

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Eugene, Oregon, has a strong legacy of parks that dates back to 1906 and the donation of land for Hendricks Park. The community includes people with diverse recreational interests—skateboarding, bird-watching, wheelchair basketball, disc-golf, kayaking, dog-walking, roller hockey—not to mention the basics of swimming, soccer, softball, bicycling, and jogging. And last, but not least, the community has a growing reputation for natural resource management that includes a wetland protection program that serves as a national model. Today, the City of Eugene manages approximately 2900 acres of land in 130 parks, natural areas and special use facilities and offers a wide variety of recreational programs, special events, and services to people of all ages and abilities.

Currently, these efforts are directed by numerous planning and policy documents, but never before has a plan addressed all of these important quality of life services. The Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Comprehensive Plan represents a unique opportunity for citizens, staff, and elected officials to work together to make Eugene a great place to live, work, and play.

The comprehensive planning process, initiated in the summer of 2002, identifies future needs for parks, open space, and recreation programs and services. These needs are based on the results of public outreach to thousands of Eugene residents through meetings with neighborhood organizations, representatives of various interest groups, youth, seniors, adults, people with disabilities, and cultural minorities. Based on the identified needs, the PROS Comprehensive Plan proposes dozens of strategies for the future to improve parks, provide recreation opportunities, and protect natural resource values. The document provides an overview of the planning process and presents the City’s strategies for achieving our community vision.

The comprehensive planning process included four phases:

- Identifying community needs;
- Creating and confirming a future vision;
- Developing strategies to implement the vision; and
- Obtaining approval for the plan from the City Council.



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Public involvement was a major component of all four phases of the planning process.

The Plan consists of five core elements, which are identified in Chapter 2.

- *Core values* best communicate the values or qualities that the Eugene community holds in common in relation to the provision of parks, recreation programs, and open space;
- A *vision* creates a compelling description of the preferred future for our community and gives us something to work towards;
- A *mission* communicates the approach that staff will take in conducting the business of parks, recreation and open space for the City of Eugene.
- Community *goals* clearly describe the desired outcomes of the comprehensive plan;
- *Strategies* are the actions or policies that will be pursued to achieve the community's vision; and

The Comprehensive Plan provides a specific, community-supported strategic plan for the future of parks, community facilities, and programs in Eugene.

## A. Planning Framework

### Core Values

Core values are the qualities most valued by the Eugene community. These qualities will guide all services provided by the City and are embodied in the goals and strategies for Eugene's parks, open space, recreation facilities, programs, and services:

- Health
- Equity
- Community
- Service
- Sustainability



### Vision

The core values shared by the community help create a vision of the community's preferred future. This vision also illustrates a picture of success for the community served by City parks and recreation opportunities. Through the public involvement process, the Mayor's Advisory Committee and the Project Steering Committee summarized the community's vision:

***We envision an interconnected and accessible system of vibrant public spaces, friendly neighborhood parks, thriving natural areas and diverse recreation opportunities that make our city a healthy, active, and beautiful place in which to live, work, and play.***

### Mission

A mission statement, in line with the community's vision, describes the approach City staff will take in conducting the business of parks, recreation, and open space in Eugene. This mission is:

***Strengthening our community by preserving and enhancing our parks and open space system and providing diverse recreation experiences.***

### Goals

Goals are the outcomes to be produced by implementing the Comprehensive Plan. Thirteen goals emerged during the comprehensive planning process, reflecting the community's values and vision for the City's future. These goals are:

- Provide opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors;
- Provide inclusive, accessible, and affordable programs and places;
- Support and enhance individual and community *health and wellness*;
- Build a *sense of community* by developing strong community partnerships;
- Identify underserved populations and provide outreach to *engage diverse community members*;
- Promote *lifelong human development* through a range of recreation opportunities;
- Build *environmental stewardship* through environmental education, outdoor recreation, and volunteer opportunities;
- Promote human understanding and a sense of community through *cultural opportunities*;



*Strengthening our community by preserving and enhancing our parks and open space system and providing diverse recreation experiences*

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- Distribute parks, open space and recreation services *equitably throughout the community*;
- Build and maintain *sustainable* parks, recreation, and open space infrastructure;
- Protect and enhance diverse, healthy, and interconnected ecosystems;
- Make *fiscal responsibility* a high priority; and
- Ensure the *efficient* use of resources.

