



CITY OF
West Linn

parks, recreation and open space plan





City of West Linn

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Redline Version Final Plan | November 2018

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Chapter 1: Our Park and Recreation System



1 OUR PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM

Purpose of the Plan

The people of West Linn are proud of their community and recognize parks and recreation are a major reason that residents enjoy such a high quality of life. There are over 500 acres of parkland that offer places to play, relax, learn and gather. Last year, more than 55,000 people took part in a City-sponsored special event or program. In addition, more than 2,000 community members, stakeholders and City leaders participated in developing this plan, providing new ideas and opportunities to consider for the future. Given the community's enthusiasm for parks and recreation, the *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* (the Plan) provides a comprehensive look at City priorities today to create a committed and sustainable approach to building the system of tomorrow.

The *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan* provides renewed direction for West Linn's parks and recreation system. As an update to the 2006 Plan, this Plan continues the forward-thinking commitment to parks and recreation, by reassessing the City's park assets, revising the inventory to consider recent acquisitions and improvements and identifying current needs and future opportunities. This is a long-term plan, building on past planning and investment and looking into the next decade and beyond, outlining guidance to operate and sustain the envisioned system.

A Planning Legacy

The City of West Linn has a long history of successfully planning park and recreation system improvements. Recommendations in the 1998 Plan led to a voter-approved bond measure that funded the acquisition and development of key park sites.

With priority projects completed, the 2007 Plan provided new direction for the enhancement of parks and facilities. Despite the Great Recession that followed, the City leveraged opportunities and prioritized investments by applying Plan policies and goals. Over time, the City carefully evaluated options for a recreation and aquatic facility in the 2011 *Recreation Center Concept Design and Operational Plan*. Plus, it adopted the 2013 *Trails Plan* to guide development of an integrated trail system.

Now a decade later, the people of West Linn continue to place a high value on parks and recreation as a primary ingredient in making West Linn a place to live and thrive. This 2018 Plan prioritizes park projects to address identified community needs.

Community Involvement and Plan Development

The public process for West Linn’s plan is built on multiple layers of input from the community, staff, neighborhood organizations and partner agencies. The process involved a combination of hands-on workshops, online questionnaires, website updates, and Neighborhood Association engagement.

Residents, stakeholders and community leaders have driven decisions throughout the planning process, resulting in a plan rooted in their vision, values and identity. The result is a community-driven plan that supports continued momentum and investment to create a unique park and open space system that is truly West Linn’s. Figure 1 highlights the key steps in the planning process, which included:

- **Identity**, establishing a plan foundation focused on the unique character of West Linn;
- **Assets**, inventorying and evaluating the parks and recreation system;
- **Placemaking and Activation**, identifying recommended improvements and opportunities;
- **Prioritization**, addressing costs, funding, management and operations; and
- **Implementation**, identifying strategies to carry out Plan recommendations.



Figure 1: Community Involvement and Plan Development



State of the Park and Recreation System

The City of West Linn provides parks on a spectrum from more developed to more natural park sites. These parks support different recreation opportunities ranging from active and specialized uses to passive recreation. The City also owns open space areas focused on natural resource protection, with no recreation opportunities. Each of the City’s parks integrate natural elements, ranging from developed parks with some natural elements, to natural resource areas with no developed uses.

Park Types

City parks and open space are classified in five categories (Table 1). Most park acreage is provided in Passive-Oriented Parks that are primarily natural or in Multi-Use Parks that provide a mix of developed space and natural areas. Highly developed Active-Oriented Parks account for 8% of the City’s park acreage, and Special Use Parks account for another 7% of the City’s park acreage. The fact that only 15% of the system is highly developed for recreation affects recreation opportunities and the character of park sites.

Figure 2: Park Spectrum

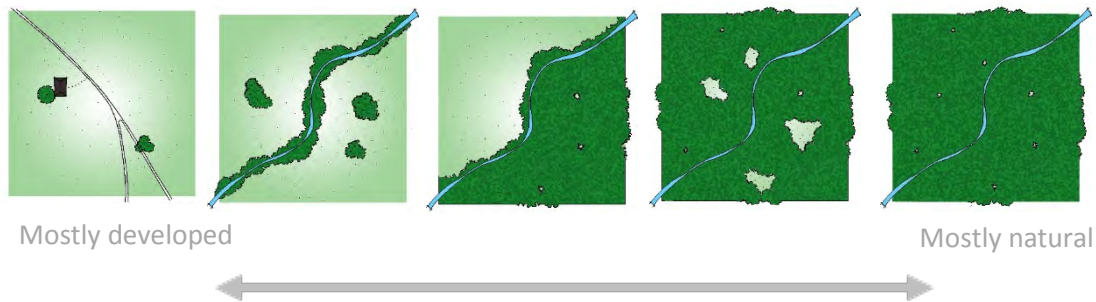


Table 1: Parks Summary by Classification

Classification	Size Range (in acres)	# of Existing Sites	Total Park Acreage	Examples
Active-Oriented Parks	0.1 - 9.1	12	45.1	Benski, Marylhurst Heights, Sunset, Tanner Creek
Special Use Parks	0.6 - 19.7	7	38.7	Adult Community Center, Bernert Landing Boat Ramp
Multi-Use Parks	5.2 - 136.0	6	207.5	Mary S. Young, Fields Bridge, Willamette
Passive-Oriented Parks	0.1 – 64.4	41	213.9	Maddox Woods, Swiftshore Park, Ibach Nature Park
Natural Resource Areas	0.2 – 13.1	25	43.1	Arran Open Space, Troon Open Space, many unnamed sites
Totals		91	548.30	

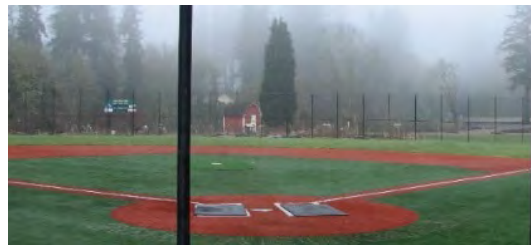
Note: See Appendix A for details.



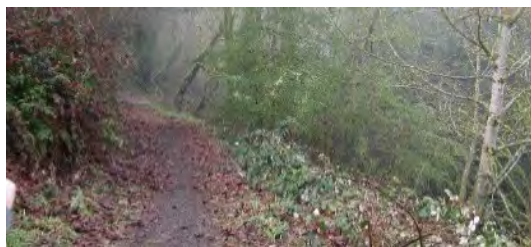
Marylburst Heights Park (Active-Oriented)



Adult Community Center (Special Use)



Fields Bridge Park (Multi-Use)



Tualatin River Open Space (Passive-Oriented)



Natural Resource Area

Active-Oriented Parks are more developed sites that support recreation opportunities including sports and play with facilities, often featuring restrooms, picnic shelters and tables.

Special Use Parks are single-purpose developed sites that include specialized facilities such as a community center, boat ramp, or fishing dock or other unique use.

Multi-Use Parks mix developed and natural areas and offer both active and passive recreation opportunities, ranging from active sports to quiet nature strolls. Several of these parks also have amenities and facilities to support large group gatherings and events.

Passive-Oriented Parks are more natural sites that provide trail-related recreation opportunities and passive outdoor activities such as wildlife watching, nature interpretation and picnicking. Several sites also provide river views or river access.

Natural Resource Areas are undeveloped open space areas that are not intended to serve as recreation resources. Instead, these sites provide habitat, green buffers for developed areas, and ecological value such as stormwater filtration.

Park Distribution

The City of West Linn has parks and open space distributed across the City (Map 1). These sites are supplemented by school facilities and other recreation and open space resources, such as sites provided by the Nature Conservancy, State of Oregon, Oregon Department of Transportation, and others. (See Appendix A.)

Table 2: City Recreation Facilities

Facility Type	# of Existing Facilities
Outdoor Recreation	
Play Features	16
Flexible Use Lawn	22
Covered Picnic Shelter	6
Skate Park / Spots	2
Spray Parks / Water features	5
Athletic Facilities	
Rectangular Fields	8
Ball Fields	7
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	12
Tennis Courts	5
Volleyball Court	2

Recreation Facilities

West Linn’s parks emphasize trails at 52 sites, along with facilities that provide access to natural areas. Many parks also support play, with open lawn areas, play features, picnic areas, and sports/recreation features, which makes some parks feel full of activities (Map 2).

Facility Type	# of Existing Facilities
Trails/Natural Features	
Natural Areas & Wildlife Viewing	25
Trails	52
River Access	14
Interpretive Features	3
Specialized	
Community Gardens	1
Boat Ramps	2
Special Use Buildings	3

Note: See Appendix A for detail



Park Differentiators

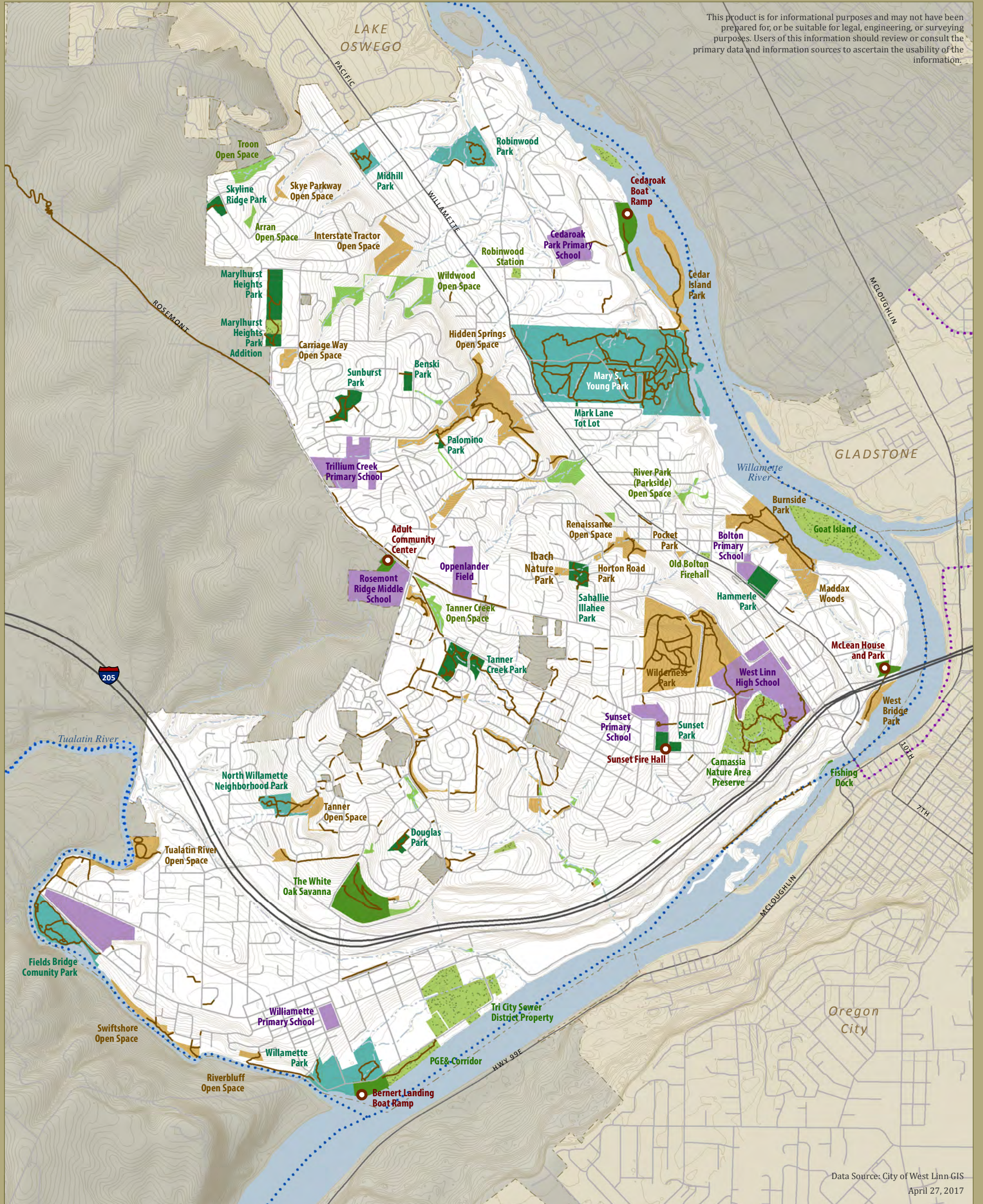
In January 2017, West Linn's parks were evaluated as part of the planning process. Five overarching observations emerged from the tour about the uniqueness, condition and opportunities that differentiate City parks.

