

PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

This chapter discusses the planning policies and guidelines for the provision of park and recreation services within the City of Medford. This includes the conclusions, goals, policies, and implementation strategies for implementing a comprehensive leisure services program.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The following are conclusions drawn from the public involvement activities, the community needs assessment, and the analysis of existing facilities and operations. These conclusions provide a foundation for the Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies, as well as for the development of recommendations presented in Chapter 6.

1. Medford's population is growing rapidly. This population increase is the primary reason for the increasing demands for parks and recreation services.
2. In the past, the City has shown great vision in acquiring and developing park and recreation facilities to meet the growing need. As Medford grows, the City will need to meet existing financial challenges in order to acquire new parks, facilities, and trails and adequately maintain current ones.
3. Medford is a very active community, with higher measured participation levels than the average of other Northwest cities surveyed. This level of participation would support an expansion of programs and facilities to meet existing and future community needs.
4. The basic concept of the proposed park system is to assure that every neighborhood in Medford is served by a neighborhood or community park. Thirteen additional neighborhood parks and five community parks would be needed to meet community needs in the years 2005-2030.
5. Of all park and recreation services in the community, surveyed residents want the City to upgrade existing parks, provide more sports fields, and develop a city-wide trail system.
6. The City of Medford is a significant provider of recreational programs in the region. Programs and services need to be expanded in nearly all areas, especially for youth, teens, and seniors, to meet increasing community needs.
7. To increase program participation, recreation programs could be expanded in several areas identified by survey

Planning Policies and Guidelines:

1. *Conclusions from the Leisure Services Plan*
2. *Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies*
3. *Guidelines for Site Selection and Development*



respondents, including arts and crafts, cultural arts, concerts, special events, and family activities.

8. Recreation programs are often subsidized by the City to keep programs affordable. According to the results of the survey, residents would like program subsidies to continue, particularly for youth and seniors. However, recreation programming must be more cost-effective.
9. Future park and recreation services in Medford must reflect the needs of a changing population. Medford has an above average and increasing proportion of senior citizens.
10. The City needs to remove or replace the deteriorating swimming pools at Hawthorne Park and Jackson Park. City residents clearly prefer an indoor pool/aquatic center to meet future swimming needs.
11. While Prescott Park is valued as a natural area, community residents want park access improved, with overlook & viewpoints and trailheads developed at the site. Prescott Park is also a desirable location for the development of a community park to meet the needs of east Medford.
12. Medford has several creek corridors that offer exceptional recreation and conservation opportunities.
13. By the year 2030, Medford will need an additional 15 miles of trails. A system of recreational trails, pathways, and bikeways would provide a safe place for walking, biking, and non-motorized transportation.
14. City of Medford General Fund, grants, and donations are the primary sources of funding for improvements, maintenance, and the expansion of facilities in existing parks.
15. An increase in the use of concessionaires in the City's parks would generate needed revenue for the park and recreation system, while providing user support services and business opportunities.
16. Parks System Development Charges (SDCs) are an important source of funding for the acquisition and development of new parks and open space areas. Since SDCs are paid by new residential development, the fees are meant to fund capacity enhancement projects. The City regularly updates its SDC methodology and increases the SDC rate for all housing units. SDC funds will be particularly important to fund new parkland in Southeast Medford, where the City is rapidly growing.

5.2 GOALS, POLICIES, IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The goals, planning policies, and implementation strategies listed below create a framework for the realization of the Parks and Leisure Services Plan and also will help measure its success.

Goal 1: To provide for a full range of recreational activities and opportunities to meet the needs of all residents of Medford.



Policy 1-A: The City of Medford shall use the *Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services Plan* as a factual basis in the land use decision-making process.

Policy 1-B: The City of Medford shall recognize the social and economic value of other providers in the City and nearby county, state, and national recreation resources that provide recreation for Medford residents, create tourist expenditures within the City of Medford, and attract businesses and industries to the City.

Implementation 1-B (1): Provide park and recreation programs that complement nearby county, state, and national recreation resources.

Implementation 1-B (2): Pursue partnerships as a key means for leveraging community resources and minimizing duplications of effort.

Policy 1-C: The City of Medford shall serve as the overall coordinator and/or administrator of recreation programs and services community-wide.

Implementation 1-C (1): Provide park and recreation facilities to support community programming needs.

Implementation 1-C (2): Expand the City's role as a primary provider of recreation programs and services and increase programming to meet changing demographics and growing community needs.

Implementation 1-C (3): Establish more revenue-generating programs to increase program funding to help fund or subsidize other programs and services.

