

INTRODUCTION

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 and actions 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.

A. Report Organization

The Eugene PROS Comprehensive Plan is organized into six chapters:

- *Chapter 1: Introduction* describes the purpose of the plan, the organization of this document, the planning area, and the plan development process.
- *Chapter 2: Planning Framework* describes the core values, vision, mission, goals, strategies, and performance measures that form the comprehensive planning framework for parks and recreation.
- *Chapter 3: Comprehensive Plan Highlights* identifies key recommendations that will guide Plan implementation.



The comprehensive planning process identifies future park, open space, and recreation needs based on the results of public outreach to thousands of Eugene residents

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- *Chapter 4: Strategies* describes the specifics of how the City will achieve its vision.
- *Chapter 5: Plan Implementation* describes potential financing sources for capital improvements, non-capital projects, and programs, as well as sources for maintenance.
- *Chapter 6: Performance Measures* describes measures linked to each of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. These measures will be used to evaluate successful Plan implementation.
- *Appendix A: Park Classification* contains one-page descriptions and definitions for each park type, along with lists of facilities typically included and examples of parks within that classification.
- *Appendix B: Existing Resources* includes a map of planning sub-areas; a map of existing resources; parkland standards; and a complete inventory of parks, outdoor recreation amenities, recreation facilities, and natural area amenities.

B. The Planning Area



The parks, recreation, and open space planning area for the Eugene PROS Comprehensive Plan extends beyond the City limits to include all areas within the urban growth boundary (UGB), including unincorporated areas. In addition, several recommendations for future park and open space areas involve land beyond the UGB.

When identifying parcels for park acquisition, the preference is on obtaining properties that are in close proximity to residents, and therefore within Eugene's UGB. However, there are some instances when it may become necessary to look outside of the UGB. For example, it is a goal of the PROS Comprehensive Plan to provide a variety of outdoor experiences for Eugene residents, including the rural, natural qualities that one encounters in the Ridgeline Park system. Additionally, there may be times when the type and size of parcels which are sought to provide specific park services are not available within the UGB because of previous development. For these reasons, several opportunities exist for the City and County to partner in an effort to obtain the best outdoor experience for all stakeholders.

Adoption of the PROS Comprehensive Plan does not amount to the City exercising any governmental authority outside of the UGB or outside of the City's limits. The PROS Comprehensive Plan does not have any legal or regulatory effect on land located outside City limits. It is a strategy/planning document that is intended as a guide for the City as it moves forward to meet the recreational and park needs of the City's residents. Staff will rely on voluntary participation of property owners when acquiring land or purchasing conservation easements. A key objective of the plan is to devise strategies that will not infringe upon the rights of property owners and will stress voluntary participation. Most park and open space protection programs rely on



responsible negotiations with willing sellers based on appraisals of fair market value to benefit the public's and owners' interests. This does not preclude the City Council from exercising its condemnation powers within the city limits.

For analysis, the planning area is divided into six planning sub-areas, as referenced in Map 1 of Appendix B:

- Bethel/Danebo
- City Central
- River Road/Santa Clara
- South Eugene
- Willakenzie
- Willow Creek

Within the UGB, the planning sub-area boundaries follow census block group lines so that census data can be matched to each planning sub-area. Outside the UGB, the planning boundaries follow natural or road features and, where feasible, census tract boundaries.

C. The Planning Process

The comprehensive planning process for the Eugene PROS Comprehensive Plan included four phases (Figure 2):

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

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

Phase I: Needs Assessment

Phase I involved significant outreach to community members to identify their key issues, priorities, and perceived needs. A Community Needs Assessment incorporated the findings from a variety of public involvement activities, along with a community profile, a demographic profile, and a technical analysis of programs, parks, facilities, and finances.

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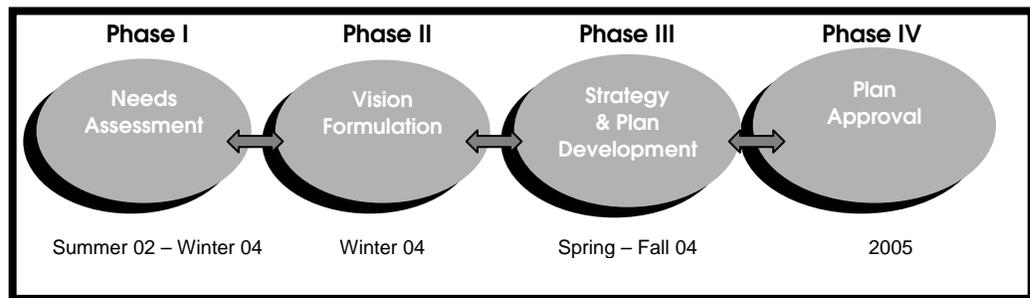


Figure 2: Comprehensive Planning Process

Phase II: Future Vision

Based on findings of the Community Needs Assessment, members of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee and the Steering Committee created a vision for parks, recreation, and open space in Eugene.