## B. Plan Highlights



An extensive community outreach program conducted as part of the PROS planning process identified several significant areas for improving community livability in Eugene through parks, open space, and recreation facilities and programs. The recommendations that will guide plan implementation over the next five to ten years and beyond are highlighted in Chapter 3.

The plan highlights include:

- Creating a balanced and equitable system of parks and recreation services;
- Providing an accessible and connected park system;
- Renovating and restoring existing parks and open space;
- Maintaining existing investments;
- Offering opportunities for community volunteerism; and
- Providing youth development opportunities.

## C. Strategy Overview



Strategies for enhancing Eugene’s parks, open space, recreation facilities, and programs were developed based on the Community Needs Assessment findings, which included a comprehensive analysis of programs, parks and facilities, and finances. Strategies are the methods, resources, processes, and systems that the City will deploy to achieve the community’s vision and goals. In Chapter 4, strategies are presented in the following categories:

- Recreation programs;
- Parks;
- Community facilities;
- Natural areas;



- Access and connectivity;
- Renovation/restoration;
- Maintenance;
- Resource development; and
- Management.

Significant strategies in each of the nine strategy areas are highlighted below:

### Recreation Programs

- Continue to serve as the primary provider of recreation services in the area while striving to increase partnerships.
- Provide diverse, community-driven recreation services.
- Establish a delivery system that provides equal access to recreation services for all residents through a variety of community facilities.
- Provide services to all residents within the following core program areas:
  - Seniors;
  - Youth & Family;
  - Outdoor/Environmental;
  - Adaptive Recreation;
  - Athletics;
  - Aquatics;
  - Hult Center/Cuthbert; and
  - Volunteer Programs.
- Be adaptable to the changing needs of the community and identify and develop new programs as these needs change.
- Continually evaluate existing programs regarding changing community needs, attendance, and achievement of program outcomes. Adjust services to meet community needs on a periodic basis.
- Use community surveys and similar techniques to determine changing recreation interests and program demand.
- Increase diversity in program participation.
- Offer more intergenerational activities and programs in addition to more traditional age-group oriented programming.



*Offer more  
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## **Parks**

- Provide a total of 20 acres minimum of parkland per 1,000 residents based on standards developed for the seven park classifications.
- Ensure the equitable distribution of parks, recreation, and open space areas throughout Eugene.
- Balance the need to provide new parks and facilities with the need to protect and preserve public investment in existing parks and facilities.
- Evaluate and communicate impacts to park and facility operations when acquiring and developing new parks and facilities.
- Design new parks and facilities for efficient maintenance by developing maintenance management plans prior to construction and involving maintenance and program staff in the design process.
- Equitably distribute neighborhood park service throughout the City. Develop capital improvement plans and schedules aimed at addressing current deficiencies.
- Provide neighborhood parks within a ½ mile of most residents for convenient and safe walking access. Take into consideration major streets, railways, topography, and rivers, which can pose barriers to safe and convenient park access for pedestrians.
- Provide 1.7 acres minimum of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Develop urban plazas to provide social and recreational opportunities in urban settings, such as downtown commercial districts, mixed-use commercial, and mixed-use neighborhood developments.
- Partner with private developers for development of urban plazas and other urban open space, such as rooftop gardens and courtyards, to meet the open space needs of residents in higher density developments.



- Provide a convenient system of community parks that provides active and passive recreational opportunities for all City residents and accommodates large group activities.
- Provide community parks within 2 miles of most residents.
- Provide 1.5 acres of community parkland per 1,000 residents, at a minimum size of 40 acres.
- Maintain metropolitan parks to preserve unique cultural and natural areas or to provide features, facilities, and events that attract users from the entire Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area.
- Provide an overall standard of 6.8 acres per 1,000 residents, for metropolitan parks, special use facilities, urban plazas, and linear parks, to allow maximum flexibility in responding to community needs and acquisition opportunities.
- Review opportunities to provide additional metropolitan parks, especially if parcels are contiguous with existing sites.

