Major renovations reach exciting completion!

In 2018, voters voiced their strong support for the future of Eugene’s parks and recreation centers. Three years later, the pandemic has shown how crucial these are for our physical and mental health and the importance of investing in our public spaces.

Our parks and recreating have been the backdrop for much of daily life in 2020, whether connecting with loved ones in a physically distant way, keeping body and mind healthy by exercising in nature or dropping the kids off for childcare and summer camp.

We have also played a pivotal role in addressing community-wide needs during this time, from sheltering the unhoused and distributing resources during the lockdown and providing space to peaceably protest racial injustices, to supporting wildfire evacuation and recovery relief efforts.

Parks and Open Spaces’ recent public survey illustrates just how important Eugene parks are to your quality of life and confirms most community members have noticed significant improvements in parks since the passing of the 2018 operations and maintenance levy. Expanded maintenance operations and stronger safety teams provided by the levy are key factors in how we are able to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

Through the global pandemic and historic wildfires,
our progress on bond and levy projects has continued to move ahead and has contributed to the community’s long-term recovery by contracting with local companies.

Eugene has come together in big and small ways to navigate the many challenges of this time. Parks and Recreation staff are proud of the role we’ve played through it all, and we’re committed to continuing and improving our service to you in the future.

**Bond Projects**

Despite the obvious challenges the pandemic presented, we’re pleased with the progress we’ve made on all of the current construction, and 63 percent of the projects approved in the 2018 bond are in progress. Construction supported local contractors and ensured many individuals had jobs through the past year. According to one estimate, nearly 300 jobs were associated with bond construction projects in 2020.

For Eugene Rec, this spring has been a particularly exciting time. As people continue to get vaccinated and COVID-19 restrictions start relaxing, we’ll soon be welcoming the completion of our first two renovations.

**Campbell Community Center**

We’ve gotten a few sneak peeks at the interior of Campbell Community Center, and we know everyone who walks through its doors will be surprised. The design by local firm Pivot Architecture is beautiful, and the expansion and renovation will enlarge the original footprint of Campbell by 50 percent. The finishing touches are happening right now. Staff has moved back into the building, and we’re expecting to be able to offer in-person classes by May. Patrons will find a new entry area with expanded seating in the lobby and an increased room for fitness. The great room in the new addition has floor-to-ceiling windows that overlook the Ruth Bascom River Path and trees lining the Willamette River.

It’s been a long year, so we’re thrilled this renovation to a treasured community center will provide people with a space to be proud of and to enjoy for years to come.
Echo Hollow Pool & Fitness Center

We're just as excited to unveil the fully renovated and expanded Echo Hollow Pool & Fitness Center in the coming month. It's hard to miss what's new when you drive by the facility, sandwiched between Willamette High School and Cascade Middle School in Bethel. Standing tall is a bright green slide next to a new zero-entry pool, and an expanded outdoor pool will mean more space for lap swimming year-round.

Robertson Sherwood Architects, a local firm, was contracted to design the renovation and expansion. The final design meets increased demand for pool space for recreation and competitive swimmers as well as more locker room space, a large lawn and a brand-new activity pool. Renovations have included a new roof with a solar array, upgraded interior tank and energy efficient lighting and water heating.

Visitors will also be greeted with a new entry way that shifts the doors to the left of where the old entry was. The frame of Echo Hollow may be the same but the 50-year-old facility is completely new.

Sheldon Pool & Fitness Center

Site excavation has started at another of the City's pools. Fences are up and earth movers have gone to work prepping for another much-needed update. Built in 1967, Sheldon Pool & Fitness Center was marked for renovation because many essential systems like plumbing and electrical equipment are beyond their lifespan.

Another project handled by Robertson Sherwood Architects, the renovation will upgrade the bathrooms and locker rooms, add a new indoor pool and hot tub and increase gathering spaces and flow throughout the facility.

Parks Projects

Parks and Open Space also kept busy during the pandemic.

- Reconstruction of the Amazon Park Running Trail was completed in November 2020 and includes a thicker rock base and a more level path. Add in new lighting, a stretching station, a shelter and distance markers and the trail is even better.
• Four artificial turf fields at local schools were also replaced in 2020.

• The Downtown Riverfront Park is nearing completion on the southwest bank of the Willamette River. Site prep happened in 2019 and over this last construction season work started on new park features, including paths, furniture, new landscapes and overlooks. It will be a fantastic place to walk or ride this summer.

• A stretch of the Ruth Bascom River Path also was updated. New lighting was extended to Maurie Jacobs Park along the West Bank Path, and approximately 1 mile of the path was repaved thanks to pavement bonds.

If you’re curious about all of the current and upcoming Parks and Rec Bond projects, please visit our website.

Progress toward meeting these goals has been achieved, despite budget reductions in other park maintenance funds, unprecedented camping in parks and a sharp increase in park and trail usage. A survey conducted during the summer of 2020 shows that 73 percent of respondents feel the levy was completely or mostly worth the expense.

**Levy Implementation**

As parks and recreation emerged as a vital component to our personal and collective health and wellness throughout the pandemic, the funding from the levy became even more instrumental in meeting the increasing demands on the park system.

The levy is specifically targeted to these goals:

• Improve routine maintenance of developed parks, natural areas and trails.

• Increase safety and security and reduce illicit activity throughout the park system.

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