies often take on responsibilities beyond their core functions of operating parks and providing recreational programs. Other responsibilities may include tourist attractions, golf courses, outdoor amphitheaters, indoor swim facilities, farmer’s markets, indoor sports complexes, campgrounds, performing arts centers, stadiums/arenas/ racetracks, fairgrounds and/or marinas.

Programming

At least nine in ten agencies provide themed special events (91% of agencies), social recreation events (88%), team sports (86%), fitness enhancement classes (82%), and health and wellness education (82%). Eighty-three percent of all park and recreation agencies offer summer camp; 77 percent offer older adult programming; and 67 percent offer programs for people with disabilities.

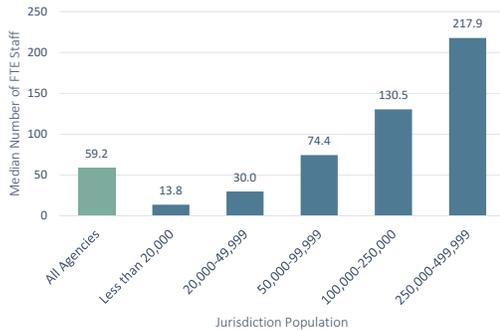
Staffing

Park and recreation employees are responsible for operations and maintenance, programming and administration. The typical park and recreation agency has:

- 59.2 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) on payroll
- 8.6 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in its jurisdiction

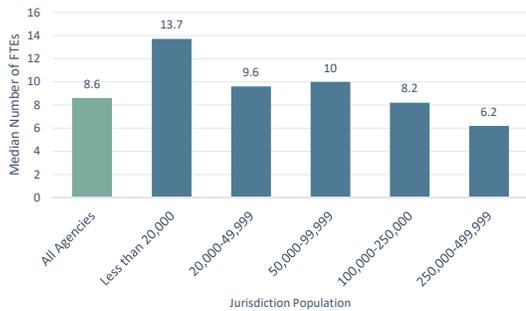
Median FTE counts also positively correlate with the number of acres maintained, the number of parks maintained, operating expenditures, and the population served. For example, agencies that serve populations under 20,000 employ an average of 13.8 FTE while agencies in communities between 20,000 and 49,999 residents employ an average of 30.5 FTE.

Figure F3. Park and Recreation Agency Staffing: Full-Time Equivalents (By Jurisdiction Population)



Another way of comparing agency staffing across different park and recreation agencies examines number of staff per 10,000 residents. These comparative numbers hold fairly steady across population sizes with the median for all agencies at 8.6 FTEs. Agencies in communities under 20,000 residents have a ratio of 13.7 FTEs per 10,000 residents.

Figure F4. Park and Recreation Agency FTEs Per 10,000 Residents



Capital and Operating Expenses

For capital expenses, the typical park agency:

- Dedicates about 56% to renovation projects and 30% to new development projects.
- Plans to spend about \$8 million on capital expenditures over the next five years.

For operations, the typical park agency spends:

- \$6.45 million per year on total operating expenses
- \$8,260 on annual operating expenses per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency
- \$99.47 on annual operating expenses per capita
- \$110,912 in annual operating expenditures per employee
- 54% of the annual operating budget on personnel costs, 38% on operating expenses, and 6% on capital expenses not included in the agency’s capital improvement plan (CIP)
- 39% of its operating budget on park management and maintenance, 35% on recreation, 17% on administration and 9% on other activities

Agency Funding

The typical park and recreation agency:

- Derives 62% of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support, 21% from generated revenues, 8% from dedicated taxes or levies, 3% from other dedicated taxes, 2% from grants, and the remaining 3% from sponsorships, private donations and other sources
- Generates \$22.58 in revenue annually for each resident in the jurisdiction

2024 Outdoor Participation Report

According to 2024 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation in Boulder, Colorado, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 4.1% in 2023 to a record 175.8 million Americans (57.3%) ages 6 and older. The number of outdoor participants has grown as new and more casual participants began hiking, biking, camping, running and fishing. Key Insights include the following:

Growth

The recreational participant base is growing. New and young outdoor participants are driving growth and increased diversity in the outdoor recreation participant base. While the number of participants increased the average number of outings per participant fell 11.4% from 70.5 outings per participant in 2022 to 62.5 outings per participant in 2023. The declining frequency of participation offers a cautionary warning that the loss of committed participants may result in declining retail sales of outdoor products.

Diversity

The participant base became more ethnically and racially diverse in 2023 but not by much. The number and percentage of Hispanic and Black people in the core participants has increased but the slower rate of increase compared to growth in the overall participant base indicates a lack of engagement in the more diverse participant base. Diversity brings new participants, new ideas, and new ways of engaging outdoors, more support for outdoor and environmental policies, and more dollars into the outdoor recreation market.

