



Chapter 6: Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION

The last chapter noted an extensive array of park projects that would enhance Grants Pass's park and recreation system. However, the City cannot afford to implement all of these projects, and it must find a balance between taking care of the existing park system and expanding recreation opportunities. This chapter introduces an implementation



strategy for prioritizing and funding park improvements. It begins with a maintenance plan to take care of existing resources, presents a long-term list of capital projects, and identifies a short list of priority projects for implementation. In addition, the chapter identifies potential funding sources that may be used to implement priority projects, depending on future strategic funding decisions discussed in the next chapter.

A. MAINTENANCE PLAN

Grants Pass has a well-planned, well-developed park system. City residents value their parks and green space, as well as the high quality of maintenance. This chapter presents a maintenance strategy to ensure that community assets continue to be adequately maintained and preserved for the future. This Plan addresses the cost implications for taking care of new and existing parks, and identifies opportunities to more efficiently maintain the park system.

Maintenance Funding

Until recently, maintenance funding for City parks has increased annually as new parks and facilities were added. However, the adopted FY 2010 budget reverses this trend, slightly reducing funding and staffing for park maintenance (Table 10). This reduction occurs as new facilities are being added at Redwood Park and John Reinhart Volunteer Park. It translates into a loss of 1.0 Parks Maintenance position, 0.5 Urban Forester position, and 210 hours of part-time help.

The maintenance plan proposed as part of this Parks Comprehensive Plan includes strategies to reallocate maintenance funding to enhance efficiencies, focus resources, and maximize staff effectiveness. This will help the City identify maintenance costs and needs annually, as new parks and facilities are developed. The reduction in maintenance dollars noted in the current budget cannot be a continuing trend if the City is to provide standard maintenance for all sites as needed.

Table 10: Park Maintenance Services (FY'07 to FY'10)

	ACTUAL FY'07	ACTUAL FY'08	ADOPTED FY'09	ADOPTED FY'10
Maintenance Budget	\$ 1,218,264	\$1,310,976	\$1,522,848	\$1,394,815
Funded Staff	6.45 FTE	8.0 FTE	8.1 FTE	6.6 FTE

*Source: City of Grants Pass.

Tiered Levels of Service

The City of Grants Pass maintains its parks to a high standard, and the community appreciates this level of detailed attention. To continue this level of maintenance, Grants Pass should implement a tiered level of service (Table 11). This tiered system will be used to update the City's maintenance management practices, including performance standards, frequency goals, and time requirements. Park maintenance activities in each tier of maintenance are based on typical amenities found in these park types. Currently, each park in Grants Pass is maintained at a high level of service, higher than most nearby communities. To help allocate staff time and resources, three levels of park maintenance are recommended:

- **High Standard:** Parks with frequent use, high-intensity special events, or unique or specialized facilities require additional maintenance tasks or increased frequencies to support frequent use. This high standard is generally reserved for regional parks, community parks, and popular special use facilities. However, it may be applied to other types of parks that fit this definition.
- **Standard:** This level of care includes all routine and preventive tasks necessary to maintain City parks at an adequate level. Standard maintenance typically applies to mini parks, neighborhood parks, green space, and less intensely-visited special use facilities. To a lesser extent, the standard level applies to beautification areas, which should be designed with maintenance efficiencies in mind.
- **Undeveloped:** Park reserves currently have no amenities and are being held for future park use. These sites require a very basic level of maintenance to ensure that they do not pose a danger to surrounding properties.

The general description of each maintenance tier can be applied to the park classification system, as noted above. However, each site should be evaluated individually based on its available facilities and the level of use the park receives. Table 11 defines maintenance tasks appropriate for park types and maintenance levels.