<b>PARK TYPE</b>	<b>PROPOSED STANDARD (acres per 1,000 population)</b>
Neighborhood Parks	1.7
Community Parks	1.5
Natural Area Parks	10.0
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>13.2</i>
Other Parkland (includes Urban Plazas, Metropolitan Parks, Linear Parks/Greenways, and Special Use Facilities)	6.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>20.0</i>

*Figure 1: Proposed Parkland Standards*

**Community Facilities**

- Provide an aquatic facility within each planning area.
- Consider both indoor and outdoor swimming opportunities when developing new aquatic facilities, as well as other diverse recreation opportunities that could draw attendance and generate revenue, such as spray features, water play attractions, fitness equipment, rental facilities, and facilities to support competitive swimming.
- Provide at least one multi-use community center within each planning area to create a system of neighborhood-based community centers. New centers should be a minimum of 40,000 square feet.
- Work with partner agencies, especially schools, to help meet demand for indoor and outdoor sports facilities. Develop and maintain inventories and evaluations of shared sports facilities.



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## Natural Areas

- Promote connectivity between natural areas and other recreation facilities and community destinations through acquisition and trail development whenever feasible. Work with appropriate governing jurisdictions, such as Lane County, to explore feasibility of trail connections between natural areas, recreation facilities, and community destinations on lands outside Eugene’s urban growth boundary.
- Protect and enhance a variety of habitat types within Eugene’s park and open space system, including oak savannas, wetlands, riparian areas, grassland prairies, forests, and working landscapes such as farm and forest land.
- Prioritize natural resource acquisitions using criteria beyond natural resources to include opportunities for recreation, education, and protection of important visual resources.
- Improve the geographic distribution of natural open space to provide natural open space parkland in currently under-served areas.
- Continue to acquire open space to expand the Ridgeline Trail open space system. Work with the appropriate governing jurisdictions, such as Lane County, to explore feasibility for Ridgeline Trail connections on lands outside Eugene’s urban growth boundary.



## Access and Connectivity

- Conduct access and connectivity studies of parks, recreation, and open space facilities to identify existing barriers for people with and without disabilities.
- Develop and implement a Transition Plan to bring the parks and open space system up to current accessibility standards and continue implementing the ADA Transition Plan for facilities.
- Increase recreational trails to provide a safe trail network that links neighborhoods, parks, natural open space, schools, recreation sites and other key community attractions.
- Improve trails and accessibility to key natural areas.
- Coordinate with other agencies and providers to encourage the development of a regional trail system linking Eugene/Springfield with Fern Ridge Reservoir, the coast, the Cascades, and the Willamette and McKenzie Rivers. Provide bicycle and pedestrian access through agricultural areas in the Willow Creek, Bethel/Danebo, and Santa Clara planning areas of Eugene.

## Renovation/Restoration

- Develop or update park designs or master plans before making significant improvements to a site.
- Make needed safety and ADA accessibility improvements when renovating existing parks and recreation facilities.



- When renovating existing parks, add facilities as appropriate that expand recreation opportunities, such as reservable picnic areas, skate parks, dog parks, basketball courts, sand volleyball courts, rental facilities, fishing access, and sports fields.
- Develop restoration plans for natural area parks and significant natural areas within community, metropolitan, and linear parks.

**Maintenance**

- Establish data on the cost of maintenance and identify a minimum per unit maintenance budget based on that data. Use that figure as a guideline for budgeting and forecasting operations impacts when new parks and facilities are brought on-line.
- Develop effective natural resource management plans for significant natural areas (such as oak habitat, riparian areas, and native prairies) to identify management priorities and to guide acquisition, development, and restoration decisions.
- Continue emphasizing public safety and security in the design and operations of City parks, natural areas, and facilities.
- Continue facilitating and encouraging the formation of adopt-a-park groups for each park and facility.

