



City of Ridgefield
Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

March 2020

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1 | INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan considers the park and recreation needs of Ridgefield residents and was prepared with the input and direction of local recreation leaders, stakeholders and residents. The Plan provides a blueprint for the growth, enhancement and management of the Ridgefield park and recreation system and is an update to the 2014 Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan.

As a six-year guide and strategic plan for enhancing park and recreation services, the Plan establishes a path forward for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, natural areas and recreational opportunities across Ridgefield. The Plan provides a vision for the City's park and recreation system, proposes updates to City service standards and addresses departmental goals, objectives and other management considerations toward the continuation of quality recreation opportunities, programs and facility enhancements to benefit the residents of Ridgefield.

The PROS Plan was developed with the input of Ridgefield residents through public events and a community survey and was guided by the direction of the Parks Board. The Plan inventories and evaluates existing park and recreation areas, assesses the needs for acquisition, site development and operations and offers specific policies and recommendations to achieve the community's goals.

The recommendations in this Plan are based on community input, evaluations of the existing park system, and needs for operations. The Plan is intended to be updated periodically to remain current with local interests and maintain eligibility for state-based grants.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The 2014 Plan offered a future vision of Ridgefield that was an outgrowth from resident feedback regarding their interests, needs and preferences for parks and recreation services. This vision remains relevant today as a guiding force for City efforts.

Ridgefield envisions an interconnected community with a park, trail, and greenway system that contributes to the City's small town character, provides a variety of recreation opportunities, and is an integral part of the community.

This vision provided the foundation for the goals, objectives, recommendations and guidelines in the following chapters within this Plan.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Regional Context and Planning Area

The City of Ridgefield is located in southwestern Washington, in the northwestern corner of Clark County on the Interstate 5 (I-5) corridor. Situated 10 miles north of Vancouver and 20 miles north of Portland, Oregon, Ridgefield has easy access to metropolitan amenities, yet enough distance to maintain a small-town atmosphere. The City is bounded to the west by Lake River and the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. To the east, the city limits extend beyond Interstate 5. The primary planning area includes the existing urban growth area (UGA) of the City of Ridgefield.

History and Community

Ridgefield's roots date back more than 2,000 years to early Native American settlements that prospered in the area of the lower Columbia River. A well-documented meeting of Lewis and Clark with the Cathlapotle settlement occurred in 1805 along Lake River. After the Civil War, this area was known as Union Ridge and grew rapidly as an important trading center through the second half of the nineteenth century. The town of Ridgefield was incorporated in 1909. The community's ties to the Chinookan people were commemorated by the construction of a replica of a Cathlapotle plankhouse at the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, which was dedicated in March 2005.

There are numerous community events in Ridgefield throughout the year, including a Fourth of July Parade, BirdFest, National Night Out, Heritage Celebration, and farmers market, among others. Although the City does not sponsor its own recreation programs, it has partnered with the City of Battle Ground for a summer playground program. Youth league sports are organized through individual soccer and little league clubs, and these teams utilize city parks and school district properties for practices and games. In addition to City-sponsored or supported activities, numerous other public and private facilities, ventures and events provide recreation and entertainment opportunities.

Population

Ridgefield combines its rich history, diverse natural resources, outdoor recreation opportunities, solid school system and viable housing choices to create an attractive and desirable community.

With this combination, the City of Ridgefield has seen rapid growth for the last several decades and has been ranked as the fastest growing community in Washington. From 2000 to 2019, the City's population increased by 314.3% with growth predicted to continue at a rapid rate for several more decades. According to the 2010 Census, the City of Ridgefield grew by over 122% between 2000 and 2010 to a population of 4,763. By 2019, the population has grown to 8,895, according to the Washington Office of Financial Management. Ridgefield is growing much faster than Clark County as a whole, where the population increased by 41.5% between 2000 and 2019 to 488,500 people.

Nearly half (48.3%) of Ridgefield's households have children. With 29% of the population under 18 years of age and facing continued growth, the Ridgefield School District projects a 45% increase in enrollment, adding 1,422 new students by 2022. The median household income (\$93,958) is approximately one-third higher than in Clark County and the state.

Figure 1. Population Change & Household Characteristics: Ridgefield, Clark County & Washington

Demographics	Ridgefield	Clark County	Washington
Population Characteristics			
Population (2019)	8,895	488,500	7,546,410
Population (2010)	4,763	425,363	6,724,540
Population (2000)	2,147	345,238	5,894,121
Percent Change (2000-19)	314.3%	41.5%	28.0%
Persons w/ Disabilities under age 65	4.0%	7.4%	7.7%
Household Characteristics (2013-17)			
Households	2,279	91,339	2,755,697
Percent with children	48.3%	44.8%	30.9%
Median Household Income	\$93,958	\$67,832	\$66,174
Average Household Size	2.91	3.31	2.55
Average Family Size	3.22	3.27	3.10
Owner Occupancy Rate	78.0%	78.5%	62.7%
Age Groups (2013-2017)			
Median Age	38.3	38	37.6
Population < 5 years of age	5.4%	6.3%	6.3%
Population < 18 years of age	29.2%	24.9%	22.5%
Population 18 - 64 years of age	60.8%	61.0%	63.1%
Population > 65 years of age	10.0%	14.1%	14.4%

Sources: Washington Office of Financial Management Population Estimates, 2019
U.S. Census, 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2013-2017 American Community Survey

Age Group Distribution

In the previous growth cycle (2000-2010), more younger people chose to live in Ridgefield versus the rest of Clark County due to the availability of high quality schools, recently built large single-family homes, small town feel with close proximity to the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan center, and availability of outdoor recreation amenities.

Recently, those age distributions have shifted slightly showing a slight decrease in percentage of younger, school-aged children and a slight increase in middle-aged adults. While the school-aged

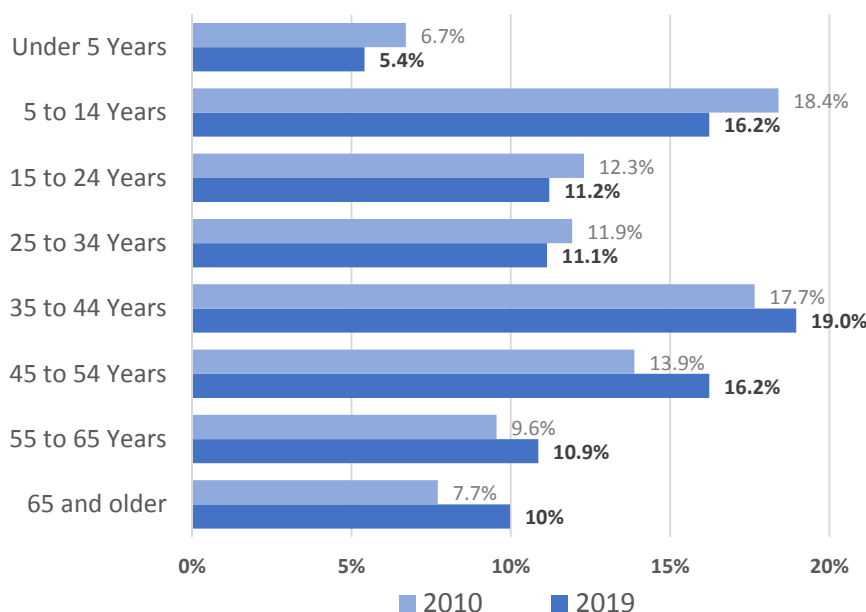
population will continue to grow in Ridgefield, the city is also an attractive place for older adults to live and recreate.

The following breakdown is used to separate the population into age-sensitive user groups.

- Under 5 years: This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities. As trails and open space users, they are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.
- 5 to 14 years: This group represents current youth program participants.
- 15 to 24 years: This group represents teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers.
- 25 to 34 years: This group represents involvement in adult programming with characteristics of beginning long-term relationships and establishing families.
- 35 to 54 years: This group represents users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters.
- 55 years plus: This group represents users of older adult programming exhibiting the characteristics of approaching retirement or already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren. This group generally also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Figure 2 illustrates the age distribution characteristics of these cohorts and provides a comparison to 2010 Census data.

Figure 2. Age Group Distributions: 2010 & 2019



Race and Ethnicity

In 2017, Ridgefield was 93% White, 4.5% Asian, 0.3% African American, and 2.2% from two or more races. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, approximately 13.7% of Ridgefield's population speaks a language other than English at home, although half of this group also speaks English very well. This is a lower percentage of people than in the rest of the state of Washington (19.1%).

Household Characteristics

The 2019 average household size in the City of Ridgefield was 2.91 people, higher than the state (2.55) and lower than the Clark County (3.31) average. Average household size has increased since 2000, when it was 2.80 people. The average family size in Ridgefield is larger, at 3.22 people. Of the 2,279 households in the City, 48.3% have children under 18, 66.7% were married couples living together, 16.5% had a single head of household with 5.7% as seniors over 65 years living alone, and 18.4% were non-families.

Income and Poverty

According to the 2017 ACS 5-year Estimates, the 2017 median household income in the City of Ridgefield was \$93,958. This figure is about \$27,784 higher than the median income for residents of Washington. The median household income in Ridgefield has continued to increase since 2000.

At the lower end of the household income scale, approximately 1.7 percent of Ridgefield households earn less than \$25,000 annually, which is significantly fewer than households of the State of Washington (17.2%). Food stamps and SNAP benefits are received by 11.5% of residents. On the other end, almost one half of City households (46.9%) have household incomes in the higher income brackets (\$100,000 and greater) than the State (30.8%) income figures. Ridgefield has 22.6% of its population receiving a Social Security income and 18.8% receiving other retirement income.

Employment & Education

The 2017 work force population (16 years and over) of Ridgefield is 5,062. Of this population, 3,269 (64.6%) is in the labor force while just over one third (35.4%) is not in the labor force. The primary occupation of the working population is management, professional, and science occupations at 50.9%, while sales, office, and service occupations comprise an additional 31.7% of the workforce.

The City of Ridgefield is slightly below the State of Washington in educational attainment. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 28.7% of the City residents over age 25 had earned a Bachelor's degree or higher (19.9% having a Bachelor's degree and 8.8% having a Graduate degree), as compared to 28.7% statewide. However, 96.3% of City residents have a high school degree or higher, 5.5% higher than the statewide average.

The 2017 American Community Survey also reported the access to computers and Internet within households, indicating 98.6% of Ridgefield households are connected compared to 91.4% of Washington households.

Persons with Disabilities

The 2017 American Community Survey reported 6% (398 persons) of Ridgefield's population 5 years and older as having a disability that interferes with life activities. This is lower than state average (12.8%). Among residents 65 and older, the percentage rises to 19.9%, or 132 persons, which is lower than the 36.1% found in the general senior population of Washington State.

Obesity and Physical Activity

Approximately 26% of adults in Clark County are obese, while 64% are either overweight or obese, according to the 2010 Clark County Community Assessment, Planning, and Evaluation (CAPE) Report. This is on par with averages in Washington State, but exceeds the national Healthy People 2020 target of no more than 15% obesity rate in adults. On average, males were more likely to be overweight or obese than females. The rate of overweight and obese adults increased with age, except among seniors.

According to the 2010 CAPE report, approximately 82% of Clark County adults reported leisure time physical activity within the previous month. This rate was estimated to be higher for the Ridgefield zip code (98642), at 86%-92%, though data is limited. The percentage of people reporting physical activity outside of work currently exceeds the national Healthy People 2020 target of 80%.

Approximately 10% of Clark County youth are obese, while 23% are either overweight or obese, according to the 2010 CAPE Report. This is on par with averages in Washington State, but exceeds the national Healthy People 2020 target of no more than 5% obesity rate in youth. On average, male, Hispanic, and Black youth were more likely to be overweight or obese.

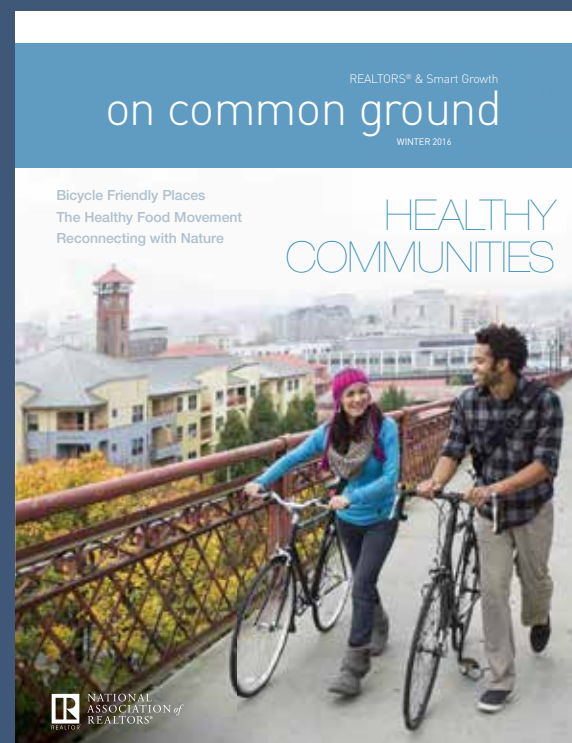
Among Clark County tenth graders, 44% reported being physically active for at least 60 minutes on 5 of the last 7 days. This rate is similar to the average for Washington State. Physical activity rates were lower for females (35% versus 50% for males) and tended to decline in higher grade levels (64% in 6th grade to 37% in 12th grade).

From the winter 2015 issue of the National Association of Realtors (NAR) magazine, the direct link between how communities are built and grow is tied to health and quality of life. More walkable and bike-able environments with better access to nature and parks have become essential for personal well-being and need to be integrated into community planning. The NAR articles identify walkable communities as a prescription for better health.

Even the U.S. Surgeon General sounded a call to action, challenging communities to become more walkable, allowing more Americans to increase their physical activity. The Center for Disease Control and its Healthy Community Design Initiative focuses on walkability and the need to better integrate into transportation planning.

The NAR magazine issue also reported on the value of bicycle-friendly communities and the direct tie to healthy and sustainable living. Access to healthy, locally-grown food choices is reported with the value of community gardens and urban food hubs for healthy diets, as well as connection to community engagement.

Realtors have long been aware that housing near a good system of parks and trails will hold strong appeal to buyers. The winter NAR issue illustrates the recognition that community design for healthy living goes beyond the single house location. People want choices, and these healthy community design traits of walking, biking, trails and parks all play an important role in housing prices, sales and re-sales.



REVIEW OF OTHER COMMUNITY PLANS

To supplement community outreach, seven community plans were reviewed for past policy direction and goals as they pertain to the provision and planning for parks, trails and recreation opportunities for Ridgefield. The development of each involved public input and final adoption by their respective responsible legislative body.

City of Ridgefield Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan (2014)

The 2014 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan guided the Public Works Department's park system planning efforts and policies for the past six years and was the City's first park system plan. The 2014 Plan included an extensive needs assessment, community input process, two community surveys and an evaluation of all existing facilities and future land acquisition needs. The Capital Facilities Plan element provided the foundation for an update to the Park Impact Fee rate used for capital expansion.

City of Ridgefield Comprehensive Plan (2016)

The 2016 Ridgefield Comprehensive Plan update provides the legally recognized decision framework for land use, housing, transportation, public facilities and parks in the City. The Plan is guided by a vision for how Ridgefield and the surrounding area will grow and develop during the next twenty years and is built upon four principles: regional employment center, quality neighborhoods, protection of critical areas, and managed growth. The Comprehensive Plan lists eight policies specific to the provision of parks in addition to policies regarding non-motorized transportation facilities, sustainability, stewardship and other environmental protections. Those eight policies include provision of parks, planning for both local and regional trail systems, provision of adequate acreage for parks and mileage for trail at adopted levels of service, acquisition of land during urban development to ensure access to recreation facilities, development of park funding to support local needs, engaging community involvement, and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan also adopted by reference the Ridgefield Capital Facilities Plan, which included specific plans for parks and recreation improvements. These capital facilities projects included improvements to Abrams Park, the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex, three (3) neighborhood park acquisitions, four sections of the Gee Creek Trail (two acquiring access rights and two designing & constructing trail segments), the waterfront park with non-motorized boat launch, and the Commerce Center Loop Trail.

Parks Capital Facilities Plan (2016)

The Parks element of the City's Capital Facilities Plan updates the previous 2014 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan by prioritizing park facilities based on needs and available funding sources. The Capital Facilities Plan includes a capital improvement section that lists specific park priorities for the coming years and the associated financing requirements to complete the projects. Fifteen projects were identified along with capital repairs and ADA compliance upgrades for a total capital cost of approximately \$16 million. Projected revenues which included park impact fees (PIF), interest earnings, real estate excise tax (REET), grants and other funding was projected at just over \$14 million.

Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail Plan (2012)

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department led a water trail planning process to identify the opportunities to improve the existing recreational paddling resources along portions of targeted waterways in western Clark County. The water trail identifies the paddling opportunities in the western section of the county along the North and East Fork of the Lewis River, Lake River and Vancouver Lake. The Water Trail Plan formally designates the location of the water trail and identifies needs for additional amenities, access points and other improvements in an effort to facilitate a better recreational experience for the community. Six water access sites in the immediate area of Ridgefield are identified in the plan. The plan identifies a number of recommendations, including specific improvements to publicly-owned access sites; a water trail sign system for wayfinding, user safety along with property and resource protection; development of a water trail paddling guide; and consideration of the water trail plan in local jurisdictions' capital facilities planning, among others.

Vancouver-Clark Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (2007)

Clark County adopted the joint Vancouver and Clark County Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan in 2007. The plan aims to address city, urban area and regional park and recreation needs in an integrated manner and includes numerous goals pertaining to each subarea. For the greater Ridgefield area, the plan proposes a new regional park between La Center and Ridgefield, along with two major trail corridors. One trail parallels Interstate 5; the other is a trail extension from Vancouver Lake, through the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge, to Paradise Point State Park.

Clark County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2015)

The Clark County Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROS) updated the County's priorities and needs through 2020 and established long-term goals for land acquisition, facility development and parks management. The capital facilities plan identified 6-year and 20-year projects that covered the Vancouver urban unincorporated area and the regional park system. Relative to Ridgefield's park and open space system, the County PROS Plan's regional capital facilities plan identified conservation acquisition targets for the Lake River Water Trail, a major regional park acquisition in the Ridgefield/Battle Ground area, trail acquisition sites for access to the LRVL Water Trail, as well as a partnership project for Conservation Futures targeting the Gee Creek Greenway.

Clark County Regional Trail & Bikeway Systems Plan (2006)

As an update to an earlier countywide trails plan adopted in 1992, this plan guides the design and development of an interconnected trail and bikeway system within Clark County. Specific to the Ridgefield area, the plan recommends the development of a water trail along the Columbia River and Lake River, in addition to the Lewis & Clark Greenway Regional Trail from Washougal to Ridgefield and an I-5 corridor trail.

CONTENTS OF THE PLAN

The remainder of the Ridgefield Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Public Outreach – highlights the methods used to engage the Ridgefield community in the development of the Plan.
- Chapter 3: Goals & Objectives – provides a policy framework for the parks and recreation system grouped by major functional or program area.
- Chapter 4: Classifications & Inventory – describes the existing park and recreation system in the City.
- Chapters 5: System Needs Assessment – discusses survey results, stakeholder feedback and other recreation trend data and provides context to the identification of potential park and recreation system enhancements.
- Chapter 6: Capital Planning – details a 6-year program for addressing park and recreation facility enhancement or expansion projects.
- Chapter 7: 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.

BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

A number of organizations and non-profits have documented the overall health and wellness benefits provided by parks, open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land published a report in 2005 called *The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*. This report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and assisting with stormwater control.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BENEFITS

Residents in communities with increased access to parks, recreation, natural areas and trails have more opportunities for physical activity, both through recreation and active transportation. By participating in physical activity, residents can reduce their risk of being or becoming overweight or obese, decrease their likelihood of suffering from chronic diseases, such as heart disease and type-2 diabetes, and improve their levels of stress and anxiety. Nearby access to parks has been shown to increase levels of physical activity. According to studies cited in a 2010 report by the National Park and Recreation Association, the majority of people of all ages who visit parks are physically active during their visit. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that greater access to parks leads to 25% more people exercising three or more days per week.



SOCIAL & COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Park and recreation facilities provide opportunities to engage with family, friends, and neighbors, thereby increasing social capital and community cohesion, which can improve residents' mental health and overall well-being. People who feel that they are connected to their community and those who participate in recreational, community and other activities are more likely to have better mental and physical health and to live longer lives. Access to parks and recreational facilities has also been linked to reductions in crime, particularly juvenile delinquency.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Parks and recreation facilities can bring positive economic impacts through increased property values, increased attractiveness for businesses and workers (quality of life), and through direct increases in employment opportunities.

In Washington, outdoor recreation generates \$26.2 billion in consumer spending annually, \$7.6 billion in wages and salaries and \$2.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. Preserving access to outdoor recreation protects the economy, the businesses, the communities and the people who depend on the ability to play outside. According to the Outdoor Recreation Economy Report published by the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation can grow jobs and drive the economy through management and investment in parks, waters and trails as an interconnected system designed to sustain economic dividends for citizens.



2 | PUBLIC OUTREACH

Community engagement and input played a crucial role in establishing a clear planning framework that reflects current community priorities. Most residents care deeply about the future of park and recreation opportunities in Ridgefield and appreciated the opportunity to offer feedback in the development of this Plan. Public outreach methods were varied and extensive, including:

- Meetings with Parks Board
- Group meeting with key stakeholders
- Open house meeting for general public participation
- Survey questions combined with the City's community-wide survey
- Pop-up workshops at community events
- Ridgefield City website with plan information and contact opportunities

The following summarizes key feedback and findings from these various outreach activities.

Community Survey

The City of Ridgefield contracted for a statistical survey to assess residents' preferences and opinions about city services in late 2019. Survey topics included general government services, transportation, development, parks and communications. A random sample of 1,500 residents was drawn from utility billing records and consumer records, and two mailings of the print survey were conducted in October and November 2019. In all, 499 responses were collected.

Major Findings Relatable to Parks & Recreation

- There are not enough walking and biking trails; Integrate with downtown access
- Parks remain very important, but role as a driver of outcomes has diminished
- Themes include more walking, biking trails; more river access
- Residents are interested in more communication on future development, new amenities, and the City's plan to manage growth and infrastructure (especially traffic)

Respondents also were asked about the topics they would like to hear more about from the City. The top themes include:

- Growth – Major growth, plans for managing growth, ensuring responsible growth, adapting infrastructure;
- Development – Future development, development of port/waterfront, proposed development; and
- Community – Community activities, events, new openings, opportunities.