- **River Frontage:** Fourteen of the City's parks are directly adjacent to the Willamette or Tualatin Rivers and provide river access. Two sites have boat ramps, two have fishing docks, and several have visual access to the water. Few cities can boast this type of water access.
- **Natural Features and Connectivity:** West Linn's parks strongly connect residents to nature. Wildlife viewing areas, trails and interpretive features are common. Many sites are covered in trees, include changes in topography, and/or are set amidst wetlands. City parks support extraordinary wildlife programs, such as the West Linn Beaver Ambassadors.
- **Park Character and Homogeneity:** A few City parks have unique and defining features, such as the Meteorite Trail at Fields Bridge Park, the giant hill slide at Sahallie Illahee Park, the basalt water feature at Robinwood Park, and art at several parks. However, many parks have a similar level and type of development that makes them feel relatively homogenous.
- **Recreation and Play:** There are 16 play areas in City parks, but most playgrounds are similar off-the-shelf pieces that are outdated and need modernizing. With the exception of some water play areas, current play equipment does not encourage unstructured, open-ended play, which is an important component of a rich play experience. Few sites have active recreation and sports facilities to support health and fitness. Schools provide most of the city's sports fields.

- **Maintenance and Facility Condition:** The City's parks are well maintained and reflect pride in the park system. Some site furnishings and recreation facilities are aging or outdated, which will require replacement for continued use. Winter storms have taken a heavy toll in the last few years, requiring clean-up of fallen trees and branches. This has pulled resources away from other general park repair and updates.



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Data Source: City of West Linn GIS
April 27, 2017

City Parks & Open Space

- Active-Oriented Park
- Special Use Parks
- Multi-Use Parks
- Passive-Oriented Parks
- Natural Resource Areas

Other Resources

- School Facilities
- Other Resources

Community Facilities

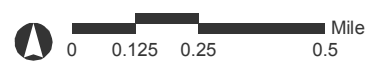
- Facilities

Existing Trails

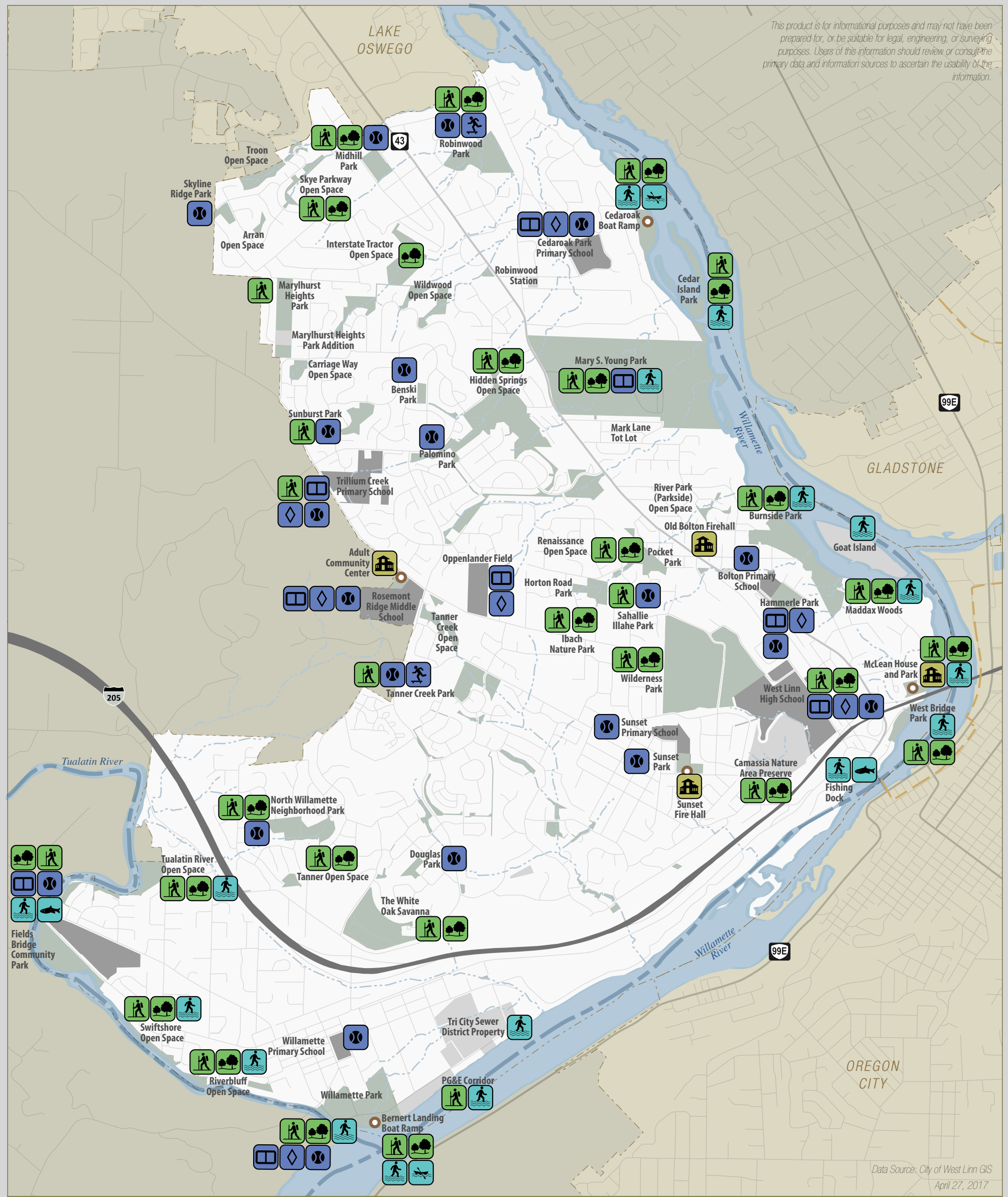
- Trails
- Water Trail
- Existing Regional Trail

Base Map Features

- City Limits
- Other City
- Unincorporated Clackmas County
- Water Feature
- Highway
- Street



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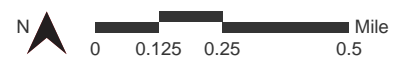
Data Source: City of West Linn GIS
April 27, 2017

BASE MAP FEATURES

- City Limits
- River
- City Parks & Open Space
- School Facilities
- Other Resources
- Community Facilities
- Highway
- Street
- Existing Regional Trail
- Water Trail

PARK & OPEN SPACE ACCESS

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Water Access | Active Recreation | Nature Access |
| Boating | Sports Courts | Natural Resources |
| River Access | Skate Parks | Walking Trail |
| Fishing | Ball Fields | Indoor Sites |
| Water Views | Rectangular Sports Fields | Indoor Access |



Programs and Events

West Linn supports key recreation activities, even though the City does not offer expansive recreation programs. In 2016-17, the City of West Linn served more than 55,554 participants through City programs and events (Table 3). The Parks & Recreation Department focuses most of its programming efforts on special events, youth sports, cultural arts, education, older adult/senior programs, and summer camps. Most recreation programs (approximately 90%) are offered by contract instructors, who provide youth sports, fitness, cultural arts, and education.

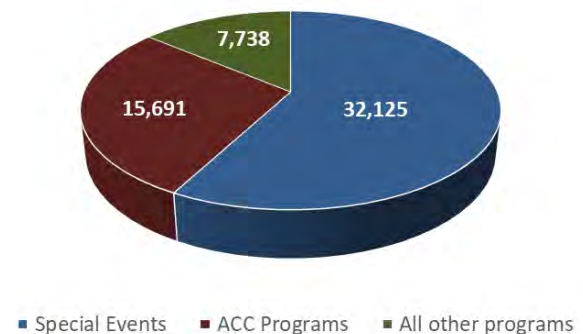
Table 3: Recreation Participation Rates by Category (FY 2016-2017)

Area	Classes/Camps Offered	# of Participants
Recreation Programs	814 classes	4,117
Adult Volleyball	2 programs	1,115
Summer Camps	55 camps	780
Skyhawk's Sports Camps	38 camps	606
Youth Basketball	68 teams	730
Safety Town	2 sessions	120
Special Needs Dances	3 events	150
Drivers Education	4 classes	120
Special Events	13	32,125
ACC Adult and Senior Programs	Varied	15,691
Total		55,554

The Department has limited staff as well as limited space to support indoor programming. These factors affect the types and magnitude of recreation programs and services that are offered. Recreation programs and services are generally delivered out of the Adult Community Center (ACC), Sunset Firehouse, or West Linn/Wilsonville School District facilities. There has been a challenge in determining what types of programs to offer. Approximately 40% of classes last year had no registrants, and classes on average are 26% full. On the other hand, many of the community's special events attract people from across the City, and in some cases beyond. Indoor facilities are programmed to capacity.

Most of West Linn's residents have the resources to take advantage of private programs and programs offered in other areas. Based on expressed community interests and needs, it appears the City could attract residents with more outdoor recreation and nature programs, cultural arts, and fitness/wellness programs, as well as place a continued emphasis on special events and programs for older adults and seniors.

Figure 3: Participants at City Programs and Events (FY 2016-2017)



“The offering of recreational activities in West Linn is impressive, but a greater variety of programs for different ages are needed.”

Questionnaire Respondent

As working parents of very young children, our family would love to see more family/youth-oriented programs on weekends.”