**Resource Development**

- Exercise fiscal responsibility in all acquisitions and expenditures.
- Develop a program to maximize donations, grants, and partnerships to increase the resources available for parks and recreation. Develop gift catalogs for key parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs.
- Consider voter-approved initiatives, such as bonds and serial levies, to finance improvements.
- Maintain and enhance general fund support of parks, recreation programs, and maintenance.
- Periodically evaluate the City's park System Development Charges (SDCs) to ensure that the rates are providing adequate funding to maintain the park system capacity as the City grows.
- Strive to reduce dependency on short-term serial levies and to increase the long-term stability of recreation program financing.
- Consider more revenue-generating programs to increase recreation program funding and provide more subsidized program services.
- Assist the Eugene Parks Foundation.
- Pursue local business sponsors to subsidize fees for high-cost programs (i.e., through an "Adopt-a-Program" effort).
- Improve partnerships with River Road Parks and Recreation District, School Districts 4J and 52, Lane Transit District, EWEB, Willamalane Parks &



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Recreation District, Lane County Parks and other public agencies to improve services and maximize efficiency.

- Continue cultivating positive, strong relationships with current partners.
- Partner with businesses to provide services and amenities, such as vendors in parks.
- Formalize all partnerships through written agreements that specify responsibilities, financial and other terms, including provisions for how to transition or end partnerships.
- Continue emphasizing community involvement and volunteerism to involve individuals, groups, and businesses in the planning, design, maintenance, operation, and programming of parks and recreation facilities.

### Management

- Improve coordination between the Public Works and Library, Recreation, and Cultural Services (LRCS) Departments and the various divisions within each of the departments.
- Continue developing a work environment that promotes trust, respect, open communication, and teamwork between all levels of staff.
- Build effective working relationships throughout the City of Eugene to address common goals with staff in Public Safety, Facilities, Finance, and other divisions within Public Works and LRCS.
- Improve diversity and cultural competence of staff.
- Coordinate planning efforts with other City departments and regional agencies, especially in support of the Rivers to Ridges regional vision.
- Improve coordination of long-range planning efforts with local school districts to ensure the availability and accessibility of play areas, athletic fields, open space, and indoor facilities.
- Work with Lane Transit District, other City Departments and other public agencies to ensure safe and convenient access to parks, open space, and recreation facilities, including access for persons with disabilities, bicycles, pedestrians, and users of public transportation.
- Acquire parkland and natural open space in advance of need to reduce land acquisition costs and to protect critical resources.
- Identify and pursue opportunities with willing sellers as the preferred approach when evaluating parkland and natural open space acquisition options. Consider willingness of seller as a key criterion when prioritizing acquisition opportunities.



*Ensure that the City's acquisition program provides a balance of natural areas and developed parks*



- Ensure that the City’s acquisition program provides a balance of natural areas and developed parks for active recreation consistent with community values.
- Reference the website in all marketing efforts.
- Continue to emphasize program benefits of child development and asset-building opportunities in marketing materials.
- Seek diverse methods of increasing program awareness, such as community open houses, presentations to neighborhood groups, and booths at community events.
- Develop a brand for the City of Eugene that emphasizes the arts, entertainment, and the outdoors to attract residents, businesses and tourism. Conduct a study to determine how to enhance arts and entertainment in Downtown Eugene.
- Market volunteerism as a recreation activity.
- Provide outreach to inform people with disabilities about recreation opportunities and provide accessible public information materials, such as alternative formats for people with visual disabilities. Incorporate new technologies when feasible.
- Evaluate the costs and benefits of serving as a central clearinghouse for recreation program information in Eugene.
- Continue involving citizens in the early planning stages of park design and development, as well as program development.

## **D. Funding Options**

### **Financing Sources**

There are a number of possible financing sources for programs; non-capital projects; and parks and facilities acquisition, development, and maintenance. Most sources are limited in scope and can only be used to fund specific types of projects or improvements. Specific financing sources, along with their advantages and limitations, are summarized in Chapter 5. These include:

- General fund;
- Road fund;
- Stormwater/wastewater fees;
- Wetlands mitigation bank funds;
- Local option levies;
- Public/government grant programs;
- Private grants and foundations;
- Public/private partnerships;



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- Fees and charges;
- System development charges;
- Donations;
- Local improvement districts;
- General obligation bonds;
- Land trusts;
- National Tree Trust;
- Lifetime estates; and
- Exchanges of property.

Other options discussed in Chapter 5 include:

- Innovative funding measures; and
- Formation of special districts.

## E. Performance Measures

Performance measures have been developed by the City to evaluate plan implementation. These measures are tied to the goals described in Chapter 2. Performance measures are presented in Chapter 6.