Implementation 1-C (4): Provide a new water park at Hawthorne Park to generate additional revenue and to meet a growing, community-wide demand for aquatic services.

Implementation 1-C (5): In the long term, consider an indoor recreation center/aquatic facility to help meet future

community needs for swimming, gymnasium, and programming space.

Implementation 1-C (6): Consider other financing approaches, including a general obligation bond, to fund the development of additional facilities and significant park upgrades.

Policy 1-D: The City of Medford shall provide park land and facilities conveniently located and economically accessible to all members of the community.

Implementation 1-D (1): Locate parks and facilities in underserved areas.

Implementation 1-D (2): Provide program services to all ages, abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds.

Implementation 1-D (3): Offer programs at a range of costs (free, low-cost, full price) and implement other strategies to ensure program affordability, while meeting city financial goals.

Implementation 1-D (4): Implement the Southeast Medford Area Plan Map with regards to greenway trails, parks, and recreation facilities.

Goal 2: To preserve natural resources in the Medford Urban Growth Boundary that provide open space or have unique recreational potential, encouraging development with parks and recreation facilities if appropriate.

Policy 2-A: The City of Medford shall emphasize acquiring park land having natural features or resources that need protection or are of significant interest to the public.

Implementation 2-A (1): The City should seek to acquire riparian corridors where feasible to protect these natural resources and to offer potential sites for trail development.

Implementation 2-A (2): Develop effective natural resource management plans for significant natural areas within parks and other City-owned or controlled lands, such as oak savanna, riparian areas, and wetlands, to identify management priorities and to guide acquisition, development, and restoration decisions.

Policy 2-B: The City of Medford shall give special consideration to the Bear Creek corridor in order to protect this dynamic natural and recreational resource for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Implementation 2-B (1): Directly and/or cooperatively acquire and plan appropriate park and recreation sites and public access along the Bear Creek corridor.

Policy 2-C: The City of Medford shall give special consideration to Prescott Park in order to protect this dynamic natural and recreational resource and most significant scenic view for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Implementation 2-C (1): Follow the recommendations of the *Prescott Park Management Plan* and regularly update the *Plan*.

Implementation 2-C (2): Pursue land additions to Prescott Park when opportunities become available.

Implementation 2-C (3): Pursue inclusion of Prescott Park in the Medford Urban Growth Boundary for eventual inclusion within the City of Medford.

Implementation 2-C (4): Increase access and public enjoyment of Prescott Park by developing appropriate facilities to enhance appreciation of natural resources, the outdoors, and Medford's unique environment.

Goal 3: To provide an interconnected park and recreation system that is well integrated with the community.

Policy 3-A: The City of Medford shall seek to develop a major intra-community system of pathways to provide linkages between parks, neighborhoods, community facilities, schools, and open space sites.

Implementation 3-A (1): Seek links to other transportation methods, such as developing parks along bus routes or encouraging bus transit to serve the parks.

Implementation 3-A (2): Develop a detailed trails plan to recommend routes for meeting future community needs for an additional 15 miles of trails by the year 2030.

Policy 3-B: The City of Medford shall seek to acquire natural and other corridors to link parks and open space throughout the community.

Implementation 3-B (1): Develop a long-range public open space plan that provides for an interconnected system of creek corridors, greenways, wetlands, and other significant natural resource areas.

Implementation 3-B (2): Acquire missing links in corridors and parcels that are contiguous to other public open

spaces to provide maximum benefits for recreation and wildlife.



Goal 4: To coordinate park and recreation planning, acquisition, maintenance, and development in the City of Medford to serve a broad spectrum of citizen and institutional interests.

Policy 4-A: The City of Medford shall design and maintain parks and recreation facilities in a safe, attractive manner, to serve as positive amenities for the community and the neighborhoods in which they are located.

Implementation 4-A (1): Adopt and utilize the Guidelines for Site Selection and Development in the acquisition and/or development of parks within each park classification.

Implementation 4-A (2): Implement a consistent park signage program for use throughout the system and install signage where needed.

Policy 4-B: The City of Medford shall evaluate and design park and recreation facilities to minimize operation and maintenance costs.

Implementation 4-B (1): Include projected maintenance costs in design proposals for parks and recreation facilities.

Implementation 4-B (2): Consider maintenance costs, including transportation and loading/unloading of equipment, before acquiring park sites smaller than one acre.

Policy 4-C: The City of Medford shall define and standardize maintenance procedures, including cost estimates for maintaining Medford parks, recreation facilities, and beautification areas.

