

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Public involvement is instrumental in identifying park and facility needs in Medford. This chapter discusses the public demand and need for parks and facilities within the city. It contains a summary of the public involvement findings from the community workshop and recreation survey, as well as a summary of the park and facility needs assessment, which incorporates the results of the sports group survey. Specific information on the public involvement processes and on the determination of needs is presented in Appendices D and E.

Recreation Demand and Needs Assessment:

1. *Community Workshop*
2. *Recreation Survey*
3. *Analysis of Park Land Needs*
4. *Analysis of Facility Needs*

4.1 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP FINDINGS

On September 14, 2004, the City of Medford Parks and Recreation Department held a Community Workshop as part of an effort to involve Medford residents in updating the Leisure Services Plan. Sixteen people attended the meeting.

Workshop participants broke into small groups to answer questions on the following subjects:

- What improvements are most needed in the existing park system?
- What programs should be offered or emphasized by the City?
- What should be the City's priorities for providing park and recreation services?

An interactive display allowed participants to mark their perceptions of City priorities for parks and facility development. Key findings from the workshop include:

- Sports or sporting events were the most frequently mentioned **favorite experience associated with a park or recreation program** in Medford. Specific programs, such as swimming, summer camps, and outdoor concerts, were also noted frequently. For specific sites, Bear Creek Park and Prescott Park were mentioned more than other parks, and natural qualities in parks (e.g., shade, open space, and greenery) were appreciated.
- All groups noted that sports fields are **the most needed facilities** in the community. An indoor, multi-use recreation center was also noted frequently. Participants wanted improvements for parking, restrooms, and pathways (access).



- **Prescott Park** is clearly valued as a natural open space area. **Improved trails and trailheads** are desired. Most agreed that vehicle access is needed, but should be limited to only portions of the park. Participants suggested a number of ways to **improve access**, such as adding parking at a trail head, offering tours, providing interpretive and directional signage, and providing trail maps.
- Medford parks received **moderate ratings in maintenance, development, and diversity**. Participants noted that park maintenance is uneven and inconsistent from park to park, but moderate overall. Comments regarding park development suggested that several popular contemporary facilities (skate park, BMX track, water play structure) balance out inadequate facilities (sport fields and restrooms), creating an average rating.
- While many respondents were not familiar with the recreation services available to various demographic groups in Medford, most participants indicated the **City needs to provide more programs and services**.
- Although several issues were identified, three key **park and recreation issues** emerged: funding, maintenance, and improvements to existing parks.
- The most frequently **suggested park improvements** overall involved renovating or adding restrooms.
- The City should consider the following **facilities for priority development**: sport field complex, indoor recreation center, city-wide trail system.

4.2 RECREATION SURVEY RESULTS

A survey of public attitudes, recreation interests, and recreation participation characteristics was conducted in the City of Medford during Fall 2004. Questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected households within the city limits. Every household member age 10 and over was asked to fill out a separate questionnaire, so feedback would be provided by a broad spectrum of population, including youth, adults, and seniors.



The survey was designed to achieve statistical reliability for the Medford planning area. For the total sample, the 438 responses exceeded the minimum needed to achieve a 95% confidence level with a margin of error no greater than 5%.

A summary of the survey process is illustrated in Table 4.1 and Table 4.2:

Table 4.1
Survey Summary
City of Medford

Survey Summary	Number
Households Surveyed	267
Questionnaires Distributed	1,243
Questionnaires Returned	438
Return Ratio	35%

Table 4.2
Household Survey Areas
City of Medford

Area	Number of Returns	Percent (n=438)
Northwest	108	24.7%
Northeast	107	24.4%
Southeast	112	25.6%
Southwest	94	21.5%
Unknown	17	3.9%
Total	438	100.0%

Key findings from the survey include the following:

- **Neighborhood parks** are the most frequently visited type of facility with 12.5 per capita visits annually.
- Respondents who **seldom visit parks** reported they did not find parks interesting (14.6%), or parks did not have the facilities they desired (13.8%).
- In an open-ended question, Bear Creek Park and Hawthorne Park were cited the most frequently as **parks in need of improvement**, followed distantly by Donahue-Frohnmyer and Fichtner-Mainwaring Parks.
- In open-ended responses, the **most needed park improvements** included in priority order: restrooms, park security, lighting, playgrounds, and pathways.
- Respondents feel relatively **safe in parks**, rating perceived safety as 6.2 on a 10-point scale. However, security is a notable concern. Lighting (22%), followed by increased police patrols in parks and greenways (18.6%) were the two most popular solutions.
- Forty-seven percent of respondents would like to see more **beautification efforts** along city streets, including landscaping medians and planting street trees.
- **Park maintenance** was rated moderately high in all areas.
- More than 60% of respondents prefer the development of an **overlook/viewpoint** and **trailheads** at Prescott Park.
- **Upgrades to existing parks** are the highest priority park improvement noted by respondents, followed by the development a sports complex and City-wide trail system.
- Of all park and recreation services, residents want:
 - **Upgrades to existing parks**
 - **Sports field development**
 - **More trails**
- The following are most desired in an **indoor recreation facility**: indoor pool, gymnasiums, space for teen activities, and space for senior activities.

- Respondents clearly prefer an **indoor pool/aquatic center** to meet future swimming needs.
- Only 20% of respondents have **participated in a City recreation program** last year. The level of participation for communities throughout the west coast typically ranges from 25-30%.
- For those who did not participate, 26% of respondents noted they were **unaware of the programs** offered by the City. Of those who participate, 27% receive their information from the Medford Parks & Recreation Activity and Services Guide.
- Three of the top four desired recreation activities in Medford were **programs specifically for youth**. After school activities (18.6%), summer youth activities (15.5%), and youth organized sports (11.2%) accounted for over 45% of all responses.
- **Teens (ages 13-17) are inadequately served** by City recreation programs. The most needed activities for all youth include special interest classes, organized sports, drop-in sports, outdoor education, and opportunities for extreme sports. This follows a national trend among teens for extreme sports such as cross country mountain biking and skateboarding.
- Most respondents (54.9%) did not know if adequate service is provided for seniors. Of the remaining respondents, more (24.6%) felt that **seniors are underserved**. The top ranking ways to improve senior services included offering special interest classes and providing health and wellness classes.
- On a prioritized list of the six most needed types of pathways and trails, respondents ranked off-street, paved **multi-purpose trails** first, followed by on-street, **commuter bike lanes**.
- According to results, respondents think that **recreation programs offered by the City should be subsidized**, particularly for youth and seniors, but also partially for adults and non-residents.
- More than three-fourths of respondents (76%) favor **concessions in parks**. Results indicate that mobile vendors selling food would be most popular. Concessions should be provided by commercial vendors (45%) or non-profit organizations (31%).



The recreation survey also measured participation rates for residents in indoor and outdoor recreation activities in Medford. These results were compared to the Northwest Average, which is the average of the last 15 communities surveyed by MIG, Inc., to see where specific activities are above or below the norm. Key findings include:

- Medford is a very **active community**, with higher participation levels than the NW Average in their top 20 ranked activities. This level of participation would support an expansion of recreation programs to meet community recreation needs.
- The **top five activities** in order of frequency of participation are: computers (personal), walking for pleasure, family activities, exercising/aerobics, and gardening.
- Four of the top ten activities involved **trails, greenways, and open space areas**: walking for pleasure, nature walks, bird watching/feeding, and wildlife watching.
- Participation in **organized sports** is average in comparison to other communities in the northwest, with baseball (17), football (19), and softball (20) ranked in the top 20 activities.
- Respondents would like to spend **more time participating** in the following activities **if facilities were available**: attending concerts, swimming indoors, playing golf, making arts and crafts, attending cultural arts, and making pottery and ceramics (ranked in order of preference).
- Arts, crafts, cultural arts, and concerts are areas where **programs could be expanded** to increase participation. Programming could also target special events, such as fairs and festivals, along with family activities.

4.3 SUMMARY OF PARK LAND NEEDS

Quantifying park and recreation facility needs is difficult because many different variables influence recreation needs. Community values, participation patterns, and willingness to pay for services vary widely from one community to another. Consequently, what seems appropriate for one community may not be suitable for another. One of the problems associated with determining needs is that overstating the demand can result in the development of underutilized facilities. Conversely, under-estimating needs can result in overused facilities, lost opportunities for recreation participation and programming, and a lack of usable park land and open space.



Methodology

Developing a statement of need for parks and open space areas depends on localized values, availability of land, financial resources, and desired service levels.

To determine specific park land needs for the Medford Planning Area, several analytical methods were used. These include:

- Recreation demand (measured through public interest and/or involvement in activities);
- National trends and standards;
- Land availability; and
- Geographical deficiencies for parks and open space areas.