A wordcloud was generated from survey responses to illustrate key topics based on frequency of response.

Figure 3. Wordcloud of Top Themes of Interest (from 2019 Engagement and Priority Assessment Survey)



Stakeholder Discussions

A group meeting of key stakeholders was facilitated to share information and ideas across the different agencies that are involved in some way with outdoor recreation, park and natural areas and public infrastructure planning. Representatives from Ridgefield's Main Street, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, Ridgefield School District, and the City Planning Commission were assembled with City Public Works and the Plan Consultant to gather their different perspectives regarding the program and facility needs for Ridgefield. The stakeholders were asked a series of questions about what was most important about parks and open space and what should be part of the future park, trail and open space system.

Highlights from these discussions include:

- The value of Ridgefield's existing trail system and the need to continue to create better connectivity for all residents for walking and biking opportunities.
- The importance of seamless connections between the City, the Port, the Refuge, the Schools, Downtown and residential neighborhoods for both public access and event coordination.
- Complete the 10-acre park (NP-6) and connect the trail system.
- Remember to celebrate the accomplishments as new amenities and facilities are added to the system.
- Ensure that new development facilitates and supports viable park development through adequate spaces and recreational amenities.
- Community gathering spaces for the many events conducted throughout the year are at a premium. More space could enhance events & programming – partner with the Port to coordinate with development plans and capture the opportunity for additional public space.
- Respect and protect the integrity of the Refuge to ensure its ecological value is preserved during the growth of the City.

Community Open House Meetings

Open house events generally allow more flexible participation and engage participants in the many facets of the plan from its purpose to the opportunity to share ideas and concerns. An open house was conducted on September 4th, 2019 at Davis Park. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting to review materials and provide comments. Residents at the September open house came from neighborhoods that included Heron Ridge, Columbia Hills, Downtown and Old Town.

The open house materials included a series of display boards that illustrated the parks, recreation and open space planning process and highlighted ways that community members could get involved in helping plan for Ridgefield's future parks, trails and outdoor recreation opportunities. Several display boards illustrated the existing recreation amenities in Ridgefield and solicited comments for any missing outdoor recreation opportunities and priorities for parks and trails. A system-wide map of Ridgefield depicted where all existing parks and open spaces and asked participants to help prioritize across four topics that were raised in the community survey: more access to parks, adding more parkland, expanding riverfront access, and preserving natural and riparian areas. Another display board targeted future park needs and asked how best to increase accessibility and where future parks were needed. Program ideas for recreation were described on another display board to gather comments on the need and desire for teen drop-in camps, senior activities, adult enrichment classes, adult sport leagues and youth programs and camps.

From the walking and biking trail display board which illustrated the variety and location of the existing trail system, questions were asked about where trail connections were most needed and where were there critical missing links. Participants were asked to mark the map and provide comments about those desired trails. Below is a compilation of those received comments for future trail improvements.

Comments from “Trails I’d Like to See”

1. Connect Downtown to the Ridgefield City Dog Park
 - a. Add dog park to rest of Hillhurst neighborhoods
 - b. Currently poor trail and sidewalk infrastructure
 - c. Allow people to walk to dog park from downtown
 - d. Allows Hillhurst neighborhoods to more easily walk downtown
 - e. A separated trail would be beneficial
2. Connect trail at N. Reiman Road to Abrams Park
3. Connect Pioneer Canyon neighborhoods to Downtown
4. Expand wooded trails in Abrams Park
 - a. Trail from SE end by soccer field up hill to neighborhood trail of Heron Dr.
5. Develop and improve trail from south end of Abrams Park to Pioneer
6. Expand bike lanes in the city
 - a. Royle Rd
 - b. All of Hillhurst to Williams
7. Trails to connect new development at S 15th to S. Royle up to Hillhurst for access to high school and Recreation Complex
8. Expand trail from Abrams to Heron Dr. beyond Heron along Gee Creek

The final display board at the open house offered a “dot-based” voting exercise designed to identify priorities across projects that included: picnic shelters, playgrounds, skateboard ramps, new skate park, trail connections, sports courts, splash pad, and riverfront access.

Other Key Highlights

“What’s missing?” responses were led by desires from attending youth to pursue a new expanded skate park. The opportunity for water play through a splash pad or similar feature was noted as well as an all-inclusive playground and added picnic shelters. Recreation program ideas included yoga in the park, adult painting classes, senior fitness and wellness programs, and outdoor survival skill training. The desire to preserve and expand on views to the mountains was also expressed.

Parks Board Meetings

The Ridgefield Parks Board is actively engaged in directing the current and future policies for the community’s park and recreation system. Discussions with the Board have centered on planning the next phases of new park development, coordinating with future park land with residential growth and ensuring that the existing system is well-maintained. Current staff funding has improved since the previous 2014 Plan, and the Board has begun to consider the possibility of establishing a dedicated parks department.

At its May meeting, the Parks Board shared its top project priorities, as

- Finalize the dog park
- Install nature play park at Abrams

- Install a splash pad
- Continued to develop trail system, including the regional Lewis & Clark Trail from Vancouver to Ridgefield (in coordination with Refuge)
- Develop 3 sites: NP-6, Rosauers, and a new skate park
- Develop a non-motorized boat launch by the Port

From a system-wide context, the Board identified the need to ensure that a unique sense of place was created for every new park such that new park amenities offered options and the history and character of the City could be expressed in some ways in the design of each public park. The Board asserted that diverse opportunities should be provided through a range of different recreational features. The need for working in coordination with developers as new park spaces are spaced and designed was also an important note. Additionally, the Board recognized that Ridgefield's many public events could use additional public spaces to support all the activities during those special occasions.

Although the City does not currently provide recreational programming, the Board cited consideration of a potential partnership with Battle Ground, relating to its summer camp programs. The Board directed that the plan should review what additional staffing needs may be on the horizon and whether there may be a need for a parks planner or park and recreation director. A comparison with similar-sized communities was suggested to find examples of unique park elements to generate ideas for future park amenities.

Other Outreach

Pop-up workshops were created during community events to provide convenient opportunities for local residents to receive information about the plan update and to provide input on key topics. Pop-up workshops entailed display materials at a table or tent to illustrate elements of the plan to engage participants with ways to help them identify their park, recreation and open space needs and prioritize potential projects for the City as they relate to Ridgefield's parks.

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3 | GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives described in this chapter define the park and recreation services that Ridgefield aims to provide. These goals and objectives were derived from input received throughout the planning process, from city staff and officials, the Parks Board and community members and stakeholders.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives from the 2014 Plan have been reaffirmed and strengthened in this planning update process. Several highlights are worth noting that enhance the existing goals and objectives and provide further direction for the priorities for Ridgefield's system of parks, trails open spaces and recreation programming.



Community Involvement & Information

Goal 1: Encourage and support public involvement in park and recreation issues.

- 1.1 Support the Parks Board as the forum for public discussion of parks and recreation issues.
- 1.2 Involve residents and stakeholders in park and recreation facility planning and design and recreation program development in order to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and engender public support.
- 1.3 Continue to use a variety of methods and media to publicize and increase resident awareness about recreational opportunities available in local neighborhoods and citywide.
- 1.4 Prepare, publish and promote a park and trail facilities map for online and print distribution to highlight existing and proposed sites and routes, while promoting Ridgefield as an active-lifestyles community.
- 1.5 Survey, review and publish local park and recreation preferences, needs and trends at least once every six years to stay current with community attitudes and interests.
- 1.6 Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks Board and other standing City boards, such as the Planning Commission, and with the City Council to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities and funding.



Parks & Greenways

Goal 2: Acquire and develop a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities and greenways that provides equitable access to all residents.

- 2.1 Proactively seek parkland identified within this Plan, in both developed and undeveloped areas, to secure suitable locations for new parks and greenways to serve future residents.
 - 2.1A Strive to provide a distributed network of parks, such that all city residents live within one-half mile of a developed neighborhood or community park.
 - 2.1B Provide a service standard of 1.56 acre per 1,000 persons of developed neighborhood parks.
 - 2.1C Provide a service standard of 6 acres per 1,000 persons of developed community parks.
 - 2.1D Provide a service standard of one baseball field per 3,000 persons and one soccer field per 2,000 persons.
- 2.2 Identify and prioritize lands for inclusion in the parks and greenway system based on factors such as contribution to level of service, connectivity, preservation and scenic or recreational opportunities for residents.
- 2.3 Develop the NP-6 and Rosauers park properties to provide for engaging and accessible neighborhood parks in existing park distribution gaps.
- 2.4 Identify location for and develop an updated skate park with contemporary and engaging skate features.
- 2.5 Enhance outdoor recreation opportunities with the addition of a nature play area (Abrams Park), a splash pad and, potentially other new and/or unique park amenities to diversify the range of outdoor recreation available to residents.
- 2.6 Pursue acquisition of additional public spaces in or adjacent to downtown to provide more capacity during signature City events,
- 2.7 Periodically coordinate with Clark County to strategize for the acquisition of parks and greenways within or in close proximity to the Ridgefield Urban Growth Area (UGA).
- 2.8 Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.



Trails

Goal 3: Develop a network of shared-use trails and bicycle & pedestrian corridors to enable connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and public amenities.

- 3.1 Provide a service standard of 0.75 miles per 1,000 persons of developed trails.
- 3.2 Connect and coordinate the City's pedestrian and bicycle system with the Clark County regional system of on-street and off-street trails.
- 3.3 Work with local agencies, utilities and private landholders to secure trail easements and access to open space for trail connections.
- 3.4 Continue to support and advocate for the extension of the regional Lewis and Clark Trail to Ridgefield and connect the City's trail system to provide improved linkages to destinations.
- 3.5 Provide or extend community trails along Gee Creek and Lake River and pursue additional connections to the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and Port of Ridgefield properties.
- 3.6 Facilitate and provide for a high degree of trail connectivity from core community trails, such as the Gee Creek Trail, to neighborhood, park and waterfront destinations.
- 3.7 Continue to integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the development review process; require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate trail segments as part of the project.
- 3.8 Evaluate and maintain a maximum spacing standard for trail linkages within new developments, such that multiple entry points to a trail corridor are provided to improve access and convenience for residents.
- 3.9 Provide trailhead accommodations, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, restrooms and other amenities.
- 3.10 Develop a non-motorized watercraft launch facility in cooperation with the Port to enhance the access to the Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail.



Maintenance & Operations

Goal 4: Provide a parks and recreation system that is efficient to maintain and operate, provides a high level of user comfort, safety, and aesthetic quality, and protects capital investments.

- 4.1 Maintain all parks and facilities in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition; repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification. Track and monitor costs of maintaining city-owned facilities by their function including parks, trails and natural areas.
- 4.2 Maintain an inventory of assets and their condition; update the inventory as assets are added, updated or removed from the system and periodically assess the condition of park and recreation facilities and infrastructure.
- 4.3 Ensure adequate staffing levels associated with acquisition, development, or renovation of parks or natural open space areas, and adjust the annual operating budget accordingly to allow for provision of recreational programming and park planning.
- 4.4 Encourage and promote volunteer park improvement projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, churches and businesses, as appropriate.



Design

Goal 5: Plan and implement high-quality park amenities, recreation facilities and durable trails throughout the City.

- 5.1 New parks and upgraded/renovated facilities should consider unique design traits that add to Ridgefield's sense of place while still ensuring quality that limits maintenance and operations costs.
- 5.2 Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age as appropriate; in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA) Standards for Accessible Design.
- 5.3 Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities; consider the use of native vegetation for landscaping in parks to conserve the integrity of native wildlife habitat and limit maintenance requirements.
- 5.4 Create illustrative master plans for park development or redevelopment, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.
- 5.5 Develop and implement design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments to encourage and promote innovative park installations that provide acceptable levels of improvement and address community facility needs, equipment types, public safety, accessibility and installation and maintenance procedures.
- 5.6 Standardize the use of graphics and signage to establish a consistent identity at all parks and facilities.
- 5.7 Standardize park furniture (trash cans, tables, benches, fencing) to reduce inventory costs and improve appearance of, and maintenance consistency within, parks.



Concurrency

Goal 6: Ensure that new park and recreational facilities are provided in concert with new development.

- 6.1 Ensure that new development provides, develops and/or funds park development consistent with the City's standards for parks and facilities.
- 6.2 Require that the development of recreational amenities conforms to the City's minimum guidelines and the general needs outlined in this Plan. Develop plans to accept fees in lieu of development by the City if such mitigation is not practicable.
- 6.3 Require plan review, final inspection and acceptance (including as-built drawings) of all developer-provided park projects installed per City guidelines and standards.
- 6.4 Accept only those parks and facilities that are consistent with the City's Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan.
- 6.5 Maximize the multiple-use aspects of critical areas, detention ponds, utility easements, etc. by preserving and enhancing the natural and ecological value of these lands, while facilitating pedestrian access or wildlife viewing.
- 6.6 Establish criteria or standards for use in evaluating the benefit of accepting greenways and natural areas from new development projects and defining minimum enhancements, such as the removal of invasive species or the provision of access.



Recreation Programming

Goal 7: Facilitate and promote a varied and inclusive suite of recreation programs that accommodate a spectrum of ages, interests and abilities.

- 7.1 Leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver recreation services and secure access to existing facilities for community recreation.
- 7.2 Continue partnering with the City of Battle Ground for summertime recreation programming and explore facility and programming options to expand services for year-round offerings.
- 7.3 Continue partnering with the Ridgefield School District to maximize public use of recreation facilities on school sites, especially athletic fields and gymnasiums, and to encourage provision of community education programming at schools.
- 7.4 Coordinate with public, private and non-profit providers, such as organized sports leagues, to plan for projects to expand facilities for athletic fields.
- 7.5 Explore partnership opportunities with regional health care providers and services, such as Kaiser Permanente, PeaceHealth and the Clark County Health Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.
- 7.6 Explore and promote programming for children, teens, seniors, people with disabilities and other populations with limited access to market-based recreation options.
- 7.7 Study and create cost recovery guidelines for planned recreation programs and services.



Partnerships

Goal 8: Maximize opportunities for public enjoyment of local and regional resources through partnerships and agreements.

- 8.1 Partner with Clark County, Battle Ground, La Center and other stakeholders to provide regional facilities.
- 8.2 Partner with the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge to improve community access to natural areas, improve trail connectivity and coordinate seasonal and annual events.
- 8.3 Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, Clark County and the City of Vancouver to provide a regional greenway network and coordinated trail alignments that provide continuous walking and biking access between regional parks, the City of Ridgefield, the Refuge and other key destinations.
- 8.4 Provide opportunities for public access to the waterfront by coordinating with the Port of Ridgefield for improved access to the boat and kayak launches and opportunities for waterfront parks, open space and trails.
- 8.5 Support the continued implementation of the Water Trail Plan to provide water trails along Lake River; tie these into Washington's water trail program and to the Lower Columbia River Water Trail Plan.
- 8.6 Encourage collaboration among local art, business, education, tourism, city beautification and recreation interests.
- 8.7 Continue to partner with Ridgefield School District and the Port of Ridgefield on recreation opportunities and facilities.



Administration & Management

Goal 9: Provide clear and direct leadership that supports and promotes the Parks Board and the Department of Public Works to the community, stakeholders, partners and City Council.

- 9.1 Provide sufficient financial and staff resources to maintain the overall parks and recreation system to high standards.
- 9.2 Maximize operational efficiency to provide the greatest public benefit for the resources expended, including potentially considering contracted services.
- 9.3 Periodically review and update the park impact fee rates.
- 9.4 Pursue alternative funding options and dedicated revenues for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities, such as private donation, sponsorships, partnerships, state and federal grant sources, among others. Place priority on maximizing grants and other external sources of funding, or inter-agency cooperative arrangements, to develop the City's park resources.
- 9.5 Inform all levels of staff of the direction of the Plan and allow for staff input, encouraging buy-in and knowledge from all staff members.
- 9.6 Assign responsibilities, resources and time frames in annual work plans as necessary to progress on the goals and policies of the Plan.
- 9.7 Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) and the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA).
- 9.8 Work with the Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce to develop information packets that promote City services to tourists and new residents.
- 9.9 Develop a comprehensive and cohesive marketing image, i.e. style, formats, message, etc. in marketing materials.
- 9.10 Periodically evaluate user satisfaction and statistical use of parks, facilities and programs, including trail counts; share this information with the Parks Board and City Council as part of the decision making process to revise program offerings or renovate facilities.



4 | CLASSIFICATIONS & INVENTORY

This chapter is segmented into two sections. The first section defines the various facility classifications in use in Ridgefield, and the second is an inventory of existing facilities.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Parkland is classified to assist in planning for the community's recreational needs. The Ridgefield park system is composed of a hierarchy of various park types, each offering recreation and/or natural area opportunities. Separately, each park type may serve only one function, but collectively the system will serve the full range of community needs. Classifying parkland by function allows the City to evaluate its needs and to plan for an efficient, cost effective and usable park system that minimizes conflicts between park users and adjacent uses. The classification characteristics are meant as general guidelines addressing the intended size and use of each park type. The following six classifications are in effect in Ridgefield and are defined as follows:

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks
- Special Use Facilities
- Greenways
- Trails

Community Parks

Community parks are larger sites developed for organized play, containing a wider array of facilities and, as a result, appealing to a more diverse group of users. They are planned to provide active and structured recreation opportunities, as well as passive and non-organized opportunities for individual and family activities. Community parks are generally 15 to 50 acres in size, should meet a minimum size of 20 acres when possible and serve residents within a 1-mile drive, walk or bike ride from the site. In areas without neighborhood parks, community parks can also serve as local neighborhood parks.

In general, community park facilities are designed for organized or intensive recreational activities and sports, although passive components such as pathways, picnic areas and natural areas are highly encouraged and complementary to active use facilities. Since community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks, parking and restroom facilities should be provided.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are generally considered the basic unit of traditional park systems. They are small park areas designed for unstructured, non-organized play and limited active and passive recreation. They are generally 2 to 4 acres in size, depending on a variety of factors including neighborhood need, physical location and opportunity, and should meet a minimum size of 1.5 acres in size when possible.

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residential areas within close proximity (up to ½-mile walking or biking distance) of the park and should be geographically distributed throughout the community. Access to neighborhood parks is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located such that people living within the service area can reach the park safely and conveniently. Park siting and design should ensure pedestrians do not have to cross a major arterial street or other significant natural or man-made barrier to get to the site, unless safe crossings are provided. Neighborhood parks should be located along road frontages to improve visual access and community awareness of the sites. Connecting and frontage streets should include sidewalks or other safe pedestrian access. Additionally, street plans should encourage maximum connectivity and public access to park sites.

Generally, developed neighborhood parks typically include amenities such as pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches, play equipment, a multi-use open field for informal play, sport courts or multi-purpose paved areas and landscaping. Restrooms are not provided due to high construction and maintenance costs. Parking is also not usually provided; however, on-street, ADA-accessible parking stall(s) may be provided.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small parks, less than ½-acre in size, often designed as play lots to serve nearby young children and their parents. Pocket parks are the smallest park classification and are used to address limited or isolated recreational needs. These parks serve a limited radius (up to ¼-mile) from the site and provide passive and play-oriented recreational opportunities. Amenities are usually limited to small playground facilities, small open grass areas, and minimal site furnishings. Passive uses may include picnic areas and sitting areas. Examples of pocket parks can include a tot lot with play equipment such as a climber, slide or swings; a small

urban plaza; or civic recognition project. Locating pocket parks adjacent to other park system components, such as recreational trails, is also desirable. Parking is not provided at pocket parks.

Although several pocket parks have been built and transferred to Ridgefield in recent years, this Plan recommends against pursuing additional pocket parks due to the higher maintenance costs and lower recreational value. The existing pocket parks have little to no opportunity for expansion.

Special Use Facilities

Special use facilities include single-purpose recreational areas or stand-alone sites designed to support a specific, specialized use. This classification includes stand-alone sports field complexes, waterfront facilities, community centers, community gardens or sites occupied by buildings. Specialized facilities may also be provided within a park of another classification. No standards exist or are proposed concerning special use facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.

Greenways

Greenways are undeveloped lands primarily left in a natural state with recreation use as a secondary objective. Greenways may be owned or managed by a governmental agency or ownership group such as a Home Owners' association and may or may not have public access.. This type of land often includes wetlands, steep hillsides or other similar spaces. In some cases, environmentally sensitive areas are considered greenways and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species. Greenways may serve as trail corridors, and low-impact or passive activities, such as walking, nature observation and fishing may be allowed, where appropriate. No standards exist or are proposed for greenways.

Trails

Trails are non-motorized recreation and transportation networks generally separated from roadways. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple or shared uses, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, or a single use. Recreation trail alignments aim to emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint.

This plan for the recreational trails system uses a trail hierarchy (Figure 4 to right) to create a series of interconnected linkages throughout the City and represents a trail framework based on the planned users volumes and intensity. This hierarchy conceptualizes a branching circulation network of non-motorized routes - ranging from cross-regional and inter-city primary corridors, to secondary intra-city neighborhood corridors, to minor local connections - with the primary purpose focused on recreation. These interconnected linkages enable recreational trail users to create loops or individualized routes depending on desired travel distances or specific destinations.

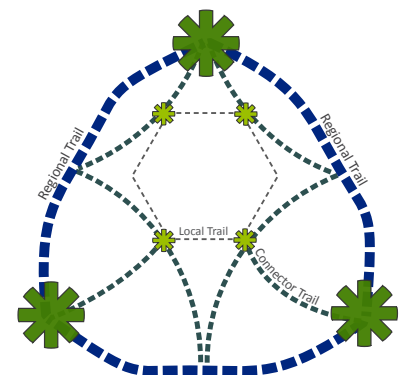


Figure 4. Existing Inventory: City-owned Park Lands

The differences between the trail classifications within the hierarchy are based on purpose, intensity of use and connections, rather than on trail width, material or user. Three trail classifications exist within the Ridgefield network: regional, connector, local trails. These three trail classes serve as the primary linkages across and through the City. Figure 5 describes the three trail types in Ridgefield.