Women as Trailblazers

More than half of American women are participating on outdoor recreation for the first time ever. Female participation reached 51.9% in 2023, up from 50% in 2022. American males reached a higher level in their participation rate with a new record of 62.9% in 2023.

Seniors

Americans aged 55 to 64 showed increased participation of 49.7% in 2023, up from 41.2% in 2019. The participation rate for Americans aged 65 and older grew 11.5% between 2022 and 2023. Those participants aged 65 and older reached a 39.5% rate for 2023.

Inclusion

Members of the LGBTQ+ community make up 11.3% of the outdoor participant base (19.9M) and continue to be the most active adult cohort in outdoor recreation with total participation rates above 60%.

The report suggests that efforts to build core participation in a more diverse market will be key to growing outdoor participation in depth as well as breadth.

2024 State of the Industry Report

Recreation Management magazine's 2024 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry summarizes the opinions and information provided by a wide range of professionals with the majority of respondents in leadership positions working in the recreation, sports, and fitness industry. While the respondents came from a wide range of sports-related entities, 42.5% were from park and recreation providers. The vast majority of respondents from parks—98.5%—were with public or governmental organizations. Park respondents manage the most facilities, with an average of 9.4, down from 13.3 in 2023, but in line with 2022, when park respondents averaged nine facilities.

Partnerships

The 2024 report indicated that most (85.4%) recreation, sports, and fitness facility owners form partnerships with other organizations as a means of expanding their reach, offering additional programming opportunities or as a way to share resources and increase funding. Local schools are shown as the most common partner (59.9%) for all facility types. Youth-

serving organizations (Ys, JCC, Boys & Girls Clubs) and park and recreation organizations were the most likely to report that they had partnered with outside organizations, at 96.1% and 92.9% respectively.

Facilities & Improvements

A majority of park respondents (74.6%) said they had plans for construction, on par with 2022. More than half (54%) of park respondents were planning renovations to their facilities, and 36.9% of park respondents were planning to new construction with 31.5% planning additions. The top 10 planned features for all facility types include:

1. Environmental education programs (26.4%, up from 22.2% in 2023)
2. Educational programs (24.1%, down slightly from 24.8%)
3. Holiday events and other special events (23.8%, up from 18.1%)
4. Fitness programs (22.5%, up from 20.3%)
5. Mind-body balance programs (22.2%, down from 23.3%)
6. Adult sports teams (22.2%, up from 19.9%)
7. Teen programming (22.2%, down from 23.3%)
8. Programs for active older adults (22.2%, up from 19%)
9. Group exercise programs (20.6%, down from 22%)
10. Special needs programs (19.6%, up from 18.8%)

2025 Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report

Prepared by a partnership of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and the Physical Activity Council (PAC), this nationwide study represents 18,000 individual interviews conducted in 2024 that summarize levels of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation in the US. The 2025 report provides a high degree of statistical accuracy using strict quotas for gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity. The study looked at more than 124 different team and individual sports and outdoor activities. The overall aim of the survey is to establish levels of activity and identify key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation participation.

In 2024, activity levels among Americans reached a historic high, with 80% of Americans aged 6+ being classified as active. Compared to 2023, participation has grown with both CORE and Casual activity. Activity in the U.S. continues to increase for the seventh consecutive year. This CORE participation (seriously committed athletes) made up 41.2% of participants with Casual participants hitting 58.8% of all participants in 2024. This widening gap points to an evolving trend in how Americans approach their engagement with activities.

Pickleball is still the fastest growing sport in America with 45.8% growth year-over-year and an extraordinary 331% over three years. Other activities also experienced notable growth with Yoga, snowboarding, and wrestling recording year-over-year increases of 9.9%, 9.3% and 8.6% respectively, reflecting a diverse set of interests among participants.

Figure F5. 2021 Total Participation Rate by Activity Category (U.S. population, ages 6+)