Phase III: Strategy Development

Strategies were developed in Phase III of the plan, based on the Needs Assessment results and the newly defined vision for the community. A Draft Comprehensive Plan was created for committee, staff, and community review. Development of the final plan was completed following a series of six public workshops.

Phase IV: Plan Approval

In Phase IV, the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Plan will be adopted by the Eugene City Council as a refinement to the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan.

D. Community Needs Assessment

To develop a solid foundation for the Comprehensive Plan, a Community Needs Assessment was conducted to solicit feedback from a broad spectrum of City residents and staff regarding their needs and preferences for parks and recreation services. Activities were planned to ensure the participation of a diverse cross-section of the community.

The Community Needs Assessment process included the following:

- A community profile including population, demographic, and economic trends;
- A statistically valid community survey of 437 households;
- A youth questionnaire completed by 647 high school and middle school youth;
- A display at the Eugene Celebration, where residents completed 456 questionnaires on parks and recreation;
- Focus groups with Library, Recreation and Cultural Services (LRCS)

staff, maintenance staff, recreation providers, and representatives from the Eugene business community and from cultural communities to identify needs and preferences;

- A Speakers Bureau with 44 presentations to community groups and organizations. A total of 1085 community members attended, and 751 questionnaires were completed;
- A survey of organized sports providers, with 15 questionnaires returned;
- Twelve stakeholder interviews with identified community leaders;
- Meetings of the Mayor’s Advisory Committee and Steering Committee;
- A recreation program and service analysis;
- An inventory and assessment of Eugene’s existing parks and facilities and future facility needs; and
- A financial analysis on capital and operational costs and revenue.

Parks, Open Space and Facility Inventory

A key component to the Community Needs Assessment involved a thorough inventory of existing parks, open space, and facilities. This inventory is included in Appendix B.

The City of Eugene provides the majority of parks, facilities, and programs within the planning area. However, city residents also benefit from parks and facilities owned or managed by other public agencies within the region. A variety of amenities, trails, and recreation facilities are contributed by these organizations:

- University of Oregon (UO)
- Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB)
- Lane County Parks
- Lane County Fairgrounds
- River Road Park and Recreation District (RRPRD)
- Eugene School District 4J
- Bethel School District 52
- Willamalane Park & Recreation District
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

There are numerous agencies and private entities, such as golf courses and fitness clubs, which provide recreation opportunities to Eugene residents. Although these providers are part of a system which contributes to the parks, recreation and open space services of the area, only lands which are actually owned by the City of Eugene are included in the PROS Comprehensive Plan inventory. However, many

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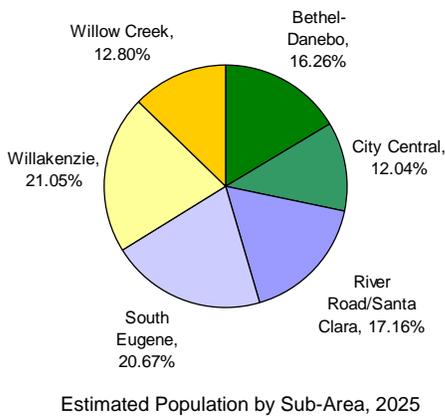
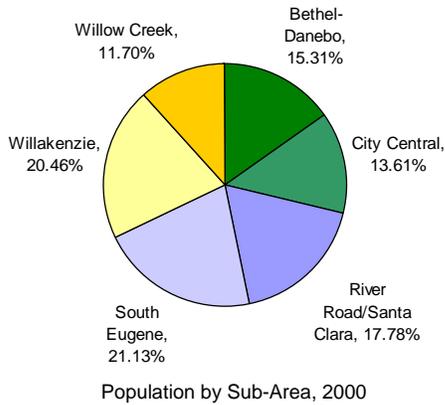


Figure 3: Current and Projected Population by Sub-Area



Residents value an interconnected and accessible park system

of these lands not owned by the city are identified on the accompanying resource maps.

The City owns and manages multiple facilities which are located on school district properties. These facilities include athletic fields, children’s play areas, skateparks, and tennis courts. These facilities are counted in the inventory of existing park and recreation facilities. However, the land which they are constructed on is not owned by the City of Eugene, and is therefore not included in the inventory.

