

INTRODUCTION



PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This 2016-2025 Medford Leisure Services Plan (LSP) creates a vision for an innovative, inclusive and interconnected system of parks and open spaces that promotes outdoor recreation, health and environmental stewardship as integral elements of a livable community. The Plan is a document that will guide City elected and appointed officials, management and staff when making decisions or taking actions regarding planning, acquiring, developing or implementing parks, open space, paths and trails, recreation programs or recreational facilities. The Plan, which is an update to the 2006 LSP, is intended to be updated periodically to remain current with the community's recreational interests and provide supporting documentation for the City in its pursuit of grants and alternative funding.

The 2016-2025 LSP will establish a path forward to guide the City's efforts to provide community-driven parks, paths, trails, natural areas and recreation services throughout Medford. The Plan considers the park and recreation needs of residents citywide. It provides updated inventories, demographic conditions, growth projections, community needs analyses, revenue forecasts and capital project phasing. The Plan establishes specific goals, objectives, recommendations and actions for developing, conserving and maintaining high-quality parks, trails, facilities and programs across the City.

PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

The LSP is a reflection of the community's interests and needs for park and recreational facilities, trails and programming. The planning process was aimed to encourage and enable public engagement in the choices, priorities and future direction of the City's park and recreation system. The LSP project team conducted a variety of public outreach activities to solicit feedback and comments, in concert with the refinement of the park system inventory, level of service review and the current and future needs assessment.

Efforts to update the Medford LSP began in spring 2015. Current community interests surfaced through a series of public outreach that included mail and online surveys, open house meetings, stakeholder meetings, mySidewalk online engagement and Parks and Recreation Commission meetings. The updated inventory became the basis for determining the current performance of the system to the adopted standards for park and trails. An overarching needs analysis was conducted for recreation programs and facilities, parks, trails and open space to assess current demands and project future demand to account for population growth and expanding cultural demographics. To implement the goals of the Plan, a capital facilities plan was developed with a set of strategies that identified costs and potential funding sources. Together this process is represented in the planning document that will be reviewed by the public and elected officials. Once adopted, the Plan can become a component of the City's Comprehensive Plan and direct park and recreation service delivery for the next 6 - 10 years.

OVERVIEW OF THE PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The Medford Parks and Recreation Department (MPRD) is Southern Oregon's largest provider of recreation services. The Department provides a comprehensive system of facilities and programs to meet the parks and recreation needs of the community. The Department acquires, plans and develops parks and recreation facilities, operates and maintains parks and facilities, and provides a wide variety of affordable recreation activities and programs for all age groups.

The Department is responsible for the care, maintenance and programming of 25 city parks, including the U.S. Cellular Community Park (USCCP) and the Santo Community Center. Its staff coordinates over 300 programs, services and events each year.

MPRD is well known locally and regionally for coordination of youth and adult sports leagues and tournaments. Medford boasts the largest adult softball program in Oregon. Participation is tied to the 2008 opening of USCCP, which is the largest synthetic turf sports park in the United States.

In 2012, the Department became only the 125th agency in the United States (and only the second in Oregon) to earn national accreditation through the National Recreation and Parks Association. Its Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation demonstrates to policy makers and taxpayers that the Department operates according to best practices in the recreation industry.

The Department has a total of 58 labor positions of which 29 are full-time positions and approximately 29 temporary staff positions. In total, the Department has a general fund biennium budget of \$17.9 million (FY15/17). The largest portion of this budget, \$7.4 million (41%), is attributed to labor. Operating costs, such as materials and supplies, account for \$5 million (33%) of the total budget. Capital outlays for construction and renovation projects represent 31% of the total biennial budget. The Department is funded through several sources, including user fees, general fund property tax revenue, park utility fees, system development charges, transient lodging tax, car rental tax and grants.

VISION STATEMENT

The City of Medford Parks and Recreation Department Vision Statement is as follows.

“We provide a system of attractive, safe, clean, accessible, interconnected parks throughout the city and coordinate a variety of passive and active recreational activities.”

MISSION STATEMENT

The City of Medford Parks and Recreation Department mission statement is to:

Create healthy lives, happy people and a strong community.

This departmental mission statement is held in the context of the City of Medford’s mission statement for *“Continuous improvement and customer service”* inspiring the department to evolve over time to greater service to the citizens of Medford.

CORE VALUES

The Department’s Core Values constitute the fundamental beliefs of the organization.

As a primary parks and recreation program and service provider in the Rogue Valley, the Medford Parks and Recreation Department makes every effort to adhere to the following core values:

- I – Innovation
- C – Community Enrichment
- E – Excellence
- E – Exceptional Customer Service

Innovation – The Department encourages an organizational culture that values new ideas and is not afraid of change or a different way of doing things. We're nimble enough to move resources to meet the changing needs of our customer, community and staff.

Community Enrichment – We provide opportunities for activities, life-long learning and stewardship of quality public spaces that enhance the lives of the community we serve. We work, so many can play.

Excellence – We're laser focused and consistently challenge ourselves to perform every task at the highest level capable by each team member, inspired to do better and be better. We enlist national accreditation standards, which enable the Department to implement best practices in all functions of the organization.

Exceptional Customer Service – Our staff is empowered to make informed decisions and provide creative solutions for our customers. Many of these decisions are gained through experience and creating a culture based on listening and balancing needs in order to exceed our customer's expectations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS SINCE 2006

The previous Leisure Services Plan was prepared in 2006, and it was a strong guide for City officials, management and staff in making decisions about planning, acquiring, developing and implementing parks, recreation programs and recreation facilities. The following represents a short list of the major accomplishments realized following the adoption of the previous plan.

- Completed Phases 1-4 of U.S. Cellular Community Park
- Pear Blossom Park completed
- Hawthorne Park rehabilitation completed
- Completed Summerfield Park
- Acquired Cedar Links Park
- Acquired land for future greenway trail in SE Area
- Acquired new SE Area Park site
- Prescott Park Management Plan updated to include maintenance and protection of natural resources
- Completed gymnasium and facility improvements to Santo Community Center
- Completed Aquatics Master Plan with recreation center elements

- Expanded Park Utility Fee and created Car Rental Tax in order to cover debt service payments for U.S. Cellular Community Park and Santo Community Center
- Partnerships with Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Oregon Stewardship, Lomakatsi and Watershed Council has led to enhancements in the Bear Creek corridor
- Entered into facility use agreements with St. Mary’s, Cascade Christian and Phoenix-Talent schools that provide gym and classroom access for community recreation programs
- Negotiated a facility use agreement with Medford School District that allows programs to operate at McLoughlin M.S.
- Established Heritage Tree Award program

CONTENTS OF THE PLAN

The remainder of the Medford LSP is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Community Profile – provides an overview of the City of Medford and its demographics.
- Chapter 3: Community Engagement – highlights the methods used to engage the Medford community in the development of the Plan.
- Chapter 4: Classifications & Inventory – describes the various classifications for parks, trails and open space and highlights information about the current inventory of parks.
- Chapters 5 - 8: Needs Assessment & Recommendations – discusses survey results, community feedback and other recreation trend data and provides context to the identification of potential park, path and recreation system enhancements.
- Chapter 9: Goals & Objectives – provides a policy framework for the parks and recreation system grouped by major functional or program area.
- Chapter 10: Capital Facilities Plan – details a 10-year program for addressing park and recreation facility enhancement or expansion projects.
- Chapter 11: Implementation Strategies – describes a range of strategies and alternatives to consider in the implementation of the Plan.
- Appendices: Provides technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, stakeholder notes, funding options, among others.