



Chapter 1: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2008, the City of Grants Pass began developing the Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan to obtain community-supported directions for developing the City's park system. This Plan, herein referred to as the Parks Comprehensive Plan, creates a vision for a sustainable, interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities, green space and trails. These are integral elements of a livable community.



The Parks Comprehensive Plan addresses the recreation needs of residents city-wide, by incorporating community views and preferences into the planning process. Combining a technical resource analysis with an assessment of recreation trends and community priorities, the Parks Comprehensive Plan proposes specific standards and guidelines for developing, conserving, and maintaining quality parks and recreation

facilities. Most importantly, it provides the City with firm directions to create a cost-efficient park system that will enhance the quality of life in Grants Pass.

A. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of the revised Parks Comprehensive Plan is to establish goals, recommendations, and an implementation strategy for park improvements and development over the next 20 years. The previous plan, completed in 1984, was intended to guide the City through the year 2000. Because of funding limitations, that plan was only partially implemented. Clearly, a new plan is needed.

The City of Grants Pass has grown substantially since the last plan was adopted, and recreation participation and trends have changed dramatically. The revised Parks Comprehensive Plan contains recommendations to serve the City's current population (39,126 people). It also looks forward to anticipate the community's recreation needs in the year 2029. By then, an estimated 59,114 people may live within the City's urban growth area.

The Parks Comprehensive Plan builds on the foundation set by the 1984 Plan. It creates a new 20-year vision for parks, green space, trails, recreation amenities and urban forestry. It identifies the type of recreation opportunities the community desires. Furthermore, it provides directions for locating new parks, updating current policies, and meeting community needs for parks and recreation city-wide. It includes a strategy to fund the acquisition, development and sustained maintenance of the park system.

B. PLANNING CONTEXT

The Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan will be adopted at a critical time for the City of Grants Pass. The City is currently evaluating the expansion of its Urban Growth Boundary Area to accommodate growth and development through 2027. As Grants Pass looks to the future, providing adequate parks and recreation opportunities will be crucial for maintaining a healthy community and a vibrant economy.

Also, current economic conditions nationwide are increasing the need for cities to provide quality services in a cost-efficient way. Residents are counting on City leaders to support the community's vision for parks and recreation, while focusing on sustainable, efficient management and maintenance of resources. However, residents aren't satisfied with maintenance alone. The community still wants to expand park and recreation opportunities, as demonstrated in the ongoing volunteer efforts and fundraising to develop River Vista at Reinhart Volunteer Park.

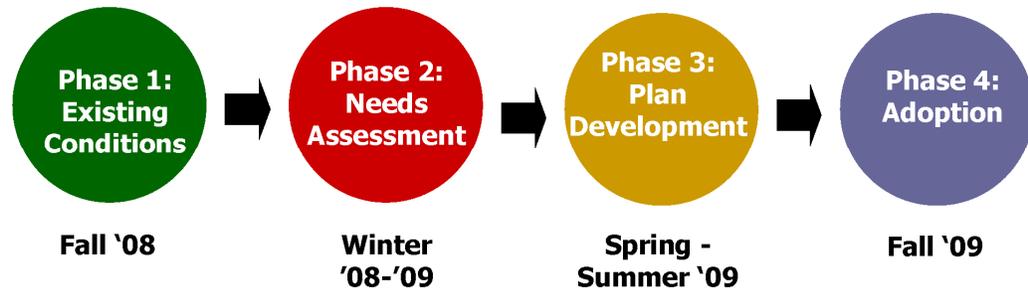
Through careful investment and foresight, the City already has acquired several key park reserves to support growing areas and recreation needs. It has taken a leadership role in urban forestry and sustainability practices to preserve its natural resources and tree canopy for future generations. It has collaborated with partners and other providers successfully to address specific community recreation demands. The City has kept its recreation facilities well-maintained, while developing sites such as Redwood Park, Tussing Park, and River Vista to address growing recreation needs. With the recommendations of this Plan, the City will be able continue this balance between maintaining existing parks and responding to future community needs. In this manner, Grants Pass will support a broad array of safe, inviting, attractive and accessible parks and recreation opportunities now and in the future.

C. PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process included four phases, beginning in September 2008 and concluding with Plan adoption in Winter 2009 (Figure 1). These phases are described below.

- **Phase I: Existing Conditions.** The Master Planning process was initiated through meetings with City Council and technical advisors to determine the best direction for outreach and analysis. In Phase I, City parks and facilities were inventoried, mapped, and evaluated using park design guidelines to assess development opportunities. Previous planning efforts were reviewed to provide a foundation for this Plan. All Phase 1 efforts were summarized in the Existing Conditions Report.

