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## Chapter 7: Strategic Decisions



## STRATEGIC DECISIONS

The Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan presents a comprehensive set of directions for achieving a sustainable park system, based on the stewardship of City assets. These directions reflect the community's vision for Grants Pass. Vibrant parks, well-maintained facilities, peaceful green spaces, and interconnected trails link the community together to strengthen the fabric of the City. This Plan captures and conveys this vision, so that citizens, City leaders and staff together can make strategic c to improve their community through people, parks, and programs.



Reflecting the community's desired for parks and recreation, the Parks Comprehensive Plan focuses on maintaining current City assets in a cost-efficient, sustainable way. When funding is available, the Plan recommends slowly building the park system, proceeding first with projects that provide the highest return on the City's investment. These include low-cost, high-impact projects that will encourage the greatest number of residents to go out walking, biking, playing, picnicking in the beautiful Rogue Valley. Once the City begins growing again—through population growth, new development, and the expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary—this Plan outlines a more aggressive course of action to meet increasing recreation demands and recreation needs in unserved areas.

### A. STRATEGIC FUNDING DECISIONS

The City of Grants Pass owns a wealth of park properties, including reserves that were acquired through wise investments in strategic locations since the last plan was completed. Developing these sites to their full recreation potential is important to the future park system.

Maintaining park resources is also a priority for the City. This Plan includes a strategy to reallocate maintenance funding to take care of current assets as the City and the park system continue to grow. It includes strategies, such as eliminating costly landscaping and flower beds, to provide basic maintenance for all parks and facilities. If needed, tasks such as trash removal, restroom cleaning, mowing, and irrigation can be undertaken less frequently to protect amenities and facilities for the long term.

The Plan includes a short-term funding strategy to increase cost recovery rates to offset the costs for facility use. Facility rentals charges, special event fees, and programming fees should be increased appropriately to pass maintenance costs on to the most frequent park users. The City also

should continue to take advantage of its success in motivating volunteers, involving partners, and obtaining grants to fund park improvements.

In the long-term, when the economy rebounds, the City should consider broadening the Transient Room Tax and reviewing its SDC methodology, adjusting rates to be comparable to other jurisdictions. These funds should be applied first to priority projects, such as improving park access through the development of the trail system along community supported routes. As economic conditions improve, the City may want to consider other funding mechanisms, such as a General Obligation Bond, to fund priority projects.



This Plan requires that a series of strategic funding decisions be made throughout the next 20 years. It provides a framework and the tools so that the City can respond to changing economic circumstances while continuing to make progress toward its long-term vision for parks and recreation.

## B. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

To help the City of Grants Pass recognize Plan successes and progress, performance measures are noted below. As the City begins to measure its performance, baseline data will be collected and goals will be set for the next fiscal year. Grants Pass Parks and Recreation Division should continue to track these measures as needed, using them to develop their annual work plan.

The City should add or substitute the following performance measures for the indicators noted in the FY2010 Adopted Budget:

- Percent of residents who live within 1/2-mile of basic recreation amenities (e.g., playground and sports courts).
- Percent of developed parks in the park system (with sites appropriately developed as parks or green space).
- Percent of residents who report that they are satisfied or very satisfied with City parks, facilities and recreation services.
- Percent of residents who report feeling safe in parks, or the actual numbers of reported crimes in City parks.
- Percentage of parks receiving the recommended level of park maintenance based on the assigned maintenance tier.
- Miles of trails provided by the City.
- Number of trees planted to increase the urban forestry canopy.
- Percent of residents who have used recreation programs in the past year.

- FTE equivalent in volunteer hours achieved by volunteers in parks and recreation.
- Amount of grant funding received.
- The percentage of costs recovered for facility reservations for picnic shelters, Caveman Pool, River Vista, and sports fields.
- Number of formal partnership agreements in place to provide parks, recreation and open space opportunities to Grants Pass' residents and visitors.
- Number of new parks and park renovation projects that incorporate sustainability concepts.

The benchmarks noted above can be monitored for changes in performance, until a best management target is achieved.

### C. FINAL MESSAGE

The Comprehensive Park & Recreation Master Plan provides the vision and tools necessary for the City of Grants Pass to preserve and enhance its park system. The City currently has a significant inventory of well-



maintained parks, facilities, trails and green space. However, it also has a significant amount undeveloped park reserves and a lower level of service (park acres) than comparable communities. The future of parks and recreation in Grants Pass depends on the development of these well-placed park reserves, plus coordination with other providers to sustain their parks and facilities for community use. This strategy will help meet many recreation needs.

This Plan sends a resounding message that the City must continue to preserve its park investment. The City needs to secure maintenance funding to sustain current resources now and in the future. The City also needs a strategy to hold onto its park reserves until site development is affordable. Selling off key acquisitions is not a cost-effective or sustainable choice in the long term.

This Plan is a 20-year plan. It recommends projects that will be implemented through the next two decades and beyond. City Councilors can adopt this plan knowing that it will provide guidance for parks and recreation for years to come. Moreover, City residents can support this plan knowing that it will improve community livability and economic vitality now and in the future. The key is recognizing the integral role that parks and recreation plays in supporting the quality of life.

