Chapter 3: Existing Park System

EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

Grants Pass is a maturing community, with a considerably different park system than it had 25 years ago. Its park and recreation resources include a variety of parks, green space, trails, and recreation facilities, which together form the existing park system. To document the parks and recreation resources within the planning area, this chapter:

- Describes the planning area;
- Introduces the park classification system;
- Summarizes the park inventory by classification; and
- Notes recreation facilities available in Grants Pass.

A. PLANNING AREA

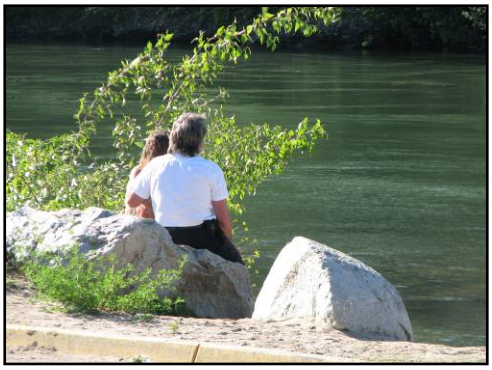
When the previous Park and Recreation Plan was adopted in 1984, fewer than 22,000 people lived within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). At that time, the Parks and Recreation Division maintained only 39 park acres. Today, more than 39,100 people live within the UGB, which is being reviewed for expansion. Residents are served by 195 acres of developed parks, which provide playgrounds, sports courts, picnic shelters, trails, and a variety of other amenities. In addition, the City has acquired more than 300 acres of well-placed park reserves—future parks for residents. These holdings are a significant and well-planned investment that, when developed, will become future neighborhood parks and green space, as well as signature attractions in the region.

Planning Area

The planning area for the Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes the area within the current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), as well as parks within the immediate vicinity of Grants Pass. According to GIS data, the planning area includes approximately 8,550 acres. Currently, the City is evaluating the need to expand the Urban Growth Boundary which would change the service area for the Grants Pass Parks and Recreation Division.

Location, Natural Resources, and Climate

Grants Pass is the county seat of Josephine County. Located on I-5, about 70 miles south of Roseburg and 29 miles north of Medford, the City is situated in the geographic center of southwest Oregon. Starting here, Highway 199 connects Grants Pass to northwest California and to Oregon's Pacific Coast.



Grants Pass is located in the scenic Rogue River Valley, surrounded by rolling, forested mountains. The river, the urban forest, and remnant orchards and farmland in the area contribute to the natural beauty of Grants Pass. The City is a recreational and cultural destination in southwest Oregon.

The climate also contributes to the scenic quality of Grants Pass. The area is noted for hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The tree cover within the City—both inside and outside of parks—provides shade that cools residents during the summer. The average summer high temperature is 90 degrees, and the average winter high is 49 degrees. The climate and weather create a need for both indoor and outdoor recreation opportunities, as well as shade during the summer.

Growth, Vacant Lands, and UGB Expansion

Grants Pass is primarily a residential community, with many areas served by close-to-home recreation opportunities. Northeastern Grants Pass is largely built-out, to the extent that finding additional park land in this area will be difficult. Recent growth has been concentrated in the City's western and southern areas, where parks and recreation opportunities are lacking. Approximately 25% of the City is zoned for commercial or industrial uses. These land uses are concentrated downtown and in eastern Grants Pass. Commercial and industrial areas have unique needs for green space that differ from the City's residential areas.

Currently, the City of Grants Pass is evaluating the sufficiency of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) to comply with statewide planning goals. Preliminary work suggests the City will expand the current UGB to accommodate growth forecasted through the year 2026. When annexation areas are identified, park standards and guidelines can be applied to these new areas. This will help the City acquire parks, trail corridors, and green space to meet community recreation needs.

Demographics

Currently, 39,126 people live within the Grants Pass urban growth boundary (2009 estimate). Population forecasts suggest that 59,114 people will live within the UGB in 2029, representing an average annual growth rate of 2.1% for the 20-year planning horizon. While the current economic condition may slow actual growth and development, the City should continue to plan for increasing park and recreation needs as the community grows.

The population in Grants Pass is an aging population. As noted in the City's Comprehensive Plan, the fastest growing age group in Grants Pass

is anticipated to be people aged 65 and over. Census data count a significant percentage of older adults, as well as families with children. Providing recreation opportunities for these groups will be important.

B. PARK CLASSIFICATION

The City's park system is composed of various types of parks, each providing unique recreation and environmental opportunities. Separately, each type of park may serve only one function, but collectively the park system serves the entire range of community needs. Map 1 illustrates existing parks by classification.

As part of the Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan update, the park classification system was refined to reflect current and future planning directions. The park classification system includes seven park types, which are defined below.