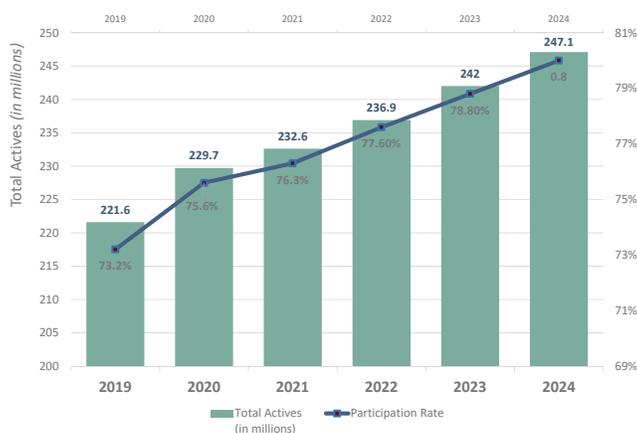
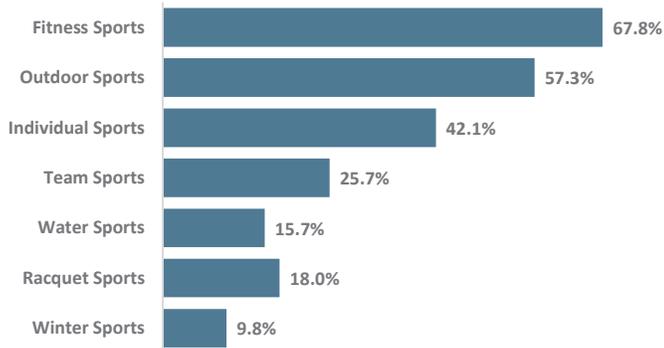


Figure F6. Activities with the Highest 5-year Increase in Participation (average annual growth, 2018-2022)



Oregon State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2025-2029 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), entitled “Balance and Engagement: Sustaining the Benefits for all Oregonians”, constitutes Oregon’s basic five-year plan for outdoor recreation. As of June 2024, the draft was still under review and accepting public comment. With the completion of the 2025-2029 plan, the state maintains eligibility to participate in the Land and Water Conservation Fund up through December 2029.

The SCORP addresses three important priorities facing outdoor recreation providers in the coming years, including:

1. The importance and benefits of recreation to Oregonians and the local economy.
2. Balancing conservation with outdoor recreation.
3. Engaging with underserved communities in outdoor recreation efforts.

As part of developing the SCORP, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) conducted a statewide survey of Oregon residents regarding their 2022 outdoor recreation participation in Oregon, as well as their opinions about park and recreation management.

The resident survey measured the top ten outdoor recreation activities for Oregon residents that occur within their community. Walking rated the most participation whether on local streets and sidewalks or along paved paths or natural trails.

Figure F7. Top Ten Activities for Oregon Resident in their Community

Activity	Percent
Walking on streets or sidewalks	79.1%
Walking on paved paths or natural trails	71.8%
Nature immersion	52.6%
Attending outdoor concerts/events	40.6%
Visiting historical sites/parks	40.5%
Picnicking	40.4%
Nature observation	37.4%
Taking children/grandchildren to a playground	34.2%
Visiting nature centers	34.2%
Pedaling bicycles on streets or sidewalks	30.9%

The resident survey also gathered input on where respondents liked to experience outdoor recreation. Local parks were the most frequently visited by 83% of respondents.

Figure F8. Types of Outdoor Recreation Areas Used

Outdoor Recreation Area	Percent
Local/city park	83%
State park, forest, or game land	71%
County park	48%
National park, forest & recreation area	49%

Further survey questions explored where residents felt future investments were needed in their community outdoor recreation areas. Their highest two priorities covered clean and well-maintained facilities and provision of restrooms.

Figure F9. Priorities for Future Investments in their Community

Recreation Priority	Mean*
Clean & well-maintained facilities	4.16
Restrooms	4.06
Free recreation opportunities	3.99
Parks & recreation areas	3.78
Directional/info signs for trails	3.71
Nature & wildlife viewing areas	3.64

This data can help local park and recreation providers better understand public opinions and the preferences of outdoor recreation participants.

In addition to the resident survey, land managers and public recreation providers in Oregon were also surveyed regarding their needs, challenges and priorities for recreation management in their jurisdiction. The most challenging management issues for local outdoor recreation providers (within urban growth boundaries) were identified.

Figure F10. Local Providers: Top 5 Challenges

Management Issues
Reducing illegal activities
Creating new park and recreation facilities
Maintaining existing local parks and facilities
Addressing ADA and other accessibility issues
Providing safe walking and biking routes to parks and trails

The results illustrate that providers face large challenges when increasing opportunities and access to outdoor recreation through resident-supported actions like creating new park and recreation facilities and providing safe walking and biking routes to parks and trails. These larger challenges require more significant investments and longer term planning.

The SCORP report also offers management recommendations to outdoor recreation providers to help protect natural resources and visitor experiences, triggered partly due to issues created by crowding.

- Promote outdoor practices and principles to minimize visitor impacts.
- Utilize web presence to provide information about crowding and encourage visitors to explore less-busy locations.
- Implement timed-entry systems, reservation requirements, and permit requirements to manage crowding.
- Adapt current infrastructure to address crowding and natural resource impacts.

Another series of studies measured the benefits of outdoor recreation on public land systems through healthy lifestyles, lower health care costs and overall quality of life. The research findings were included in the 2025-2029 SCORP. Physical health benefits are demonstrated in the SCORP chapter titled, “Health Benefits Estimates for Oregonians from their Outdoor Recreation Participation in Oregon,” showing how energy expenditure from physical activity related to outdoor recreation participation may lead to \$2.965 billion in cost of illness savings for these chronic illnesses.