Figure 1: Planning Process



- **Phase II: Needs Assessment.** Phase II included several forums for public outreach to assess the recreation preferences of residents and key stakeholders in Grants Pass. A GIS analysis of park access, a level of service analysis of park acreage, and a facility analysis were conducted to determine park standards and facility guidelines. Current and future recreation needs were documented in the *Community Needs Assessment Report*; not a component of this Plan but available under a separate cover.
- **Phase III: Plan Development.** In Phase III, recommendations were drafted and reviewed to provide direction for park maintenance, management, and development. Policies, strategies and actions were defined and used to create a capital projects list, maintenance plan, and financing strategy for implementation.
- **Phase IV: Review and Adoption.** Phase IV included the preparation of a full draft of the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan to provide the City with a successful and sustainable plan to protect and enhance City assets. The Draft Plan was presented to City residents, the Parks Advisory Committee, and City Council for review and refinement prior to adoption. This phase of the planning process was extended by several months to allow the preparation and presentation of a Revised Draft Plan, with refined priority projects for implementation. After substantial review, the Revised Draft Plan was refined and presented as the Final Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan for adoption. This Plan will continue to be discussed and used for many years as a tool for achieving the desired park system.

D. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To develop a solid foundation for the Plan, the City of Grant Pass solicited feedback from as many residents as possible regarding their needs, preferences, attitudes, and vision for parks and recreation services. A variety of activities were conducted throughout the planning process to ensure participation from a cross-section of the community, including various age groups and diverse special interests.

The public involvement process was extended by several months in the last phase of the planning process to further involve residents in reviewing the Draft Parks Comprehensive Plan and identifying priority projects for implementation. More than 1,400 residents have participated in the planning process (Table 1). This level of involvement is outstanding for a community of Grants Pass' size.

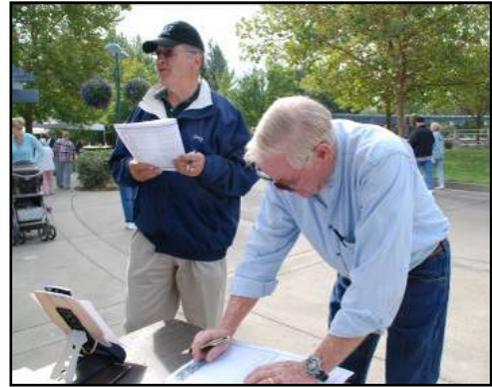


Table 1: Public Involvement Participation

ACTIVITY	# OF PARTICIPANTS
Community Survey	300
Community Questionnaire	805
Community Intercept Event	171
Focus Groups	44
Additional Public Comment	10+
Advisory Committee	16
City Council	12
Planning Commission	8
Draft Plan Review*	50+
TOTAL	1,416

* Included a Community Open House, website questionnaire, letters, and citizen participation in Advisory Committee Meetings, a Planning Commission Hearing, and a City Council Meeting.

E. PLAN ORGANIZATION

This Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan is organized in seven chapters and five appendices. For reference, each section is described below.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the purpose of the plan, the planning process, public involvement process, planning context, and the organization of this report.

- **Chapter 2: Planning Framework** outlines the core values, vision, mission and goals that provide a foundation for this Plan and its implementation.



- **Chapter 3: Existing Parks and Facilities** describes the planning area, presents the park classification system, summarizes the park and facility inventory, and describes the City's current level of service.
- **Chapter 4: Community Needs** summarizes the results of the needs assessment, highlighting public involvement key findings, as well as proposed park and facility standards, guidelines, and needs.
- **Chapter 5: Policies and Strategies** describes the recommended policies, strategies and actions for developing the future park system.
- **Chapter 6: Implementation** presents concrete information on the costs to implement recommendations, including strategies to sustain the park system through maintenance and development.
- **Chapter 7: Strategic Decisions** summarizes the approach the City should take in implementing the Parks Comprehensive Plan. This chapter also includes performance measures to gauge the success in achieving the community's vision for the park system.

Appendices include the following:

- **Appendix A: Park and Facility Inventory** includes a complete inventory of parks and recreation facilities by provider within the Grants Pass planning area.
- **Appendix B: Design Guidelines** provides a set of guidelines for park development, including the facilities that are appropriate for development in various types of parks.
- **Appendix C: User Fee Considerations** includes a discussion and comparison of user fees in Grants Pass to provide a foundation for the strategies presented in Chapter 5.
- **Appendix D: Park System Costs** presents cost estimates for existing and proposed parks for maintenance, improvements, acquisition, development and capital reinvestment.
- **Appendix E: Potential Funding Sources** includes a description of all potential sources for capital, operations and maintenance funding.