Table 11: Park Maintenance Tasks by Level

MAINTENANCE OVERVIEW			
LEVEL	DESCRIPTION	Mini and Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks, Regional Parks and Special Use Sites
High Standard	Highest level of detailed maintenance for signature parks, sites with specialized or unique facilities, and frequently-used parks (often providing programming or special events). These sites need standard maintenance tasks plus extra attention.	<p>Standard Tasks PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention to annual plantings, shrubs and landscaped beds Additional urban forest management Additional turf maintenance and mowing frequency to offset impacts of heavy use Maintenance of special facilities, if any 	<p>Standard Tasks PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher frequency for all maintenance activities, reflecting the highest level of use Maintenance of special facilities, e.g. water spraygrounds, pools, sport fields Set-up and clean-up after group and festival reservations <p>Green Spaces</p> <p>Standard Tasks PLUS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of facilities supporting picnic areas and other gathering spaces Parking lot maintenance Restroom cleaning* Attention to high-use or signature trails and trailheads Natural resource restoration
Standard	Regular maintenance to preserve assets, ensure safety, and contribute to community livability. This level of service applies to all developed sites that do not fit the criteria above.	<p>Standard Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic mowing and trimming Basic urban forest management Playground safety inspections Restroom cleaning* Trash removal Graffiti removal Paved surface maintenance Parking lot maintenance Lighting maintenance Irrigation maintenance Edging <p>Preventive Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilization Aeration Pruning Structure evaluation* 	<p>Standard Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual plantings Shrub and landscape beds Basic mowing and trimming Basic urban forest management Playground safety inspections Restroom cleaning* Trash removal Graffiti removal Paved surface maintenance Parking lot maintenance Lighting maintenance Irrigation maintenance Edging <p>Preventive Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilization Aeration Pruning Structure evaluation* <p>Standard Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trash removal Urban forest management Trail maintenance Vandalism check <p>Preventive Tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive species management
Undeveloped	A basic level of maintenance for park reserves.	<p>Hazard mowing, tree maintenance and debris removal to provide for public safety. (Additional maintenance efforts may be needed to support special events at reserve sites.)</p>	

*Where present

Tiered Park Assignments

These tiered service levels ensure that most park sites will receive standard maintenance. For some sites, this will mean a reduced level of attention. For example, mini parks, neighborhood parks, and beautification areas should not include flower beds, rose bushes, or any type of annual plantings or specialized landscaping. Further, beautification areas should be designed and planted for basic maintenance only, which may require the removing high-maintenance landscaping. Specialized facilities should not be developed at neighborhood parks, to keep maintenance costs low at those sites.



However, several sites should receive a higher standard of maintenance. These existing sites need extra attention because of their specialized facilities, special events, and/or popularity as the City's signature parks:

- Reinhart Volunteer Park
- Riverside Park
- Caveman Pool
- Tussing Park

Similarly, some proposed sites will need to be maintained at a high standard, in conjunction with their anticipated development and use:

- Regional park
- Community park
- Downtown plaza
- USFS Plaza

Finally, while standard maintenance is proposed at trails and trailheads, the maintenance level at the following sites should be evaluated periodically to determine if a higher level of service is needed:

- Rogue River Greenway Regional Trail
- West Rogue River Bridge/Trailhead
- West Tom Pearce Park Trailhead
- Morrison Centennial Park (sprayground)

While reducing the maintenance tasks and frequencies at some sites may slightly reduce maintenance costs, the overall goal is to redistribute the

level of effort and the allocation of maintenance funds. That way the most heavily used sites will receive the most attention.

Maintenance Costs

A 20-year capital improvement and maintenance plan is presented in Appendix D. Below, Table 12 notes the per-acre costs used to calculate maintenance costs for the entire park system. These amounts are based on the recommendation that the City should increase spending at undeveloped sites to maintain site safety, decrease spending at mini parks, neighborhood parks, and green space to provide a more basic level of service, and continue to maintain community parks, regional parks, and special use areas at a high level.

Table 12: Maintenance Costs per Acre

PARK TYPE	MAINTENANCE COST (PER ACRE OR TRAIL MILE)		
	UNDEVELOPED	STANDARD	HIGH
Mini & Neighborhood Parks	\$500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Community, Regional, & Special Use Parks	\$500	\$7,000	\$9,000
Green Space and Trail Corridors	\$500	\$5,000	\$7,000
Trails (per mile)	\$1,200	\$12,000	\$16,800

Existing System Costs

Based on these average costs and the recommended maintenance level of service, approximately \$1.37 million is needed annually to maintain the existing park and recreation system. Additionally, the City of Grants Pass typically spends approximately 1% of its parks maintenance budget on urban forestry (Tree City USA tasks and activities) and extra funds to maintain the City’s street and median beautification areas (Table 13). This creates maintenance cost estimates that are on par with the reduced FY 2010 budget. However, the proposed budget does not allow for the development of new facilities or acquisition of new park sites until additional maintenance and operations funding is obtained.