Figure 5. Trail Types & Characteristics

Trail Type	Function	Use Type	Users	Surfaces	Width
1) Regional Trail	Major connections through community and beyond	Multi-use	Pedestrians, cyclists, skaters. Equestrians (where feasible)	Asphalt, concrete, boardwalk.	10' - 12'; 2' shoulders
2) Connector Trail	Connects parks, trails, neighborhoods and local destinations	Multi-use	Pedestrians, cyclists, skaters.	Asphalt, concrete, boardwalk. Gravel, possible.	8' - 12'; 2' shoulders
3) Local Trail	Interior loops or point-to-point routes in public spaces or subdivisions	Multi- or single use	Pedestrians, cyclists, skaters.	Asphalt, concrete, boardwalk. Gravel, possible.	6' - 8'; 1' shoulders

In general, the City will own and maintain Type 1 and Type 2 trails, with Type 3 trails owned and maintained by other entities such as Home Owners' Associations.

Additionally, two trail use types exist and reinforce the three trail classifications noted above.

Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are separated from the public right-of-way and may have two-way traffic separated by a centerline. These trails accommodate two-way wheelchair, stroller, bicycle, skater and pedestrian traffic, as well as maintenance and emergency vehicles. Multi-use trails are generally paved with asphalt or concrete over a compacted crushed rock base (impervious surfaces are preferred), and the preferred width is 12 feet - with a 10 foot minimum width where needed to avoid natural resources or tree canopy. If maintenance vehicles will use the trail as an access road, then a width of 12 to 14 feet is preferred to prevent cracking and wear of the path edges. Multi-use paths function best where motor vehicle crossings can be eliminated or minimized and should be designed with at-grade crossings with streets and driveways. Additional design considerations include attention to site lines, grade, erosion control and trail etiquette regulations. Soft shoulders of crushed rock or wood chips may be provided for runners if space allows. Trails that have regional or community-wide significance are usually multi-use trails.

Single-Use Trails

Single use trails may be designated along segments with especially challenging terrain or natural features, for dedicated user types or where trail width is restrictively narrow.

- **Walking Trail - Pedestrian Only:** It may be difficult to plan and design a trail for the exclusive use of pedestrians, as other users will be attracted to the facility. Trail signage and public education will be required to reinforce the intended use and restrictions.
- **Mountain Bike Use:** Mountain biking trails are narrow, winding trails of soil and gravel, and rock and boardwalks are used when needed. They may be designed as either one-way single track or wider two-way routes. Steep slopes and natural obstacles, such as rocks and roots, create challenges for the rider and increase the diversity of trail experience. Narrow trail width and sharp turns may be required in steep, irregular terrain.

The following should be considered in future planning to expand the trail network.

- Trails should be located and designed to provide a diversity of challenges. Enhance accessibility wherever possible, the high priority being loop or destination opportunities on portions of trails near staging areas.
- Local trails should be required in residential subdivision planning and should connect to the City's trail system and neighboring local trails. Trail locations can be determined during the land use review process.
- During the land development approval process, dedication of right-of-way for recreational trails should be required.
- Additional trail easements or dedications should be sought to complete missing trail segments, link parks and expand the overall trail network into areas that are already developed. If no other means can be found to provide missing links, on-street trail links should be used.
- Whenever possible, recreational trails should be separated from the roadway. Where routes use existing streets, the trail should be designed to minimize potential conflicts between motorists and trail users.

FACILITY INVENTORY

The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within Ridgefield. The City provides 127 acres of public parks and recreation facilities distributed among 29 sites and with an additional number of greenway parcels that comprises over 101 acres of conserved public open space. Figure 7 depicts the available parkland inventory in Ridgefield.

Ridgefield provides and maintains a growing system of parks that supports a range of experiences, including both active and passive recreation. Newly constructed all-weather and lighted sports fields have been completed as the result of a partnership between the City and the School District. The Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex contains artificial turf baseball, softball and soccer fields, stadium seating, concession building with restrooms, picnic areas, playgrounds, bike racks and parking. Other City-provided athletic fields are available at Abrams Park which includes one large soccer field, two small soccer fields, one T-ball field and two baseball fields. Additional athletic fields in Ridgefield are provided at school sites. Ridgefield also provides a well-sited skate park at a central downtown location that is one of the most used recreation facilities in the City. The City does not currently offer recreation programs, although organized sports are provided by private youth leagues, and the School District offers some

additional programming for adults through the community education program.

In addition to City-owned properties, numerous private Home Owners' Associations, parks and open space tracts exist in Ridgefield and add over 175 acres to the overall park system.

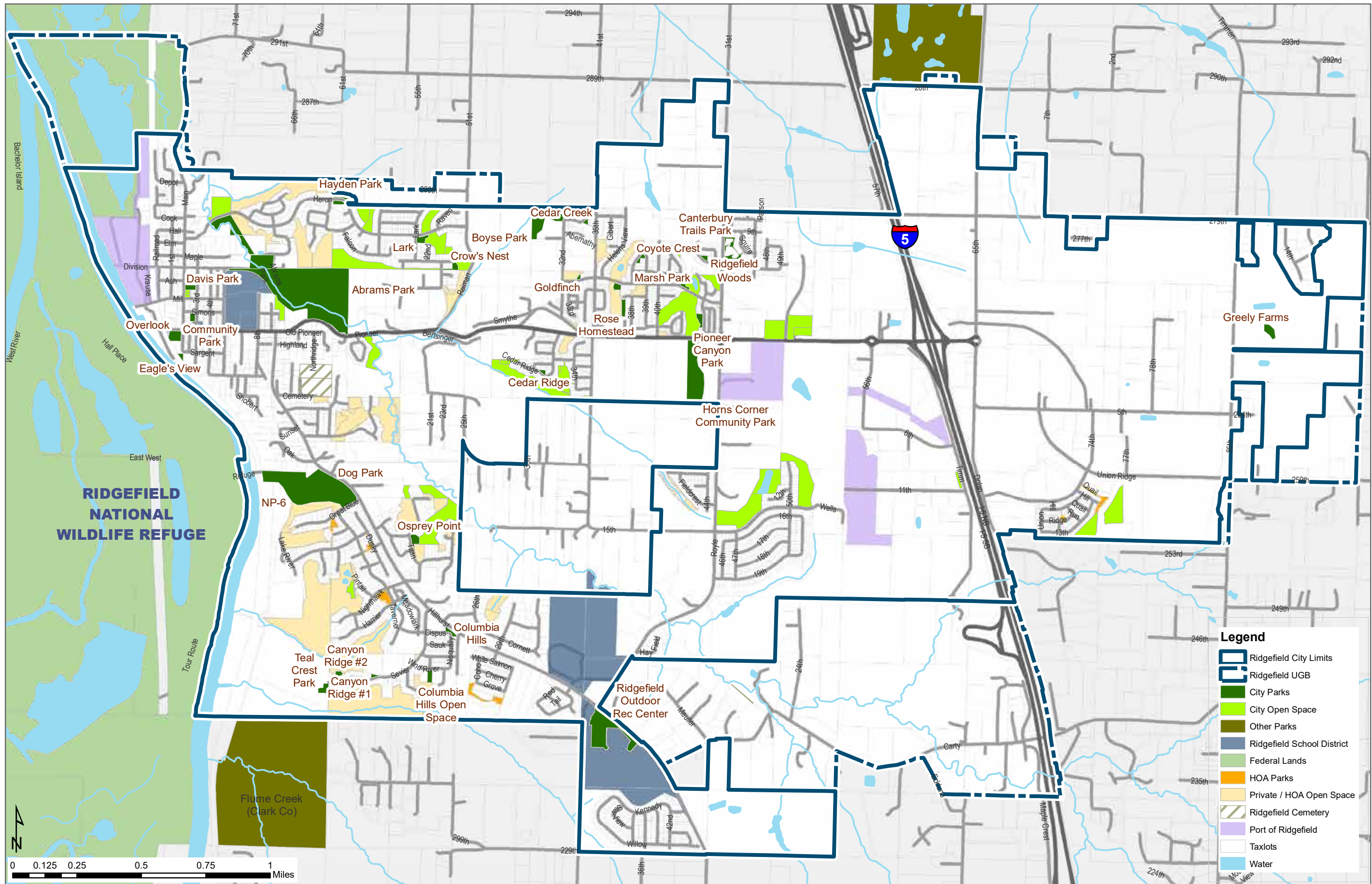
Figure 6. Existing Inventory: City-owned Park Lands

Park Classifications	Sites (#)	Acres
Community Park	4	89.39
Neighborhood Park	6	26.17
Pocket Park	16	6.11
Special Facility	3	5.59
Total Core Parks		127.26
Other City Open Space	43	101.12
Total Public Parklands		228.38
Private HOA Parks & OS	57	175.28
All Parklands		403.7

Figure 7. Existing Inventory: City-owned Park Lands

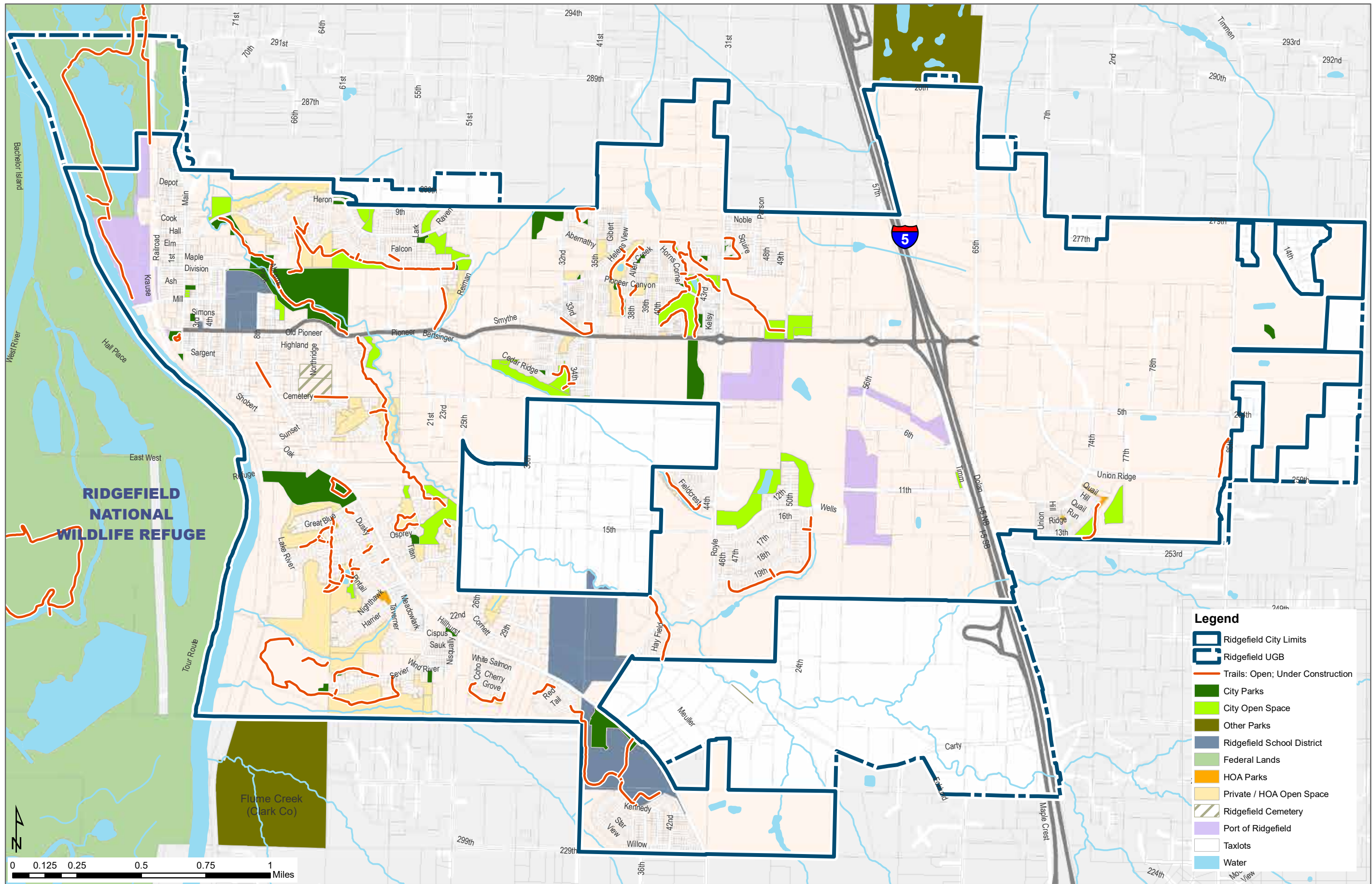
Park Type / Name	Classification	Acreage
Community Parks		
Abrams Park	Community	44.20
Greely Farms (undeveloped)	Community	2.12
Horns Corner Community Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	8.07
Ridgefield Outdoor Rec Center	Community	35.00
Neighborhood Parks		
Boyse Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	5.28
Canterbury Trails (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	1.00
Davis Park	Neighborhood	0.48
Hayden Park	Neighborhood	1.72
NP-6 Park (undeveloped)	Neighborhood	16.60
Rose Homestead Park	Neighborhood	1.09
Pocket Parks		
Canyon Ridge #1 Park	Pocket Park	0.18
Canyon Ridge #2 Park	Pocket Park	0.31
Cedar Creek Park	Pocket Park	0.21
Cedar Ridge Park	Pocket Park	0.20
Columbia Hills Open Space	Pocket Park	0.56
Columbia Hills Park	Pocket Park	0.35
Coyote Crest Park	Pocket Park	0.29
Crow's Nest Park	Pocket Park	0.50
Eagle's View Park	Pocket Park	0.23
Goldfinch Park	Pocket Park	0.13
Lark Park	Pocket Park	0.61
Marsh Park	Pocket Park	0.24
Osprey Pointe Park	Pocket Park	0.70
Pioneer Canyon (undeveloped)	Pocket Park	0.59
Ridgefield Woods Park	Pocket Park	0.24
Teal Crest (undeveloped)	Pocket Park	0.79
Special Use Facilities		
Community Park	Special Facility	0.37
Dog Park	Special Facility	4.06
Overlook Park	Special Facility	1.16
Total		127.3

The following map shows the location of existing parks, trail and recreation areas within and around the City.



Map I: Existing Parks & Open Space

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Map 2: Existing Recreational Trails

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PARK CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

The condition of park infrastructure and amenities is a measure of park adequacy and a required assurance of public safety. General park infrastructure may include walkways, parking lots, park furniture, drainage and irrigation, lighting systems and vegetation. Deferred maintenance over a long period can result in unusable amenities when perceived as unsafe or undesirable by park patrons.

The existing conditions within parks were assessed to identify issues and concerns and opportunities for future improvements. The condition assessment matrix shown on the below summarizes the results of these assessments and can be used to help prioritize needed park improvements. The matrix uses a rating system that ranks the condition of the park element based on the following scale:

-  1 – Good Condition: In general, amenities in good condition offer full functionality and do not need repairs. Good facilities have playable sports surfaces and equipment, working fixtures, and fully intact safety features (railings, fences, etc.). Good facilities may have minor cosmetic defects. Good facilities encourage area residents to use the park.
-  2 – Fair: In general, amenities in fair condition are largely functional but need minor or moderate repairs. Fair facilities have play surfaces, equipment, fixtures, and safety features that are operational and allow play, but have deficiencies or time periods where they are unusable. Fair facilities remain important amenities for the neighborhood but may slightly discourage use of the park by residents.
-  3 – Poor: In general, amenities in poor condition are largely or completely unusable. They need major repairs to be functional. Poor facilities are park features that have deteriorated to the point where they are barely usable. Fields are too uneven for ball games, safety features are irreparably broken, buildings need structural retrofitting, etc. Poor facilities discourage residents from using the park.

Generally a feature with a rating of “3” should have higher priority for resolution through maintenance, capital repairs or as a new capital project. Park amenity conditions were also averaged across park elements to indicate which types of elements are in greater need for significant upgrades, renovations or overall improvements. Based on this assessment, the City’s sport courts, baseball/softball fields, site furnishings, and natural area vegetation are in the greatest need of rehabilitation or repair.

Assessment Highlights

Of the park sites that were assessed, one is undeveloped (NP-6) and is currently natural in character, consisting of open and wooded hillsides. The remaining 22 parks are developed to varying degrees.

- The Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex had just been completed adjacent to the new Ridgefield High School as a shared school/community facility. This special facility provides lighted and all-weather surfaced sports fields for school and community league uses as well as picnic and playground amenities.
- Abrams Park is the only developed park that truly offers the functionality and feel of a Community Park, based on its size, amenities and diversity of recreational opportunities.

- Davis Park, Community Park and Overlook Park are all located within the central business district of the city. They offer active and passive recreational opportunities and help create the character and human scale of Ridgefield's downtown. These three parks are often important public spaces during city/public events and celebrations.
- Eagle's View Park offers a passive, pocket park setting, with shade, seating and high level overlooks of the Refuge. Similarly, Canyon Ridge Park #1 provides a passive use area with picnic tables at the entry to a natural wooded area.
- The remaining developed parks are relatively small and similar in character. They are mostly sites that were provided by the developers of the surrounding communities and have similar park amenities, including small irrigated lawn areas, seating, walking paths, play equipment, sport courts and furnishings.

Ridgefield - Park Conditions Assessment

Park Name	Park Type	Developed Acres	Recreation Amenities											Site Amenities					Structures				Vegetation				ADA	Comments
			Playgrounds	Paved Courts: Basketball	Paved Courts: Tennis	Soccer Fields	Baseball / Softball Fields	Synthetic Turf	Open Playfield/Lawn	Pathways/Trails	Skate Park/Spray Park	Dog Park	Other Rec Element	Site Furnishings	Lighting (Y/N)	Signage	Parking Areas	Public Art	Restrooms	Picnic Shelters	Concession Building	Amphitheater/Stage	Turf	Park Trees	Landscaped Beds	Natural Areas	Compliance*	
Abrams Park	C	44.2	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	Y	1	1	-	1	-	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2-5-yr old playground not on accessible route & without ramp access. Well house & stage structures need renovation. Bleachers need safety railings.
Canyon Ridge #1 Park	P	0.2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	2	Refinish picnic table. Install groundcovers on bare slope. Add ramp into playground area.
Canyon Ridge #2 Park	P	0.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	Add interpretive sign about water quality treatment and habitat value of SWM basin.
Cedar Creek Park	N	0.2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	Add shade trees to park to provide more comfort and cooler play environment.
Cedar Ridge/Horn Family Park	P	0.2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	Canopy trees could be added to this park.
Columbia Hills Open Space	P	0.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	-	2	Existing picnic table not on accessible route. Add another ADA-compliant table. Avoid further damage to trunks of shade trees by creating mulch rings at base.
Columbia Hills Park	P	0.4	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	Add compost or mulch to exposed roots of street trees along Hillhurst. Add ramp into playground to overcome access barrier.
Community Park	SP	0.4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	N	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	Skate park features could be enhanced. If basketball hoop is removed, there's more room for skate/bike elements that are in higher recreational demand.
Coyote Crest Park	P	0.3	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	Add shade structure to play equipment. Install ramp into playground to overcome access barrier.
Crows Nest Park	P	0.5	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	Add shade structure to play equipment and shade trees around playground. Repaint basketball lines. Remove stumps. Add park ID sign.
Davis Park	N	0.5	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	Y	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	Connect amenities with paved path across park from 3rd to Main. Playground needs ramp access.
Dog Park	SP	4.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	N	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	Repair or realignment stone paths to avoid erosion. Pave area at handicapped parking and entrance for better ADA access.
Eagle's View Park	P	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	1	N	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	Repair split rail fence as soon as possible-some posts are no longer supportive. Consider better path surfacing and definition.
Goldfinch Park	P	0.1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	Add ramp into playground area. Add shade trees.
Hayden Park	N	1.7	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	N	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	2	Add handicapped sign at designated parking spot.
Lark Park	P	0.6	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	Add paved route to play area. Add ADA ramp into playground. Add more shade trees. Consider adding small picnic shelter.
Marsh Park	P	0.2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	Add park ID sign. Add playground ramp. Add shade structure to play equipment. Add shade trees.
NP-6 Park	N	16.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Create a master site plan that is compatible with neighborhood characteristics and add unique play value for area. Capture value of distant mountain views.
Osprey Pointe Park	P	0.7	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1	Minimal park amenities could be enhanced with additional recreation elements and support furnishings.
Overlook Park	SP	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	Y	1	-	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	Add park identification sign.
Ridgefield Woods Park	P	0.2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	-	-	1	Add native plants to existing landscape beds. Add compost &/or mulch to planting beds. Park has room for more recreational amenities.
Rose Homestead Park	N	1.1	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	1	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	1	1	1	Landscape beds need weeding and additional mulch. Consider adding more shade trees near basketball court as well as small picnic shelter on accessible route.
Sports Complex (shared)	SP	7.3	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	1	Y	1	1	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	New facility in great condition. Picnic cluster has limited ADA access.
Average Conditions Rating			1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1.11	1	1	1	1.05	n/a	1	1.2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1.1	1.43	1	1.57	

Ratings: 1= good; 2=fair; 3=poor

Park Type
C = Community Park
N = Neighborhood Park
P = Pocket Park
SP = Special Facility

Figure 8: Park Conditions Assessment

Park & Facility Condition Assessment

RATING SCALE

Playgrounds:

1	In good condition: no drainage issues; 0-10% material deterioration safety surfacing with a border at the site.
2	In fair condition: drainage issues; 10-25% material deterioration; some small compliance issues that could be spot fixed.
3	In poor condition: drainage issues; 25% or greater material deterioration; needs repair or replacement (but workable).

Paved Courts:

1	In good condition: no cracks in surfacing; fencing is functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes/passages; painting and striping are appropriately located, whole, and uniform in color.
2	In fair condition: hairline cracks to ¼”, surfacing required; fencing has minor protrusions, or holes/passages that do not affect game play; painting and striping have flaking or color fading.
3	In poor condition: horizontal cracks more than ½” wide, surfacing required; fencing has large protrusions, holes/passages or defects; painting and striping are patchy and color has faded dramatically.

Spray Park:

1	In good condition: spray pad has little or no cracking; spray furnishings have little or no damage; no vandalism; good drainage.
2	In fair condition: spray pad has some cracking; spray furnishings have signs of wear, but are in working condition; color fading.
3	In poor condition: drainage issues with clogging or sinking pad; large cracks; spray furnishings broken.

Signage:

1	In good condition: a signage system for the site, appropriate signs, no damaged signs.
2	In fair condition: multiple signage system within one site, a few damaged signs (0-10%), need maintenance.
3	In poor condition: multiple signage systems within one site, signs that are not legible from a reasonable distance, some damaged signs (10-25%), old logos, deteriorated materials, no signage.

Public Art:

1	In good condition: no vandalism; no signs of weathering.
2	In fair condition: minor signs of weathering or wear.
3	In poor condition: metal leaching/concrete efflorescence/paint peeling/wood chipped or carved into or warping; vandalized.