Questionnaire Respondent





Chapter 2: Our Vision



2 OUR VISION



Our Community

The community of West Linn is highly regarded as a great place to live and raise a family, with engaged neighborhoods and a rich history connected to the Willamette and Tualatin Rivers.

A City of Growth and Change

West Linn is primarily a residential community, characterized by 11 neighborhood associations, each with its own unique goals. It's important to respect that diversity while also focusing on larger citywide needs. The City is experiencing modest population growth focused in four neighborhoods, generally those with multi-family housing. While the population of West

Linn was estimated at 25,615 in 2016, as many as 31,471 residents may live in the city by 2040, creating an increased demand for parks and recreation opportunities (data from the *Transportation System Plan*). More than a third of residents are new since the 2007 *Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan* was adopted, reflecting changing needs and priorities in the community.

More than one-quarter of residents are young, ages 19 or under. However, that percentage has decreased on the last 15 years, while the population of residents age 65+ has increased from 7.8% to 14.5%. This also suggests that priorities may have changed since the last Plan was completed (Table 4).

Table 4: West Linn Age Breakdown

Age of West Linn Residents	2000 Census	2015 Census
Under 5	6.6	3.7
5-9	8.2	7.6
10-19	16.5	14.4
20-34	13.7	13.4
35-64	47.4	46.4
65 years or older	7.8	14.5

A Community with Unique Needs and Opportunities

Socioeconomic and demographic data helps us better understand the changing priorities and market preferences of West Linn residents. Table 5 summarizes the six primary socio-economic segments of West Linn, using ESRI's Tapestry data to categorize lifestyle choices, purchase options and recreation preferences. (See Appendix B for details.)

Overall, West Linn's population is savvy with a higher than typical spending on recreation and entertainment. Residents tend to live active lifestyles, including participating in sports and exercise, and have time to spend on personal interests, including the arts and travel. Three of the top market segments are family-oriented, suggesting a stronger market for this demographic.



Figure 4: Savvy Suburbanites. These families with empty nests (or soon to be) are characterized as spending 84% above the national average on entertainment and recreation.

Tapestry Segmentation

Tapestry Segmentation™ classifies U.S. neighborhoods based on their socioeconomic and demographic compositions to identify 65 unique market segments. Neighborhoods are sorted by more than 60 attributes, including income, employment, home value, housing types, education, household composition, age and other key determinates of consumer behavior. These attributes help us understand the preferences of West Linn residents.

Table 5: West Linn Tapestry Segments

Segment Type	Percent	Median HH Income
Savvy Suburbanites	35.2%	\$104,000
In Style	27.0%	\$66,000
Soccer Moms	20.1%	\$84,000
Professional Pride	10.5%	\$127,000
Exurbanites	5.3%	\$98,000
Golden Years	1.8%	\$61,000



Figure 5: In Style. These professional couples without children engage in the arts and travel. While they spend 25% more than the national average on entertainment and recreation, they are less engaged in active activities.



Public Involvement and Key Themes

Nearly 2,000 members of the community were involved in developing the plan, sharing their insights and preferences to help shape recommendations. Based on community input, the 2018 *Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* identifies new priorities for parks and recreation in West Linn. The following key themes emerged from public comments.

Activating the City’s Waterfront While Respecting Community Context

West Linn’s location along two rivers is a big part of the City’s identity and a major draw for recreation. To improve access and connectivity along the Willamette River between Willamette Park and West Bridge Park, nearly 70% of questionnaire respondents want an off-street multi-use path along the river. There is additional interest in an improved bike/pedestrian route along Willamette Falls Drive.

Participants in the Vision Workshop identified the river frontages as a major opportunity to

enhance the City of West Linn’s identity. Participants suggested developing waterfront trails and facilities that support water sports and recreation such as kayaking, boating and jet skiing. Priorities included designing quality community gathering spaces along the river to provide social and economic benefits. Participants suggested a community esplanade along the river where people can walk, bike, shop and gather. Some participants suggested small boat (non-motorized) launch facilities, swimming docks and rentals.

Protecting a System of Natural Areas

Opportunities to be outdoors or in nature was identified as a top benefit offered by West Linn’s parks and recreation system, as noted in Online Questionnaire results. Workshop participants emphasized the need to invest in natural area protection, especially in light of pressure from new development. Suggestions included acquiring natural areas near developing properties and restoring compromised wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas.

Participants also emphasized that riparian habitat and sensitive natural areas along the water should be preserved.

Continuing to Connect Parks and Places with Trails

Trails and community connectivity continue to be a high priority for residents. Community members identified trails and connectivity as a primary reason for visiting parks or open space and expressed a need for better connectivity along the City's riverfront. Adding nature trails and multi-purpose trails was also identified as a high priority according to questionnaire respondents.

Increasing Recreation Variety

Residents want to see a greater variety of outdoor recreation facilities in West Linn, especially those that engage residents of all ages and can be enjoyed year-round. Participants suggested adding swimming opportunities, small entertainment venues, tennis or pickleball courts, and facilities that promote youth participation such as climbing walls, ziplines and bicycle courses. Other ideas included enhancing existing parks with community gardens, reservable shelters, dog parks and amenities that can be enjoyed by active families.

Desired park characteristics

Residents noted that their favorite parks have several things in common. These include attributes such as convenient locations, natural character, shade, high quality amenities in good condition, riverfront or water access, trails and dog-friendly spaces.

Improving Indoor Options

Community members voiced a need for more year-round and indoor activities. Less than 30% of questionnaire respondents felt that the current quality of indoor recreation facilities provided by the City is good or excellent. When asked what could be improved, many respondents noted the desire for new indoor recreation/community space, potentially

including an aquatic facility, or repurposed multi-purpose spaces to support indoor sports and activities for all age groups.

Popularity of Community Events

Public events are very popular in West Linn. Community members feel it's important to continue or increase these activities. More than 54% of Online Questionnaire respondents or their family members participated in community events and festivals in 2016.

Offering Greater Flexibility in Recreation Classes and Programs

According to Online Questionnaire results, more programming options are needed. Opportunities to increase program participation include providing more weekend programs, a greater variety of programs or events, more family-friendly options and flexible scheduling or drop-in opportunities. More activities for different age groups and better communication regarding upcoming opportunities would also be helpful. Overall, residents indicated that children (age 6-12), as well as older adults or seniors, had more recreation opportunities. However, other age groups need improved and a greater variety of recreation services.

Figure 6: Favorite Park or Facility

This word cloud emphasizes the responses mentioned most frequently in an online question where respondents were asked to write in their favorite parks and facilities. The most frequently mentioned sites, noted in larger type, tend to be larger multi-use parks that support a variety of recreation opportunities.

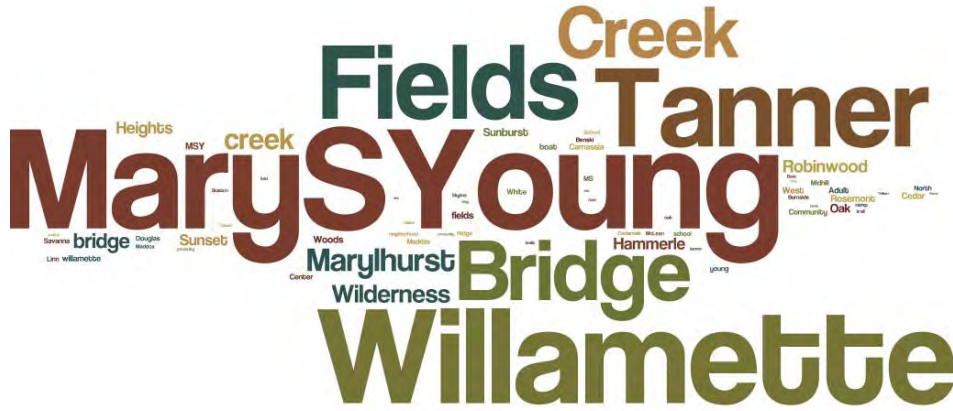
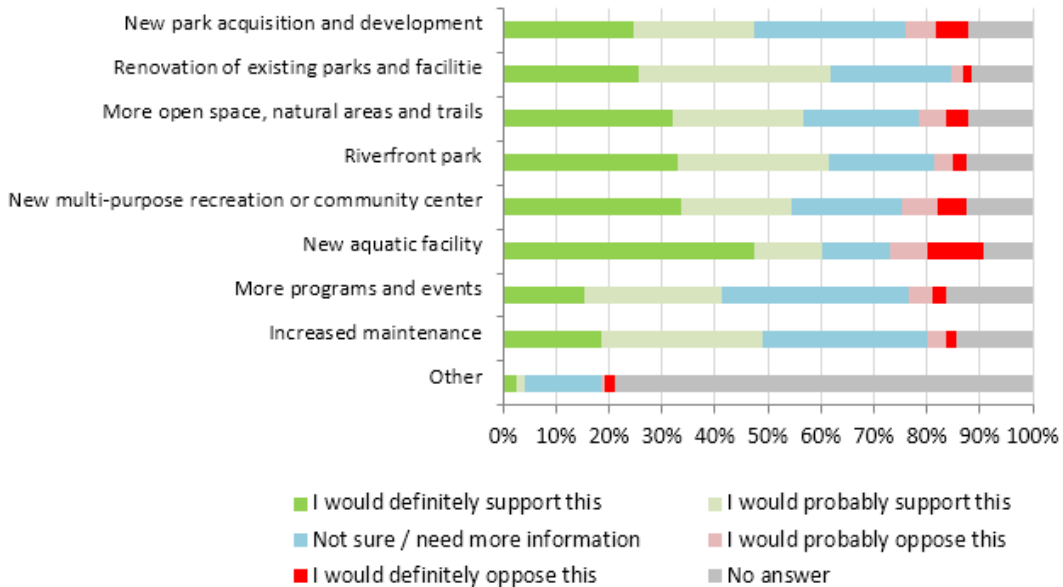


Figure 7: Funding Preferences if the City Pursued a Future Tax Measure

Online questionnaire responses show some support for many different types of park and facility enhancements. While respondents showed the most definite support for an aquatic facility, this same facility also showed the most opposition. In comparison, renovating existing parks showed the most definite and probable support combined, along with the least opposition.



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Chapter 3: Goals for the Future



3 GOALS FOR THE FUTURE



Based on the ideas and needs summarized in Chapter 2, seven overarching goals and related recommendations provide direction for enhancements to the park system. Key themes and priorities from the extensive community involvement process directly informed the following goals:

- 1. Re-envision West Linn’s water experience.**
- 2. Create social hubs that provide year-round gathering places for all West Linn residents.**
- 3. Create parks and open spaces that showcase West Linn’s unique qualities.**
- 4. Provide new and extraordinary experiences in West Linn’s parks.**
- 5. Re-imagine West Linn’s future indoor recreation opportunities.**
- 6. Activate parks with recreation programs and events that encourage social interaction and a sense of community.**
- 7. Create a more connected and accessible environment for pedestrians, bicyclists and other recreation uses.**

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GOAL 1: Re-envision West Linn's water experience

Overview

The Willamette and Tualatin Rivers are defining features of West Linn and important assets in the community. The rivers are also a big part of the City's history and identity. Parks and recreation play a vital role in bringing people to water, with ten city parks located along the Willamette or Tualatin Rivers, and several more with a river view.