Table 13: Anticipated Maintenance Costs (Existing System)

	TOTAL
FY 2010 Adopted Maintenance Budget	\$1,394,815
Anticipated Annual Maintenance Costs	\$1,371,708
Beautification Areas (1.32 acres)	\$6,600
Tree City USA	\$14,000
Total Estimated Costs	\$1,392,308

Proposed System Costs

Table 14 illustrates the acreage associated each maintenance level of service for the existing and proposed park system. The column for the proposed park acreage shows the number of *additional* acres that would need to be maintained if all recommended sites were acquired or developed. It also notes potential partner properties that could be maintained through some type of collaborative partnership in the future.

Table 14: Acreage by Maintenance Level (Existing and Proposed Parks)

PARK TYPES	EXISTING ACRES	PROPOSED ACRES
Standard		
Mini Parks	3.84	0.00
Neighborhood Parks	41.71	51.43
Special Use (Standard Use)	29.45	19.32
Green Space	23.49	51.12
Subtotal	98.49	121.87
High Standard		
Community Parks	31.65	32.51
Regional Parks	58.19	247.66
Special Use (High Use)	0.93	4.32
Parks of Other Types*	5.50	0.00
Subtotal	96.27	284.49
Undeveloped Parks	312.52	
Park Partnerships		519.23
Subtotal	312.52	519.23
TOTAL	507.28	925.59

* Tussing Park has a high standard, because it functions as an entry way to Reinhart Volunteer Park.

Given the current budget limitations, the capital improvement and maintenance plan in Appendix D presumes that—in the short term—the City will not take over the maintenance of partner sites. However, if City leaders want to include the park acres provided by potential partners in their park LOS standards, the option to manage or contribute to the maintenance of these sites could be further evaluated in the future.

B. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

All projects recommended in this Plan are summarized in a long-term capital projects list. As part of this list, these projects can be submitted for grant funding. All projects at existing and proposed sites are noted in Appendix D, with estimated costs for needed capital improvements, capital reinvestment and maintenance. These planning-level costs are noted to help prioritize recommended projects and identify their associated impacts. Costs are based on the following:

- **Capital Improvements:** Recommended capital projects include park acquisition, development, and enhancement/improvement. Costs for land acquisition and development are based on an average amount needed to acquire or develop one acre of park land, which differs by park type. On the other hand, site improvement costs are noted as a set amount that would be needed to add or upgrade a facility. This flat cost is based on an average cost for typical improvements, which may occur at any type of park.
- **Capital Reinvestment:** Capital reinvestment involves replacing outdated or worn facilities as scheduled based on their age and use. Funds should be set aside annually so that the City has money to replace facilities when needed. These funds will cover minor repairs such as resurfacing sport courts; replacing restroom features and valves; painting and implementing concrete improvements; repairing fences, backstops, and other amenities; repairing or repaving trails; repairing and reseeding turf areas; installing high efficiency irrigation systems, etc. In the long term, these funds should also help cover the replacement of facilities with 20 to 30-year lifecycles.
- **Maintenance:** Site maintenance costs are calculated based on a park's assigned service level (high, standard, or undeveloped). This cost takes into account each site's current level of development and final level of development within the 20-year timeframe for this Plan.

The capital projects noted in Appendix D are part of the community's comprehensive vision for the future park system. However, the scope of this vision is considerably larger than anything the City can achieve in the next 20 years. Anticipated capital costs associated with all projects exceed \$93.8 million, and another \$3.8 million would be needed to take care of this park system once developed. Clearly, this is more than the City can afford.

C. PROJECT PRIORITIES

Residents were asked to identify the City's top priorities for park and recreation facilities, so that these projects could be included in a 20-year implementation plan. City leaders, staff, and community members spent several months reviewing recommendations to determine which projects were most important to them. Their feedback was used to create a short list of priority projects that *may be achievable* in the next 20 years. This will help the City make decisions about which projects should move forward first *when funding is available*.

Prioritization Criteria

As part of this process, prioritization criteria were developed to help identify priority projects based on the community's values and vision. The following criteria were used by City staff and residents to identify their top priorities.