Park Structures (Restrooms, Picnic Shelters, Concession Building):

1	In good condition: roof has no leaks; floor shows little sign of wear; finishes are fresh with no graffiti or vandalism; all elements are in working order.
2	In fair condition: roof shows signs of wear but is structurally sound; floor shows some wear; finishes show some wear with some marks or blemishes.
3	In poor condition: roof leaks or otherwise needs repair; floor show significant wear and is difficult to maintain; finishes are dull or discolored, have graffiti, or are not easily maintained; some elements not working or in need of repair (e.g., non-functioning sink).

Park Trees:

1	In good condition: trees overall have good form and spacing; no topping; free of disease or pest infestation; no vandalism; no hazard trees.
2	In fair condition: some crowding may exist but overall health is good; less than 5% of trees show signs of topping, disease or pest infestation; vandalism has not impacted tree health (graffiti, not girdling).
3	In poor condition: Form or spacing issues may exist; evidence of disease or pests; vandalism affecting tree health; some hazard trees or trees in danger of becoming hazard trees.

ADA Compliance:

1	Appears to comply with ADA standards.
2	Some items appear to not comply, but could be fixed by replacing with relative ease.
3	A number of park assets appear not to comply, including large-scale items like regrading.

Sports Fields:

1	In good condition: thick grass with few bare spots; few depressions; no noticeable drainage issues, proper slope and layout; fencing if present is functional, free of protrusions, and free of holes.
2	In fair condition: grass with bare turf areas in high-use locations, some drainage issues in overuse areas, slope is within one percent of proper field slope, infields have grading problems (bump) at transition to grass and have no additive, may not have proper layout and/or orientation, fencing if present has minor protrusions, or holes/passages that do not affect game play.
3	In poor condition: bare areas throughout the year, uneven playing surface that holds water in certain places, drainage issues, slopes not uniform and/or more than one percent from proper field slope, improper layout and/or orientation; fencing has large protrusions, holes/passages or defects.

Pathways / Trails:

1	In good condition: surface generally smooth and even; proper width and material for type of pathway; proper clearances; minimal drainage issues.
2	In fair condition: uneven surfaces in places; some cracking issues; some cracking, narrow widths in some places.
3	In poor condition: uneven surfaces; inadequate width; significant cracking or heaving; clearance issues.

Skate Park:

1	In good condition: little to no signs of cracking; little or no erosion; elements target a diversity of age groups.
2	In fair condition: some cracking, but still usable; furnishings (i.e. - metal rails) might need spot fixes.
3	In poor condition: parts of the structure are damaged or deteriorated, chipped off or broken; edges of the structure are eroded possibly causing safety issues; elements target a specific / narrow age range.

Site Furnishings:

1	In good condition; not damaged; free of peeling or chipped paint; consistent throughout park. Trash receptacles, drinking fountain, picnic tables, benches on paved surface.
2	In fair condition; 0-20% furnishings are damaged and require replacing parts; some peeling or chipped paint; furnishings are not consistent, but are operational.
3	In poor condition; 20% or more are damaged and require replacing parts; significant peeling or chipped paint; multiple styles within park site require different maintenance.

Parking Areas:

1	In good condition: paving and drainage do not need repair; pavement markings clear; pathway connection provided to facility; proper layout.
2	In fair condition: paving needs patching or has some drainage problems; has wheel stops and curbs.
3	In poor condition: surfaces (gravel, asphalt, or concrete) needs repair; uneven grading; limited signage; no delineation for vehicles.

Natural Areas:

1	In good condition: barely noticeable invasives, high species diversity, healthy plants.
2	In fair conditions: Noticeable invasives, fewer species but still healthy.
3	In poor condition: Invasives have taken over, low diversity, unhealthy plants.

Amphitheater/Stage:

1	In good condition: paving, stage and stair materials have little to no cracking or peeling; vegetation that is present is healthy; seating and other furnishings show modest signs of wear; views to stage from all seating vantage points.
2	In fair condition: paving, stage and stair materials have some cracking or peeling; vegetation that is present is healthy, but some soil compaction might be present; seating and other furnishings show signs of wear, but are still usable; stage orientation not be ideal for all viewers.
3	In poor condition: paving, stage and stair materials have significant cracking or peeling; vegetation is unhealthy (pests, disease, topped trees), compacted soil; seating and other furnishings need repair or replacement; redesign of space is needed for proper viewing and access.

Landscaped Beds:

1	In good condition: few weeds; no bare or worn areas; plants appear healthy with no signs of pest or disease infestation.
2	In fair condition: some weeds present; some bare or worn spots; plants are still generally healthy.
3	In poor condition: many weeds present; large bare or worn areas; plants show signs of pests or disease; compacted soils.

Turf:

1	In good condition: lush and full, few weeds, no drainage problems.
2	In fair condition: some bare spots, some drainage problems.
3	In poor condition: irrigation problems, bare spots, weeds, soil compacted.

Detailed inventories and assessments for each individual park are located on the following pages; however, the following summary offers a composite from on-site observations and recommendations that will contribute to the enhancement of the City's park system, character and sustainability.

Playgrounds

The majority of playground equipment was in good condition. Replacement of play equipment should be scheduled through an asset management program with predicted equipment lifespan aiding the timing for replacement. A regular schedule of playground equipment inspections should continue to be incorporated into the park maintenance routine to ensure continual play-safe structures. Inspections should also note the depth of play safety surfacing to ensure adequate cushioning is provided beneath play structures and swings.

Physical access to playground areas was not always barrier-free. Several parks were noted to lack any ramps or provisions to transfer from park pathway pavement to the lower surfacing of the playground. The drop-off edges varied from 3 to 6 inches, far exceeding the maximum ½-inch tolerance. Typically, engineered wood chip surfacing will settle over time creating a gap between top of chip surface and adjacent hard pavement. Ramps help avoid those transitional barriers between surfaces.

Certain play equipment, particularly slides, was noticeably hot on sunny days – too hot for safe or comfortable use. Incorporating shade structures that cut the number of hours and angle of direct sunlight on play equipment can enhance the park user experience and extend the amount of play value provided at many parks. Where mature trees were adjacent to play structures, the overheating of slides was greatly reduced.

Site Furnishings

Standards for park furnishing such as benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bike racks, trash receptacles and other common amenities used throughout the park system can be instrumental in assuring consistent ADA compliance and streamlined maintenance and repairs. Picnic tables did not provide adequately for wheelchair seating, and many tables were located in grass areas with no accessible route from the park paved paths. Park benches should have backs and armrests and be located along accessible routes with adjacent wheelchair spaces at one end of the bench pad.

Choosing a consistent style and installation design could help simplify park development and future maintenance for site furnishings. As parks are added to the Ridgefield system during residential growth, park designs should include the site furnishings that fit within parks maintenance and standards for the city.

Bollards at trail entries are valuable for discouraging unauthorized vehicles from entering park and trails. However, dark-colored bollards should be discouraged for this purpose. Since they tend to become invisible to cyclists in low light conditions and can become a hazard. At a minimum, some reflective material should be applied to enhance visibility or the bollards switched out with a lighter color.

ADA Accessibility & Compliance

As is common with aging parks, some architectural barriers were present in the park system. Updating and providing ADA accessibility and compliance with federal guidelines should be part of a regular capital repair schedule to ensure the reasonable access on older pavements, parking, playgrounds, picnic amenities, restrooms and recreational elements.

The Ridgefield park system has minor ADA compliance issues with access into playground and swing areas, as well as to site furnishings such as picnic tables and benches. The City will want to develop an ADA Compliance Checklist to identify and prioritize these deficiencies and develop a methodology for bringing all their parks into compliance.

Wayfinding, Identity & Signage

As part of the overall park and trail system, opportunities exist to help navigate visitors and inform them about the public spaces they were entering. One clear need is for park identification signs at the numerous pocket parks throughout Ridgefield. Side entries for parks and open spaces should also include a sign or marker that identifies the name for the public space.

While Ridgefield does have trail signs at many of the entrances points along public rights-of-way, not all trail signs indicate the name of the trail, where the path goes, or other wayfinding information. A good wayfinding system can provide a consistent identity and display effective and accessible information to orient the user. This guidance system ensures efficient use of the trail, park or other public space and conveys safety to the user by translating the environment into a known geography. Signs, symbols, mapping, color, standardized site amenities combined with good design of the physical environment (i.e., trail or park) helps the user navigate the space and stay comfortably oriented.

Ridgefield could expand its wayfinding program to include both visual graphic standards and site furnishing standards. The use of consistent graphics and a coordinated hierarchy of sign types and sizes can provide park and trail users with wayfinding information to enhance their access and knowledge of the recreational system available for their enjoyment. A good wayfinding system applies the “simpler is better” concept.

Ridgefield provides a number of interpretive signs about its history, environmental conditions and the adjacent national wildlife refuge. With a trail system that aligns with its natural forests and stream corridors, the city could consider additional interpretive signs to help visitors appreciate the natural assets and processes around these natural areas. Stormwater basins are a good location for adding signs about water quality and environmental information.

Safety

Many of the park layouts and landscapes meet the basic CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design) principles of good visibility and overall positive perceptions of public safety. Park safety conditions were generally good throughout the park system. At the sport fields in Abrams Park, most, if not all, of the bleachers did not have safety railings. The International Building Code requires safety rails on any bleacher seating with more than two tiers. These older and outdated bleachers should be replaced with IBC-compliant designs.

Buildings & Structures

Ridgefield parks contain multiple structures with a range of ages. Restrooms, picnic shelters and gazebos compose the mix of buildings in most parks. In general, the structures were in good repair. Of note, the well house and stage structures at Abrams Park were showing deteriorating wood siding. Some level of repair or complete renovation should be undertaken for these older buildings. Annual inspections should occur to ensure continual integrity of any buildings, structures, and retaining walls.

Trails & Pavement

Pavement maintenance should address cracks and root upheavals, as well as seams where different pavement types meet (curbs, bridges, sidewalk-to-trail, boardwalks, path to play areas, etc.) and have a tendency to settle at different rates, creating barriers to universal access. Paved park paths that are located near large trees can be subject to root upheavals causing pavement cracks that need to be addressed.

Sport courts and parking should have regularly scheduled repainting to ensure retention of functional court play and identified parking stalls. Basketball courts could have free throw lines painted. Cracks were noted in several sports courts and should be monitored to anticipate the eventual need for resurfacing.

Trails through natural areas should undergo regular inspections to identify potential erosion and surface wear. Common challenges to natural area trails, such as root upheavals, cracking, slumping and eroded edges, can be addressed more readily if treated early. Vegetation control through scheduled brushing is important along natural trails to keep trail corridors open from encroachment.

Some open spaces link neighborhoods and parks and could provide an alternative route to the parks from multiple neighborhoods. Providing multiple safe walking paths encourages residents to walk or bike instead of driving to promote exercise and healthy lifestyles. For example, the open space between Lark and Crow's Nest Park is a potential location for new trails. Existing trails south of this area run east-west and connect Crow's Nest Park to Abrams Park. This existing trail network could be extended to Lark Park. An east-west trail connection between the north end of Lark Drive and Hayden Park would create direct access to more neighbors along a safe route.

Trees & Landscape Maintenance

In general, the trees and landscapes in Ridgefield's parks were in good condition. Turf grass management appears to well-executed. Additional attention may be warranted for shade trees under stress. Ensuring that park trees do not have grass growing at the base of their trunks can help to protect their trunks and roots from mower damage. Also, applying a layer of leaf compost can improve soil health and help sustain tree longevity.

The park inventory and conditions assessment noted that several parks could benefit from additional tree plantings to provide more enhanced shade for park users and tree canopy for environmental benefit. Playground and picnic areas would benefit from more shade trees to provide comfort during sunny days when play equipment can become unusable due to excessive heat.

As a side note, Ridgefield should consider becoming a Tree City, USA. This program helps

recognize a city that values its trees for protecting creeks and water quality, cleaning air and adding beauty to streets, parks and neighborhoods. Enrolling in this national program could further demonstrate the City's commitment to this valuable resource. In addition to pursuing this recognition, the City should consider establishing a tree canopy replacement plan for its parks and provide a capital pruning schedule to ensure proper attention and longevity.

Greenways & Open Space

In general, natural areas did not appear to have severe problems with noxious or invasive plant species. Trails that travel through wetland areas with aggressive cattails and rice grass or other tall wetland vegetation will require regular brushing back to allow comfortable passage of trail users. Regular inspections of rough mown and natural areas should include identification of noxious weeds and initiate control measures to prevent noxious weed takeovers.

Undeveloped Parkland

One neighborhood park site (NP-6, adjacent to dog park) has yet to be developed and has the potential to add more value to Ridgefield's park system. As the city grows, future parks should be carefully planned, designed and implemented to meet the essential public park and recreation standards for design, development and construction of public spaces in Ridgefield.



Abrams Park

44.2 acres

AMENITIES

- Parking Areas
- Restrooms
- Benches
- Trash Receptacles
- Drinking Fountains
- Picnic Tables & Grills
- Park Sign
- Lights
- Irrigated Lawn
- Age 2-5 Play Structure
- Age 5-12 Play Structure (Landscape Structures)
- 2 Swings (1 Toddler, 1 Belt)
- 2 Baseball Fields (with Score Boards)
- 1 Small Baseball Field
- Soccer Field (Multi-Use Field)
- Bleachers
- Concession Stand
- Ticket Booth
- Well Houses
- Horseshoe Pits
- Memorial Kitchen/Events Center
- Plaza Area
- Small Stage
- Open Lawn/Gathering Area
- Interpretive Kiosk
- Memorial Tree Grove
- Trails
- Gee Creek & Natural Areas
- Disc golf course (9-hole)
- Maintenance/Caretaker's Residence
- Bridges (pedestrian & vehicular)

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Parking is limited when games are occurring. Expansion of parking areas recommended.
- Restroom concrete pad entrances are above the surrounding gravel areas, creating a non-ADA compliance issue. To remove barrier, consider paving portions of pathways leading to restrooms.
- Paved path access should be added to the 2-5-year old playground with ramp to address curbed barrier into play area.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Well house structure is deteriorating and should be replaced or renovated.
- Frank Burris Stage is aging and will need repairs or renovation.
- Bleachers need safety railings installed on sides and back to meet International Building Code requirements.



Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex

7.3 acres

AMENITIES

- Soccer fields
- Baseball/softball fields
- Synthetic turf
- Field Lighting
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Concession/scoring tower building
- Paved connections
- Picnic tables
- Spectator seating
- Playground (accessible/5-12 yr old)
- Bike racks
- Landscape plantings

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Limited ADA access to grouped picnic tables.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Shared facility with high school. Plan for synthetic turf replacement funding in long-term capital planning..

Canyon Ridge #1 Park

0.18 acres

AMENITIES

- Picnic Table
- Open Grass Lawn
- Empty Planting Area
- Age 2-5 Play Structure (TimberForm & Pipeline)



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Install groundcover and shrubs where weeds are growing in empty planting beds.
- Playground needs ADA access – add ramp or remove section of curbing.
- Consider adding trail wayfinding information to help trail users navigate the existing pathway system.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted

Canyon Ridge #2 Park

0.31 acres

AMENITIES

- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic tables
- Connected to local trail
- Adjacent to natural area
- Adjacent to stormwater management basin



DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider adding interpretive sign against stormwater basin about treating for water quality and providing habitat..

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted

Cedar Creek Park

0.21 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (2-5 yr-old eqt.)
- Swings (2 strap)
- Paved path connecting to streets
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic table
- Exercise – sit-up bench

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Playground lacks ADA access. Install ramp to overcome barrier to access.
- Playground lacks shade so equipment, especially slide, gets too hot on sunny days. Add shade trees to grass areas next to playground. Consider adding shade structure to play equipment.
- Park lacks identification sign.
- Paved edge to playground is a non-confirming slope and width, creating a tripping hazard and adding little value.
- Exercise sit-up bench could be placed in open grass area, creating more space in play safety surface area for additional play equipment.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Cedar Ridge/Horn Family Park

0.20 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr. old play eqt.)
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Paved path
- Shade trees
- Open grass lawn
- Boulder retaining wall
- Basketball sport court
- 2-rail fence
- Trash receptacle

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add accessible ramp into playground area.
- Plant more trees for shade – especially near playground.
- Consider shade structure for play equipment.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Playground area needs additional engineered wood chips.



Columbia Hills Open Space

0.56 acres

AMENITIES

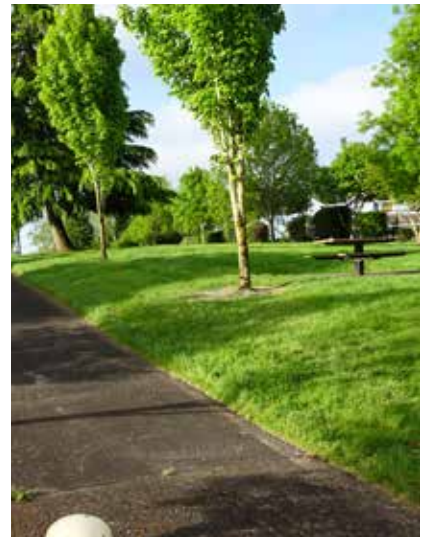
- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic table

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Open space lacks any identification/name as public park or open space. Add park identification sign.
- Amenities (picnic table) have no accessible route. Consider adding another table with paved connection to park path..

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Base of park trees show scarring from mower damage. Maintain mulch rings at base of trees to avoid proximate use of mowers or string trimmers.



Columbia Hills Park

0.35 acres

AMENITIES

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| ■ Playground (5-12 yr. old play eqt.) | ■ Shade trees |
| ■ Swings (2 strap) | ■ Open grass lawn |
| ■ Picnic tables | ■ Boulder retaining wall |
| ■ Benches | ■ Chain link fence |
| ■ Paved path | ■ Trash receptacle |

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add accessible ramp into playground area.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Add mulch or compost to exposed roots of adjacent street trees along Hillhurst.



Community Park

0.37 acres

AMENITIES

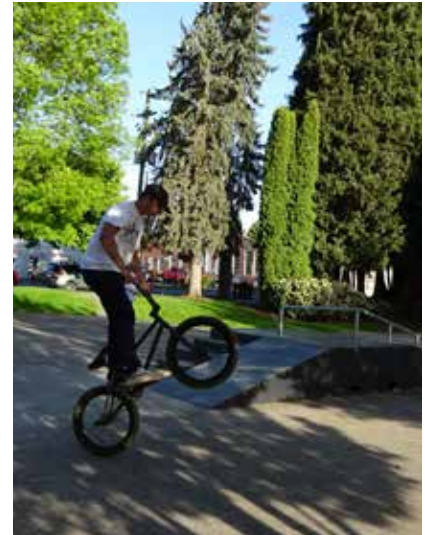
- Skate park
- Veterans Memorial
- Gazebo
- Basketball sport court
- Picnic tables
- Drinking fountain
- Benches
- Shade trees
- Seat walls
- Trash receptacles

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Outdated skate features could be replaced with street skate element and bowl feature.
- Basketball ½ court is rarely used and could be removed to allow more room for skate/bike elements to this popular park.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Coyote Crest Park

0.29 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Planting beds
- Paved path
- Shade trees
- Picnic table
- Trash receptacle
- Benches
- Boulder retaining wall
- Open grass lawn
- Split rail fence

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Park lacks identification sign. Add sign.
- Add ramp into playground to provide barrier-free access.
- Add shade structure to play area.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Landscape planting beds need additional mulch.



Crow's Nest Park

0.50 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Basketball sport court
- Shade trees (along western edge)
- Connected to local trail
- Trash receptacle

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider adding some benches around basketball court.
- Add park identification sign.
- Consider adding shade structure for play equipment. Add shade trees to perimeter of play area.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Trash receptacle is coming apart –needs repair or replacement.
- Remove tree stump.
- Repaint basketball play lines soon.



Davis Park

0.48 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (2-5 yr old)
- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Swings (2 tot; 2 strap)
- Tire swing frame
- Shade trees
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic tables
- Drinking fountains
- Benches
- Park sign
- Trash receptacles

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider adding a small picnic shelter.
- Playground ramp needed to provide barrier-free access.
- Accessible (paved) path should be added to Davis Park connecting the recreational elements between 3rd and Main Streets.
- If basketball sport court is removed from Community Park to provide more room for skate/bike elements, a sport court could be added to Davis Park..

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Dog Park

4.06 acres

AMENITIES

- Fenced off-leash area
- Double-gate entry
- Kiosk & sign
- Water station
- Bench
- Parking (gravel lot)
- Perimeter path (crushed rock)
- Open grass area
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Fire hydrant
- Trash receptacle

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider adding pavement to the handicapped parking spaces at off-leash area entrance gates.
- Consider other directions for perimeter path alignment to avoid paths that go directly up or down hill to avoid susceptibility to erosion.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Loose gravel on pathway is washing out where paths go directly up/down slope. Repairs needed combined with erosion control measures.



Eagle's View Park

0.23 acres

AMENITIES

- Overlook – scenic view to Refuge
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Split rail fence
- Parking (limited, unimproved)
- Shade trees
- Adjacent to forested slope
- Rock sculpture

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign.
- Consider adding interpretive sign about overlooking Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge.
- Consider better definition of entrance, walkway and connection to amenities. Defining those spaces could leave more room for native plantings

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Goldfinch Park

0.13 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (2-5 yr old)
- Swings (2-toddler)
- Paved path loop
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic table
- Bench
- Chain link perimeter fence
- Trash receptacle

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign.
- Plant shade trees in available spaces.
- Playground needs ramp to create accessible route from paved path into wood chips.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Hayden Park

1.72 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Swings (2-tot; 2-strap)
- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Basketball sport court
- Shade trees
- Small parking area (4 spaces)
- Lighting (at parking lot)
- Trash receptacles
- Retaining wall
- Perimeter chain link fence
- Park sign

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Consider adding shade structure to play equipment. Slide gets too hot for use on sunny days.
- Plan on resurfacing basketball sports court to improve uneven play surface.
- Install plantings in empty beds between path and fence. Re-establish grass between parking and play area.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Install sign for handicapped parking space.
- Ensure ongoing playground surface maintenance (maintain adequate engineered wood chip depth).
- Add ramp into play area for ADA access.



Lark Park

0.61 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Swings (2-tot; 2-strap)
- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Little Free Library
- Park identification sign
- Trash receptacles
- Perimeter chain link fence

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Create an accessible route to and into playground area from paved path.
- Consider adding shade structure for play equipment.
- Consider adding a small picnic shelter on an accessible route.
- Add more shade trees to park area, especially near picnic tables and benches.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain playground surface (maintain adequate depth for engineered wood chips).