Research also included the total net economic value for recreation participation in Oregon from their participation in 76 outdoor recreation activities in 2022 for a total of 1.27 billion user occasions. The total net economic value for a recreation

activity is the value per activity day times the number of activity days. Filtering the top ten contributors for outdoor recreation activities and their associated economic value reveals walking and enjoying nature as the top generators followed by bicycling, running/jogging, field sports, and playground and dog park users.

Figure F11. User Occasions, Activity Days, and Total Net Economic Value

Top Ten: SCORP Activity in your Community	RUVD* Activity	Total Annual Activity Days	Value/Activity Day (2023 USD)	Total Net Economic Value (2023 USD)
Walking on streets or sidewalks	Walking	357,558,563	\$21.83	\$7,804,896,510
Nature immersion	Wildlife viewing	59,056,930	\$67.36	\$3,978,126,928
Nature observation	Wildlife viewing	54,981,854	\$67.36	\$3,703,626,212
Pedaling bicycles on streets or sidewalks	Leisure biking	42,666,036	\$67.19	\$2,866,672,617
Pedaling bikes on paved or natural trails (incl. mtn bikes)	Mtn biking	22,888,395	\$115.68	\$2,647,691,141
Jogging or running on streets or sidewalks	Jogging/running	28,791,816	\$67.69	\$1,948,961,000
Field sports (soccer, softball, baseball, football, disc golf, etc)	Jogging/running	17,130,797	\$67.69	\$1,159,609,218
Jogging or running on on paved paths or natural trails	Jogging/running	19,867,529	\$67.69	\$1,344,862,692
Taking children/grandchildren to a playground	Walking	48,003,644	\$21.83	\$1,047,838,067
Going to dog parks or off-leash areas	Walking	45,415,364	\$21.83	\$991,340,308

The total net economic value for recreation participation in Oregon by Oregonians is estimated to be \$571 billion (2023 USD) annually based on 2022 use levels. Total consumer spending on outdoor recreation in 2022 supported 198,000 full and part-time jobs in Oregon, associated with \$8.4 billion in wages and other compensation.

2026-2035 Oregon Trails Plan

The Oregon Trails Plan comes as a summary report from the 2025-2029 SCORP that measures the latest data on trail usage in Oregon, the economic and health benefits of trails, management issues, and funding priorities. The report provides data on motorized and non-motorized trail activities and water trail (non-motorized) activities. Oregon has an extensive network of federal, state, and local non-motorized trails, including state designated scenic and recreational trails. Scenic trails showcase Oregon’s outstanding natural features including rivers, mountains, waterfalls, and the Pacific Ocean. Regional trails connect recreation sites, schools, and communities to provide recreation and active transportation routes. Oregon has over 50 designated motorized riding areas that provide a high level of trail maintenance, signs, maps, and staging areas.

A water trail is a designated route along a lake, river, reservoir, or bay specifically designed for people using small, primarily non-motorized watercraft. Designated National Water Trails in Oregon are the Tualatin River Water Trail and Willamette River Water Trail. The Willamette River Water Trail and Deschutes River Water Trail were identified as Oregon Signature Trails. Water trail facilities are supported by local agencies along many other water bodies across the state.

Trail Use

Oregon residents participated in nearly 275 million trail activities in 2022. Walking on local paved paths and natural trails is the second most frequent outdoor activity in Oregon after walking on streets and sidewalks, with over 149 million use occasions. Walking on local trails accounts for over half (54%) of all trail use in Oregon by residents. Walking/hiking on non-local paved paths or natural trails is the number one outdoor recreation activity that Oregon residents travel outside their community to participate in.

Motorized trail activities such as riding ATVs and snowmobiling make up 3.5% of trail use.

Non-motorized water paddle sports are one of the fastest growing forms of recreation and amongst the top three activities Oregonians started doing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Water trail activities such as canoeing, kayaking, rafting, and sailing accounted for just under 3% of trail use by Oregon residents.

A major change that has occurred on Oregon’s trail network since the 2016 Trails Plan is the rapid increase in availability and adoption of electric bicycles (“e-bikes”)5 and electric micromobility devices (“e-micromobility”). The majority (53%) of

reported e-bike and e-micromobility use occurred on streets and sidewalks, nearly 9 million use occasions. Thirty-one percent of e-bike and e-micromobility use (over 5 million use occasions) occurred on local trails.

“Walking on streets or sidewalks” and “Walking on local trails” are the most common outdoor activities for all Oregon resident demographic groups to participate in within their communities. Oregon’s trail network supports outdoor recreation, access to nature, and physical activity; all of which are associated with positive impacts on physical and mental health.