Implementation 4-C (1): Allocate an average minimum maintenance cost per acre annually for maintenance of each park type and increase maintenance funds using this guideline as new parks are added to the City's system.

Implementation 4-C (2): Develop an Integrated Pest Management Plan to define use of herbicides and pesticides on City-owned or controlled properties.

Implementation 4-C (3): Develop a parks maintenance management plan that defines maintenance levels, performance standards, and budget allocation.

Policy 4-D: The City of Medford shall encourage joint acquisition and use of contiguous school and park sites for recreational purposes.

Policy 4-E: The City of Medford shall work with partner agencies, especially schools, to help meet demand for indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

Implementation 4-E (1): Develop and maintain inventories and evaluations of shared sports facilities.

Implementation 4-E (2): Continue partnering with the school districts to ensure community access to school gymnasiums and other sports facilities.

Policy 4-F: The City of Medford shall allow compatible, revenue-producing concession facilities and services within parks that enhance visitor use and enjoyment of the City's parks.

Goal 5: To maintain and enhance community livability in Medford by promoting the aesthetic quality of the urban environment.

Policy 5-A: The City of Medford shall recognize trees as valuable amenities that contribute to the livability of our city through the proper selection, placement, preservation and maintenance of trees along our streets, in open spaces, and in parks.

Implementation 5-A (1): Develop a tree protection ordinance for adoption by the City Council.

Implementation 5-A (2): Develop a street tree ordinance for adoption by the City Council.

Implementation 5-A (3): Provide a mechanism for a tree recognition program.

Policy 5-B: The City of Medford shall require the provision and continued maintenance of appropriate landscaping in conjunction with new development.

Policy 5-C: The City of Medford shall encourage the establishment of public art in parks, on public grounds, and in public buildings.

Implementation 5-C (1): Investigate mechanisms for displaying art in public places.

5.3 GUIDELINES FOR SITE SELECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

The following design guidelines apply to the acquisition and/or development of parks within each park classification. Each park classification includes a description of the park type, site selection and development guidelines, features to consider, and features to avoid.

Mini Parks

Description:



- Mini parks may be considered when they are privately developed and maintained, or in neighborhoods where there are no other viable options.
- The typical mini park user:
 - Comes from within a quarter mile or half mile of the park.
 - Arrives on foot or by bicycle.
 - Visits the park on a short time basis.

Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Typical size is less than 1 acre.
- Access to the site should be provided via a local street with sidewalks. Mini parks fronting on arterial streets should be discouraged.
- The site should ideally have a minimum of 100-150 feet of street frontage.
- Parking Requirements: On-street parking should be provided as street frontage allows.

Features and Amenities to Consider:

- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)
- Children's playground or tot-lot
- Pathway connecting park elements
- Picnic tables and/or small picnic shelter
- Interpretive signage

Features to Avoid:

- Indoor recreation facilities
- Active sports facilities

Neighborhood Parks

Description:

- Neighborhood parks provide nearby residents with access to basic recreation opportunities. These parks are being designed to enhance neighborhood identity, preserve or provide neighborhood open space, and improve the quality of life of nearby residents. They are designed for passive and unstructured activities.
- The typical neighborhood park user:
 - Comes from within a half mile of the park.
 - Arrives on foot or by bicycle.
 - Visits the park on a short time basis.



Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Optimum size is 3 to 5 acres, depending upon the availability of land.
- At least 50% of site will be relatively level and usable, providing space for both active and passive uses.
- The site will have at least 200 feet of street frontage.
- Access to the site should be provided via local streets with sidewalks. Neighborhood parks fronting on arterial streets will be discouraged.
- Parking Requirements: A minimum of three spaces per acre of usable active park area. Generally, if on-street parking is available in front of park, this guideline can be reduced by one car per 25 feet of street frontage. City code requirements will provide more specific parking requirements.
- Active and noise producing facilities, such as tennis and basketball courts, should be located at least 100' from nearby homes or property zoned for a residential use.

Features and Amenities to Consider:

- Open turf area for unstructured play
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)
- Children's playground
- Basketball (full or half) court
- Pathway connecting park elements
- Picnic tables
- Small picnic shelter
- Volleyball court
- Multi-use fields for practice
- Interpretive signage
- Natural area/greenspace
- Permanent restrooms

Features to Avoid:

- High maintenance horticultural or annual plantings, unless sponsored and maintained by a neighborhood or community group
- Indoor recreation facilities
- Wading pools and similar types of amenities that require staff supervision or highly specialized maintenance

Additional Considerations for School Parks:

- The school park concept is primarily associated with elementary schools and should be planned and designed as a composite unit whenever possible.
- Because of the potential of jointly developing school sites, facilities on the site itself will be a mixture of active and passive uses. This could include:
 - Pathways systems
 - Picnic areas/facilities
 - Multi-purpose paved court
 - A small piece of playground equipment
 - Baseball and soccer fields
- Because these sites are adjacent to school grounds, landscaping will address safety and security issues. Facilities generating crowd noise will be located in a manner so as not to disturb adjoining residential areas.
- When sport fields utilized for league play are located on school grounds, the City should assist in maintaining these fields.