Marsh Park

0.24 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Paved access path
- Open grass lawn
- Picnic table
- Bench
- Trash receptacle
- Split rail fence
- Adjacent to local trail
- Adjacent to natural area

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Park needs identification sign.
- Add accessible ramp into playground area for ADA compliance.
- Consider adding a shade structure to play equipment. Slide gets too hot for use on sunny days.
- Young child/user recommended adding swings and a teeter totter.
- Plant more shade trees in park..

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain playground surface (maintain adequate depth for engineered wood chips).



Osprey Pointe Park

0.70 acres

AMENITIES

- Playground (5-12 yr old)
- Paved ramp
- Stairs
- Open grass lawn
- Retaining wall
- Dog waste bag dispenser
- Adjacent to natural forested area

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign.
- Park has minimal amenities and could benefit from addition of picnic table, bench, trash receptacle and added play equipment.
- Consider adding a small picnic shelter on an accessible route.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain playground surface (maintain adequate depth for engineered wood chips).



Overlook Park

1.16 acres

AMENITIES

- Plaza with stage platform
- Restrooms
- Public Art/Sculptures
- Paved path
- Open grass lawn
- Viewpoint
- Seat walls
- Bench
- Interpretive signs
- Lighting

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign.
- Consider adding more benches.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- None noted



Ridgefield Woods Park

0.24 acres

AMENITIES

- Basketball sport court
- Paved path
- Picnic table
- Open grass lawn
- Perimeter landscape beds
- Trash receptacle

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign.
- Consider adding more recreational amenities as well as benches and picnic tables.
- Add native canopy trees and shrubs to existing bare planting areas.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Planted areas need more mulch or compost coverage.



Rose Homestead Park

1.09 acres

AMENITIES

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ Basketball court | ■ Benches |
| ■ Paved path | ■ Trash receptacles |
| ■ Open grass lawn | ■ Bike rack |
| ■ Landscape beds | ■ Adjacent to natural area |
| ■ Picnic tables | ■ Split rail fence |

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

- Add park identification sign on Pioneer Canyon Road frontage.
- Consider adding more shade trees near basketball court and along park pathway.
- Consider adding small picnic shelter with accessible route near basketball court.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- Landscape beds needed weeding.
- Consider phasing out non-native plant species and replacing with native plants.



ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL INVENTORY

Trails

Since 2005, Ridgefield has developed additional public trails through coordination with residential development. There are a number of trails within new neighborhoods, some of which include segments of the planned Gee Creek Trail. The City of Ridgefield has 1.48 miles of trails in Abrams Park, along Gee Creek, and parallel to Reiman Road. Trails also exist in the Bellwood Heights, Heron Ridge, Cedar Ridge, Pioneer Canyon, Canyons Ridge, Osprey Pointe and Wishing Wells subdivisions. Citywide, Ridgefield offers 11.3 miles of trails, but some trail segments consist of informal paths with limited constructed improvements. The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge also provides 3.6 miles of trails (see the Regional Resources section that follows).

The City and Port of Ridgefield, as well as representatives from the Refuge and other conservation and recreation advocates, helped plan the Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail that extends through Ridgefield along Lake River. This water trail identifies appropriate routes that allow small watercraft, such as canoes, kayaks, rafts, and stand-up paddleboards, to access recreational, scenic and cultural resources along the river and shorelines. The Water Trail connects 32 miles of waterways in Clark and Cowlitz Counties including Vancouver Lake, the full extent of Lake River, a section of the Columbia River along the west side of Bachelor Island, the Bachelor Island Slough and the confluences of the Lewis and Lake Rivers. The Water Trail features sites of historic significance, the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, two state wildlife areas (Shillapoo and Two Forks), a state park (Paradise Point) and hundreds of acres of conservation lands allowing ample opportunities for wildlife viewing. The Port of Ridgefield provides two of the most central water access points for this trail at the Mill Street boat launch and Division Street kayak launch.

School Facilities

In partnership between the Ridgefield School District and the City, the recently constructed Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex located at the Ridgefield High School offers all-weather sports fields for school and community baseball, softball, and soccer. The new complex illustrates the importance of schools as a community resource for recreation facilities, such as sports fields and playgrounds. Ridgefield High School, View Ridge Middle School, Sunset Ridge Intermediate School, South Ridge Elementary School, and Union Ridge Elementary School are important sites for community recreation, as well as education. The Ridgefield School District also provides community programming for the public, in addition to its interscholastic and intramural athletic programs for district students.

Sports Programs for Youth

Area soccer clubs provide recreation through advanced soccer programs for boys and girls ages 5 through 19. Some clubs include Lewis River Soccer Club, Pacific Soccer Club and Pacific FC. The Ridgefield Little League provides baseball and softball opportunities from T-ball through Junior leagues (ages 5 to 14). Clark County Youth Football provides a tackle football program for youth throughout Clark County. The Greater Northwest Conference of Pop Warner provides football and cheerleading programs in Oregon and southwest Washington. The Conference is divided into seven associations using local school districts as boundaries. Ridgefield residents participate in the North County Wildcats Association. Ridgefield Runners sponsors running events including a Fourth of July Run, Holiday Fun Run, and the Ridge Run.

REGIONAL RESOURCES

Resources within the Ridgefield Planning Area

The Port of Ridgefield, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Clark County provide important recreation resources within the Ridgefield planning area. These resources are listed in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Existing Inventory: Other Open Space Lands

Resource	Owner	Acreage
Ridgefield Cemetery	City of Ridgefield	9.79
Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge	US Fish and Wildlife	5,150.00
Boat Launch	Port of Ridgefield	0.18
Kayak Launch	Port of Ridgefield	0.10
Flume Creek Conservation Area	Clark County	160.00
Total		5,320.07

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is located immediately west of Ridgefield and serves as a primary reserve for migrating waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway. The Refuge protects over 5,200 acres of floodplain and wetland habitat and provides important wintering habitat for migrating waterfowl, including the dusky Canada goose and lesser Sandhill cranes. Recreational and educational opportunities include wildlife viewing and walking opportunities along two hiking trails – the 2.1-mile Oak to Wetlands Trail, a 1.5-mile Kiwa Trail loop – and a 4-mile auto tour route. The Refuge is considering expanding public trail access through a new trail in the Carty unit. This potential trail could connect pedestrian access from the City and another trail that would allow walking in the River ‘S’ unit near the visitor parking area.

The historic Cathlapotle town site is also located within the Refuge. This historic and cultural site is one of the best-preserved Native American sites in the Northwest United States and was visited by the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1806. The Refuge can be accessed by car from NW Hall Palace Road or by watercraft along Lake River and the Bachelor Island Slough.

The Friends of the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, a non-profit organization, works directly with the National Wildlife Refuge staff to enhance their education and interpretation programs and support their conservation efforts. In addition to their work within the Refuge, the Friends host the annual BirdFest every October to celebrate the return of many migrating waterfowl. The BirdFest celebration includes guided hikes, environmental interpretation, birding outings, bluegrass music and kayaking tours. This event is a significant attraction for Ridgefield.

The Port of Ridgefield’s Lake River frontage offers water access and recreational opportunities adjacent to downtown Ridgefield. The property runs along Lake River from Mill Street to Division Street and includes a formal boat launch (at Mill Street), an informal kayak launch (at Division Street), a 0.75-mile trail connecting the two launches, restrooms, and a picnic area overlooking the river.

The Port and the City of Ridgefield have cooperated to develop the Mill Street boat launch and the Division Street kayak launch. From either launch, the paddle along Lake River and beyond provides wildlife viewing experiences through portions of the Refuge. The boat launch provides

two concrete ramps with adjacent docks for loading and unloading motor and paddle boats into Lake River and is adjacent to McCuddy's Marina. From the boat launch, fishermen and other boaters can travel 2 miles to connect to the Columbia River's expansive water and fishing resources. The informal kayak launch at the end of Division Street provides easy access for paddlers to launch on Lake River and avoid the congestion of fishing boats at the Mill Street boat launch facility.

McCuddy's Ridgefield Marina, adjacent to the Port boat launch facility, is a convenient option for fishermen and boaters who prefer to access the northern Columbia River. Within the marina, Ridgefield Kayak provides kayak rentals and guided trips. The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge abuts the marina - offering boaters a quiet natural setting.

Other Nearby Resources

Ridgefield's location in Clark County provides community residents with access to a broad range of nearby recreation resources, such as state and county parks, fairgrounds and a public golf course. This proximity to regional recreation means that Ridgefield is not the sole recreation provider in the area and gives residents a choice for leisure services.

Clark County provides regional park and open space facilities, including the East Fork Lewis River Greenway, Fairgrounds Park, Whipple Creek Park, Lewisville Park, Frenchman's Bar Park, Vancouver Lake Park, and Mud Lake (undeveloped). Clark County also owns and operates the 80-acre primitive campground, Bratton Canyon (formerly the Woodland DNR campground), located three miles east of Woodland on NW 389th Street. In addition, Clark County owns and maintains the Tri Mountain Golf Course, a public course.

Washington State Parks and Recreation owns and operates Paradise Point State Park, which encompasses 88 acres and 6,180 feet of freshwater shoreline on the East Fork of the Lewis River immediately east of I-5. As another water access point along the 32-mile water trail, the state park is connected to Ridgefield through contiguous waterways. The National Park Service operates and maintains the 164-acre Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, which is located in Vancouver near the Columbia River.

The Clark County Event Center is a 170-acre campus with five multi-purpose facilities that host a wide variety of events each year. The Exhibition Hall features 97,200 square feet of show space. Additional facilities on the grounds include an Equestrian Arena, The Grandstands, a collection of Livestock Buildings and three halls. The Clark County Fair has been providing concerts, family activities, exhibitions and livestock events for more than 135 years.

Private Development

Open spaces held by private Home Owners' Associations provide existing and potential opportunities for park and recreation facilities. Typically, land within a residential development that is not suitable for construction or located within critical areas (i.e., environmentally sensitive lands, steep slopes, etc) is retained as open space tracts. At the present, privately held open space tracts account for 175.3 acres of lands set aside from development.

Numerous residential developments in Ridgefield are in various stages of completion, and several contain open space networks. Some developments own and maintain pocket parks,

with Tavemer Ridge an example of providing two privately owned pocket parks for its subdivision. Ridgefield has encouraged trail connections through the development process and many segments of the Gee Creek Trail have dedicated alignments, informal improvements or actual trails constructed.



5 | SYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The following needs assessment synthesizes and articulates the community's needs for Ridgefield's park and recreation system. This chapter explores and addresses park and recreation activity, facility and programming needs and priorities. It relies heavily on public input from the community survey and public events, in addition to site inventories and regional and national recreation trends. By considering the location, size and number of facilities by type and use, along with community interests and priorities, this Plan evaluates the existing and projected demand for park and recreation amenities. This assessment provides a foundation for the six-year capital facilities plan (see Chapter 6), which identifies and prioritizes crucial upgrades, improvements and expansions consistent with the needs expressed by residents.

RECREATION TRENDS

The following summaries from recognized park and recreation resources provide background on national, state and local trends that may reflect potential recreational activities and facilities for future consideration in Ridgefield's park system. Examining current recreation trends can help inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities that may enhance the community and create a more vibrant parks system as it moves into the future.

National Recreational Trends

The Outdoor Participation Report

According to *2018 Outdoor Participation Report*, published by the Outdoor Foundation in Boulder, Colorado, more than 146.1 million Americans (49%) participated in an outdoor activity at least once in 2017. These outdoor participants went on a total of 10.9 billion outdoor outings, a decrease from 11.0 billion in 2016. Participation in outdoor recreation, team sports and indoor fitness activities vary by an individual's age. Recent trend highlights include the following:

- Twenty percent (20%) of outdoor enthusiasts participated in outdoor activities at least twice per week.
- Running, including jogging and trail running, was the most popular activity among Americans when measured by number of participants and by number of total annual outings.
- Nineteen percent (19%) of outdoor participants lived in the South Atlantic region of the US, making its population the most active in outdoor activities.
- Walking for fitness was the most popular crossover activity where 45.8% of all outdoor participants also walked.
- Data shows that adults who were introduced to the outdoors as children were more likely to participate in outdoor activities during adulthood than those who were not exposed to the outdoors as children.
- The biggest motivator for outdoor participation was getting exercise.

Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report

Prepared by a partnership of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and the Physical Activity Council (PAC), this 2018 participation report establishes levels of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation in the US. The largest focus of activities continues to be toward fitness sports. Winter sports gained the most of all categories, increasing 2% over the last year. The interest in activities has started moving toward outdoor recreation. The top aspirational activity for all age segments was outside, ranging from camping to biking to birdwatching.

Fitness sports/activities continues to have the highest participation rates; having 64% of the US population ages 6 and over engaging in activities like running/jogging, high intensity/impact training, row machines, and swimming. Outdoor activities remained second but was flat from 2016; seeing an increase in day hiking and backpacking, but lost participants in canoeing and adventure racing.

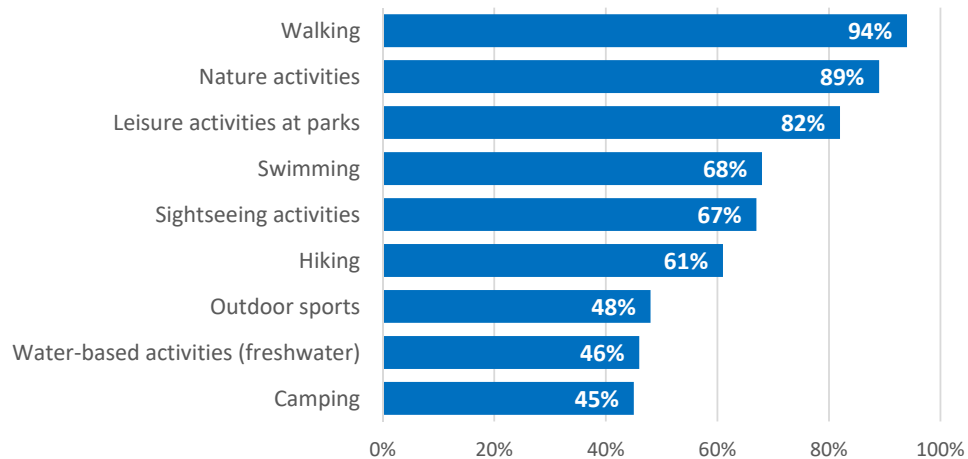
While age clearly affects how often someone participates, what they do can also be age dependent. Young kids, ages 6 to 17, who tend to be more active overall, focus on team sports and outdoor activities. While Boomers prefer fitness activities, especially low impact such as aquatic exercise, cycling, and walking. Millennials are more likely than the other generations to participate in water sports, such as stand up paddling, boardsailing and surfing.

Statewide Recreational Trends

The Washington Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) document is a five-year statewide recreation plan and guides decision-makers in better understanding statewide

recreation issues and is required to help maintain Washington’s eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars. The SCORP is designed to determine outdoor recreation issues and opportunities and helps explore local park and recreation planning strategies. It includes valuable data on current trends in recreation participation and demand in Washington. Findings from the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) were evaluated to help inform planning and funding considerations for future park and recreational facilities.

Figure 10. Statewide Participation Rates by Outdoor Activity (2018 SCORP)



The 2018-2022 Washington SCORP confirms that outdoor recreation is still an integral part of life for most Washington residents, 90% participate in the most popular category of activities, which includes walking and hiking, demonstrating the pervasiveness of outdoor recreation in Washington’s culture. Significant increases in rates of participation in outdoor recreation activities since 2006 indicate the importance of the state and local communities to continue their investment in outdoor recreation facilities and opportunities.

The 2018 SCORP includes five priority areas to meet the needs of Washington State residents. Listed below with their accompanying recommendations, these priorities seek to address current needs and plan for future demands for recreation and conservation. The 2018 SCORP Recommendations encourage local park and recreation service providers to:

- **Sustain and Grow the Legacy of Parks, Trails and Conservation Lands:** Through renovation of existing facilities; regional solutions; partnerships; coordination; and planning for growth.
- **Improve Equity in Parks, Trails and Conservation Lands:** By connecting more people to recreation; building facilities in underserved areas; providing experiences where people go most; and enhancing community health and safety.
- **Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics:** By creating new and diverse opportunities that accommodate the active senior population
- **Get Youth Outside:** By providing a variety of high-quality facilities, activities, and programs for youth.
- **Position as a Vital Public Service:** By promoting outdoor recreation and conservation, and their benefits; improving communication tools and mapping; and maintaining adequate funding.

Summaries from other national and state recreation studies appears in Appendix E.

Focus on Paddlesports

In 2018, 22.9 million Americans (approximately 7.6% of the population) engaged in at least one paddling activity — in kayaks, rafts, canoes and stand up paddle boards. Recreational kayaking is the most popular form of paddling, with about 5.1 percent of Americans participating in 2018. Paddlesports have become increasingly popular in the past five years. Female participation has increased by 3% since 2016. Although stand up paddling has the highest rate of female participation out of all of the paddlesports, recreational kayaking is close behind

A majority of paddlers participate in order to get outside, get exercise, or spend time with family and friends. In terms of specific paddlesports, recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity and seems to be replacing many Americans' desires to canoe. Stand up paddling, on the other hand, doesn't have nearly as high a participation rate as either canoeing or recreational kayaking, but its popularity has soared in recent years, gaining 1.5 million participants since 2013.

Outdoor Foundation, *Special Report on Paddlesports & Safety*, 2019



LOCAL INTERESTS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

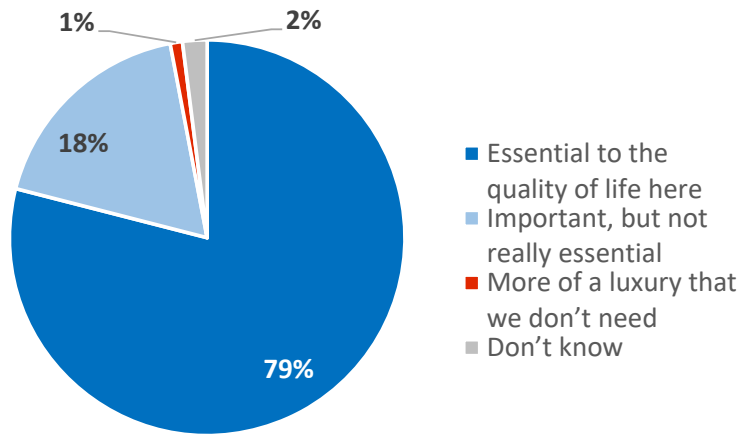
Local recreation interests were explored through a variety of public engagement methods to gather feedback on the strengths of and opportunities for park and recreational resources available to Ridgefield residents. Public outreach included a community survey, stakeholder discussions, an open house to review opportunities across the park system, and pop-up displays at several community events.

Community Feedback

In the 2014 Plan community survey, Ridgefield residents were generally satisfied with their park and recreation system and generally felt it met their needs. Maintaining existing parks and trails, providing new and unique park facilities as the city continues to grow, and providing recreation programs for children were high priorities. Completing a trail system to connect the community to its homes, businesses, schools, parks and natural areas were also a priority for future spending.

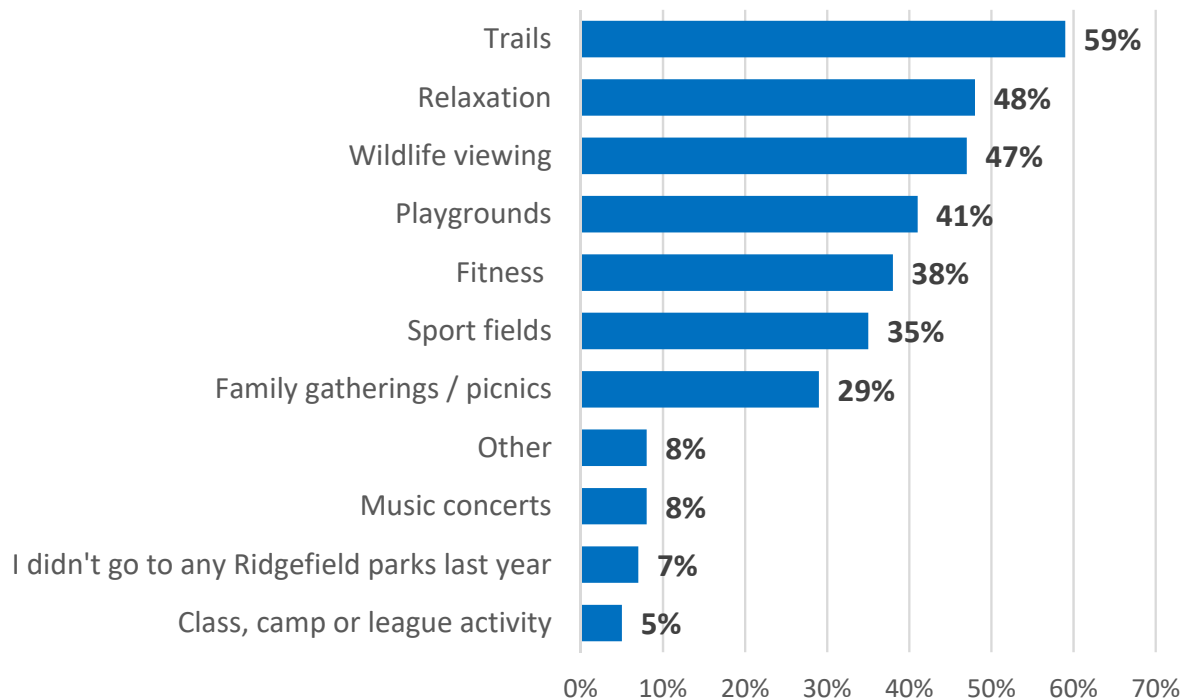
In the recent December 2019 community survey report ("City of Ridgefield Engagement and Priority Assessment"), parks remained very important but were seen less as a primary driver of outcomes. Survey respondents cited the need for more walking and biking trails that integrate with downtown access and the need for more river access. Notably, the 2019 report showed the level of satisfaction with community events has increased since the 2014 survey. In the 2019 survey, close to 80% of respondents indicated that parks were essential to the quality of life in Ridgefield.