- **Utilizes available funding:** Projects that have identified funding or the potential to be funded through grants, donations, partner contributions, volunteer labor, or other existing funding sources should receive higher priority than projects without other identified funding opportunities.
- **Increases trail connectivity and park access:** Priority should be given to trail projects, which are likely to provide the greatest return on the City's investment, because of their high demand and use. Developing trails and acquiring corridors that tie to the regional trail system, improve non-motorized transportation, enhance recreation opportunities, and are supported by the community should be considered high priority projects.
- **Enhances sustainability:** Projects that require small investments to sustain existing resources, improve maintenance efficiency, reduce lifecycle costs, or otherwise promote environmental sustainability should be given high priority.
- **Expands recreation opportunities:** Priority should be given to projects that increase the recreation capacity of an existing site or a site obtained through partnership/lease. This may include adding a playground or playground cover, adding a sport court to support other facilities, providing a City-managed dog park on a partner property, etc.
- **Addresses major facility needs:** Site development to address major community priorities and demands should be prioritized.
- **Meets needs in unserved areas:** Site development and acquisition in future growth areas will become a future priority as those areas



begin to grow. However, the City should prioritize the acquisition of parks and trail corridors in developing areas when the opportunity arises and before it is lost to development.

- **Enhances natural areas and green space:** Projects that provide access to natural areas, restore habitats, improve ecological health, and support environmental education and sustainability should be considered as high priorities.
- **Supports community values and strengthens the community:** Lastly, proposed projects should be prioritized based on their ability to strengthen community identity, safety, and livability. Projects should take into Grants Pass's unique needs and preferences. Priorities may include projects that provide water access, support social cohesion, attract tourism, or support other City resources and initiatives.

Priority Projects

Using these criteria, high-priority projects were identified and presented to City residents, staff, the Advisory Committee, and City Council. Feedback from each of these groups was incorporated into a revised list of priority projects, which were further refined through adoption hearings into this final form. Table 15 lists the high priority projects for implementation, with rounded costs.

The total cost of priority projects is slightly less than \$21 million. This amount reflects the *anticipated value* of these projects to the City. The City may spend far less, however. Volunteer labor, sponsorships, partnerships, donations and grants will decrease the actual amount that City will spend on park and facility development. While the total cost for priority projects still sounds expensive, this plan may be achievable. In comparison, the amount is substantially less than the value of the projects that have been completed since the last plan was implemented.

In identifying and refining priority projects, community members clearly valued trail connectivity, community and regional park development, and completion of projects that were previously started. Major facility development at a few large parks, plus trail development, ranked higher than a combination of smaller projects at more sites. Projects with strong partner support and outside funding, such as a proposed Food Bank farm, are supported as well.

Available funding and partner assistance will help determine the order in which these projects are implemented. As funding resources change in the future, so will this list of project priorities. Projects may be re-prioritized if substantial volunteer contributions or unanticipated funding becomes available.

Table 15: Priority Projects and Costs (2009 Dollars)

	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COSTS
EXISTING PARKS		
Fruitdale Park	Complete Phase II improvements.	\$788,000
Gilbert Creek Park	Add playground cover, off-leash dog area, and trail improvements.	\$150,000
Redwood Park	Complete Phase II improvements.	\$226,000 ¹
Riverside Park	Add sport court. Develop pedestrian/bicycle entry at 6 th Street. Move disc golf. Improve restrooms.	\$333,000
Reinhart Volunteer Park	Finish River Vista and associated improvements.	Completed
Tussing Park	Complete Phase II improvements.	Budgeted ¹
Subtotal		\$1,497,000
PROPOSED PARKS AND TRAILS		
NE Neighborhood Park	Investigate options to develop a new 5-acre neighborhood park in NE Grants Pass. Consider the Hillcrest Reserve, potential partnerships at school sites, or other appropriate sites. Create a site master plan and develop the site according to design and development guidelines.	\$1,250,000 ²
Community Park	Investigate options to develop Allen Creek Reserve as a community park. Acquire additional acreage, create a site master plan, improve Garrison Fields, and initiate Phase I development.	\$8,767,000
Regional Park	Investigate options to develop the River Road Reserve or a comparable site as a regional park. Create a site master plan and pursue a partnership with the Food Bank to develop a working farm. Provide infrastructure and initiate Phase 1 development for facilities to be identified in the site master plan. These may include open playfields, a destination playground and sprayground.	\$6,502,000
Tom Pearce Trailhead	Investigate options to acquire 5 acres and develop a trailhead to improve access to Tom Pearce Park.	\$1,250,000
River City Trail	Create trail master plan to identify appropriate trail routes. Acquire corridors and extend current trails as proposed.	\$1,710,000
Subtotal		\$19,479,000
TOTAL		\$ 20,976,000

¹Partial funds for Redwood Park and full funds for Tussing Park are included in the FY2009-2010 Adopted Budget.