In synthesizing this information, park land standards were developed for each park classification. These standards are based on a ratio of park acreage to population, expressed in terms of number of acres per 1,000 people. The standard indicates a level of service desired by the Medford community, or in other words, how many facilities or acres of parks the City should provide to meet the needs of all residents in Medford.

The analysis looks at the existing ratio of facility or park land in comparison to the city's existing population. Then a demand standard is calculated based on the anticipated needs of the estimated population at build-out, when the city is fully developed within the urban growth boundary. This new demand standard can then be used to express current and future community needs for specific types of park land.

Table 4.3 summarizes the population data used in the analysis:

Table 4.3
Population Data Used in Analysis
 City of Medford

Population	Year	# of People
Existing	2005	69,222
Build-out	2030	93,770

Source: Medford Planning Department

Table 4.4 summarizes existing and future park land needs for the Medford Planning Area for each park type. These needs are based on a proposed demand standard listed in Column 6 of the table. The following terms are used in the analysis:

- **Existing ratio** is the amount of existing park land or a facility divided by the existing population. The existing ratio is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 people.
- **1997 Plan standard** is the standard proposed in the 1997 Leisure Services Plan. It is expressed in terms of a unit (such as acres or fields) per 1,000 people.
- **Adopted demand standard** is the amount of facility or park land at the time of build-out, expressed in terms of a unit (such as acres) per 1,000 people. The standard is a ratio of the unit (acres) allotted for each facility/park type divided by the build-out population for the planning area. The standard is developed via the adoption of a 25-year project list.
- **Total current need** is the number of facilities or acres needed in Medford today to meet the needs of all City residents.
- **Net current need** takes into account Medford's existing park sites or facilities and determines if more are needed to meet current community needs. If additional parks or facilities are needed, the number are noted in appropriate table (follows).
- **Total need at build-out** is the park acreage or facility that will be needed in Medford at build-out (the year 2030) to serve the City's future population.
- **Net need at build-out** is the number of additional park facility, sites or acres that will be needed in 2030.

Table 4.4
Summary of Park Land Needs
 Medford Planning Area

Park Land Classification	Total Park Land (# of sites)	Total Existing Park Land (Acres)	Existing Ratio (Acres / 1000 People)	1997 Plan Standard (Acres / 1000 People)	Current Standard (Acres / 1000 People)	Total Current Need (Acres)	Net Current Need (Acres)	Net Current Need (Sites)	Total Need at Build-Out (Acres)	Net Need at Build-Out (Acres)	Net Need at Build-Out (Sites)
Neighbor-hood Parks	21	130.86	1.89	2.2	1.56	107.68	-22.33	0	145.86	15	5
Community Parks	6	228.19	3.30	2.2	2.75	190.60	-37.59	0	258.19	30	3
Special Use Areas	7	212.84	N/A	1.6	None	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Linear Parks	2	14.42	0.2	0.4	None	47.66	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Natural Open Space / Greenways	10	1,923.11	27.78	1.0	20	1,384	-539	0	-47.71	0	N/A



Needs Assessment

According to calculations indicated in the previous table, the City of Medford has sufficient neighborhood parks, community parks, and Natural Open Space. Standards for Special Use Areas and Linear Parks have been removed from this plan as they have not historically been funded by Parks SDC funds. The recommendations by M.I.G. in their Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services Plan Update of 2005 conclude that:

In the next 25 years, Medford would need to develop an additional 13 neighborhood parks, 5 community parks, and 3 special use areas. Assuming that some of these needs can be met by developing currently undeveloped park land, the City may need to acquire between 5 and 6 acres per year to meet neighborhood and community park needs in 2030.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate the findings of the neighborhood park and community park service area analysis, indicating which areas are underserved for these park types.

However, the City would not and could not support the costs of the proposal. A greatly reduced 25-year project list was developed by staff and adopted by council on 1/19/06.

All of MIG's potential park sites remain in this plan. As stated above, they are not all SDC eligible projects on the 25-year project list. The Medford City Council will need to select which of the 5 Neighborhood Parks (of the 13 potential sites) and 3 Community Parks (of the 5 potential sites) are to be developed with SDC fees as identified in the adopted project list. All other potential park sites must be constructed using some other funding source.

An increase to the 25-year project list may occur with Council approval, with an associated Park SDC fee increase.

Appendix E provides additional information on park land needs.