Figure 11. Sentiment about the Importance of Parks and Recreation



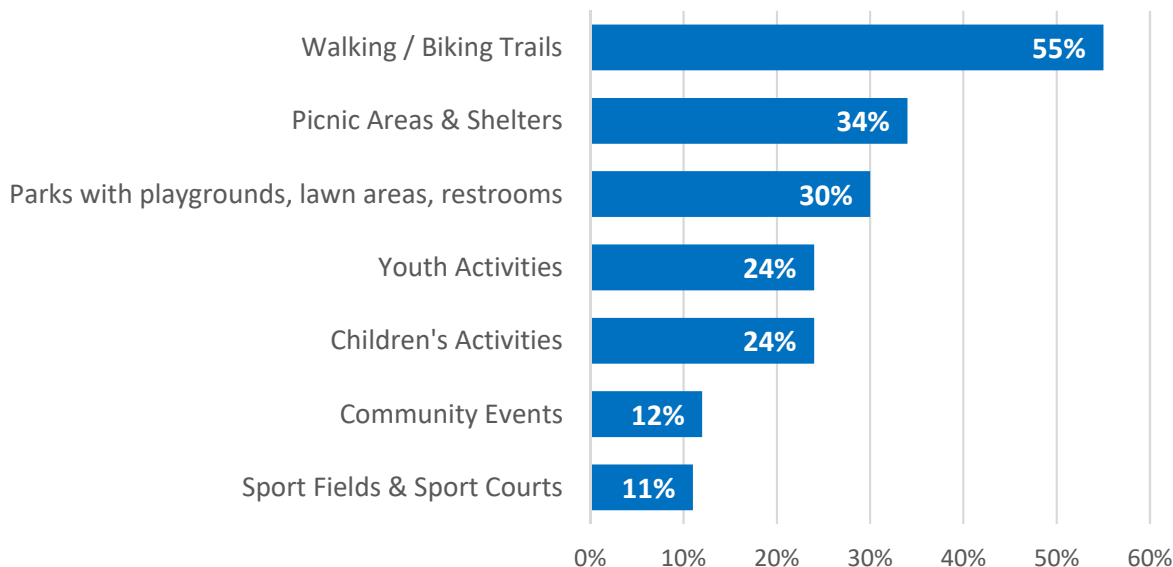
The 2019 survey reported that using trails was the main reason for respondents visiting park system facilities. Relaxation, wildlife viewing and playgrounds were noted as the next most-cited reasons for visiting parks. Sports fields, fitness and family gatherings/picnics also ranked as strong reasons for park use.

Figure 12. Main Reasons Survey Respondents Visit Parks



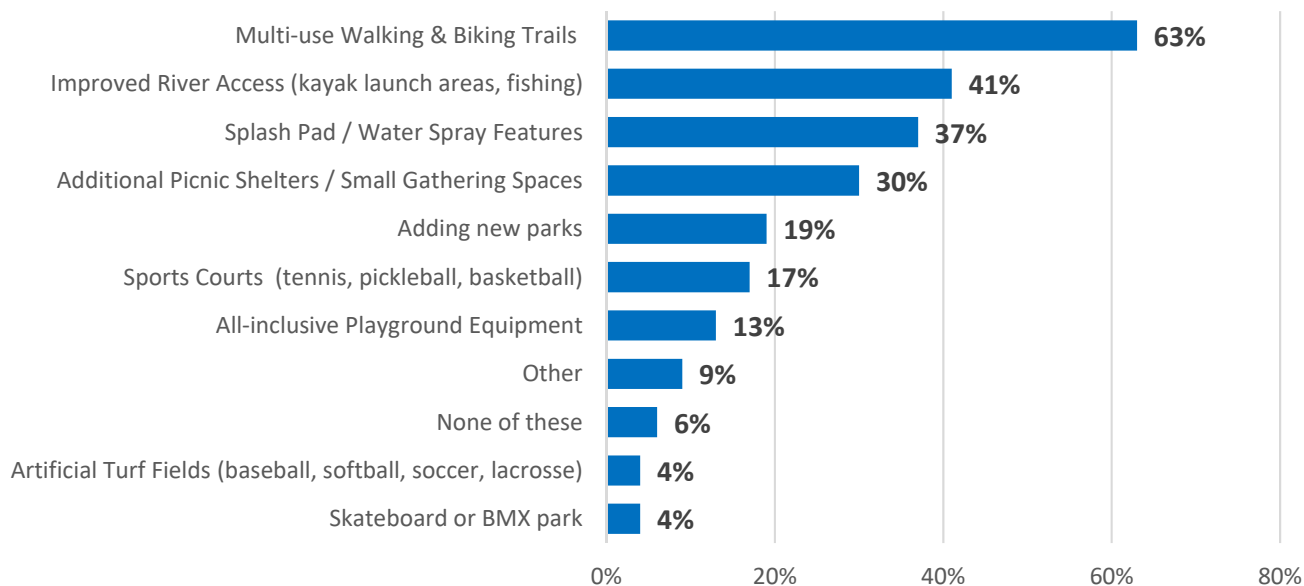
The survey report revealed that the majority of respondents felt that Ridgefield had just the right amount of parks, sports fields, picnic areas & shelters, but not enough walking & hiking trails.

Figure 13. Inadequacy of Supply for Various Recreation Amenities



When questioned about the need for future park amenities, multi-use walking and biking trails soared above other priorities with over 60% of recreational choices. More river access and splash pad/spray park features led the secondary choices for future improvements.

Figure 14. Support for Various Recreational Amenities



Conditions of park maintenance ranked in higher satisfaction levels with the only low score cited with regard to bicycle accommodations.

Stakeholder input identified some key improvements to be pursued in the near future for Ridgefield's park system. Key park developments included upgraded (or full replacement site for) skate park features, NP-6 park development, and Rosauers site park development. Key park improvements included the addition of a splash pad, nature playground and non-motorized boat launch. The trail system has continued to rank highly as a prioritized public improvement helping to connect neighborhoods, schools, parks, the downtown, open spaces, the Port and Refuge. Extending the regional Lewis and Clark Trail to Ridgefield from Vancouver also has risen higher as a priority that should be advocated for, in partnership with the Refuge and the County.

PARK SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS

Active Spaces & Places

In addition to its developed parks, Ridgefield has a number of public events and celebrations that require a fair amount of flexible open spaces to accommodate the activities, vendors and participants involved with these occurrences. BirdFest & Bluegrass, the Big Paddle, Farmer's Market and other events use the public spaces in downtown. As the community continues to grow, more open public areas are needed and the parking to accommodate the events needs to be coordinated. For local residents attending these community activities, a more connected trail system could help supplement the need for additional parking while allowing for transportation alternatives to the downtown area.

Overlook Park, Community Park and Davis Park in combination provide the basic infrastructure to support additional special events in downtown. The promotion of downtown as an active space would be furthered through the siting and development of a new riverfront park in partnership with the Port. Exploration of additional parking provisions should also seek options for supporting these active outdoor spaces.

Community Parks

Abrams Park is the focal point for the range of community park recreational amenities with its mix of sports fields, playgrounds, trails, disc golf, picnic shelter, stage, creek and natural areas. The community park service area is not restricted to walking distance as many park users come from further away to participate in sports activities, family gatherings, events and general recreation. However, another community park is needed to help provide for the recreation needs of today's population and to accommodate anticipated growth. The location of the next community park should serve Ridgefield residents who live more than two miles from Abrams Park.

Neighborhood & Pocket Parks

With five neighborhood parks (3 developed and 2 undeveloped) and 14 pocket parks, small park spaces comprise a large proportion of Ridgefield's park system. Many of the smaller parks have been constructed by developers in conjunction with residential growth. While they generally

contain play equipment and a few site furnishings, space is limited and residents must travel further to get a wider range of more active recreational facilities.

Conceptual planning is currently underway for the NP-6 property, which is located immediately east of the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge at Refuge Road. A portion of the 20.7-acre site has been developed as an off-leash dog park (4.1 acres) with a fenced area, watering station, information kiosk and parking. The rest of the site offers an opportunity to highlight Ridgefield's relation to the Refuge. Ideas for this future park include making the park a gateway to the Refuge, with a focus on natural or passive program elements. Amenities may include nature play space, community gardens, interpretive displays, picnicking and a meditation garden or labyrinth. This park may also include a restroom and off-street parking.

The Refuge is currently undergoing a new bridge project over the railroad and river and has plans for enhanced walking trails and potential water access on the west bank of Lake River. These improvements will make the park and trail elements of NP-6 a strong candidate for future grant or volunteer support.

Future neighborhood park locations should be planned concurrently with future residential growth to ensure capturing the most beneficial access and walkability for the growing community. The gap mapping analyses should help determine potential locations for future park sites.

Special Use Facilities & New Park Amenities

In addition to land-banking for future parks, new park amenities or facilities could be considered for development within existing parks or as components of future sites.

- **Splash pad or spray ground:** Splash pads and spray grounds are water play features that are very popular and provide a means of integrating aquatics into parks at a relatively low cost. Ridgefield should consider at least two spray grounds in community parks, one north of Pioneer Street and the other south of Pioneer Street. This special use amenity typically is supported by parking and restrooms, since it draws users from a wider area. Although a neighborhood park, Davis Park may be a good site for a spray ground because of its downtown location.
- **Skateboard/BMX Facilities:** Ridgefield should explore the replacement of the portable skate park features at Ridgefield Community Park with a permanent concrete park at a central location that also provides parking, a restroom and possibly lighting. The City should incorporate a permanent, concrete skate park that provides a variety of challenges into the park system as a replacement and upgrade to the existing facility. This facility should be designed with the input of local skaters, and should be suitable for development in phases. Since this facility may require a different location, preferably within reach of downtown and keeping it accessible to local youth, the complete replacement of the skate park may be many years in the future. In the meanwhile, the existing portable amenities need replacement to sustain the active use and engagement of current and future skate and bike users. The City should also consider incorporating small-scale skateboard/BMX features into neighborhood and community park sites, as appropriate.
- **All-Inclusive Playground:** The City should consider the installation of an all-inclusive playground to expand options for local children with special needs and to accommodate access for caregivers. It should be designed to provide a safe place where children of all abilities can play together and are developmentally appropriate for children with and without disabilities. Examples include Harper's Playground in North Portland, in addition to Couch Park (inner NW Portland) and Gabriel Park (SW Portland).

Recreation Facilities & Programs

Sport Fields

The City currently does not provide youth athletic programs, but rather works in support of the various youth leagues and organizations with regard to field access and broad dialogue about long-term field needs and facility planning. A number of community sports leagues serve the Ridgefield community including:

- Ridgefield Little League
- Kalama-Woodland-Ridgefield-La Center (Babe Ruth) League
- Pacific Soccer Club
- Clark County Youth Football

With the recent completion of the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex, a shared recreation facility between the City and Ridgefield School District, the sport field infrastructure within the City has increased dramatically. The lighting and all-weather surfacing also extend the seasons and times when community leagues and school teams can conduct practices, games and tournaments. The new fields may serve to meet the current and near future demand for sports fields, depending on scheduling and shared use policies.

Abrams Park still provides sports fields for community and league use and the new Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex should relieve some of the pressure on the natural grass fields at Abrams Park - allowing for periods of recovery and regrowth of turfgrass. If the sports complex cannot meet the growing need for sports fields, some consideration should be given to upgrading the Abrams Park fields to all-weather surfacing.

Outdoor Sport Courts

A current deficit and limited distribution of sport courts exists within Ridgefield. School sites provide limited access to basketball courts, and numerous “street” hoops were noted during the inventory process and reinforced the demand for sport courts. Only two outdoor basketball courts and two additional basketball goals (under-sized, not full courts) are provided within the City’s park system, and no public tennis, pickleball or volleyball courts exist within the City, except for the outdoor tennis courts located at Ridgefield High School.

Recommendations for Sport Courts

- Outdoor basketball courts should be provided for new community parks with smaller sport court sizes within new neighborhood parks. The addition of a covered basketball court could provide extended sports use well through the wet winter months. Such a covered court could also be striped for alternative activities that can share the space such as four-square, funnel ball, Pickleball and other paved surface games.
- Ridgefield currently has no pickleball or tennis courts available within public parks. Outdoor pickleball and/or tennis courts should be considered at new community parks, if desired by residents.
- Ridgefield currently has no outdoor volleyball courts. Sand volleyball courts facilitate league play and provide for older teens and adult sports activity. These should be considered for inclusion in future community parks if desired by residents.

Indoor Recreation Facilities

Indoor recreation facilities are highly valuable during the school year when outdoor fields and facilities support limited uses due to Pacific Northwest weather conditions. Coordination with the School District is an essential element for providing community and youth recreation programming. The sale of the Community Center to facilitate the development of a new Ridgefield Community Library (associated with the Fort Vancouver Regional Library system) has resulted in the loss of some community meeting room space.

It is expected that new public projects in Ridgefield will include meeting rooms to replace meeting space from the converted community center. Additional recreation, fitness and community space is needed at affordable rates to promote wellness, active recreation and social engagement. While traditional standards for service demand for recreation centers are based on a population benchmark with the idea that one recreation center could be supported by a population of 20,000 to 40,000, the City's projected population will remain below those targets. This suggests the need for a partnership strategy to meet the community need, while being financially pragmatic and avoiding the potential of a significant operating subsidy.

Recommendations for Indoor Recreation Facilities

- The City should continue to coordinate with the School District on the development of indoor gymnasium spaces to make them available to the general public. An agreement should be developed between the City and School District that details joint use responsibilities and policies, including financial and maintenance responsibility.
- Partnerships will be necessary to offset development and operational costs of a community recreation center, so the City should continue discussions with local agency partners (school district, La Center, Battle Ground) and with operators (e.g. YMCA) to explore options for the development and operations for a future center.

Trails & Linkages

Ridgefield's trail system continues to grow to eventually connect all parts of the city together, with linkages to downtown, schools, neighborhoods, greenway corridors and park sites. The recreational trail system focuses on off-street connections to serve pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorized recreational and transportation needs. Renewed focus should now target the connection to the larger, regional network that includes Clark County and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge trails. The regional trail is on the adopted county trail plan and would serve to connect local residents to greater recreational assets across the county and neighboring cities. The regional trail could connect Ridgefield through the Refuge into Vancouver and along its waterfront. The neighboring cities of Camas and Washougal continue to piece together their waterfront trail along the Columbia River to create an exceptional trail resource. Within Ridgefield, linkages should continue to be implemented between individual residential developments and the citywide trail system.

The on-street bike route and sidewalk system meet transportation needs, but also supplement the off-street system by providing linkages and offering connections where off-street connections are presently unfeasible. The continued improvements to the on-street network are guided by the City's Transportation System Plan.

Stakeholders, Parks Board members and community meeting participants support the expansion of a trail system for pedestrians and bicycles. The 2019 City of Ridgefield Engagement and Priority

Assessment (community-wide survey) report identified the continuing needs to provide for more connections across the City's trail system and to create linkages that allow for access to downtown and create better, safer accommodations for bicycle traffic. When asked about what improvements were needed in the downtown, more integrated walking access and more walking trails were among the top themes for downtown improvements.

The proposed trail system will provide logical pathway connections to key destinations, and these pathways should be comfortable and convenient for the community to use. Some feedback commented that more information should be readily available about existing trails within the City.

Recommendations for the Trails Network

This Plan recommends the development of more detailed trail signage standards, route and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and facilities and an informational brochure identifying existing and planned trail facilities.

- The Gee Creek Trail will become the core spine of the growing Ridgefield trail system. Efforts should continue to establish the continuous trail along Gee Creek approximately 3.5-4 miles in length to link major local destinations.
- Hillhurst and Pioneer Streets serve as main transportation corridors for the City and, as feasible, should be upgraded to provide for sidewalks, off-road trails or other methods for accommodating safe pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Other potential trail connections are identified on Map 7 and in the Capital Facilities Plan.
- Additionally, the City should endeavor to upgrade existing trail segments to provide uniform width, surfacing and maintenance, as appropriate for the trail setting, for the benefit of trail users. Current trail surfacing ranges from wood chips to gravel to paved, and these transitions may create accessibility challenges for some users. Also, existing trail segments should be maintained to remove encroaching vegetation and non-native or invasive species.

Trail Towns: Capturing Trail-based Tourism

Trail towns are destinations along long-distance trails that can provide goods and services within easy access of trail users. A trail town encourages trail users to visit and welcomes them with warm hospitality. Trails users find their trail experiences are more enjoyable with the support services and local amenities that enhance their travels and add uniqueness to their experiences. Basic elements of a trail town strategy include:

- Enticing trail users to get off the trail and into your town
- Welcoming trail users to your town by making information about the community readily available at the trail
- Making a strong and safe connection between your town and the trail
- Educating local businesses on the economic benefits of meeting trail tourists' needs
- Recruiting new businesses or expanding existing ones to fill gaps in the goods or services that trail users need
- Promoting the "trail-friendly" character of the town
- Working with neighboring communities to promote the entire trail corridor as a tourist destination.



Greenways, Refuge & Other Natural Areas

Ridgefield's greenway network includes wildlife habitat, creek corridors, and wooded slopes which create unique connections as habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as areas for special and/or endangered plant species to thrive. The City's network includes areas protected by the Critical Areas Ordinance and incorporates privately-held subdivision open space tracts. The proximity to the extensive natural areas within the Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge provide further habitat and species diversity along the Columbia River. As a gateway community to the Refuge, Ridgefield benefits from the attraction to visitors through provided services for food, gas, and related economic activities. The ecological benefit of the larger, extended land and water habitats serve to sustain more local and migratory species and draw attention to birders, tourists and other nature-related outdoor recreation. Enhancing those connections to nature can be forwarded by extending the city trail system through its greenway corridors as much as feasible.

The City's greenway corridor and easement acquisition efforts should be focused toward locations that support of the expansion of the trail network. In future growth locations, the City should encourage the holding of greenways as development common areas or tracts, whenever possible, and include public access easements or rights over those tracts to minimize maintenance demands while allowing future development for public use. In areas where the private open space tracts overlap with mapped critical areas, the City should request additional lands within these set-asides to accommodate trail connections that do not encroach upon the critical areas.

Recommendations for Greenways

The City should continue to protect, link and expand the critical areas throughout Ridgefield via developer set-asides and limited direct purchases to further the recreation trail program. Critical riparian areas along stream corridors offer an opportunity to weave nature throughout the community, protect critical habitat and create a broader network of trails.

- The City should consider ways in which existing stormwater facilities and wetlands, including multiple publicly-owned sites, could be integrated into a natural area system and include nature-based education opportunities.
- The City should continue to coordinate with staff from the Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge to enable additional, safe pedestrian access to the Refuge, as well as jointly promote the Refuge and Ridgefield as an outdoor lifestyles community.
- The City could consider utilizing volunteers to aid in trail improvements, habitat restoration and developing an environmental interpretive and signage program to increase public awareness of the role of natural areas within the urban environment.
- The City should continue to coordinate with the Port of Ridgefield and the Ridgefield School District to promote the connection of the trail system for off-street linkages and the growing trail network.

Water Access

Ridgefield originated as a river community, yet physical access to the waters of Lake River and the Columbia River remains limited. While access can be challenging due to topography, the railroad corridor and public riverfront lands, future Lake River access should continue to be sought. The Parks Board and local residents have shown interest in additional waterfront launches, particularly for non-motorized watercraft. The City should work to capture any opportunities during development activities and in partnerships with the Port and the Refuge to expand public access and improvements along the River.

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge is currently replacing the vehicular bridge to its “S” unit to create better public access to those public lands. Potential improvements for a watercraft launch on the west side of Lake River at the new Refuge Road bridge should be encouraged.

IDENTITY & MAINTENANCE

Information & Wayfinding

Information on Recreational Opportunities

The City should continue to enhance its website to provide information on local and regional park and recreation opportunities and community events. An interactive mapping function could help connect residents and visitors to highlighted park, trail and natural area amenities and facilities. The City should continue to strengthen existing partnerships with local businesses, sport leagues, the school district and the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate the promotion and distribution of information to the community. The City could consider actively inviting local groups or businesses that specialize in recreational activities, events or facilities (i.e., fitness instructors, outfitters, etc.) to present to staff and/or City Council about local services, health trends and opportunities in an effort to expand awareness of services and to encourage and promote opportunities to cross-market programs and events. Partnerships with outside recreation programming providers and environmental education groups for land and water-based activities could enhance the opportunities to engage residents in healthy, active outdoor recreation.

Wayfinding

The City of Ridgefield can benefit from enhanced wayfinding and signage in support of both City and partners’ parks and facilities for seamless navigation across public land ownership. As the park system continues to expand, the City should consider a more comprehensive approach to directional signage to park and trail facilities. Better signage and consistency in brand identification could increase awareness for residents and visitors of nearby recreational opportunities, such as the Refuge, the Port’s waterfront and boat launches, and City parks and trails. Better signage in conjunction with publicly available maps of parks and trails can also improve the enjoyment and understanding of the parks system and encourage visitors to experience more sites within the City. Printed or online mapping and marketing information should be shared with new Ridgefield residents as part of a welcome package to help orient them to their new community.

Asset Management

Maintenance & Renovation

The majority of the amenities and facilities in the City's park system are rated as being in good condition. Most of these amenities are relatively new and should remain in good condition for another decade or so. Some older park amenities and structures, particularly in Abrams Park, are in need of repair or replacement. The capital facilities plan targets those elements that are in poor condition. Parks operations should develop an asset management program that continues to track, identify and repair/replace park assets.

Universal Accessibility

The park site conditions assessments identified a number of barriers in parks where ADA compliance was not met. As part of the capital repair program, these barriers, such as the need for playground ramps or benches and tables linked with paved pathways, should be addressed.

Leveraging & Volunteer Development

Volunteer time and talent is a key enhancement to limited resources for local governments. However, the recruitment and retention of valuable volunteers requires effort and commitment of resources to manage and sustain a quality volunteer program. While such a program is not free, trained and respected volunteers can net many hours of labor and result in an overall enhancement of the parks system. Volunteers help encourage a sense of ownership and pride with trails, parks and recreation programming to set the standard for community engagement. Trails and greenway management and restoration projects, in particular, can benefit from a volunteer workforce that has undergone training and support.

Design Continuity & Standards

The adoption and implementation of updated design standards for City parks will create a consistency in the methods used to maintain, repair and replace park amenities as they become worn or are damaged. Park benches, trash receptacles, picnic tables and signage can be consistent across all parks without reducing the potential to create unique spaces and individual park identities. This consistency can make the system more efficient to maintain and improve aesthetic appeal and safety.