The 2025-29 Oregon SCORP estimated the net economic value of outdoor recreation in Oregon by residents to be \$57.1 billion based on 2022 use levels. One quarter (25%) of the total economic value of outdoor recreation in Oregon comes from trail activities, with an annual estimated economic value of \$14.5 billion.

The 2026 Trails Plan will use the trails information from the 2025-29 SCORP to update grant criteria for the Recreational Trails and ATV grant programs. The following topic areas have been identified as potential additional focus areas for the 2026 Trails Plan:

- Funding – Identify strategies and tools to address inadequate funding for trail development, operations, and maintenance
- Trails Maintenance & Stewardship – Prioritize maintaining the existing system. Identify strategies and tools to promote stewardship, stretch limited funding, and expand community partnerships and enjoyment of trails.
- Increasing Accessible Trail Opportunities (including trail amenities such as restrooms, wayfinding, parking) – Identify strategies and tools to increase accessibility of existing and future trails and facilities.

Oregon Outdoor Recreation Industry

The research group Headwaters Economics, in collaboration with the State Outdoor Recreation Business Alliance, published a report in 2023 on the state of the outdoor recreation economy nationally. In the State of Oregon, the outdoor recreation industry employed approximately 72,737 people in 2022 with a total compensation level of \$3,760,711. The total recreation value contributed \$7,502,130 to Oregon’s economy. The report emphasizes that investments in outdoor recreation directly result in visitor spending that supports jobs, businesses, and industries across the country.

Outdoor Recreation Economy

In November 2023, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released its annual report on the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry at national and state levels. The gross economic output for the outdoor recreation economy was \$1.1 trillion in 2022, accounting for 2.2% of the gross domestic product that year.

The GDP contribution from outdoor recreation economic activity increased by 4.8% from 2021 to 2022. People finding employment in the outdoor recreation industry increased by 7.4% from 2021 to 2022. Outdoor recreation remains a significant sector of the U.S. economy. A wide range of activities—from hiking, boating, and hunting to golf and tennis—result in outdoor recreation jobs in a wide variety of industries.

2019 Special Report on Paddlesports & Safety

In 2019, the Outdoor Foundation produced a report focused on paddlesports data based on a participation survey (over 20,000 online interviews with a nationwide sample of individuals and households). In 2018, 22.9 million Americans (approximately 7.4% of the population) participated in paddle sports. This represents an increase of more than 4 million participants since the study began in 2010. Over the last five years, there continues to be an increase in paddlesports popularity among outdoor enthusiasts, with significant portions of the nationwide growth occurring in the Pacific region.

Recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity but may be driving some of the decline in canoeing. The popularity of stand-up paddling has soared, increasing by 1.5 million participants over the past five years, though it does not have nearly as high a participation rate as either recreational kayaking or canoeing.

Most paddlers are Caucasian, other racial and ethnic groups are largely under-represented. However, Caucasian participation has remained relatively flat while participation by people identifying as Hispanic or Black/African American has grown by 0.5% to 1% per year since 2013. This growth has led to more than 773,000 new Hispanic paddlers in just six years, signaling the importance and potential of engaging minority groups in paddlesports.

One in eight paddlers have been participating in the sport for 21 years or more. However, many participants – between thirty and sixty percent, depending on the discipline – tried a paddlesport for the first time in 2018. Such high levels of first-time participation may produce longer term growth in paddling, assuming participants continue to enjoy the sport.

Among adult paddlers, most participate for excitement and adventure, for exercise, or to be close to nature. Kayakers, rafters, canoers and stand-up paddlers often enjoy, or would be willing to try, other paddlesports. Many also enjoy similar outdoor “crossover” activities such as hiking, camping, walking, and nature viewing.

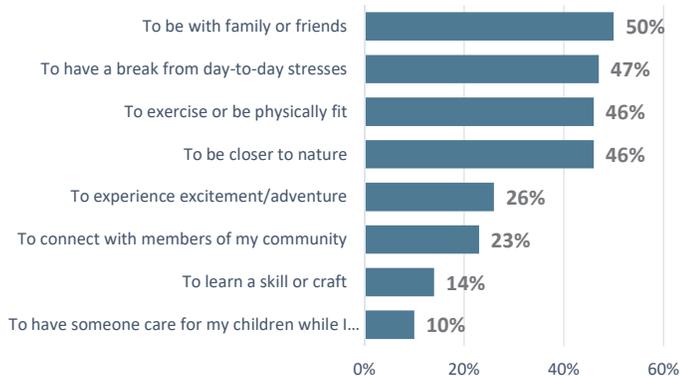
Americans Engagement with Parks Survey

This annual study from the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) probes Americans’ usage of parks, the key reasons that drive their use, and the greatest challenges preventing greater usage. Each year, the study examines the importance of public parks in Americans’ lives, including how parks compare to other services and offerings of local governments. The survey of 1,000 American adults looks at frequency and drivers of parks/recreation facilities visits and the barriers to that prevent greater enjoyment. Survey respondents also indicate the importance of park and recreation plays in their decisions at the voting booth and their level of support for greater funding. Key findings include:

- Eighty-four percent of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.
- Nearly 3 in 4 U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space or recreation center within walking distance of their homes.
- Nine in ten people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by the local government.
- Nearly 3 in 4 adults agree that equity should be an extremely or very important goal for their local park and recreation agency.

People who live near parks and recreation facilities are more likely to be park and recreation users. Individuals living near at least one park are much more likely to arrive at that park by an “active” means (e.g., walking, biking, running), with walking being the most common method of transport. Conversely, 80 percent of U.S. adults who do not live within a walkable distance to parks or recreation opportunities travel to those amenities by car. The typical adult in the United States visits their local parks or recreation facilities every other month. Four main reasons for visiting local parks and recreation facilities stand out: being with family and friends, exercising and being physically fit, taking a break from day-to-day stresses, and being closer to nature. Park and recreation agencies can customize their offerings to the specific needs, wants and desires of their community members by knowing their motivation for visiting parks.

Figure F12. NRPA Park Engagement: Key Reasons for Park Visits



According to the Americans Engagement with Parks report,

“Parks and recreation’s success results from its vast offerings of parks, trail networks and other recreation facilities that deliver critical programs for every segment of a community. Each person’s relationship with parks and recreation

is unique. Some people flock to their local park to stay physically fit, meet with friends and family, or reconnect with nature. Others depend on their local park and recreation agency for indispensable services that improve their lives.

But there remains much work to do. One-hundred million people do not live within a walkable distance of at least one park or recreation facility. Further, many survey respondents indicate they have felt unwelcome at a park or recreation facility or say the infrastructure and programming are not inclusive. Parks and recreation is for everyone — regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Professionals, advocates and political leaders have the opportunity to narrow any accessibility or inclusivity gaps through greater community engagement and addressing inequitable funding and infrastructure investments that have deprived millions of people of access to parks and recreation.”

Inclusion & Universal Access

Across the country, local municipalities and park and recreation providers with older public infrastructure have been upgrading their facilities to comply with the outdoor recreation guidelines for universal access and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The removal of existing architectural barriers in park facilities has been ongoing and should continue until renovations, upgrades and newer construction provide barrier-free access to all users. Access and inclusion in public parks extends beyond the physical amenities and incorporates considerations of language, technology, wayfinding, program equity and equitable geographic distribution of facilities.

Park and recreation agencies are in a unique position to champion efforts that advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). By assuring representation of diverse life experiences and voices, park and recreation professionals will better reflect the communities their agencies serve. Inequity is the ultimate challenge facing the nation, and parks and recreation can make a profound difference.

Parks for Climate Resiliency

Numerous studies have been documenting the contributions of parks and public lands to better climate resiliency. Parks, open space and natural lands can cool urban heat islands, buffer flood impacts, improve water quality and improve air quality. Urban tree canopy in parks can remove air pollution and sequester carbon. Parks and greenways along storm-affected coastlines are being created to help buffer impacts of anticipated flooding due to sea level rise, storm surges, and increased precipitation. Climate resilience strategies involving parks can focus on resilient shoreline development, green stormwater infrastructure and increased tree groves.

As the climate changes, outdoor recreation opportunities and availability can become more inconsistent. Wildfires, flooding, reduced snowpack and other environmental impacts from climate changes can directly and indirectly affect visitor-use patterns. Recreation planners and managers play a role in climate resiliency by protecting vulnerable resources that can impact outdoor recreation opportunities.

APPENDIX G

Implementation Tools

Local Funding Options

General Obligation Bond

These are voter-approved bonds with the authority to levy an assessment on real and personal property. The money can only be used for capital construction and improvements, but not for maintenance. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time (usually 15-20 years). Passage requires a simple majority in November and May elections, unless during a special election, in which case a double majority (a majority of registered voters must vote and a majority of those voting must approve the measure) is required. Cities in Oregon have a legal debt limit on general obligation (GO) debt equal to 3% of their real market value.

Park Utility Fee

A park utility fee provides dedicated funds to help offset the cost of park maintenance and could free up general fund dollars for other capital project uses. Most city residents pay water and sewer utility fees. Park utility fees apply the same concepts to city parks, and a fee is assessed to all businesses and households. The monthly fee would be paid upon connection to the water and sewer system.