Community Parks



Description:

- Community Parks (CP) provide visitors with active and passive recreation opportunities. These parks often accommodate large group activities and include major recreation facilities, such as sports fields. Community Parks are designed to enhance neighborhood and community identity, preserve open space, and enhance the quality of life of community residents.
- Typical community park users:
 - Come from within one mile of the park.
 - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot.
 - Visit the park for 1 to 3 hours.

Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Average site size will be 15 acres with the optimum at 20-30 acres, but may exceed 50 acres
- Due to their size requirements, the acquisition of CP park sites will occur far in advance of need. Park development will occur when the area it serves becomes 50% developed.
- Whenever possible CP will be located adjacent to middle or high schools.
- At least two-thirds of the site will be available for active recreation use. Adequate buffers or natural open space areas will separate active recreation areas from nearby homes.
- The site will be visible from adjoining streets and have a minimum of 400' of street frontage.
- Parking Requirements: Dependent upon facilities provided. Generally, 50 off-street spaces per ball field are required, plus 5 spaces per acre of active use areas. City code requirements will provide more specific parking requirements.
- Permanent restrooms are appropriate for this type of park.
- Access to the site will be provided via a collector or arterial street with sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

Facilities and Amenities to Consider:

- Tot and youth playground
- Designated sports fields for baseball, softball, and soccer. Fields may be in a complex within the park
- Open turf area for unstructured play
- General landscape improvements

- Looped pathway system
- Picnic shelters, including at least one capable of accommodating groups of 25 to 50 people
- Permanent restrooms
- Volleyball courts
- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Other sporting facilities (lawn bowling, croquet, bocce court)
- Community scale skate park
- Water playground
- Off-leash dog area or designated dog park
- Community gardens
- Concessions or vendor space
- Interpretive signage
- Natural area/greenspace
- Indoor recreation center or other indoor recreation space
- Public art
- Performance space, such as a stage area or bandshell
- Special facilities such as an indoor recreation center or swimming pool
- Storage or maintenance buildings. If visible, these will be architecturally compatible with other park elements and any exterior work areas will be screened from view



Special Use Areas

Description:

- Special use areas are unique sites often occupied by a specialized facility. Some uses that fall into this category include waterfront parks, boat ramps, botanical gardens, memorials, community gardens, single purpose sites used for a particular field sport, or sites occupied by buildings.
- Typical users of special use areas:
 - May come from throughout the city or beyond (depends on site).
 - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot.
 - Depend on site: May visit the park for one hour to more than three hours.

Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Siting criteria depend on the types of facilities proposed.
- Prior to the development of any specialized recreation facility, such as a pool, recreation center, sports complex, etc., the City will prepare a detailed cost/benefit analysis and maintenance impact statement.
- Size will depend upon the facilities provided.
- Site should front on a public street.
- Parking Requirements: Depends on facilities provided.

Facilities and Amenities to Consider:

- Facilities and amenities will depend on the proposed activities and site use.

Linear Parks

Description:

- Linear parks are developed or landscaped areas and other lands that follow linear corridors such as railroad rights-of-way, creeks, canals, power lines, and other elongated features. This type of park usually contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints, and seating areas. Activities are generally passive in nature, such as walking, biking, wildlife watching, etc.
- Typical linear park users:
 - May come from throughout the city (depends on site).
 - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle, or foot.
 - May visit the park for one or more hours.



Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Linear parks should generally follow continuous special feature strips, with a minimum corridor width of 50-75 feet.
- Due to the shape, configuration, and potential for user noise in linear parks, user impacts on adjoining neighbors will be considered. Fences, walls, or landscaping may be used to

provide some privacy for neighbors, but the provision of these features will consider user safety.

- Paved pathways will be designed to accommodate maintenance and patrol vehicles.