Privately-constructed parks should be required to provide standardized park amenities if they are intended to be dedicated to city ownership. The City's park design and maintenance criteria should be required for new parks to ensure quality and consistency of park amenities. The City should prepare and adopt design standards to be applied to site development at the time of development review. Application of such standards is particularly critical in cases where a developer is building the park in lieu of paying park impact fees. Such standards could also outline minimally-acceptable maintenance requirements.

PARKLAND GAP ANALYSIS

To better understand where efforts for potential acquisition should be directed, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the City. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify target areas representing service gaps. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially zoned lands were isolated, since neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas. Additionally, primary and secondary service areas were used as follows:

- Community Parks: ½-mile primary & 1-mile secondary service areas
- Neighborhood & Pocket Parks: ¼-mile primary & ½-mile secondary service areas

Maps 3 to 5 illustrate the application of these distribution criteria. The gap analysis also reviewed the need for parkland after considering the existing private homeowner association parks, along with the distribution of private condominium or apartment complex recreation common areas. Map 6 highlights how the public neighborhood parks and private parks enhance the overall coverage of parklands in Ridgefield. It should be noted that the park walksheds for the private parks were restricted to the actual homeowner association boundaries of the respective parks.

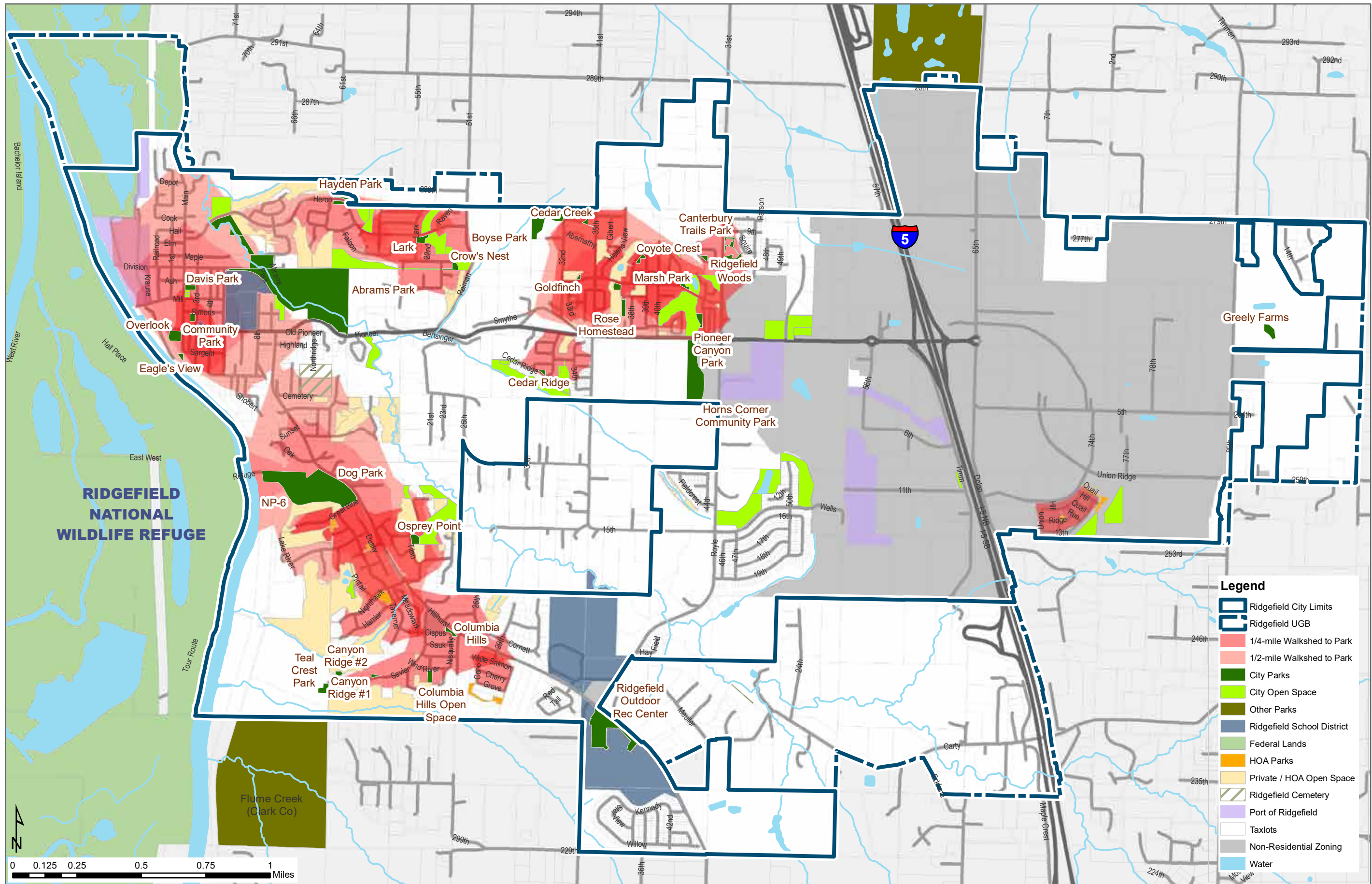
The greatest need based on system gaps is for at least one additional community park and numerous neighborhood parks to improve overall distribution and equity, while promoting localized recreational spaces that can accommodate playgrounds, court sports and open play.

Gaps in parkland distribution appear in four generalized segments of the city:

- Northcentral - north of Pioneer between NW 26th Avenue and NW 51st Avenue
- Central Ridgefield - near and in the unincorporated area in the center of the city
- Southeast - south of S Timm Road
- Northeast - east of N 85th Avenue

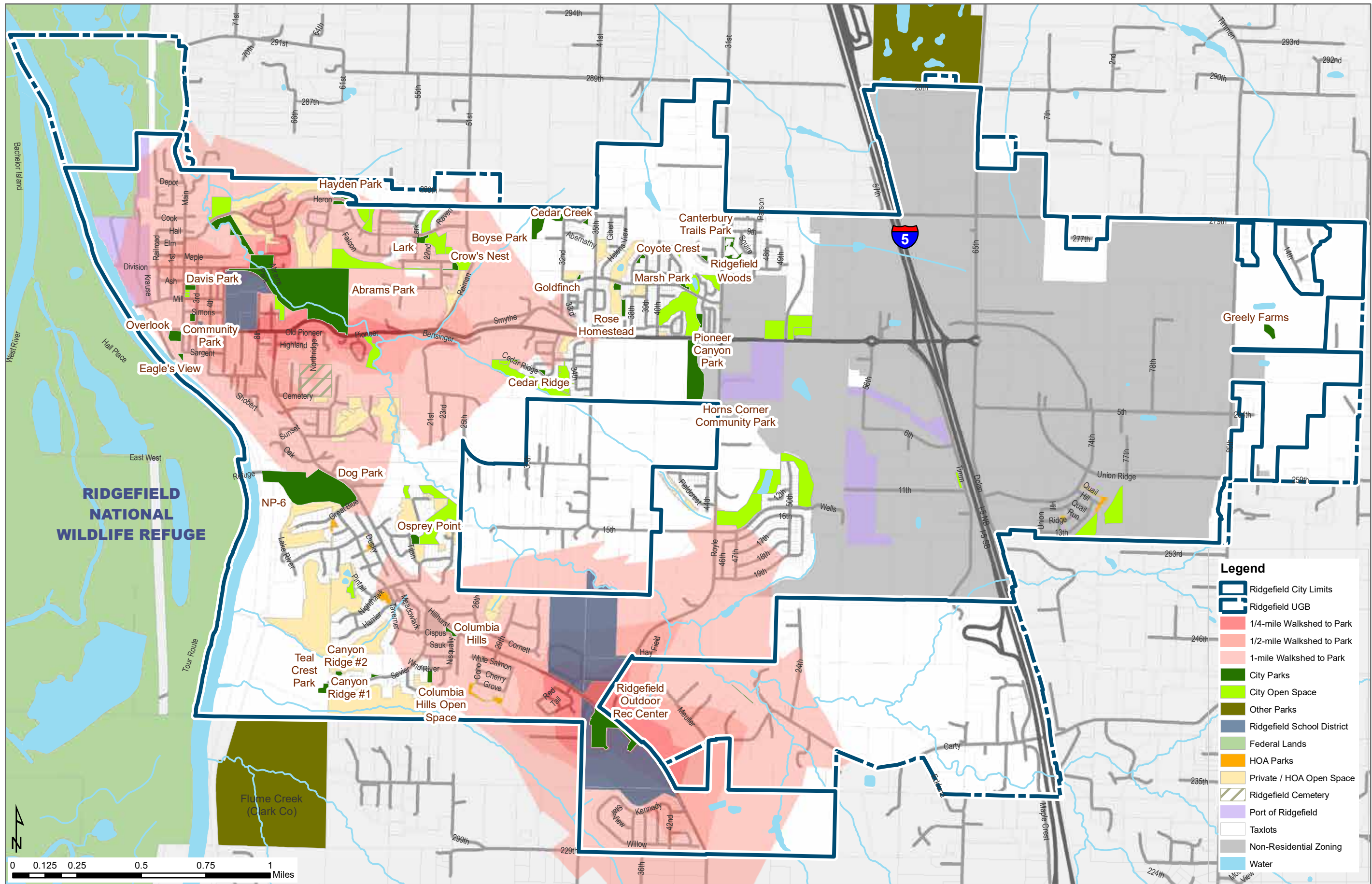
While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving parkland distribution throughout Ridgefield.

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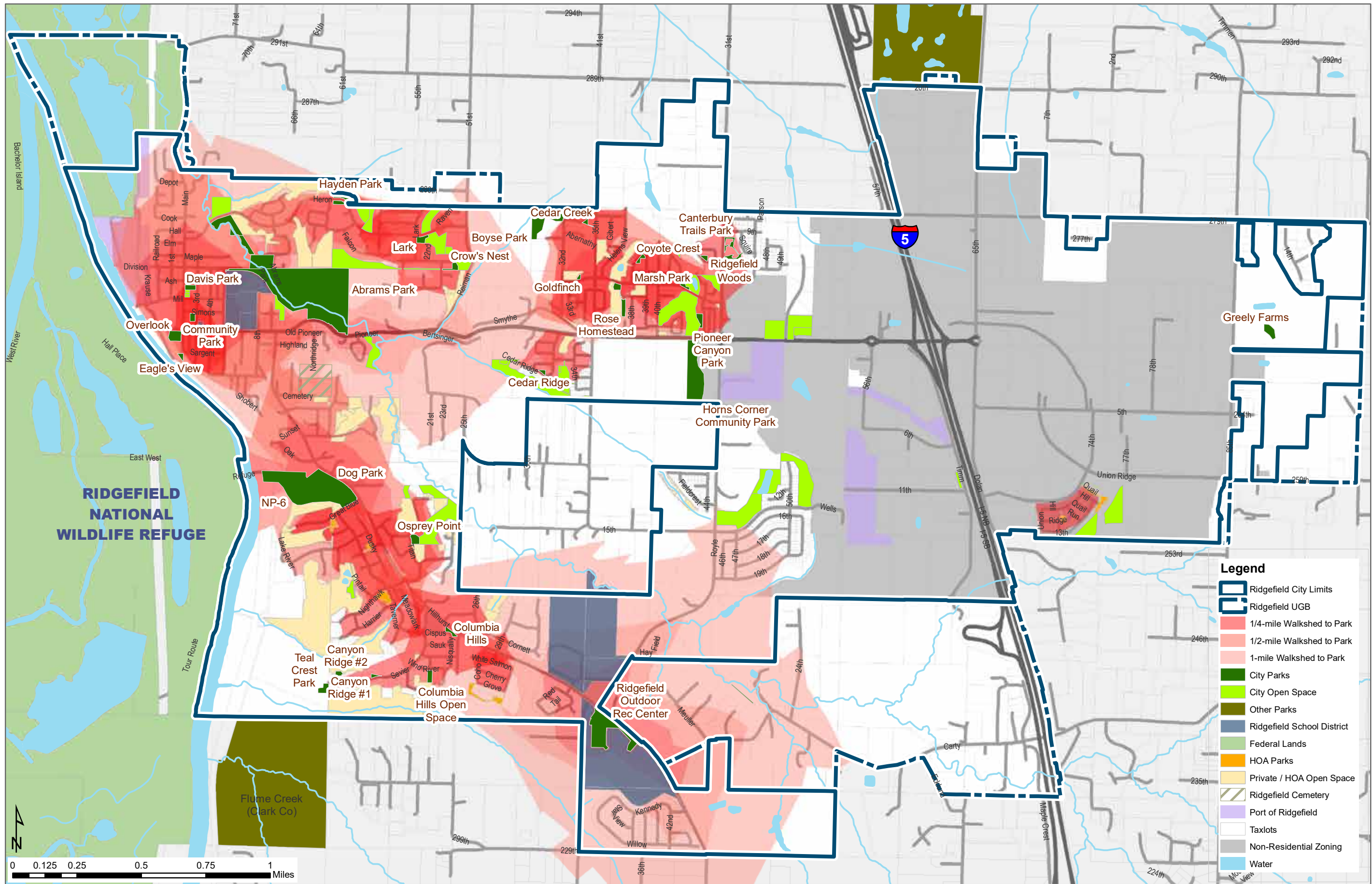
Map 3: Walkshed Map (Neighborhood, Pocket & HOA)

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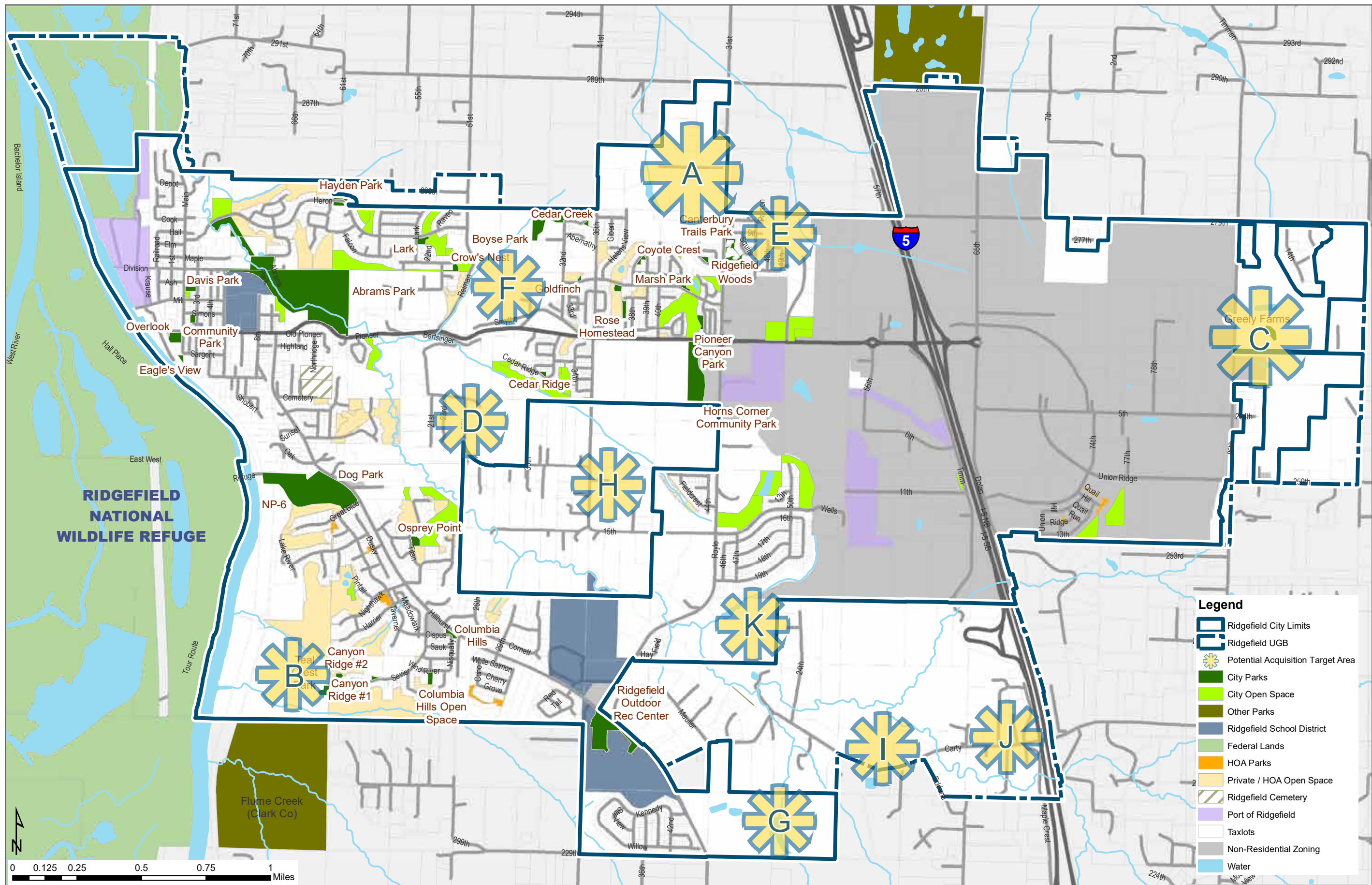
Map 4: Walkshed Map (Community Parks)

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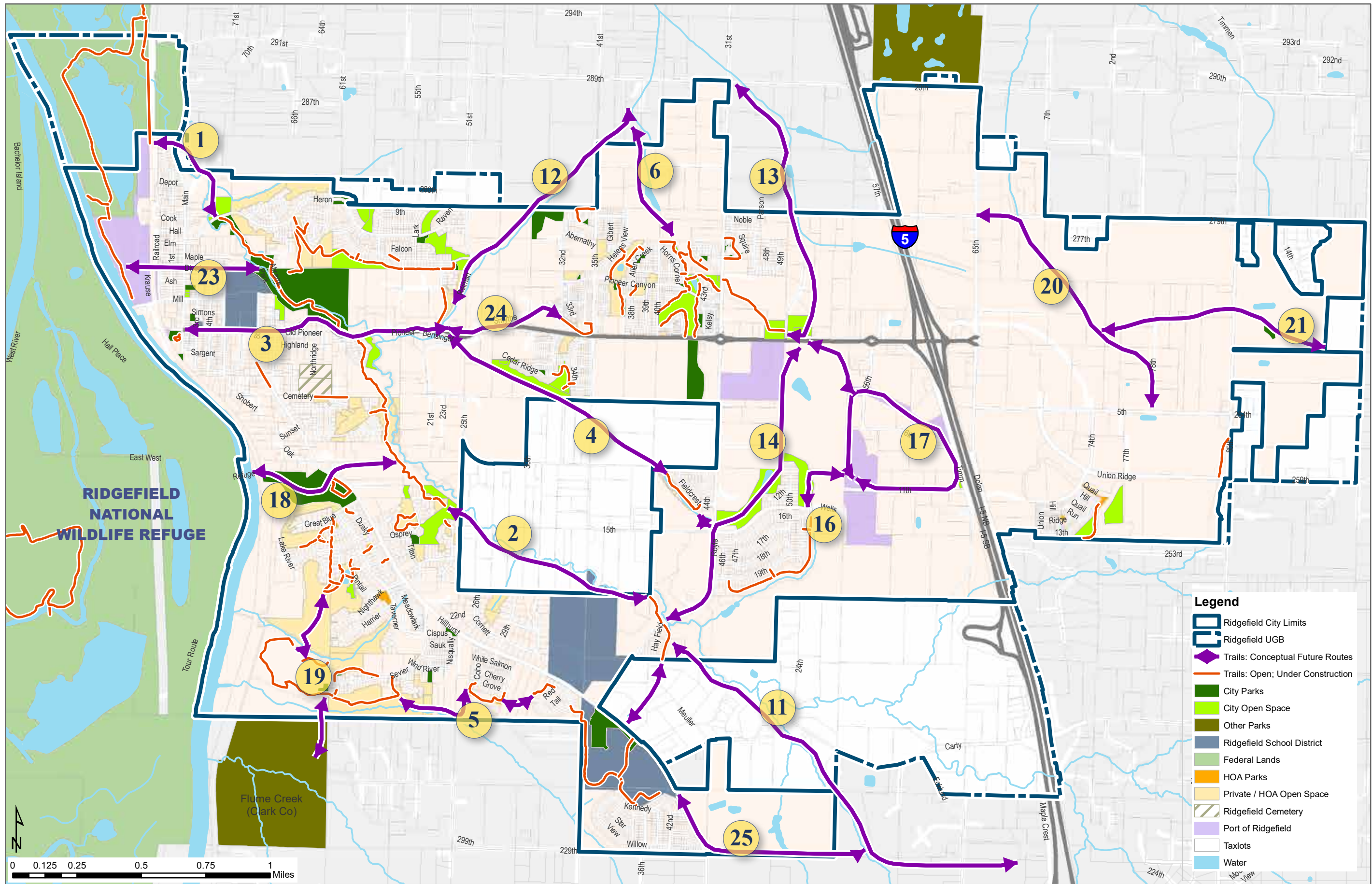
Map 5: Walkshed Map (All Parks)

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Map 6: Acquisition Target Areas

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Map 7: Potential Recreational Trails

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COMPARATIVE PARK PROVIDERS

Ridgefield has been proactive in planning for its park and recreation facilities, while undergoing rapid growth. The ability to coordinate with new development has allowed the City to have pocket parks installed with residential growth. As the park system grows, more active coordination and planning will be necessary, not only for the planning of future facilities, but also for the operation and maintenance of the expanded system and the development of a strong asset management program. The value of capturing state and federal grant funding, coordinating a strong volunteer corps, developing potential recreation programming and other aspects of park planning should be explored.

Park Staffing Levels

To examine the potential need for additional professional park staff, a comparison was conducted with similar sized Pacific Northwest cities. As a starting point, the National Recreation and Park Association's Park Metrics data has compiled the typical number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees with the size of various park and recreation agencies. Figure 15 below shows the median staffing for cities less than 20,000 residents to be 10.5 FTEs per 10,000 residents.

Figure 15. Park and Recreation FTEs per 10,000 Residents (by Jurisdiction Population)

	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	Over 250,000
Median	7.3	10.5	8.5	7.6	5.7	4.3
Lower Quartile	3.7	5.3	4.6	3.8	3.1	1.7
Upper Quartile	14.9	20.8	17	13.9	11.3	7.6

Ridgefield's current allocation of park staffing was increased from 3 FTEs to 4 FTEs is under the 2019 adopted city budget. Parks maintenance is managed under the Public Works Department and conducts support and maintenance of City-owned parks. The City maintains three major parks: Abrams Park, Davis Park and Overlook Park. The City also maintains several smaller parks throughout the city.