²These funds are for park development only. No acquisition costs are noted.

D. FUNDING OPTIONS

The City will need to consider all funding options to be able to implement priority projects for the park system. However, the implementation of the Park Comprehensive Plan is not tied to a particular funding strategy. In fact:

- The Parks Comprehensive Plan does not create any obligation to fund and/or develop the recommended projects.
- The value of improvements is anticipated to come from a variety of public and private sources.

These public and private sources are described in Appendix E. The appendix provides an overview of funding sources for the City to consider when implementing this Plan. Funding sources are divided into two categories: 1) operations/capital funds; and 2) capital funding only. Typically, it is easier to obtain capital dollars than operations funding. This can create a shortage in the maintenance funds needed to take care of the park system. For this reason, a source for maintenance funding should be identified before new capital projects can move forward.



Current Funding

As noted in Appendix E, the City relies on a variety of funding mechanisms to support parks and recreation. These include General Fund dollars, a Transient Room Tax, Park System Development Charges (SDCs), grants, volunteer contributions, and donations. This Plan anticipates that the City will continue to rely on each of these funding sources. A large reduction in any of these sources could force the City to cut or significantly reduce park and recreation services, such as pool operations, recreation programming, and park maintenance.

Program-Generated Funding

In Grants Pass, all revenues that are generated by the Parks and Recreation Division are allocated to the General Fund. If these funds were dedicated to parks and programming, it would provide a great incentive for the Division to increase revenue-generating facilities and programs that employ higher cost recovery rates. As noted in Chapter 5, this Plan recommends that the City increase its user fees to a reasonable amount that the market can bear. In new community and regional parks, the City should also consider developing revenue-generating facilities, such as picnic shelters, sports fields, and other rental facilities, to increase its revenue generating capacity. This will help sustain parks and recreation services and decrease the reliance on General Fund dollars.

Future Funding

Given the current economic climate, the City should remain flexible so that it can take advantage of new funding opportunities as circumstances change in the future. Any strategy to fund capital projects and services will depend on economic conditions at that time. Since this is a 20-year Plan, the City may want to consider both short-term and long-term strategies to obtain park funding. As economic circumstances change, new sources of funding may become available.

In the short term, this Plan recommends that City continue to use grants, partnerships and volunteer contributions to support parks and recreation. This means that community groups who are willing to fund and develop park facilities can move forward with projects that support the vision of this Plan. In addition, sponsorships should be pursued, particularly in the development of regional and community park facilities. As noted in Appendix C, moderate increases in facility use fees should be instituted as well to implement an enhanced cost recovery strategy.

In the long term, the City should consider more aggressive strategies to meet recreation needs in underserved areas. This may include such options as increasing or expanding the Transient Room Tax to include other sources revenue (rental cars and restaurants). This strategy would help the City pass on costs to out-of-town visitors who take advantage of the park system. In time, when the economy rebounds, the City may also consider reviewing its SDC methodology. Currently, the City's rate for residential and non-residential system development charges is slightly lower than other cities in Oregon. A formal analysis is needed to review Grant Pass's SDC rates, adjust them for inflationary impacts, and revise them to update automatically each year for inflation. The City should wait until the economy improves before determining whether a rate increase is warranted and advisable.

As conditions further improve in the long term, the City may want to consider other funding mechanisms, such as a levy or General Obligation Bond, to fund priority projects. However, those options will require public approval, and community support will depend on future economic conditions. While the City was successful with a recent voter-approved tax levy, voter-approved funding initiatives can be difficult to pass, especially since the City now has a fairly high property tax rate (\$6.32/\$1,000 tax assessed value) in comparison to other cities in Oregon. However, a General Obligation bond may be a viable option in the future.