System Development Charges

A parks system development charge (SDC) is a fee for new residential development to help finance the demand for park facilities created by the new growth. These fees support park acquisition and development, but they cannot be used for ongoing operations or maintenance.

Urban Renewal District

The purpose of urban renewal is to improve specific areas of a city that are poorly developed or underdeveloped, called blighted areas in Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 457.010. These areas can have deteriorated buildings, changing uses, streets and utilities in poor condition, a complete lack of streets and utilities altogether, or other obstacles to development. Urban renewal allows for the use of tax increment financing, a funding source that is unique to urban renewal, to fund its projects. In general, urban renewal projects can include construction or improvement of streets, utilities, and other public facilities; assistance for rehabilitation or redevelopment of property; acquisition and re-sale of property (site assembly) from willing sellers; and improvements to public spaces including parks and open spaces.

Fuel Tax

Oregon gas taxes are collected as a fixed amount per gallon of gasoline purchased. The Oregon Highway Trust Fund collects fuel taxes, and a portion is paid to cities annually on a per-capita basis. By statute, revenues can be used for any road-related purpose, which may include sidewalk repairs, ADA upgrades, bike routes and other transportation-oriented park and trail enhancements.

FEDERAL / STATE GRANTS & CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program - National Park Service

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as the Rivers & Trails Program or RTCA, is a community resource administered by the National Park Service and federal government agencies, so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA assists communities and public land managers in developing or restoring parks, conservation areas, rivers, and wildlife habitats, as well as creating outdoor recreation opportunities and programs that engage future generations in the outdoors.

Urban and Community Forestry Grants - Oregon Department of Forestry

The Oregon Department of Forestry provides a range of grants and incentives for private landowners and municipalities. Program areas range from community forestry to weed control to conservation and resiliency efforts.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants Program - US Fish & Wildlife Service

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetland conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. Both are Two competitive grants programs exist (Standard and a Small Grants Program) and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match.

The Standard Grants Program supports projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. In Mexico, partners may also conduct projects involving technical training, environmental education and outreach, organizational infrastructure development, and sustainable-use studies.

The Small Grants Program operates only in the United States; it supports the same type of projects and adheres to the same selection criteria and administrative guidelines as the U.S. Standard Grants Program. However, project activities are usually smaller in scope and involve fewer project dollars. Grant requests may not exceed \$75,000, and funding priority is given to grantees or partners new to the Act's Grants Program.

Local Government Grant - Oregon Parks and Recreation

Local government agencies who are obligated by state law to provide public recreation facilities are eligible for OPR's Local Government Grants, and these are limited to public outdoor park and recreation areas and facilities. Eligible projects involve land acquisition, development and major rehabilitation projects that are consistent with the outdoor recreation goals and objectives contained in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Grant - Oregon Parks and Recreation

LWCF grants are available through OPR to either acquire land for public outdoor recreation or to develop basic outdoor recreation facilities. Projects must be consistent with the outdoor recreation goals and objectives stated in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and elements of local comprehensive land use plans and park master plans. A 50% match is required from all successful applicants of non-federal funds, in-kind services and/or materials.

Recreational Trails Program Grant - Oregon Parks and Recreation

Recreational Trails Grants are national grants administered by OPRD for recreational trail-related projects, such as hiking, running, bicycling, off-road motorcycling, and all-terrain vehicle riding. Yearly grants are awarded based on available federal funding. RTP funding is primarily for recreational trail projects, rather than utilitarian transportation-based projects. Funding is divided into 30% motorized trail use, 30% non-motorized trail use and 40% diverse trail use. A 20% minimum project match is required.

Oregon Heritage Grants - Oregon Parks and Recreation

Oregon Heritage offers a variety of grant programs for heritage projects from historic building preservation to oral history projects and more. Grant programs focus on specific foci, including façade renovation, main street revitalization, Veterans' and War Memorials, the preservation of historic resources, among others.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Program Grants - Oregon Department of Transportation

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Grant Program is a competitive grant program that provides resources to Oregon cities, counties and ODOT regional and district offices for design and construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Proposed facilities must be within public rights-of-way. Grants are awarded by the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Project types include sidewalk infill, ADA upgrades, street crossings, intersection improvements, minor widening for bike lanes.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Grant

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board focuses on projects that approach natural resources management from a whole-watershed perspective. OWEB encourages projects that foster interagency cooperation, include other sources of funding, provide for local stakeholder involvement, include youth and volunteers and promote learning about watershed concepts. There are five general categories of projects eligible for OWEB funding: watershed management (restoration and acquisition), resource monitoring and assessment, watershed education and outreach, and technical assistance.