Facilities and Amenities to Consider:

- Paved pathways
- Landscaped areas
- Maintained natural vegetation
- Picnic tables
- Orientation and information signage
- Trailhead or entry/ kiosk
- Turf areas
- Ornamental plantings
- Fences, landscaping, or other features to control access near adjoining residential areas
- Viewpoints
- Seating areas
- On-street or off-street parking at trailheads. Amount depends on facilities and anticipated use of the trails

Facilities to Avoid:

- Active use areas (sport fields, paved courts, etc.)



Natural Open Space/Greenways

Description:

- Natural open space/greenways are publicly owned or controlled natural resources that are managed for conservation, environmental education, and passive recreational use, such as walking and nature viewing. This type of land may include wetlands, steep hillsides, or other similar spaces. Environmentally sensitive areas are considered open space and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or areas with unique and/or endangered plant species.
- Typical open space/greenway users:
 - Come from throughout the city.
 - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot.
 - Visit the park for one or more hours.

Site Selection and Development Guidelines:

- Site size will be based on natural resource needs. Acreage will be sufficient to preserve or protect the resource.
- The City will consider alternative ways of preserving natural open space besides outright purchase, such as acquiring conservation easements, encouraging donations of land, land trades, etc.
- Emphasis for acquisition will be on lands offering unique features or have the potential to be lost to development.
- An analysis should be made to determine if unique qualities and conditions exist to warrant acquisition.
- Development and site improvements should be kept to a minimum, with the natural environment, interpretive and educational features emphasized.
- Natural open space areas should be managed and maintained for a sense of solitude, separation, or environmental protection.
- Parking and site use should be limited to the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate while still retaining its natural character and the intended level of solitude.
- Where feasible, public access and use of these areas should be encouraged, but environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from overuse.

Facilities and Amenities to Consider:

- Interpretive signage
- Off-street parking if a trail is located within the site
- Picnic shelters
- Picnic areas
- Trail and pathway system
- Trailhead or entry/ kiosk
- Viewpoints or viewing blinds
- Interpretive or educational facilities

Facilities and Amenities to Avoid:

- Turf areas
- Ornamental plantings
- Active use areas



Recreation Pathways and Trails

Description:

- Recreation pathways and trails, as described here, provide off-street bicycle and pedestrian links to parks, with recreation emphasized. These include paths within greenways and linear parks. Guidelines are not presented for on-street bikeways or accessways intended mainly for transportation.
- Typical pathway users:
 - May come from throughout the city (depends on site).
 - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle, or foot.

Site Selection:

- Non-motorized routes provide the following primary purposes: 1) recreation off street trails providing a recreation experience; or 2) non-motorized transportation links which may be identified in the Medford Transportation System Plan; 3) on-street bike lanes.
- The city will seek to develop non-motorized routes to provide linkages to parks, schools, and other destination points.
- Recreation trails will be located outside street rights-of-ways, or will be separated by traffic lanes by a generous landscaped separation.
- Where routes use street rights-of-way, the street should be designed to minimize potential conflicts between motorists and pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Trails that are within street rights-of-way but separated will be designed, when possible, along continuous features, so that they do not pose hazards when crossing driveways and intersections.
- If possible, trail crossings by streets should occur at signalized intersections.
- Trails may need to utilize street rights-of-way in order to complete a segment link.

- Since trails are so difficult to provide after an area has been developed, advanced detailed trail planning for developing areas is essential.

Facilities and Amenities to Consider:

- Staging areas for trail access
- Picnic sites
- Seating areas
- Trailhead or entry/ kiosk
- Interpretive signage
- Orientation and information signage
- Amenities should be site specific

Additional Trail Guidelines:

- Trail alignments should take into account soil conditions, steep slopes, surface drainage and other physical limitations that could increase construction and/or maintenance costs.
- Trail alignments should avoid sensitive environmental areas such as wetlands, riparian vegetation, large trees, etc.
- Trails should be planned, sized, and designed for non-motorized multiple uses, except for dedicated nature trails, and/or areas that cannot be developed to the standard necessary to minimize potential user conflicts.
- Centralized and effective staging areas should be provided for trail access. Trailheads should include parking, orientation and information, and any necessary specialized unloading features.
- Trails should be looped and interconnected to provide a variety of trail lengths and destinations. They should link various parts of the community, as well as existing park sites.
- Recreation trails should be interesting to the user and maximize the number and diversity of enjoyable viewing opportunities.
- Trails should be located and designed to provide a diversity of challenges. Enhance accessibility wherever possible.
- Linkages and trail location and orientation should encourage users to walk or bicycle to the trail, depending upon the expected and desired level of use.
- Developers should be encouraged to provide public pathways through proposed developments, where such improvements

would provide needed linkages between trail routes and access to public destinations.