Water-based resources provide access to the rivers and diverse recreation experiences, such as wildlife viewing, fishing, boating, swimming and strolling along the river.

Access to the water is a tremendous differentiator for West Linn's park system. Based on responses to the community questionnaire, parks near water are of the most popular park types in the city, including Mary S. Young, Willamette and Fields Bridge. Greater river access is desired. Equally important, sites with access to water have the potential to increase community identity, public interest and general park character, which are all important to residents.

Photo: Riva Row Boathouse (The Woodlands, TX)

Recommendations

- Prioritize trail improvements near or along rivers or connecting to riverfront parks.
- Establish an esplanade along the river near Riverfront Park where people can walk, bike, shop and view the Willamette Falls.
- Develop non-motorized boat launches, swimming docks, boat rentals, and a boathouse with boat storage, lockers and concessionaire space.
- Prioritize the preservation and restoration of riparian habitat and sensitive natural areas along waterfront and wetland areas.
- Create designated fishing areas and enhance existing fishing opportunities, including waterfront near an eddy, near submerged trees or vegetation.
- Enhance and maintain views of the rivers by maintaining breaks in vegetation and orienting viewpoints and seating areas towards river views.
- Consider a riverfront access plan addressing parking management in conjunction with added amenities along the riverfront.
- Identify properties that would increase water access, habitat and park land connectivity through an inventory of desirable properties and through conversations with willing property owners and potential partners.
- Increase awareness of riverfront sites by adding consistent wayfinding signage that depicts the different features offered at each site.
- Address increased programming needs associated with waterfront opportunities.



GOAL 2: Create social hubs that provide year-round gathering places for all West Linn residents

Overview

Social interaction is one of the most fundamental and inherent benefits of public parks: places that provide a chance for unexpected encounters, social cohesion, demonstration and celebration. Respondents of the questionnaire felt that parks are important for neighborhood and family gatherings, as well as for community events. Different scales of social spaces should be provided, ranging from smaller less-formal spaces (such as seat walls or open lawns), to larger-scale facilities (such as reservable shelters or amphitheaters). These social hubs will help create the types of environments where social interaction and gathering can occur and may support a network of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces for the community.

When outdoors, protection from rain, wind and sun are important considerations, such as at the six parks that provide a covered picnic shelter. Poor weather is one of the top reasons why people seldom use parks. Covered amphitheaters, program pavilions and community buildings are all facilities that provide year-round gathering spaces or serve as social hubs.

Photo: Hemisfair Park (San Antonio, TX)



Recommendations

- Develop flexible-use programming areas, such as spaces for special events, different types of outdoor classes, programs and activity practice space throughout the city.
- Integrate accessible seating and gathering areas in existing parks, including reservable picnic shelters and pavilions, lookouts along rivers, and dispersed tables and seating areas in parks and along trails.
- Design gathering spaces to shelter from the elements. Consider wind breaks, shade and shelters, and fire pits with defensible space from vegetation and structures.
- Continue to program existing indoor spaces in meeting needs of nearby residents.
- Integrate permanent and temporary public restrooms in parks that attract a high level of community use or attract users for extended time.
- Activate gathering spaces to attract and retain users. Consider concessionaires (e.g., coffee stands, small boat rentals), farmers' markets and guided tours, classes and activities as part of site programming to contribute to livelier social or activity hubs.
- Improve connections and signage to encourage use of nearby park sites. Develop parks near schools to generate more activity from kids and families.

GOAL 3: Create parks and open spaces that showcase West Linn's unique qualities

Overview

As public spaces, West Linn's parks and open spaces should reflect the very best of the City and its people, showcasing an identity that is unique to West Linn and to each park. West Linn has many unique qualities that can shine through local parks, such as neighborhood character, natural features and site history. Most parks have some combination of open lawn area, wooded area, trails, play area, picnic area, and sports/recreation features, which makes the parks feel full of activities. However, this similarity also makes them feel relatively homogeneous, without distinct identities for each park.

A few parks have unique and defining features, such as the Meteorite Trail at Fields Bridge Park, the giant hill slide at Sahallie Illahee Park, the basalt water feature at Robinwood Park, and the new design features at Marylhurst Heights Park. Several parks have unique public art displays. There is an opportunity to create more site-specific, interpretive art outdoors. Employing placemaking and park activation techniques in selected parks would help increase the variety of recreation experiences and would help transform these sites into distinctive, animated parks for all to enjoy. Maintaining a more rustic, natural character at other sites would help differentiate park character in West Linn.

Recommendations

- Identify priority sites for natural resources restoration and stewardship, including sites with high resource value, riparian corridors, wetlands, wildlife habitat, continuous tree canopy, and pollinator pathways.
- Support opportunities for historical, natural and cultural interpretation and wildlife viewing in parks.
- Provide signage and facilities to support environmental education and interpretation in developed parks and natural areas, particularly at points of interest such as trailheads, waterfront sites, viewpoints and sensitive areas. Facilities may include elements such as outdoor classrooms, kiosks, interactive and educational play features.
- For parks with steep slopes or hill sides, incorporate facilities that accentuate the topography. These may include switchback trails, slides, viewpoints, vistas, steps or seating areas.
- Establish a tree health monitoring protocol and tree replacement plan for existing parks. Pursue pilot projects to test new or innovative facilities in parks. Encourage volunteer-driven initiatives and ideas through an annual improvement campaign.
- Build opportunities and options for increasing art in parks to reflect local history and context.
- Design new facilities for sustainable energy efficiency, water conservation, ease of maintenance and minimized impacts to the natural environment.



GOAL 4: Provide new and extraordinary experiences in West Linn's parks

Overview

West Linn's parks offer incredible settings to support play, learning, exercise and relaxation. There are opportunities to maximize the full potential of parks to support a greater variety and diversity of recreation opportunities. For example, most play areas are similar off-the-shelf pieces that do not encourage unstructured, open-ended play, which is an important component of a rich play experience.

Some parks lack defining features or memorable and unique recreation options. Parks also would benefit from a variety of facilities to serve youth, teens, young adults, adults, and older adults. Similarly, many sports fields and courts in parks are outdated, and additional active recreation opportunities are needed. In some parks, adjacent private property encroaches onto public space and detracts from the park character and erodes the necessary edge between public and private realms.

Recommendations

- Support new and emerging recreational facilities across the city. Consider adding activities for young adults and teens, such as parkour, climbing walls, bike skills areas, zip lines, pump tracks, and outdoor ping-pong.
- Enhance play areas to feature fun and unique play sites not found in nearby parks. Consider nature play in addition to or as an alternative to traditional play equipment when replacing aging or worn structures. Prioritize accessible design.
- Design park features around a common theme or style that showcases West Linn's unique natural areas and local history, providing settings that are comfortable, functional and engaging.
- Open new or underused areas of parks where there is potential to add appropriate new recreational facilities, art installations, viewpoints, boardwalks or trails.
- Increase low impact, social opportunities for adults and seniors in parks. Consider pickleball, lawn bowling, badminton, petanque, and outdoor exercise equipment.
- Partner with schools to address sport field needs. Design synthetic-turf multipurpose fields suitable for traditional and newer emerging athletic activities.
- Update the City's policies on park encroachment and use boundary markers and maintenance to delineate park boundaries where they abut residential uses. Conduct annual GIS park boundary surveys. Develop an annual reporting database of encroachment violations and actively enforce violations.



GOAL 5: Re-imagine West Linn's future indoor recreation opportunities

Overview

West Linn residents desire indoor public spaces that have the potential to fulfill some of the top needs identified by the community, including opportunities for **all ages**, year-round recreation, health and fitness activities, and social gatherings.

The City currently owns a mix of indoor facilities and buildings. Two function as current recreational assets supporting passive recreation programs and reservable space: Adult Community Center and Sunset Fire Hall. Two are considered Community Resource Centers that are operated by non-profits: the McLean House (located McLean Park) and the Robinwood Station. Two are not currently in use but represent Community Resource Opportunities if renovated and/or improved.

As noted in the public comments received, many residents feel that existing indoor facilities are not satisfactory. What's lacking is a facility that supports indoor fitness, sports, recreation and drop-in community use. Questionnaire respondents indicated that a new indoor community/recreation center is one of their highest priorities. However, new indoor facilities are also costly—both for construction and ongoing operations. On the other hand, renovated indoor spaces are also costly, particularly if the resulting space lacks value for indoor recreation. The City needs a cohesive investment approach to evaluate indoor needs and create a strategic investment approach to capital improvements.



Recommendations

- Create a comprehensive Public Facilities Master Plan to evaluate the long-term community needs, potential site uses, capital costs for improvements and development, ongoing operating expenses and revenues (cost recovery) of all current and future City-owned facilities.
- Once costs and priorities are identified, create a long-term investment strategy that balances requests for short-term facility improvements with the high priority outdoor facility needs and long-term indoor facility needs.
- Explore various funding sources and continue to monitor the community's willingness to pay increased taxes to support indoor facilities.
- Recruit private businesses, non-profits and other partners to manage operate neighborhood-scale indoor facilities. Encourage them to include revenue-generating options such as small retail concessions, coffee or food stands, and equipment rentals to offset costs.
- Invest in indoor facilities that provide a community-wide benefit and support multiple uses, including active and passive recreation.
- Allow drop-in times or open use of indoor facilities during designated times, especially after school/work hours and on weekends.
- Program indoor facilities for seasonal or year-round activities and exhibits, such as art shows, plays, neighborhood gatherings and movie nights.

GOAL 6: Activate parks with recreation programs and events that encourage social interaction and a sense of community

Overview

West Linn residents enjoy opportunities to come together, connect with friends and neighbors and spend time with family. Based on questionnaire responses, many respondents indicated that the City already provides great community events, and more than half attended community events and festivals. Yet, according to the questionnaire, respondents rated the recreation programs, classes and events for young adults and teens poorly. Overall, programs, classes and events for children (age 6-12) and older adults or seniors were rated better than programs and classes offered for other population groups.

Parks and recreation facilities provide great places to accommodate social gathering and serve as venues for learning, celebrating, demonstrating and playing, together. Open and flexible hours and locations are a starting point to encourage a greater variety of events and programs. The City should lead the effort to further improve social gathering opportunities, actively testing different times and types of opportunities to better meet the diverse needs of West Linn.

Existing and new partners are also key to building and sustaining this important part of the park and recreation system. Recreation programs offered by the City should be expanded to increase opportunities for residents to interact and gather.