Key Findings

Several key findings emerged from the public involvement process:

- Eugene’s population has been growing at a rate of nearly two percent annually and is expected to reach 210,900 by 2025. In the next ten years, the greatest increase is expected to occur in the 55-64 age range, while the youth population will continue to grow slowly. The Hispanic population has more than doubled in the last ten years and will continue to grow, adding to the City’s diversity. Additional parks, facilities, programs and services will be needed to meet the needs of Eugene’s growing population.
- The Willakenzie and South Eugene sub-areas will contain the largest amount of the future population, but a major shift is not anticipated in population distribution (Figure 3). A balanced and equitable system of parks and facilities will be needed to support all sub-areas in Eugene.
- Residents value an interconnected and accessible park system. Multi-purpose trails are the second most highly used park and community facility, according to the Community Survey. Community members at the Eugene Celebration indicated that multipurpose trails connecting community facilities were the top recreation element most needed in Eugene. The provision of these multi-purpose trails will help reduce the community’s auto-dependency, which is one of the statewide goals identified in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Plan (SCORP).
- Renovating existing parks is a high priority for Eugene residents. Upgrade/complete existing parks ranked number one in desired park improvements, according to the Community Survey, the Speakers Bureau, and the Youth Questionnaire. Increased maintenance is important in addressing a substantial backlog of renovation and restoration needs.
- Most residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of maintenance in Eugene’s park, open spaces and recreation facilities. The City will face a challenge in the future to protect these assets as a highly-valued community investment, while addressing a decline in maintenance funding.
- Community volunteers are a critical resource for the City; expanding resources for maintenance, environmental restoration,



recreation programs, and other activities. The Recreation Providers, Open Space, and Maintenance focus groups all identified a need for more opportunities for volunteerism, particularly for youth.

- Youth development is a high priority for the Eugene community. The Community Survey identified the following age groups as needing more or better recreation services: middle school youth (ages 12 to 14), high school youth (ages 15 to 18), and elementary school youth (ages 6 to 11). Key Stakeholders and the LRCS All-Staff, Recreation Providers, and Multi-Cultural focus groups noted a number of opportunities to expand youth services and cited the benefits of youth development to the community overall.

Figure 4 illustrates how the Community Needs Assessment included community involvement opportunities as well as a technical analysis of facilities, programs, and finances. The Community Needs Assessment is available from the Parks and Open Space Division.

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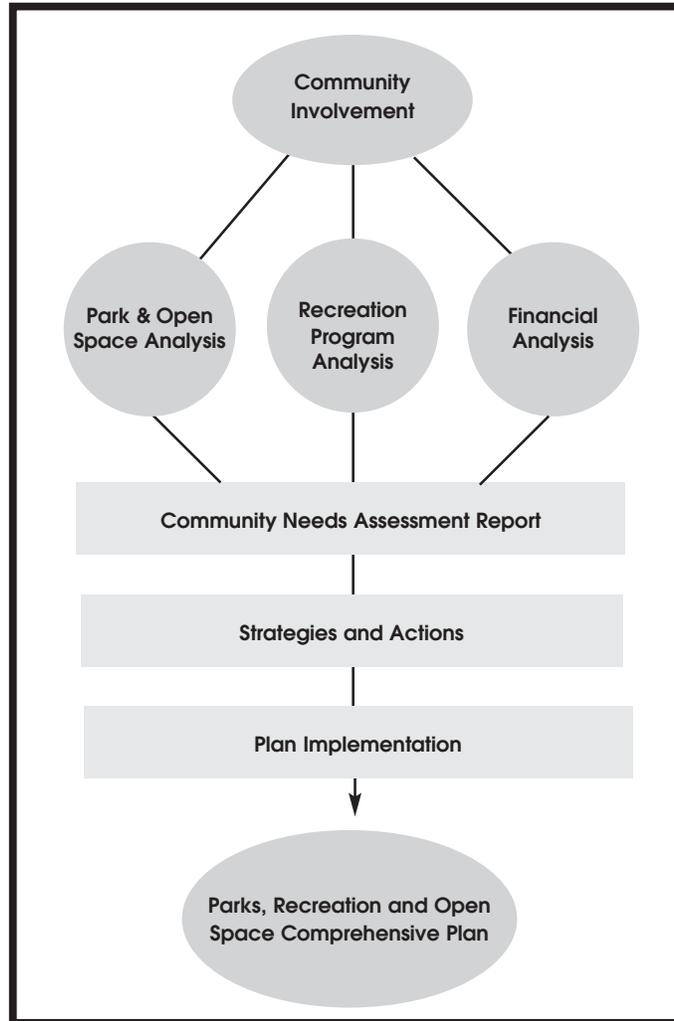


Figure 4: Plan Development

E. Plan Development

The findings from the Community Needs Assessment formed the basis of a community vision and the development of a series of strategies for parks, open space, recreation facilities, programs, and services. When these strategies are implemented, they will help achieve Eugene’s vision for the future.

