



Upgrading the system

Renovating Eugene, one treasure at a time

The future site of the Downtown Riverfront Park on the old EWEB property next to the Willamette River.

Eugeneans value parks and recreation.

If that wasn't abundantly clear before, it was reaffirmed in May 2018 when citizens voted overwhelmingly to approve a \$39.35 million bond and \$3.15 million operating levy to improve the future of Eugene's Parks and Recreation System. We heard you. Our system of trails, parks, pools and community centers are what make Eugene such an inviting place.

Since the vote, City employees have started taking the first steps in bringing the grand 30-year System Plan vision to life. Eugene Rec has methodically moved forward with its first two projects — expanding and renovating Echo Hollow Pool & Fitness Center and Campbell Community Center. Meanwhile, Parks and Open Space staff got to work strengthening safety and security efforts, increasing park maintenance, planning renovations and preparing for the creation of new parks in underserved areas.

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Around the City

Here's a quick glance at the projects Parks and Rec are already working on.

Levy already working

Since being passed, the levy funds have already made their mark. The City has already hired staff to increase the public safety presence in parks and natural areas and provide general maintenance in parks. Habitat and natural area maintenance has been increased and money is reserved for future projects in the system plan, including the increased staff needs as new parks open and pools and community centers are expanded.



Echo Hollow Pool & Fitness Center

Nearing 50 years old, Echo Hollow is set for an expansion and renovation that includes the addition of an outdoor recreation pool and added swim lanes.



renovation to square foot room for fitness



Berkeley Park

This 2.38-acre park, purchased in 1949, is ready for a renovation. Public outreach is underway to inform the new park design.

The collaborative effort has been a long time coming. The City and its partners spent years making sure the vision was equitable to our growing population and changing diversity. No matter what part of Eugene you live in, you will see improvements from the bond and levy.

The full Parks and Rec System Plan is more than just another government document. It's a road map to updating, improving and polishing what we have for future generations.

Off to a fast start

You might not know it, but you've already seen your vote at work. While bond-funded projects are moving forward, money from the five-year operating levy immediately helped Parks hire two full-time police officers and two park ambassadors. Parks hired an additional five maintenance positions, opened restrooms at Sheldon, Hendricks

and Sladden parks and added more clean-up crews and increased trail maintenance throughout Eugene's natural areas.

The money spent is the first fulfillment of a promise the City made to voters. One of the core principles of the System Plan is to care for and make the most of what we have, and investing in people to take care of our buildings and parks is paramount to doing just that.

The rest of that mission will take shape in the coming years. In Rec, we are finalizing plans for big renovations and expansions of Campbell and Echo Hollow. Both aging buildings have reached their capacity to serve the population and adding to and improving them will be beneficial to the community.

At Campbell, construction will begin this fall and be completed in approximately a year. The plan includes almost doubling the square footage of



Campbell Community Center

The aging facility is in for a major renovation with plans to nearly double footprint and add much more fitness activities.



Striker Field Park

Outreach began in February and will continue into the summer for the development of this parcel of land.



Riverfront Park

A 4-acre park on the banks of the Willamette River adjacent to downtown? Yes, please! Construction will begin in the late spring on the old EWEB property.



Sheldon Pool & Fitness Center

Updating the City's only indoor competitive swimming pool is important. Along with renovating the tank, look for the fitness pool and other amenities to be updated.

the current building, which hasn't seen a major renovation in 30 years. Adding fitness space is a top priority, as is supporting and enhancing a welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment that can adapt to new and future needs of patrons.

Echo Hollow Pool is nearly 50 years old and in need of renovation and expansion. Public outreach sessions have made it clear increased swim lanes for competitive teams as well as a recreation-only pool are wanted. The increased pool space will also mean better locker rooms and a more inviting environment for Bethel's only pool. The hope is to start construction next winter and be finished by winter 2021. Amazon Pool will remain open as an alternate to Echo Hollow during the construction.

As these Rec projects near completion, work will begin on renovating Sheldon Pool & Fitness Center as well as planning the first phase of a new sports complex.

Parks is also improving parts of the current system. Berkeley Park, a 2.38-acre neighborhood park at West 14th Avenue and Wilson Court, will be renovated. Plans to renovate Alton Baker, University, Tugman, MLK Jr. and Trainsong parks will move forward, too. Outreach to local communities is already happening to make sure the parks represent their areas.

Two of Eugene's prized outdoor transportation thoroughfares – the Ridgeline Trail and the Ruth Bascom Riverbank Path System – will see improvements. River path lighting updates have started, and the Ridgeline will be extended to reach all the way to Suzanne Arlie Park.

And not to brag, but this is just scratching the surface. We haven't even gotten to renovating tennis courts at Churchill High School and replacing four school turf fields – two more projects to be completed with bond funding.

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Building for the future

Renovating current parts of our system will be the foundation, but we must grow with our community. That means building new facilities and parks in areas that serve the entire community and create more connections.

One of the priorities the City heard most clearly in talking to the community about the future of parks and recreation was providing access to the river — for everything from recreation to simply enjoying the views. The 4-acre Downtown Riverfront Park will be the heart of the greater riverfront development that reimagines the area and, once again, unites our city with the river. Parks staff has already held multiple Riverfront Park outreach sessions, and construction is planned to start in the late spring.

An undeveloped park in northeast Eugene, Striker Field Park, is also tabbed for new facilities. There are plans for updates to Santa Clara Community, Ferndale, West Bank and Mattie Reynolds parks, and the City will be working to move forward with the development of land for a new sports complex. Four new turf fields will be installed

on the yet-to-be-determined parcel of land as part of the first phase of a grand vision of creating a complex that could attract youth tournaments and teams from all over the region.

A special place

Our community is uniquely situated within a bounty of natural beauty and recreation opportunities. The Willamette River cuts through our city. We are surrounded by forested hills and buttes that offer trails and scenic vistas. Natural areas, developed parks and the buzz of urban life are intertwined. We protect habitat. We are an active community that enjoys a wide range of recreation and know we have something distinctly special here.

It's why many of us chose Eugene as our place to live, work and play. The Parks and Recreation System Plan is a vision for how we can care for the system we currently have and how we can expand it. The system provides numerous benefits to our community's wellness and prosperity.

Let's build something great together for future generations to enjoy and call their own. ■

Keeping you in the loop

It's one thing to earn the trust of the community, it's another thing to keep it.

Oversight for the bond and levy was promised when the ballot measures went to the public in 2018. In both cases, multiple reporting measures are in place to ensure everyone knows what the money is being spent on.

For the bond, an outside auditor will prepare an annual written report and report to the City Council. A citizen advisory board will also prepare a separate annual report that is provided to the Council and made public.

The levy includes an annual review by a citizen advisory board and an annual report to City Council. Staff will also create an annual summary of levy fund spending and — per state law — there will be a levy fund budget and accounting available to the public.

Stay informed

Look for updates at EUGparksandrec.org, follow us on social media or subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter.