Recommendations

- Consider testing new program options that provide a variety of choices, weekend options, flexible scheduling and drop-in opportunities.
- Work with volunteers or private businesses to provide access to outdoor recreation programs and activities, including nature-based programs and environmental learning.
- Offer additional programs catering to young adults and teens, including a greater variety of outdoor concerts and movies, as well as beginner classes and field trips to regional recreation and institutional destinations.
- Direct resources to help recruit new program instructors or volunteers. Showcase providers when advertising events and programs to the public.
- Promote West Linn's parks and recreation opportunities, partnerships and programs to a higher degree. This will help increase participation and also inform people about the benefits that are being created with their tax dollars. Retain specialists in advertising and social media to promote the full range of opportunities offered by the City and its partners, using already popular events to showcase the park system and its supporters.
- The City should continue to collaborate with a range of partners to put on public events. This strategy is cost effective and reduces demand on City resources.
- As new facilities are developed, program and activate these spaces. For example, be prepared to staff a new swimming area with lifeguards during peak times.



GOAL 7: Create a more connected and accessible environment for pedestrians, bicyclists and other recreation uses

Overview

The City of West Linn has a long history planning for trails and non-motorized connections. The City's adopted Trails Plan outlines a network of 62 miles of trail routes, including on-and off-street facilities. A larger, more robust trail network envisioned by the plan would make the entire city more walkable/bikeable and would connect people to the waterfront, schools, neighborhoods, the regional trail network and other community destinations.

Based on more recent interests and needs identified from the Master Plan, trails continue to be a top priority. Respondents to the community questionnaire identified several trail priorities, including an off-street multi-use path to connect Willamette Park and West Bridge Park, plus an overall desire for more nature trails and multi-purpose trails for hiking or biking.

Trail corridors can provide many of the same experiences that residents would expect from a local park and further improve access to recreation, as well as non-motorized transportation. Trails also provide places to learn, reflect, explore and play. Seating and interactive or interpretive art, as well as boulders, downed trees or other natural materials for play, can all be added next to trails.



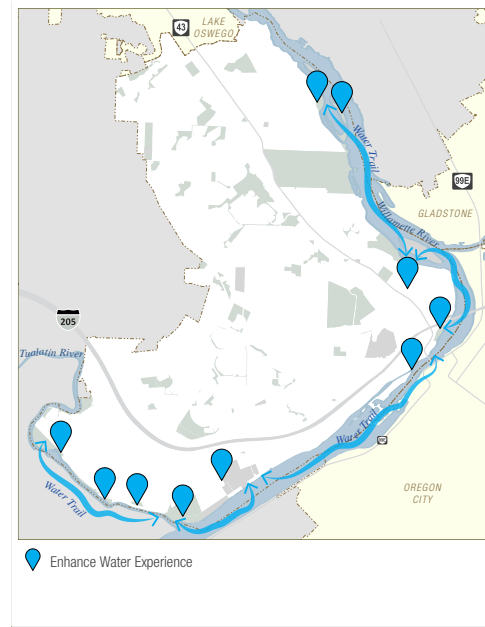
Recommendations

- Using the Trails Plan for guidance, leverage the interconnected trail and greenway system as a major attraction, a recreation resource and a transportation asset.
- Prioritize pursuing a continuous multi-use path along the river (south of I-205).
- Improve Willamette Falls Drive to include a separated bike/pedestrian route.
- Build trails and pathways within existing parks and natural areas to increase access to and interaction with natural areas, where appropriate.
- Design chicanes or pockets alongside trails that include features for play, learning or relaxing. Consider natural or built materials to crawl under or climb over, engaging art pieces, seating and rest areas.
- Create a comprehensive wayfinding system that is recognizable and understandable to all users. The system of signs should indicate where trails, bike routes and trailheads are located, distances between destinations, and safety and educational information. The system should conform to a consistent design theme that is durable and easy to maintain.
- Locate park entrances and trailheads near transit stops, off-street parking areas, safe crossings and bike racks to promote connections to other transportation modes.

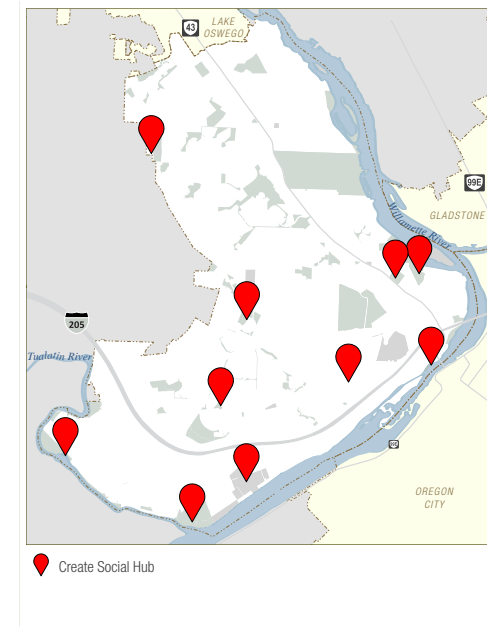
MAPS:

West Linn’s goals and recommendations can be achieved by enhancing and improving key park sites.

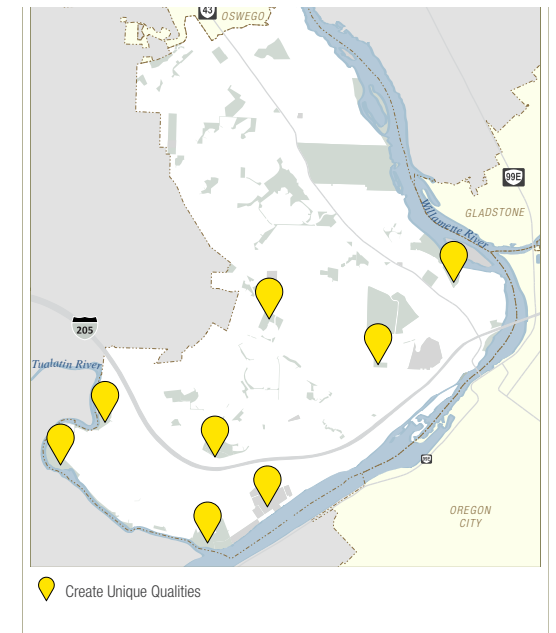
The following maps illustrate West Linn park sites where proposed improvements would support the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan goals detailed in this chapter. For more details on recommended improvement projects see Chapter 4.



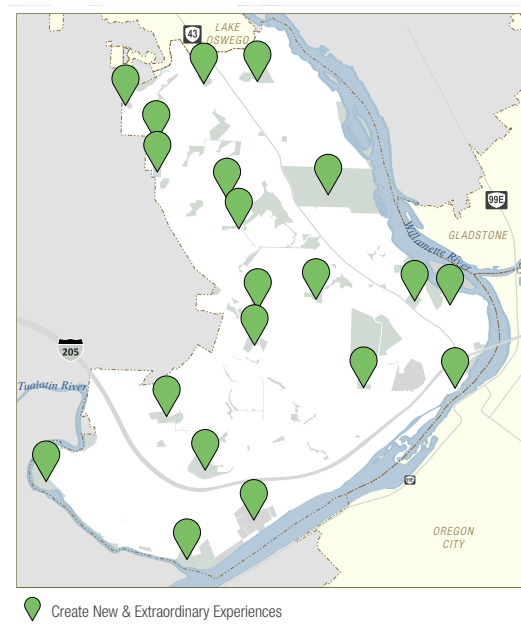
Map 3: Potential Sites for Enhanced Water Experiences



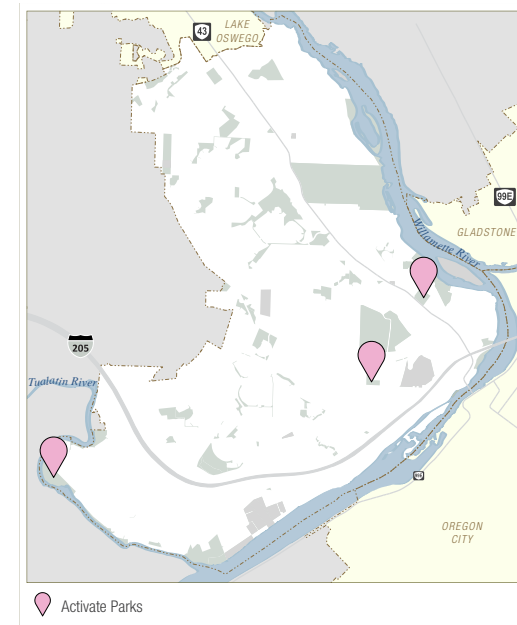
Map 4: Potential Sites for Enhanced Social Hubs



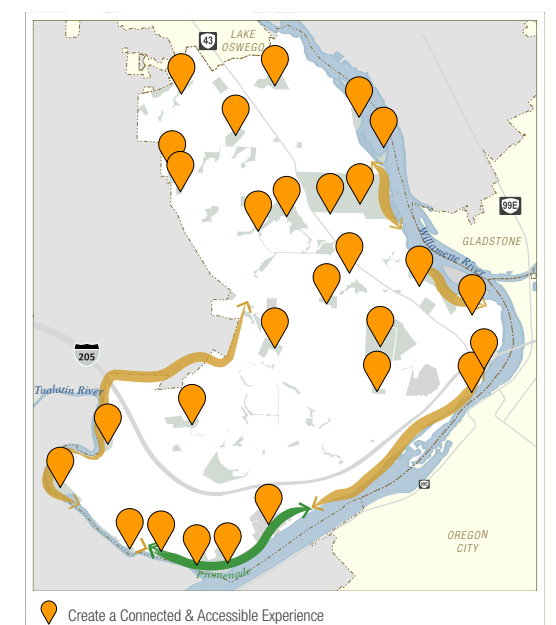
Map 5: Potential Sites for Showcasing Unique Park Qualities



Map 6: Potential Sites for Enhanced Park Experiences



Map 7: Potential Sites for Programming Improvements



Map 8: Potential Sites for Enhanced Access and Connectivity



Chapter 4: Recommendations



4

RECOMMENDATIONS

West Linn’s goals for parks and recreation identify key moves to promote the community’s character through its park system. These moves together require a major investment in parks, facilities, programs and operations. Recent bond measures, however, have shown a reluctance to support some parks and recreation projects. For this reason, it’s important to understand what types of investment residents truly support.

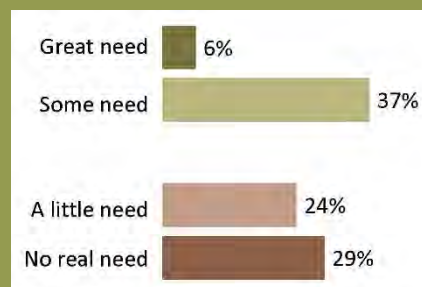
In December 2017 and January 2018, the City of West Linn surveyed 458 voters to identify priorities for a potential bond measure to improve to improve parks, trails, natural areas, streets, and community facilities. This chapter shares highlights from the West Linn Bond Measure Feasibility Study to define community support for parks projects. Considering these findings, the chapter also recommends site specific improvements and policies to enhance the development and management of West Linn’s park and recreation system.