Arts Grants - Oregon Arts Commission

The Oregon Arts Commission funds arts programs and individual artistic innovation throughout Oregon. Grant programs serve as investments in our state's culture. They are supported by contributions from the State of Oregon, the Oregon Cultural Trust, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

OTHER METHODS & FUNDING SOURCES

Private Grants, Donations & Gifts

Many trusts and private foundations provide funding for park, recreation and open space projects. Grants from these sources are typically allocated through a competitive application process and vary dramatically in size based on the financial resources and funding criteria of the organization. Philanthropic giving is another source of project funding. Efforts in this area may involve cash gifts and include donations through other mechanisms such as wills or insurance policies. Community fund raising efforts can also support park, recreation or open space facilities and projects.

Meyer Memorial Trust

The Meyer Memorial Trust seeks opportunities to make program-related investments in Oregon and Clark County, WA. General Purpose Grants support projects related to arts and humanities, education, health, social welfare, and a variety of other activities. Proposals may be submitted at any time under this program, and there is no limitation on the size or duration of these grants.

Business Sponsorships/Donations

Business sponsorships for programs may be available throughout the year. In-kind contributions are often received, including food, door prizes and equipment/material.

Interagency Agreements

State law provides for interagency cooperative efforts between units of government. Joint acquisition, development and/or use of park and open space facilities may be provided between parks, school districts, other municipalities and utility providers.

ACQUISITION TOOLS & METHODS

DIRECT PURCHASE METHODS

Market Value Purchase

Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

In a bargain sale, the landowner agrees to sell for less than the property's fair market value. A landowner's decision to proceed with a bargain sale is unique and personal; landowners with a strong sense of civic pride, long community history or concerns about capital gains are possible candidates for this approach. In addition to cash proceeds upon closing, the

landowner may be entitled to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price.

Life Estates & Bequests

In the event a landowner wishes to remain on the property for a long period of time or until death, several variations on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the landowner may continue to live on the land by donating a remainder interest and retaining a "reserved life estate." Specifically, the landowner donates or sells the property to the city, but reserves the right for the seller or any other named person to continue to live on and use the property. When the owner or other specified person dies or releases his/her life interest, full title and control over the property will be transferred to the city. By donating a remainder interest, the landowner may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made. In a bequest, the landowner designates in a will or trust document that the property is to be transferred to the city upon death. While a life estate offers the city some degree of title control during the life of the landowner, a bequest does not. Unless the intent to bequest is disclosed to and known by the city in advance, no guarantees exist with regard to the condition of the property upon transfer or to any liabilities that may exist.

Option to Purchase Agreement

This is a binding contract between a landowner and the city that would only apply according to the conditions of the option and limits the seller's power to revoke an offer. Once in place and signed, the option agreement may be triggered at a future, specified date or upon the completion of designated conditions. Option agreements can be made for any time duration and can include all of the language pertinent to closing a property sale.

Right of First Refusal

In this agreement, the landowner grants the city the first chance to purchase the property once the landowner wishes to sell. The agreement does not establish the sale price for the property, and the landowner is free to refuse to sell it for the price offered by the city. This is the weakest form of agreement between an owner and a prospective buyer.

Conservation Easements

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with his or her property – often the right to subdivide or develop – and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city (or private organization) that permanently limits uses of the land in order to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. Typically, this approach is used to provide trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted. Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. The preservation and protection of habitat or resources lands may best be coordinated with the local land trust or conservancy, since that organization will likely have staff resources, a systematic planning approach and access to non-governmental funds to facilitate aggressive or large scale transactions.

LANDOWNER INCENTIVE MEASURES

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses are a planning tool used to encourage a variety of public land use objectives, usually in urban areas. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities beyond current regulations in one area, in return for concessions in another. Density bonuses are applied to a single parcel or development. An example is allowing developers of multi-family units to build at higher densities if they provide a certain number of low-income units or public open space. For density bonuses to work, market forces must support densities at a higher level than current regulations.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an incentive-based planning tool that allows land owners to trade the right to develop property to its fullest extent in one area for the right to develop beyond existing regulations in another area. Local governments may establish the specific areas in which development may be limited or restricted and the areas in which development beyond regulation may be allowed. Usually, but not always, the "sending" and "receiving" property

are under common ownership. Some programs allow for different ownership, which, in effect, establishes a market for development rights to be bought and sold.

IRC 1031 Exchange

If the landowner owns business or investment property, an IRC Section 1031 Exchange can facilitate the exchange of like-kind property solely for business or investment purposes. No capital gain or loss is recognized under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031 (see www.irc.gov for more details).

OTHER LAND PROTECTION OPTIONS

Land Trusts & Conservancies

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect special open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. The Columbia Land Trust is the local land trust serving the Columbia City area. Other national organizations with local representation include The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and the Wetlands Conservancy.



City of Columbia City
PO Box 189
Columbia City, OR 97018
columbia-city.org