Insert Figure 4.1 (Neighborhood Park Service Area Map)

Back of Figure 4.1 (Neighborhood Park Service Area Map)

Insert Figure 4.2 (Community Park Service Area Map)

Back of Figure 4.2 (Community Park Service Area Map)

4.4 SUMMARY OF RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Similar to the discussion of park land needs, community needs for recreation facilities are described in terms of a ratio of the number of existing facilities to the City's current population. This ratio is expressed in terms of one facility to the number of people served. The suggested demand standard is based on the desired level of service and the anticipated number of facilities needed at build-out. By applying this standard to the existing and future population forecast, recreation facility needs are assessed.



Leisure Services Methodology

The need for sport fields, pools, and trails was calculated using several analytical approaches. Methodology included an analysis of present recreation participation levels, facility needs expressed in the public involvement processes, play and practice time requirements for sports leagues as indicated in a sport group survey, and mathematical models developed over the years from other studies.

To determine the need for sport fields and gymnasiums, a demand model was created that compared the supply of fields/courts against the demand created by the number of teams using them. Within this demand model, there are many variables (or service levels) that will affect the eventual need statement. These variables include:

- **Demand variables:** Demand variables include the number of teams, along with the number of games and practices permitted per team per week.
- **Supply variables:** Supply variables include the number of fields, number of games/practices permitted per field per week, and the existence of lighted or unlighted fields. Factors, such as weather, playing season, and field constraints affect the supply of fields.

Physical constraints similarly affected the number of fields and gymnasiums that could be counted in determining recreation facility needs. (See Chapter 3, Section 3.3 for an explanation of inventory methods and factors that affect field and court usability.)

For the purposes of this analysis, calculations of sports facility needs are generally based upon their unrestricted inventory. Table 4.5 summarizes existing and future needs for recreation facilities.

Table 4.5
Summary of Recreation Facility Needs
 Medford Planning Area

Recreation Facility	Existing Unrestricted Facilities	Existing Ratio (# per people)	1997 Plan Standard (# per people)	Proposed Standard (# per people)	Total Current Need	Net Current Need	Total Forecasted Need	Net Forecasted Need
Adult Baseball	0 fields	None	1 field per 5,500	1 field per 22,700	3 fields	3 fields	5 fields	5 fields
Adult Softball Fields	6	1 field per 11,537	1 field per 3,500	1 field per 7,143	10 fields	4 fields	14 fields	8 fields
Youth Baseball/Softball Fields	6	1 field per 3,845	1 field per 1,500	1 field per 3,846	18 fields	11.7 fields	24 fields	18 fields
Soccer Fields	18	1 field / 3,845	1 field per 2,000	1 field per 3,333	20.5 fields	2.5 fields	28 fields	10 fields
Football Fields	5	1 field / 13,844	N/A	1 field per 13,000	5 fields	0 fields	7 fields	2 fields
Gymnasiums (courts)	22	1 court / 3404	1 court per 1,700	1 court per 3,600	19 courts	0	26 courts	4 courts
Swimming Pools	4,200 sq Ft/1000	61.7 sq Ft/1000	84.3 sq Ft/1000	216.5 sq Ft/1000	14,742 sq Ft/1000	10,542 sq Ft/1000	20,301 sq Ft/1000	16,101 sq Ft/1000
Paved Trails	17.53 miles	0.25	0.27	0.27	17.5 miles	1.16 miles	26 miles	8.4 miles
Unpaved Trails	12.38 miles	0.18	--	0.19	12.38 miles	0.77 miles	18.7 miles	6.4 miles

Needs Assessment

According to calculations on the previous table, the City of Medford has a current need for the following recreation facilities: adult baseball, youth baseball/softball fields, adult softball fields, soccer fields, pools, and trails. In the year 2030, the need for all types of recreational facilities will have grown substantially, and the City will need to maximize all opportunities to develop these facilities, if community needs are to be met.

This Leisure Services Plan maintains or slightly increases the demand standard for most sport facilities. Adult baseball leagues presently rely on restricted ball fields, utilizing school facilities. Additional league play is anticipated following the construction of the unrestricted ball fields at the Medford Sports park. Trail use is increasing locally, regionally, and nation-wide, so the City anticipates the development of approximately 15 miles of trails within the next 25 years. Trails are planned for developed within each new park, as a part of the completion of the Bear Creek Greenway trail system, development of the Southeast Medford plan area through gifts and developer agreements, and within the Prescott Park area.

Appendix E provides additional information on recreation facility needs.