High Satisfaction Ratings

West Linn residents appreciate City parks and facilities. In the 2017 Online Questionnaire conducted for the Master Plan process, 85% of respondents rated the City’s parks and facilities as good or excellent. The 2018 Bond Measure Feasibility Study survey also found high ratings for the Parks and Recreation Department (see sidebar). Because current satisfaction levels are

Bond Feasibility Study

- The Parks & Recreation Department has a stronger approval rating (85%) than the Streets Department, City Council, Neighborhood Associations and City management overall.
- Almost 70% of voters visit parks, natural areas and trails once a month or more.
- The Department does such a good job of maintaining sites that only 39% of respondents think that deteriorating and run-down parks are a serious problem. Parks issues overall are perceived to be less serious than other city issues.
- Fewer than half see a need for funding for neighborhood parks, trails, natural areas, and recreation facilities.



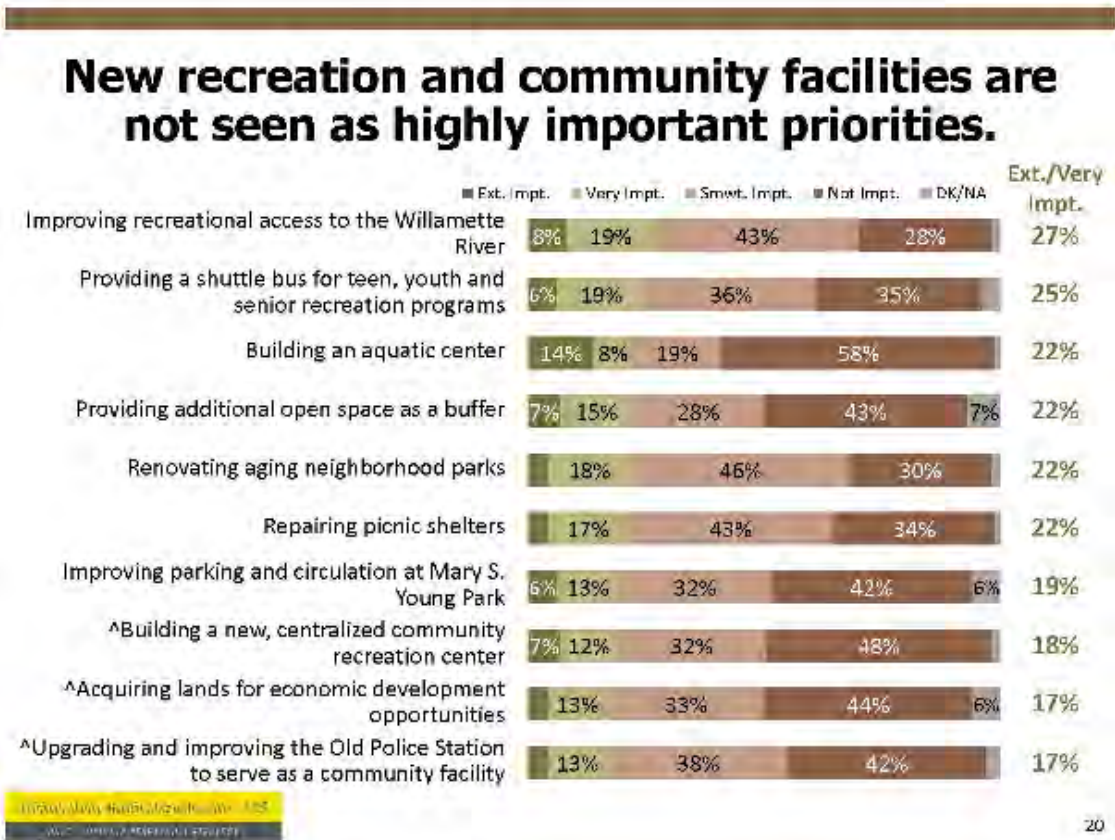
FM3: West Linn Bond Measure Feasibility Study

so high, however, few respondents saw a need for improved or new recreation and community facilities. Among a list of spending priorities tested, traffic/safety improvements are at the top (48-67% of respondents noting these as extremely or very important). Cycling, hiking, and park improvements are lower priorities, followed by new parks and facilities (Figure 8). However, one of the top reasons for supporting the bond measure is to invest in West Linn’s quality of life.

Quality of Life Investment

The third most important reason for supporting a bond measure is that parks, natural areas, and recreation and community facilities provide people of all ages opportunities to relax, exercise and appreciate nature. Investing in parks and recreation improves our quality of life.

Figure 8: Bond Measure Study Findings on Facility Priorities



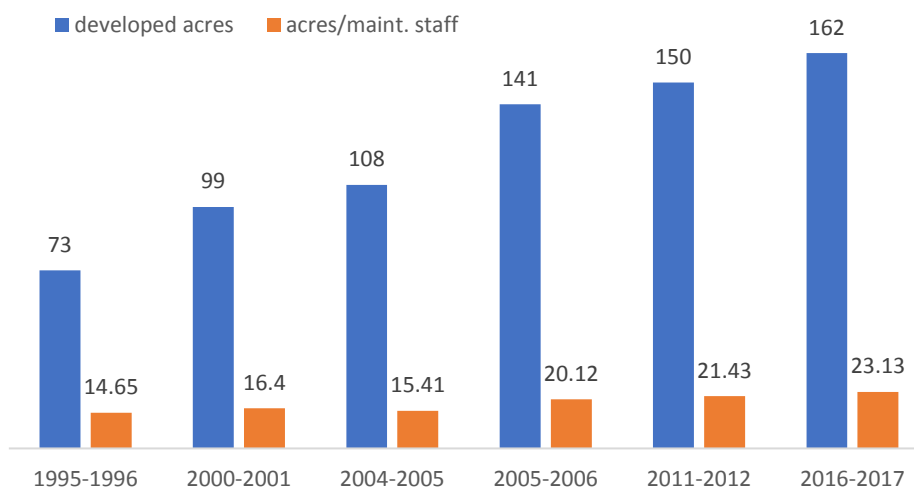
Increasing Maintenance and Operations Needs

The high satisfaction ratings mask the fact that the City’s parks and recreation facilities are at a critical junction. The City’s growing population is putting a greater demand on parks.

Recreation program participation also has increased in recent years. Department staff have been scrambling to take care of and operate its parks and facilities. Staffing has not kept pace with increases in the City’s population, developed park acreage and program participation through the years.

Currently, nine full time staff take care of 548.3 acres of City park land and natural areas, with some seasonal and volunteer support. Since there isn’t enough funding to maintain all parks, staff wisely focus resources on developed park areas only. However, more staff are needed as park to maintain the system as it grows. As the amount of developed park acreage has grown since 1995, the numbers of acres that each staff maintains has continued to grow as well (Figure 9). This FTE per maintained acre is not sustainable.

Figure 9: Increase in Developed Acres and Maintained Acres per Staff Person Since 1995.



Needed Maintenance

The combination of deferred maintenance, storm-related maintenance issues, aging and worn facilities, increasing park and facility use, and added new facilities has pushed West Linn parks maintenance to a tipping point.

Without an increase in staffing and funds for site stewardship and asset replacement, the Parks & Recreation Department will be unable to maintain its parks adequately. If the City wants to sustain its high public approval ratings for parks and recreation, the Master Plan strongly recommends increasing funding to address maintenance needs.

While the Department has been able to keep things looking good and operational, staff know they are facing the perfect storm. Increased maintenance funding and staffing are critically needed. A higher level of maintenance is needed at 18 existing sites (Table 6).

Table 6: Numbers of Sites Needing Improved Maintenance and Reinvestment

Maintenance Classification	Definition	# of Existing Sites	# of Proposed Sites	Examples
Basic Maintenance	A basic level of maintenance includes routine monitoring, inspection and care of recreation facilities, natural areas and landscaping. At this level, the City provides routine maintenance for health and safety, but not specialized care for asset protection. All sites need at least basic maintenance.	50	8	All parks and natural areas
Standard Maintenance	More heavily or frequently-used sites require a higher standard of maintenance. These sites receive the types of maintenance provided at “basic” maintenance sites on a more frequent basis.	7	1	All boat ramps, Tanner Creek Park, White Oak Savannah, Mary S. Young Park, Midhill Park
Enhanced Maintenance	Enhanced maintenance is needed at sites that include specialized assets and are highly visible and heavily used. These sites are maintained at the highest level and receive priority during peak use times.	10	6	All indoor facilities, Fields Bridge Park, Willamette Park, proposed Riverfront Park
Reinvestment/Replacement	An allowance should be set aside annually to offset the costs of replacing facilities at the end of their lifecycles. In the timeframe of this plan, this applies to all sites.	41	9	All developed park sites

Note: See Appendix D for details.

Site Recommendations

The issue the City is facing is not just about park maintenance. To meet community expectations, aging parks and facilities need to be updated and refreshed, plus new recreation facilities should be developed to support changing recreation trends. The Master Plan includes a Park Site Recommendations Matrix that documents site by site needs for improvements and maintenance (Appendix C). It presents recommended capital projects for existing parks and potential future parks and facilities. It also identifies maintenance needs based on anticipated levels of site use. These recommendations are tied to Plan goals presented in Chapter 3 and consistent with the Design Use and Maintenance Standards presented in Appendix D.

Many existing sites need improvements (Table 7). Fortunately, most of them simply need minor facility enhancement and natural resource restorations. Deferred maintenance is a significant issue at nine sites.

Site Recommendations

There are five categories of recommendations for existing parks. Appendix G provides additional description of these terms.

- **Major Enhancement:** A feature that would affect roughly half of the developed portion of a site or add costly features.
- **Minor Enhancement:** A feature that would affect roughly one quarter of the developed portion of a site or add improvements with a moderate cost.
- **Added Facility:** A unique or specific feature recommended for a site.
- **Deferred Maintenance:** Providing upkeep to existing parks with known maintenance needs.
- **Natural Resource Restoration:** Attending to preservation, restoration or protection of natural resource areas of a site.

Table 7: Highlights of Recommendations for Existing Sites (# of sites needing improvements)

	Major Enhancement	Minor Enhancement	Added Facility	Deferred Maintenance	Natural Resource Restoration
Active-Oriented	2	5	4	2	0
Special Use	1	2	1	1	0
Multi-Use	2	4	0	5	1
Passive-Oriented	1	6	0	1	14
Natural Resource Areas	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL Existing Parks	6	17	5	9	15

See Appendix C for all site recommendations.

Table 8 summarizes recommendations for proposed (new) sites that will add new recreation opportunities for West Linn residents and promote community livability. There are also opportunities to cost effectively partner at Oppenlander Field (potential partner site) to add sports capacity to West Linn. Map 9, on the next page, shows how these improvements advance the goals of this plan.

Table 8: Highlights of Recommendations for Proposed Sites (# of sites needing improvements)

	Acquire	Plan	Develop	Enhance	Sustain
Proposed park sites	6	6	6	3	1
Potential Partner Sites	0	0	0	1	0
Other Sites	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	6	6	6	5	1

See Appendix E for all site recommendations.