Mini Parks

Mini parks provide basic recreation opportunities on small lots within residential areas. Typically less than two acres in size, these parks are designed to serve residents in immediately adjacent neighborhoods. Mini parks provide limited recreation amenities, such as playgrounds, benches, and picnic tables. Debo Park and Lawnridge Park are examples of mini parks.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for nearby residents. Typically five to ten acres in size, these parks are designed to serve neighbors within walking and bicycling distance of the park. Neighborhood parks include amenities such as playgrounds, outdoor sport courts, sport fields, picnic tables, pathways, and multi-use open grass areas. Eckstein Park and Redwood Park are examples of neighborhood parks.

Community Parks

Community parks are typically 25-30 acres and provide both active and passive recreation opportunities that appeal to the entire community. Community parks accommodate large numbers of people and offer a wide variety of facilities, such as group picnic areas and shelters, sport fields and courts, children's play areas, horseshoes, gardens, trail or pathway systems, community festival or event space, and green space or natural areas. Community parks require additional support facilities, such as off-street parking and restrooms. Riverside Park is the only existing community park in Grants Pass.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are large parks that provide access to unique natural or cultural features and regional-scale recreation facilities. Typically 50 acres or more in size, regional parks draw residents from the City and beyond. These parks often include significant green space to preserve unique natural areas, riverfront corridors, wetlands, and agricultural or forested areas. Regional parks also accommodate large group activities and often have infrastructure to support sporting events, festivals and other revenue-generating events to enhance the City's economic vitality and identity. Currently, Reinhart Volunteer Park is the only regional park in Grants Pass.

Special Use Areas

Special use areas include stand-alone recreation facilities not located within larger parks. Their size and service area vary depending on their use. Special use areas support single-purpose facilities, such as skate parks, boat ramps, swimming pools, community centers, urban plazas, and gardens. The Grants Pass Skate Park, Baker Park, and Caveman Pool are examples of special use areas.