Project Types

Capital projects for proposed sites, potential partner sites and other sites include five types:

- **Acquire:** Obtain new land
- **Plan:** Create or revise a master plan, design or study
- **Develop:** Build a new park
- **Enhance:** Add a specialized feature or facility
- **Sustain:** Attend to the maintenance, restoration or preservation of site features

Map 9: Recommended Park Projects by Goal



RELATED PLAN GOALS

- Enhance Water Experience
- Showcase Unique Qualities
- Create a Connected & Accessible Environment
- Create Social Hub
- Create New & Extraordinary Experiences
- Activate Parks

Note: Proposed trails are based on recommendations in the adopted 2013 Trails Master Plan.

Top Community Projects

Since the Master Plan includes more projects than the community can fund, projects were screened according to Master Plan goals and the community priorities noted in the Online Questionnaire and Community Workshop. The following projects are important to achieving Plan goals. These are not noted in priority order and should be prioritized along with other capital projects as part of the City's capital improvement planning process (see Chapter 5). Appendix E provides additional details for each top project.

Maddax Woods

Enhance Maddax Woods as a unique natural park site that better supports events and holiday festivals and provides opportunities for hiking, wildlife viewing, and environmental education.



Fields Bridge Park

Strengthen some of the best features of Fields Bridge Park to reinforce it as a one-of-a-kind destination park experience that offers a wide range of activities and environments for all ages and interests.

Sunset Park

Reinvest in Sunset Park by creating an outdoor neighborhood oasis that provides community spaces for play, gathering, and learning under the canopy of mature conifer trees.

Marylhurst Heights Park Addition

Develop the addition to Marylhurst Park to complete the overall park's design and installation.

Oppenlander Field

Explore a partnership or joint-use agreement with the School District to improve and manage this site as a high-level sports facility with artificial turf and field lighting.



Cedar Oak Boat Ramp

Add to the recent boat ramp improvements by enhancing existing features and introducing new ones that improve user comfort.

Sports and Games Activation

Strengthen West Linn's existing activity areas and sports facilities with diversified sports courts, challenge elements, and game features in two to three pilot sites. These outdoor sports courts and game areas should be designed to encourage community interaction, activate public spaces, promote play, and present opportunities for friendly competition and

intergenerational connection. Consider sites such as Tanner Creek Park, Hammerle Park, Marylhurst Heights Addition, and Robinwood Park.

Enhanced Play Experience at Targeted Sites

Target four to five sites to provide unique and extraordinary play experiences – ones that offer surprising, contextual, and open-ended experiences and that are designed for people of all ages and abilities.

User Comfort and Accessibility

Enhance user comfort and accessibility by providing a variety of accessible amenities with a special focus on priority projects. Clean, comfortable, and accessible parks are aesthetically pleasing and are a major contributor to the community’s general quality of life.



Riverfront Park

Create a community destination and year-round social hub that provides an extraordinary riverfront experience. Acquire and adaptively reuse the Tri-City Sewer District Property into a new regional park that enhances the character of West Linn’s riverfront. Include attractive plazas, a swimming dock, a non-motorized boat launch, a boathouse, a reservable shelter with

gathering and social spaces and connect to nearby parks via a riverfront esplanade. This park will connect to the portion of the waterfront that is currently owned by PGE.



Willamette Greenway Trail and Tualatin River Greenway Trail

As recommended in the adopted 2013 Trails Master Plan, develop a riverside trail that provides visual and physical water access, connects riverfront parks, highlights natural resources, and transforms the riverfront area into a lively, usable, valuable treasure for the entire city. Along the Willamette River, create a riverfront trail extending from Bernert Landing Boat Ramp to Cedaroak Boat Ramp. Connect to the new Riverfront Park esplanade, as well as to the West Linn Public Fishing Dock, West Bridge Park/ MacLean House, Maddax Woods, Cedar Island Park, and Mary S. Young Park as feasible.

Land and Water Trailheads

Design and develop new trailheads and support facilities as gateways to popular or prioritized future land and water trails. Focus on the new Riverfront Park, as well as existing Special Use and Multi-Use Parks with the largest demand or need for improved access, including the future Riverfront Trail.

West Linn Fishing Dock

Enhance the existing fishing dock by improving parking and access and by increasing use throughout the shoulder seasons.



A Multi-Purpose Indoor Recreation Space

Strategically prioritize investments to move towards the long-term goal of building an indoor community hub that supports active programming and enrichment activities for residents of all ages. As noted in the indoor facility recommendations in Appendix F, consider a phased approach to develop a community recreation center with indoor/outdoor programming space that could later be expanded. Also, maintain and improve the Adult Community Center to continue its emphasis on senior programs and, after hours, on passive community activities and rentals.



Recognizing the importance of other City-owned buildings such as the Robinwood Station, Bolton Fire Hall, and Old City Hall, create a comprehensive Public Facilities Master Plan to evaluate long-term community needs and investment strategies for all indoor facilities.

Programming Recommendations

The development of a new indoor recreation facility will significantly change the business of the Parks and Recreation Department to emphasize more recreation programming. In the short-term, however, the City must carefully consider ways to invest in increasing recreation programs and events. Increased activities in parks will increase maintenance demands as well. Consequently, the Master Plan recommends that the City increase programming as a revenue-generating opportunity, responding to West Linn's market considerations (see Appendix B). That includes focusing on cost recovery, specific types of programs, and a longer-term strategy for meeting indoor needs.

Cost Recovery and Program Reinvestment

Based on West Linn's market profile, residents are well above the national average in the funds they spend annually on recreation and entertainment. That means residents have a strong capacity to "pay to play" for recreation services provided by public, private and non-profit groups. Given the City's limited investment in recreation, the pricing policies and cost recovery established for programs and services is critical to being able to provide programming. Any revenues collected through City events and programs must be reallocated to the Parks and Recreation Department and re-invested in park maintenance and programs.

The City should revisit and update its pricing policies that define how fees are set for programs, events, and facility reservations. A comprehensive fee philosophy and cost recovery policy will:

- Ensure that facility reservation and use fees are based on time reserved and set to recover costs for labor and materials associated with staffing, equipment, janitorial services and utilities, plus some indirect costs as per market capacity.
- Increase fees to include a facility impact/capital replacement fee to offset the long-term impact of facility use.
- Address the different rates charged for City residents and non-residents and non-profits vs. other for-profit or private facility users.
- Address fees for special uses, such as vendors, alcohol and sound permits, special equipment rentals, application processing fees, reservation changes, added event monitors, etc., as well as deposits for cleaning and damage.
- Determine cost recovery rates based on the types of benefits provided. For example, activities that have individualized benefits have a higher cost recovery rate, potentially recovering 100% or more of direct costs. Events and programs with community-wide benefits, or provided by community partners in parks, may have lower cost recovery rates.

Revenues collected from all programs, as well as park and facility user fees, should be reinvested in the Parks and Recreation Department to support park maintenance, programs and operations.

Core Program Areas

Based on West Linn's market profile and needs identified in the Online Questionnaire, City staff should expand programs in the following areas:

Programming Recommendations

- Revenues collected through City events and programs should be reallocated to the Parks and Recreation Department and re-invested in park maintenance, programs and operations.
- Facility use fees should include a facility impact charge to apply towards repair or replacement as facilities wear and age.
- Activities that have individualized benefits should recover 100% or more of direct costs, unless it involves services to a targeted underrepresented group. Events and programs with community-wide benefits, or provided by community partners in parks, may have lower cost recovery rates as defined in an updated cost recovery and fee philosophy.
- Outdoor programs should be expanded in the following areas: Outdoor Recreation/Nature Programs, Cultural Arts, and Fitness/Wellness.
- Special Events and Older Adult/Senior programs should be continued.
- Additional program staff should be hired to phase in new programs and expand the recreation business prior to investing in a new indoor recreation and community facility.
- Park concessions should be added to generate revenues and increase recreation opportunities in the city.

Outdoor Recreation/Nature Programs, Cultural Arts, and Fitness/Wellness. The City should continue providing Special Events and programs for Older Adults and Seniors. Recognizing that current indoor facilities are at capacity, most of these programs will be held outdoors in City parks.

Indoor Program Expansion

As the City considers the development and phasing of a new community recreation center, as discussed in Appendix F, it should consider partnership opportunities as well as operation needs. Program expansion and cost recovery should be addressed to generate revenue and offset the cost of facility operations. This may require a substantial change in Department operations. Prior to new facility development or renovation of other City-owned building, the City should explore opportunities to expand facility use agreements with the West Linn-Wilsonville School District to initiate pilot recreation programs. Additional dedicated program staff would be needed to phase in new programs and expand the recreation business prior to investing in a new indoor recreation and community facility.

Park Concessions

The City should explore opportunities to add concessionaires in parks to generate revenues and increase recreation opportunities in the city. Preceding the development of a new regional park, the City should evaluate revenue-generating options to help make the Riverfront Park cost-neutral. This would require planning and operating this site similar to an enterprise facility, with all revenues collected and kept by the Parks and Recreation Department to support operations.



Chapter 5: Plan of Action



5 PLAN OF ACTION



As noted in Chapter 4, the path towards Master Plan implementation requires a clear understanding of costs, community priorities, and funding options. Chapter 5 outlines these ingredients, as well as criteria to guide the timing of these projects and implementation steps for carrying out the plan.

Cost Summary

The City of West Linn must be prepared to invest in its park and recreation system in four different ways. Costs will include:

- **Capital Costs:** Land acquisition, planning, development, and park improvements.
- **Reinvestment/Replacement Costs:** Annual cost to sustain recreation facilities.

- **Maintenance Costs:** Annual maintenance cost scaled to match park characteristics.
- **Recreation and Facility Operations Costs:** Annual costs to support programming, events and operations of existing indoor recreation facilities.

Assuming a stronger cost recovery and reinvestment program is implemented for operations and programming, the City must still fund a higher level of maintenance, the replacement of aging and worn facilities, and improvements to existing parks. The community also values new park development to support community livability.

Table 9, on the next page, summarizes planning level costs for all capital projects, maintenance

and reinvestment/replacement presented in this Master Plan, based on a cost analysis presented in Appendix G.

Table 9: Cost Summary

	Total Capital Costs (10 Years)	Total Reinvest./ Replace. Costs (annual)	Total Maint. Costs (annual)
Active-Oriented	\$3,424,100	\$192,400	\$412,000
Special Use	\$2,186,400	\$93,200	\$348,300
Multi-Use	\$16,609,200	\$891,600	\$1,957,800
Passive-Oriented	\$3,084,000	\$124,000	\$340,600
Natural Resource Areas	\$0	\$0	\$66,400
Subtotal Existing Parks	\$25,303,600	\$1,301,100	\$3,125,200
Proposed Parks	\$47,990,000	\$328,800	\$606,500
Partner Sites/Other	\$4,500,000	\$0	\$120,500
TOTAL	\$77,793,700	\$1,630,000	\$3,852,100

See Appendix G for a complete summary of costs.