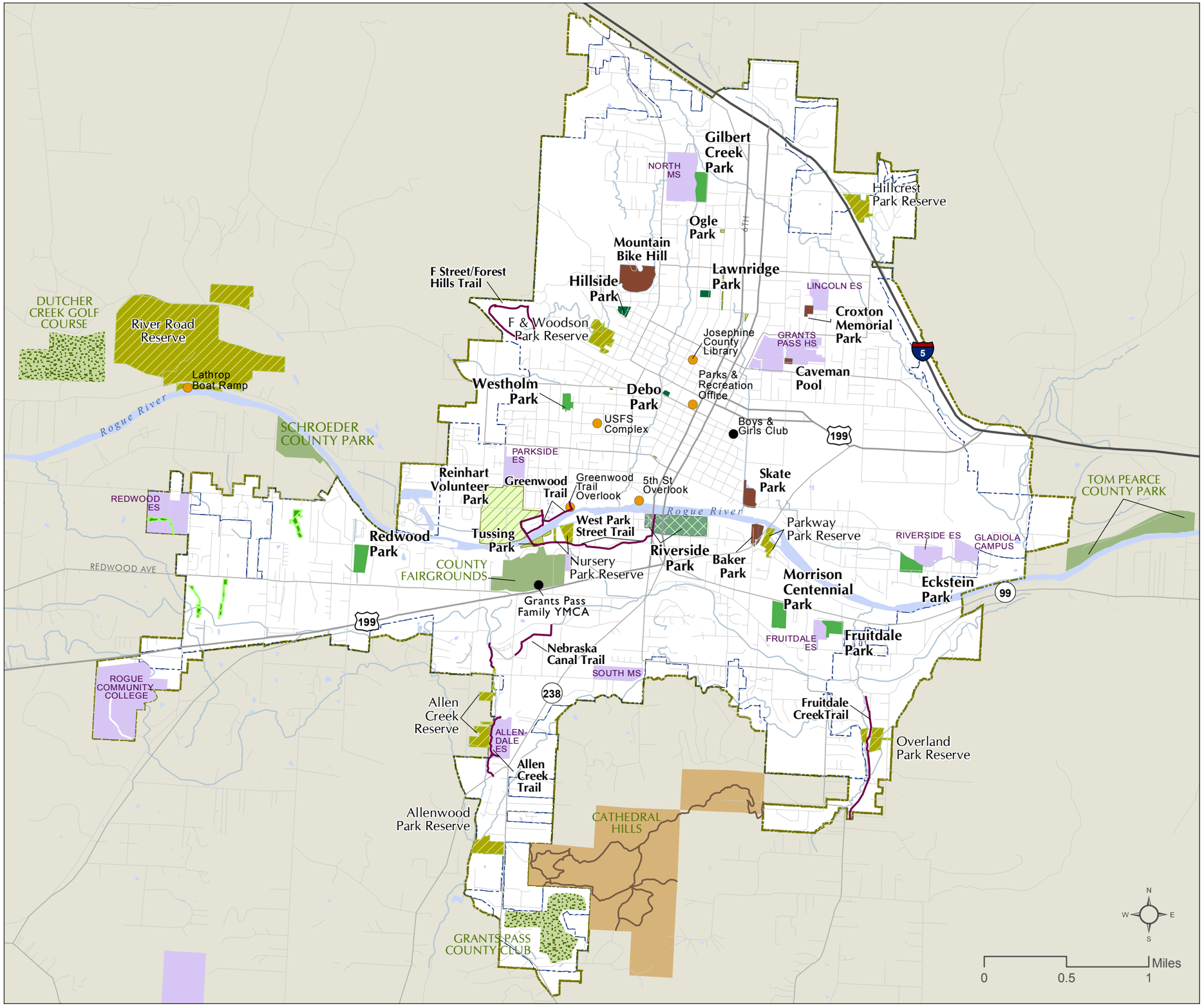
Green Space

Green space provides natural or landscaped areas within the City in contrast to the built landscape. The size, shape, and service area of green space will vary depending on its function and use. The City manages green space for different purposes, including:

- **Natural areas and greenways:** These parks are designed to protect or conserve significant natural features, such as trees, rivers and streams, wetlands, steep hillsides, environmentally sensitive areas, and wildlife habitat. Where appropriate, these parks may also support outdoor recreation, such as trail-related opportunities, bird and wildlife viewing, environmental interpretation and education, and small-scale picnicking. Tussing Park is an example of this park type.
- **Trail corridors:** These linear-shaped parks may follow streams, abandoned railroad lines, transportation or utility rights-of-way, or elongated natural areas. Trail corridors may include soft and hard-surfaced trails, interpretative and informational signage, and trailheads. Trail corridors may support non-motorized transportation, recreation, exercise, and community access by connecting significant destinations within the City. The Fruitdale Creek Trail and Nebraska Canal Trail are examples of trail corridors.

Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan

Grants Pass, Oregon



Parks & Recreation Department

- Mini Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Community Park
- Regional Park
- Special Use
- Green Space
- Undeveloped

Trails

- City Trail
- BLM Trail

- Golf Course
- County Park
- Wetland
- School
- BLM Park
- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Recreation Center
- Recreation Resource
- Highway
- Major Arterial
- Arterial
- Water

Map 1: Existing Park Resources

MIG

January 2010 | Data Source: City of Grants Pass GIS, ESRI street maps, and Oregon Geospatial Clearinghouse

- **Pocket parks:** These small parcels provide landscaped and/or natural green space primarily for passive uses. Typically less than two acres in size, these sites are designed to support green space within otherwise built environments, such as residential or commercial areas. These parks typically include picnic tables, benches, and basic site amenities. Ogle Park is an example of a pocket park.

Park Reserves

Park reserves include undeveloped park sites that have been acquired by the City for future park improvements. While these sites currently provide green space, park reserves are intended to be developed as one of the park types noted above in the future. Their size varies depending on the purpose of their acquisition. The River Road Reserve and the Allenwood Park Reserve are examples of park reserves in Grants Pass.

Beautification Areas

In addition to these park types within the City's park system, the Parks and Recreation Division also maintains several small sites that are not designed to provide recreation opportunities. Categorized separately from the rest of the inventory, these sites are not considered park land.

Beautification areas are landscaped areas typically located along street right-of-ways, medians, intersections, and entry ways. These areas provide visual benefits to the community and add to community identity, but have little or no recreational value.

C. PARK INVENTORY

Grants Pass has a variety of parks and green space. These areas support both passive and active recreation and a variety of recreation experiences. The City's inventory of parks and facilities is summarized below. For reference, the entire park and facility inventory is presented by provider in Appendix A.

City Park Land

The City of Grants Pass provides 507 acres of park land at 32 sites. Of these, 24 parks provide recreation opportunities, such as playing on playgrounds, walking or biking on trails, attending community events, playing or watching sports, and enjoying the beautiful outdoors. The remaining eight properties are park reserves for future development and/or preservation as green space. These sites represent a great opportunity to enhance City parks and recreation.

Table 2 summarizes the City's park inventory. The City of Grants Pass provides approximately 195 acres of developed parks and green space. An additional 312 acres (62% of the total park system) are held in undeveloped park reserves. The majority of this acreage is provided at one site: the River Road Reserve. By itself, this site provides more park acreage (247.7 acres) than the entire developed park system (194.8 acres). Similarly, much of the City's developed park land is provided at one site: Reinhart Volunteer Park. This 58-acre regional park accounts for nearly 30% of the developed park system.