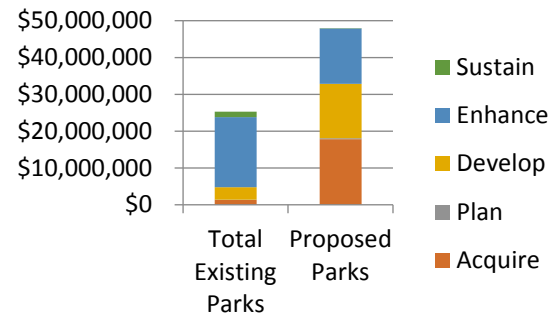
As shown above, if all Plan recommendations were implemented, approximately \$25.3 million would be needed to improve existing parks. An additional \$1.3 million would be needed annually for reinvestment and replacement, and \$3.1 million for annual maintenance.

Proposed parks would require approximately \$47.9 million for land acquisition, planning and development. If added, these sites would increase the funds needed annually for park maintenance by \$606,500. The annual set-aside allowance for facility reinvestment and replacement would increase by \$328,800. If the City invested in potential partner sites, improvements would cost approximately \$4.5

million, with \$120,500 in annual maintenance costs.

Figure 10 compares costs for existing parks with proposed parks.

Figure 10: Cost Distribution for Existing and Proposed Parks



Prioritization

While all these improvements are desired, the cost is more than the City can afford and more than the community is willing to pay. The envisioned parks and recreation system will take time, resources and adaptability to achieve over the long term. Not all recommendations will be carried out in 10 years. So how does the City decide what to advance?

Prioritization Criteria

The decision-making criteria noted below can be used in the City’s budgeting process to identify higher priority projects for funding. Projects that more closely meet the intent of these criteria should rise to the top of the list, while those that do not should be moved lower in the queue and considered at a later date. This process can also help decide what to include in citywide funding measures if put before voters for decision-making.

1. **Multiple Benefits:** Would the project help fulfill multiple plan goals?

2. **Community-Wide Value:** Does the project deliver high value for the cost or resource needed for the benefit of the greater community, relative to other projects?
3. **City Priority:** Does the project coincide with or support another City project, goal or City Council initiative that supports community wide services?
4. **Completing Connections:** Will the project result in improved connectivity as envisioned by this Plan and the Trails Master Plan?
5. **Replacement and Revitalization:** Will the project remove, replace or enhance facilities or landscaping in poor condition to ensure high quality parks and facilities compliant with current safety and ADA standards?
6. **Programming Options:** Will the project improve a facility or park area to support a program, class, camp, organized sport or event?
7. **New or Unique Opportunity:** Will the project add a new type of recreation facility to address changing recreation trends and support a greater variety of recreation opportunities in West Linn?
8. **All Ages, Abilities and Users:** Does the project serve several neighborhoods or the entire community, provide recreation opportunities for different age groups and people of all abilities and skill levels, and/or support activities targeting teens, young adults, and adults?
9. **Community Heritage and/or Natural Resources:** Does the project create engaging parks and facilities that reflect local heritage and history, and/or protect the urban forest, stream corridors, natural resources and open space?

10. **Sense of Community and Social Cohesiveness:** Does the project create social gathering places or respond to the City's demographic character, cultural diversity and community cohesion?

Project Sequencing

After identifying top community priorities using the prioritization criteria, the City should consider the following questions to determine when implementation is feasible. These questions will help decide which projects to include in the City's five-year CIP, which is updated annually, and which projects to implement when funding or other resources arise.

Capital and Resource Availability: Are there adequate resources to move the project forward and maintain it in the future?

Available Partnerships: Does the project have the committed support of one or more partners?

Timing: Is immediate action needed before the opportunity is lost?

Value: Is there potential to reduce costs or be more efficient by bundling projects?

Capacity: Is there adequate staff capacity to implement the project and support ongoing maintenance and operations?

11. **Local Economy:** Does the project increase opportunities to generate revenue or support community events and encourage tourism that indirectly supports local businesses?
12. **Sustainability:** Does the project reduce operations and maintenance costs or help achieve City sustainability goals?

Funding Alternatives

The City primarily relies on the General Fund to pay for parks and recreation. Ultimately multiple funding sources will be needed to fund both capital projects and operations. Some of most strategic funding moves are noted here.

General Fund

The City’s General Fund budget is used to provide routine public services to the community. Given the role parks and recreation plays in supporting the City’s high approval ratings, the City should strive to maintain and increase its General Fund allocations for parks and recreation services. Any revenues collected from parks and programs should automatically be reinvested in Department services to ensure high quality services.

Best for funding: park maintenance, capital replacement, management, administration and programming

Bond Measure

By 2021, the City’s General Obligation Bond for parks will be fully paid off. Passage of a new bond with at least partial funds dedicated to parks projects could provide a major source of revenue to cover recommended capital improvements. While the Bond Measure Feasibility Study showed a reluctance to pass a May 2018 bond measure dedicated to parks projects alone, it did highlight the importance of community livability in voter decision-making. The voters who participated in the

survey seems unaware of the pressing need to fund park improvements. This highlights the need for voter education before a parks bond measure is put before voters for renewal.

The City should continue to consider the right mix of park and non-park projects, as well as timing of the bond measure, to ensure its passage. Even if the City goes forward with a transportation-focused bond measure in 2018, it should consider strategies to bolster support for the parks system and to build a larger constituency that supports a bond measure for parks in the future.

Best for funding: park enhancements, new parks

System Development Charges

The City of West Linn should consider updating its parks and trails system development charges to ensure that any new development is paying their fair share for the increased demand and need for new facilities. Since residential growth is slowing, the City may consider whether charges for commercial and industrial impact fees may be warranted depending on plans for future growth.

Restricted for funding: capacity-enhancement capital projects

Operating Levy

Unlike the General Obligation Bond—which would only cover major construction projects—an operating levy would help pay for needed park maintenance and recreation operations over the lifetime of the levy. Maintenance and upkeep of parks and recreation assets are important to the public and such a levy could provide a valuable resource to pay for ongoing maintenance to the system. Additional operations funding is also needed to cover the additional community events and recreation services desired.

Best for funding: park maintenance and recreation events and programs

Maintenance Fee

The City should continue to rely on the park maintenance fee as part of the larger strategy to fund needed park maintenance. The City doesn't currently require a fee for commercial uses, though many businesses and workers in West Linn rely on nearby parks, trails and other recreation facilities during a lunch break or before or after work. The City should discuss the merits of assessing a fee to commercial uses to help offset the existing shortage of maintenance funding.

Best for funding: park maintenance

User Fees and Programming Fees

The City should redefine its pricing policies and cost recovery targets to increase revenues from programming fees, facility-use charges and where applicable, facility-entry fees. Facility use charges should cover all direct costs, and rates may also be set higher to subsidize parks maintenance and address the long-term impacts of facility use. Charges for programming should be based on a cost-recovery strategy or fee philosophy that identifies which programs and events can be subsidized, and where costs can be offset by revenue-generating programs that more than fully recover their cost. It's critical that these revenues return to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Best for funding: recreation programming and operations, maintenance

Concessions

Food, beverage and merchandise vendors or concessionaires that operate coffee kiosks, food carts, equipment rentals such as bicycles or kayaks or provide other revenue-generating facilities or services in parks can also generate

excess revenues to support the park system. The City can set-up specific arrangements with vendors and concessionaires for these services. Vendors are also required to obtain a license from the City.

Best for funding: park maintenance and operations

Foundation Support

A new parks foundation can be a valuable asset that can raise money and garner support for development and stewardship of the park and recreation system. A parks foundation can leverage its non-profit status to make the most of tax-deductible donations and can use its independence from the City to put on a range of fundraising events. The tapestry segmentation for West Linn (Appendix B) suggests potential support for a parks foundation, with higher median income and other demographic indicators in West Linn, including residents with a likelihood to support charitable organizations and recreation expenditures.

Best for funding: specific projects

Private Contributions and Endowments

Cash contributions from private organizations can add up when successfully managed. The program must be thoughtfully designed so that potential contributors can see the results of their donations. Options to purchase benches, playground equipment, trees and other items are great ways to show that donations are making a difference. The program should also be prepared for larger endowments for playgrounds, picnic structures or entire parks. The City should seek contributions from estates and trusts and have the resources needed to accommodate more complex transactions.

Best for funding: park maintenance, new parks, partner sites

Going Forward

The path to leverage Master Plan recommendations will require deliberate action. The Parks and Recreation Department staff should work with the City Manager, parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council to undertake the following:

1. Revise City funding policies to ensure that all revenues generated in parks and from recreation programs, events and activities are placed in a special fund for the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Increase the General Fund budget for park maintenance to hire more staff to reduce the staff-per-developed acre ratio and improve maintenance quality. Ensure that all sites receive basic maintenance to ensure public safety and that high-use sites and higher value assets receive the attention they need.
3. Ensure that at least one significant parks project is part of the package for the 2018 bond funding measure. Studies show that having a mix of projects typically garners broader support. The role that parks play in supporting community livability tested as the third most powerful message to support a May 2018 bond passage.
4. Create a “Support the Parks” campaign to highlight the importance of parks and recreation to West Linn’s quality of life and character, plus raise awareness of the need to take care of assets, improve aging and deteriorating facilities, and enhance sites. The campaign will provide the level of awareness and “buzz” needed to gather support for future funding measures and for attracting new partners and sponsors. Involve Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members in being ambassadors for the park and recreation system. Continue

to publicize success and popular parks projects and programs to build community interest.

5. Fund parks and recreation as essential services. The City is facing several competing funding priorities, and staff and City Council will need to make some significant decisions on overarching priorities. Both the Parks and Recreation Master Plan outreach and Bond Measure Feasibility Study show the importance of taking care of park assets to ensure community support and a high level of satisfaction in City services. As the City seeks to increase other funds, ensure that parks remain part of the funding package for essential services.
6. Pursue an operations levy or utility fee to fund maintenance and recreation services. Ensure costs are recovered from recreation programs to have funding on hand to continue to re-invest in programming and operations.
7. Invest in priority projects that have the broadest benefit.. Since funding is tight, the City must make strategic decisions to spend funds on critical projects and withhold funds from other requests to accumulate sufficient funding for larger priority projects.
8. Maintain a dedicated Parks and Recreation Department and staff. City parks are clearly valued assets. During transitions in park staff, it is important to ensure quality leadership and expertise in parks and recreation to guide the management and operations of West Linn’s park and recreation system.
9. Acquire land for the riverfront regional park while the opportunity exists to do so. Create a master plan and market study to

develop the park as a cost-neutral site with revenue generation to offset operations.

10. Annually prioritize projects and update the Capital Projects List. Using the criteria listed in this chapter, review the capital projects and rank each project according to how well it meets the identified prioritization and sequencing criteria. Each year, as conditions, preferences and funding opportunities change, the City should readdress the project list and re-prioritize the project queue.