Table 2: Grants Pass Park Acreage by Classification

PARK TYPE	# OF SITES	ACRES	% OF DEVELOPED PARK SYSTEM
Developed Parks and Green Space			
Mini Parks	3	3.8	2.0%
Neighborhood Parks	6	41.7	21.4%
Community Parks	1	31.7	16.3
Regional Parks	1	58.2	29.9
Special Use Areas	5	30.4	15.6
Green Space	8	29.0	14.9
Subtotal	24	194.8	100%
Park Reserves	8	312.5	
TOTAL	**32**	**507.3**	

Parks and Open Space Provided by Others

The park system provided by the Grants Pass Parks and Recreation Division is augmented by parks and open space provided by other jurisdictions. These other providers in Grants Pass are summarized below. Their assets are noted in the inventory in Appendix A.

- **Other City Sites:** The City of Grants Pass owns several non-park properties. These include several wetlands and beautification areas that provide approximately 14.4 acres of green space.
- **Josephine County:** Four County-owned sites provide important recreation opportunities in Grants Pass: the County Fairgrounds, Tom Pearce Park, Schroeder Park, and the Lathrop Boat Ramp. With a combined total of 184.4 acres, these sites provide event space, picnic pavilions, sport fields, disc golf, a dog park, a campground, and other recreation facilities.

- **Federal Government:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages Cathedral Hills and Highland Park, which both provide opportunities for trail-related recreation. In addition, the Forest Service (USFS) owns a surplus maintenance complex, which currently has no public access. Together, these sites account for 467.1 acres.
- **Schools and Colleges:** Grants Pass is served by two public school districts: Grants Pass School District 7 and Three Rivers School District. The Grants Pass School District operates 12 schools, and the Three Rivers School District operates one elementary school in the planning area. Schools are a major provider of sport fields, sport courts, playgrounds, and gymnasiums in the community. In addition, the Rogue Community College (Redwood Campus) provides a variety of facilities for its staff and students. Together, these sites provide 248.9 acres of facilities (including school buildings) and green space.
- **Private providers:** Private and non-profit organizations in and around Grants Pass provide various recreation facilities. These include the Boys and Girls Club, Club Northwest, Dutcher Creek Golf Course, Grants Pass Country Club, and the YMCA. There is also a privately-operated Community Center, with indoor meeting space for rent. The acreage of these sites has not been inventoried.

These assets provide additional park and recreation opportunities for City residents. However, the City of Grants Pass has no control over these properties, their services, maintenance levels, openings, closings, or programming. Developing formal partnerships with other jurisdictions is important where these sites help meet identified recreation needs.

D. FACILITY INVENTORY

The Grants Pass Parks and Recreation Division, as well as several other local providers, own and maintain a variety of recreation facilities. Table 3 summarizes Grant Pass's recreation facilities, which are provided by the City, schools, and others. Recreation facilities provided by Rogue Community College are not included in this inventory, since they are generally unavailable for public use. A more detailed inventory of all providers is included in Appendix A.

The City of Grants Pass is the primary provider of baseball/softball fields, tennis courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds and trails for Grants Pass and Josephine County. The City also provides other unique recreation opportunities, such as a fishing pond, water play area, and skatepark. However, other providers play a significant role in the provision of

soccer fields, multi-use fields, outdoor basketball courts, and gymnasiums.

City parks and facilities tend to be well-maintained and in good condition. Many of the facilities provided by others are not maintained at the same level as City facilities. Moreover, facilities provided by others often have restrictions on who can use these facilities or when these facilities may be used. Nevertheless, all recreation facilities (applicable to the planning process) are noted here because of their role in meeting community demands.

Table 3: Grants Pass Recreation Facilities by Type

FACILITY TYPE	CITY PARKS	SCHOOLS[1 2]	OTHER[3]	**TOTAL**[4]
Baseball/Softball Field	12	7	2	21
Soccer Field	5	13	-	18
Multi-Use Field	5	11	3	19
Basketball Court	10	14	2	26
Skate Park	1	-	-	1
Tennis Court	14	4	2	20
Volleyball Court	3	-	2	5
Boat Ramp	2	-	1	3
Disc Golf Course	1	-	1	2
Off-Leash Dog Area	-	-	1	1
Fishing Pond	1	-	-	1
Picnic Shelter	15	-	4	19
Horseshoe Court	15	-	1	16
Playground	11	7	3	21
Swimming Pool	1	-	2	3
Trails	10	-	4	14
Water Play Area	1	-	-	1

[1]Facilities at the Rogue Community College-Redwood Campus are not included here, since they do not have public access. Their inventory is noted in Appendix A.

[2] Several school sites count multi-use fields in terms of square footage. It is unclear whether this represents playable open space, designated fields with overlays, or delineated sport fields with multiple uses. Eleven school sites have multi-use fields.

[3] Other providers include the Josephine County, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls Club, Club Northwest, and the Bureau of Land Management.

[4] Facilities provided by the County and School District are not maintained to City standards.