Comparable Cities Parkland Levels

Further exploration compares total population and land areas with parklands and number of park facilities with four other cities in Washington and Oregon. In this comparison, Ridgefield is clearly the fastest growing community and has the highest median household income. The 2019 population sizes were similar enough to provide comparable examination of how population density and parkland acreage varies across the board. With its rich composition of public parks and greenways, Ridgefield currently has the highest level of service at 21.5 acres per 1,000 people and the lowest population density of the selected cities. It should be noted that the parkland acreages reported by other cities have highly variable levels of facility development and public access, since jurisdictions may or may not report their conserved open spaces as parks.

Figure 16. Parkland Comparisons across Similar-sized Cities (2018 pop.) in Washington & Oregon

City	Population 2010	Population 2019	Land Area (sq.mi.)	Density (pop./sq.mi.)	Parkland Acreage	Number of Parks	Parkland LOS (ac/1,000)	Median Household Income
Ridgefield, WA	4,763	8,895	7.08	1,256	190.9	24	21.5	\$93,958
Gladstone, OR	11,497	11,905	2.4	4,960	139.1	17	11.7	\$57,652
Port Orchard, WA	11,144	14,390	7.24	1,988	67.7	10	4.7	\$67,750
Sandy, OR	9,570	11,075	3.14	3,527	153.0	16	13.8	\$64,057
Washougal, WA	14,095	16,500	5.42	3,044	85.8	19	5.2	\$76,998

*Figures based on 2010 Census, 2019 WA Office of Finance & Management, 2019 Portland State University

The population density for the comparable cities was much more dense than Ridgefield's. With projected growth over the two decades expected to triple the size of Ridgefield, the City's population density may increase to similar levels as shown in the parkland comparison above.

Park Operating Expenditure Comparisons

While Clark County as a whole has a slightly lower population density to that of Ridgefield, the county has a similar mix of urban and rural landscapes, and data from the urbanized area of the county is a fair proxy to examine operating expenditures. In the county's urban unincorporated area, the metropolitan parks operations for community and neighborhood parks provide a snapshot for potential, future Ridgefield park system operations expenses by park type.

Figure 17. Clark County Parks: Urban Park Operations and Maintenance Performance

Type of Facility	Average Acreage per Park	Annual Cost per Acre	Annual Labor Hours per Acre
Neighborhood Parks	4.8	\$5,500	110
Community Parks	26.2	\$4,400	112

The NRPA 2018 Agency Performance Review compared park and recreation providers across the country to assess current trends in agency budgets, staffing, facilities and levels of service.

A review of those agencies that serve populations under 20,000 residents reveals the median for annual operating budgets reported per capita, per employee and per park acre. Parkland acres and facility provision are also captured in the NRPA report.

Figure 18. NRPA Typical Performance Measures for Jurisdictions Under 20,000 Population

For Agencies under 20,000	Median Values
Annual operating budget	\$1,010,000 per year
Annual operating budget	\$91,483 per employee
Annual operating budget	\$96 per capita
Park/non Park sites	\$7,196 per acre
Parks & Open Space	40.60% operating expense split
Recreation Programs	46.30% operating expense split
One park for every	1,231 residents
Park land acres	11.8 per 1,000 residents
Tennis courts	2,500 residents per court
Basketball courts	3,975 residents per court
Youth baseball	3,378 residents per field

In comparison, Ridgefield has spent an average of \$467,454 over the last four years in their parks operating budget. In 2019, park operating expenditures jumped up \$635,538 with the addition of operations and maintenance staffing to meet the needs of its growing park facilities. The City spends approximately \$76 per capita annually for park operations with operating dollars averaging \$3,319 per acre of parkland. In Ridgefield, there are approximately 370 residents per park site, which compares favorably to the national average of 1,231 residents per park.

The NRPA data provides a look at the typical park and recreation agency's staffing allocation for park operations and recreation programming. Generally, park operations comprises 40.6% operating expense for staffing compared to 46.3% for recreation programming. As Ridgefield's park system grows, community interest for recreation programming may swell beyond the capacity of current outside providers. Ridgefield will want to be intentional about providing recreation programming and the related expansion of staffing expenditures. The NRPA data also indicates that Ridgefield's population is approaching the threshold where the median park and recreation provider may operate a recreation center, a community center and/or a senior center.

LEVEL OF SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Standards & Levels of Service

Service standards are the adopted guidelines or benchmarks the City is trying to attain with their parks system; the level of service is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting the adopted standards. A level of service (LOS) review was conducted in addition to and in support of the gap analysis as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification and for a broader measure of how well the City is serving its residents with access to parks, trails and greenways. The adopted service standards for parks and open space are as follows: community parks at 6 acres per 1,000 residents, neighborhood parks at 1.56 acres per 1,000 residents, and greenways at 9.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

As noted in the inventory chapter, the City manages approximately 228 acres of parks and greenways. An additional 175 acres of private parks and open space also exist within Ridgefield. Utilizing the current standards adopted with the 2014 Plan, the following tables provide a snapshot of the existing levels of service for parklands. It should be noted that acreage standards do not apply to special use facility or pocket park classifications, and these levels of service are provided merely for reference.

Figure 19. Current Level of Service by Classification for City-owned Parklands

Type	Adopted Standard	Inventory*	Current Level of Service	Projected Demand	Projected Surplus (Deficit)
Community Park	6 ac/000	89.4	10.05 ac/000	53.4	36.0
Neighborhood Park	1.56 ac/000	15.6	1.74 ac/000	13.9	1.7
Pocket Park	--- ac/000	6.1	0.69 ac/000	---	N/A
Greenway	9.5 ac/000	111.7	12.56 ac/000	84.5	27.2
Special Facilities	--- ac/000	5.6	0.63 ac/000	---	N/A
		228.4	25.67 ac/000		

* NOTE: Inventory column includes undeveloped NP-6 at 6 acres and Horns Corner (Rosauers) site.

Figure 20. Current Level of Service by Classification for City-owned & Private Parks

Type	Adopted Standard	Inventory**	Current Level of Service	Projected Demand	Projected Surplus (Deficit)
Community Park	6 ac/000	89.4	10.05 ac/000	53.4	36.0
Neighborhood Park	1.56 ac/000	19.5	2.19 ac/000	13.9	5.6
Pocket Park	--- ac/000	7.3	0.82 ac/000	---	N/A
Greenway	9.5 ac/000	281.9	31.7 ac/000	84.5	197.4
Special Facilities	--- ac/000	5.6	0.63 ac/000	---	N/A
		403.6	45.38 ac/000		

** NOTE: Inventory column includes undeveloped NP-6 at 6 acres and Horns Corner, along with private HOA parks and open space.

At 228.4 acres, the existing, overall level of service for the City of Ridgefield is 25.67 acres per 1,000 people. Based on today's inventory and existing standards, no deficit exists today when looking solely at City-owned land and in aggregate across all parkland classifications.

With the inclusion of privately-held parks and open space tracts, the combined, overall level of service within the city increases to 45 acres per 1,000 people. The contribution of private homeowners association parks improved the level of service for the neighborhood and pocket park classifications, but the largest change was with the greenways classification.

Since the 2014 Plan, the City's park inventory has changed with the addition of the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex and several smaller parks, along with the removal of the CP-5 site that helped finance a portion of the RORC project. The City currently is meeting its standard for community parks, neighborhood parks and greenways.

Looking forward, a quick assessment to predict the future needs for parks and greenways is shown in Figure 21 and utilizes a 7% annual growth rate for Ridgefield to project a 2030 population of 18,723 people.

Figure 21. Future Demand by Park Type

Type	Adopted Standard	Inventory**	Current Level of Service	2030 Demand	2030 Surplus (Deficit)
Community Park	6 ac/000	89.4	10.05 ac/000	112.3	(22.9)
Neighborhood Park	1.56 ac/000	19.5	2.19 ac/000	29.2	(9.7)
Pocket Park	--- ac/000	7.3	0.82 ac/000	---	N/A
Greenway	9.5 ac/000	281.9	31.7 ac/000	177.9	104.1
Special Facilities	--- ac/000	5.6	0.63 ac/000	---	N/A
		403.6	45.38 ac/000		

** NOTE: Inventory column includes undeveloped NP-6 at 6 acres and Horns Corner, along with private HOA parks and open space.

With a significantly larger population, more acreage will be required to meet currently adopted standards for parks and open space. The future inventory for community parks will need to grow by 23 acres, plus an additional 9.7 acres for neighborhood parks. The demand for greenway lands should remain satisfied with the current inventory (assuming a portion of NP-6 is reclassified as greenway from neighborhood park as noted).

The adopted service standards for recreation facilities are as follows: 0.75 miles of trail per 1,000 residents, 1 field per 3,000 residents for ballfields, and 1 field per 2,000 residents for soccer fields. These standards were used to assess the current levels of service for each facility type, as well as examine the current demand and future demand for each based on population.

Figure 22. Current Levels of Service, Current Demand & Future Demand by Recreation Facility

Type	Adopted Standard	Inventory*	Current Level of Service	2019 Demand	2019 Surplus (Deficit)	2030 Demand	2030 Surplus (Deficit)
Trails	0.75 mi/1,000	11.3	1.27 mi/1,000	6.7	4.63	14.0	(2.74)
Baseball Fields	1 field/3,000	7	2.3 fields/3,000	3.0	4.04	6.2	0.76
Soccer Fields	1 field/2,000	8	1.8 fields/2,000	4.4	3.55	9.4	(1.36)

* NOTE: Inventory column includes Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex.

Since the construction of the Ridgefield Outdoor Recreation Complex with its ballfields and soccer fields, the current level of service for sport fields exceeds the adopted standards. Also, the current inventory of 11.3 miles of trails creates a current level of service that exceeds the standard. For the future demand for recreation facilities, the 2030 projected population for Ridgefield will require at least one more soccer field.

While numeric standards are a useful tool to assess how well the City is delivering park and recreation services, the numeric values alone do not provide adequate recognition of the quality of the facilities or their distribution.

While public ownership of a broad range of recreation lands is crucial to the well-being of the City, the exclusive application of an overall acreage standard requires a balance with the citizen input received during this planning process. Residents were particularly interested in the availability of trails and parks. Developed parks within a reasonable distance from their homes continue to be important.

This Plan does not propose changes to the neighborhood park standard or the trail standard. Since the City is expected to have considerable growth in the future, neighborhood park acreage will be needed to keep up with population increases. Additionally, this Plan maintains the previous plan's guidance for pocket parks and special facilities and no standards are proposed.

At the present, approximately 170 acres of sensitive or protected lands have been set aside as privately held open space tracts via the platting and land development process. The inclusion of future, protected critical areas will strengthen and expand the broader greenway network, and the increase of the numeric standard is also in recognition of the contribution of private open space lands in the overall network of greenways and natural areas. The plan does not recommend changes to the greenway acreage standards since they have been met and exceeded. However, the priority for greenway land acquisitions is still important for the protection of critical environmental lands. Opportunities to connect conserved greenways with regional conservation lands, especially along riparian corridors, adds tremendous value to both habitat and water resource integrity. The acceptance of greenway dedications from developers should be focused toward those lands that expand ownership of adjacent City-owned greenways or to ensure sufficient property is available to accommodate public access and future trail connections.

The proposed capital projects noted in the next chapter ameliorate the current and some projected acreage needs and maintain service levels to meet the current adopted standard.

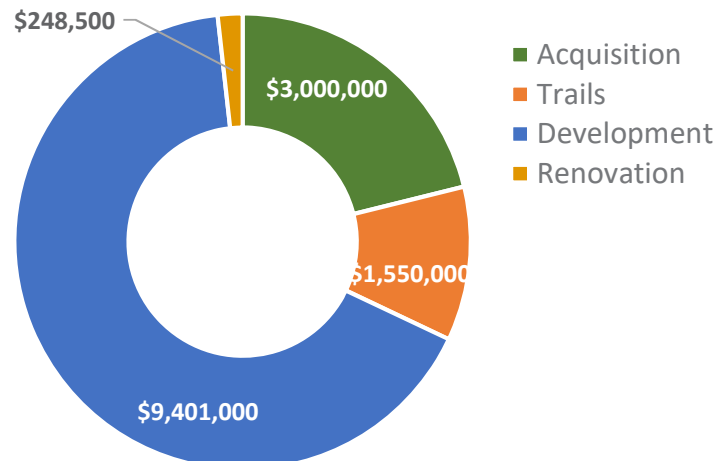
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6 | CAPITAL PLANNING

The following Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) lists all park, trail and facility projects considered for the next six years. The majority of these projects entail the acquisition and development of parks, special recreation amenities and trails. The need for renovating or repairing existing facilities is listed separately from the capital project plan. Based on survey results and other feedback, Ridgefield residents have indicated an interest in park facility upgrades and expansion as short-term priorities, and the proposed CFP is reflective of that desire. The following table summarizes the aggregate capital estimates by park types for the next six years.

Figure 23. Capital Facilities Plan Expenditures Summary



The CFP identifies land acquisition to ensure that sufficient lands and corridor connections are available for outdoor recreation as the Ridgefield urban area continues to grow in population. Acquisition target areas have been identified, and emphasis has been placed on securing future community park acquisitions and access rights along key trail corridors to serve the greatest population and then on filling gaps in distribution within the city.

The following CFP project list provides brief project descriptions and priority ranking to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.

Ridgefield Parks 6-Year Capital Facilities Plan - Capacity Building Projects

ID#	Park Type	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Priority	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Sum
	Special Facility	Skate Park	Acquisition for future skate park location	A	2		\$450,000					\$450,000
	Special Facility	Waterfront Park	Design & construct park w/ non-motorized boat launch	D	2		\$50,000		\$1,950,000			\$2,000,000
	Community	C	Park Site Acquisition	A	1			\$500,000				\$500,000
	Neighborhood	B	Park Site Acquisition	A	2		\$300,000					\$300,000
	Neighborhood	G	Park Site Acquisition	A	3					\$800,000		\$800,000
	Neighborhood	F	Park Site Acquisition	A	2		\$200,000					\$200,000
	Trail	Gee Creek Trail	Abrams to Heron Drive	D	1	\$100,000						\$100,000
	Trail	Gee Creek Trail	Heron Drive to Refuge - secure access	A	1		\$850,000					\$850,000
	Trail	Gee Creek Trail	Abrams to RHS - secure access	A	2			\$350,000				\$350,000
	Trail	Gee Creek Trail	Abrams to Osprey Point - design & construction	D	3						\$350,000	\$350,000
	Trail	Flume Creek Trail	Trail extension to Flume Creek	D	1	\$100,000			\$400,000			\$500,000
	Trail	Smythe Road Trail	Trail along Smthye Road	D	1	\$100,000		\$500,000				\$600,000
	Community	Abrams Park	Implement master plan improvements	D	1					\$650,000		\$650,000
	Community	C	Park Site Development	D	2				\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$1,500,000
	Community	Horns Corner	Park Site Development	D	1		\$2,000,000					\$2,000,000
	Neighborhood	NP-6	Park development - phase 1	D	1			\$900,000				\$900,000
	Neighborhood	B	Park Site Development	D	2					\$1,020,000		\$1,020,000
	Neighborhood	F	Park Site Development	D	3						\$1,190,000	\$1,190,000
	Pocket	Canyon Ridge #1 Park	Playground ramp	D	1	\$6,000						\$6,000
	Neighborhood	Cedar Creek Park	Playground ramp	D	1	\$6,000						\$6,000
	Pocket	Columbia Hills Park	Playground ramp	D	1	\$6,000						\$6,000
	Pocket	Columbia Hills Open Space	Picnic table on ADA route	D	2				\$8,000			\$8,000
	Pocket	Coyote Crest Park	Shade structure, playground ramp	D	1		\$18,000					\$18,000
	Pocket	Crows Nest Park	Shade structure, playground ramp	D	1		\$18,000					\$18,000
	Pocket	Eagle's View Park	New pathway pavement and picnic platforms	D	2		\$35,000					\$35,000
	Neighborhood	Davis Park	Paved pathway, playground ramp	D	2		\$25,000					\$25,000
	Special Facility	Dog Park	ADA parking and accessible route pavement	D	1	\$9,000						\$9,000
	Pocket	Goldfinch Park	Playground ramp	D	1	\$6,000						\$6,000
	Pocket	Lark Park	Small shelter, accessible route, playground ramp	D	2					\$45,000		\$45,000
	Pocket	Marsh Park	Shade structure, playground ramp	D	2				\$15,000			\$15,000
	Pocket	Osprey Pointe Park	Playground upgrade/enhancement, picnic table, bench, path.	D	2			\$50,000				\$50,000
	Pocket	Ridgefield Woods Park	Playground addition and skate spot	D	2					\$65,000		\$65,000
	Neighborhood	Rose Homestead Park	Picnic shelter w/ paved path	D	2				\$60,000			\$60,000
						\$333,000	\$3,946,000	\$2,300,000	\$2,933,000	\$3,080,000	\$2,040,000	\$14,632,000

NOTES:

This CIP identifies planning-level cost estimates and does not assume the value of volunteer or other non-City contributions. Detailed costing may be necessary for projects noted.

This CIP is not an official budget and intended as a guiding document for City staff in the preparation of departmental budgets.

Code Priority

- 1 High Priority
- 2 Moderate
- 3 Long-term

Ridgefield Parks 6-Year Capital Facilities Plan - Non-capacity Projects

ID#	Park Type	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Priority	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Sum
	Community	Abrams Park	Replace well house	R	1		\$10,000					\$10,000
	Community	Abrams Park	Renovate stage	R	1			\$35,000				\$35,000
	Community	Abrams Park	Paved pathway to tot playground	D	2				\$12,000			\$12,000
	Trail	Commerce Center Loop Trail	Design & construct trail loop	D	2					\$800,000		\$800,000
	Pocket	Canyon Ridge #1 Park	Slope replanting, table top refinish/replace	R	1	\$8,000						\$8,000
	Neighborhood	Cedar Creek Park	Shade tree plantings, park ID sign	D	1		\$7,000					\$7,000
	Pocket	Cedar Ridge/Horn Family Park	Shade tree plantings	D	2				\$4,000			\$4,000
	Special Facility	Community Park	Skate Park - replacement of mobile elements	R	1		\$60,000					\$60,000
	Pocket	Crows Nest Park	Shade tree plantings, park ID sign	D	2			\$9,000				\$9,000
	Special Facility	Dog Park	Repair slope erosion	R	1	\$4,000						\$4,000
	Pocket	Eagle's View Park	Replace split rail fence	R	1	\$7,000						\$7,000
	Pocket	Goldfinch Park	Shade tree plantings	D	2			\$4,000				\$4,000
	Pocket	Lark Park	Shade tree plantings	D	2			\$4,000				\$4,000
	Pocket	Marsh Park	Shade tree plantings, park ID sign	D	2			\$7,000				\$7,000
	Special Facility	Overlook Park	Add park ID sign	D	1		\$6,000					\$6,000
	Pocket	Ridgefield Woods Park	Shade tree & native plantings	D	2				\$8,000			\$8,000
	Neighborhood	Rose Homestead Park	Shade tree plantings	D	2				\$8,000			\$8,000
	Varies	ADA Compliance Upgrades	Handicapped signs, barrier removal, site furnishings, etc.	R	1	\$11,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$61,500
	Varies	Minor Repairs & renovations	Systemwide	R	1	\$12,000	\$11,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$63,000
						\$42,500	\$104,000	\$79,000	\$52,000	\$820,000	\$20,000	\$1,117,500



7 | IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

KEY PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a summary of key project recommendations which will require commitment from the City and its residents to continue to support a healthy park and recreation system that preserves and enhances the safety, livability and character of the community.

Trail Connections and Linkages

The need for more connectivity with walking and biking trails has been expressed in the recent community wide-survey. During the survey process, public input was solicited. The City has also stressed the importance of connectivity in its planning documents. The continuation of segments of the Gee Creek Trail rises to the top of the priorities for the trail plan implementation. Phases of implementation include securing public access rights, and design and construction of actual physical improvements. These phases have been identified on the Capital Facilities Plan.

The City's comprehensive plan has also identified future transportation improvement targets for complete streets that enhance trail connections and create more links for access across neighborhoods and the entire community.

Other trail projects include encouraging the County to pursue the regional trail connection to Vancouver through the proposed extension of the county-wide Lewis and Clark Trail.

Access to Lake River was an important need expressed by the community. The Port's continuing improvements to the river for boating access should be encouraged. Additional access locations such as the Refuge's River "S" project improvements and other potential sites can provide

positive contributions to water-based recreation opportunities. The Lewis River – Vancouver Lake Water Trail should continue to be developed with additional waterfront access points to enhance the trail opportunities, facilities and connections.

As the community grows, additional trail planning and implementation should continue to ensure future alternative transportation connections.

New Park Design & Development

As the proposed parkland acquisition program successfully secures properties or directs new development to provide for future parks, these new sites will undergo design and development to provide both basic park amenities and unique places for community use. While park development standards can ensure unified site furnishings across the park system, each park site can be designed and developed to create its own unique character. Master planning for new park facilities should undergo a public engagement process to ensure the identification of any specialized local needs and to solidify support for pursuing development funding. The undeveloped NP-6 neighborhood park site should be developed in the near future to help provide outdoor play opportunities for its local neighborhoods. Because the off-leash dog park is adjacent to the park property, additional and unique amenities could be incorporated to draw park users from other Ridgefield neighborhoods to provide exceptional recreational value.

Considering both the national trends and local needs for types of park facilities, new park designs should include some of the following amenities, in addition to always supporting walking trails:

- Splash pad/water play
- Fitness trail/exercise stations
- Playgrounds
- Picnic shelters

Including facilities for alternative or emerging sports can offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences, while creating destinations that attract and engage park users. Opportunities and facilities for other alternative sports could be expanded in the city. The Parks Board has been exploring innovative outdoor recreation opportunities to generate ideas for incorporation of features into new and existing parks. Fitness amenities, natural play, splash pads and more creative play equipment can provide more outdoor opportunities for physical health, fun and social interaction.

The desire for a replacement for the existing skate park has been identified. Opportunities may exist to develop alternative sports facilities at a few existing parks and plan for these facilities in the site design of parks to be developed in the future. Enhancing the existing skate park while conducting a search for a feasible replacement site could offer a stop-gap for providing sufficient recreational opportunities through a phase approach. Generally, the City should also consider incorporating small-scale skateboard (skate spots), bike skills features or pump tracks into existing and new park sites, as appropriate.

The existing off-leash area (a.k.a. “dog park”) provides space for pet exercise and also for the social gathering dog owners enjoy in these specialized spaces. Some improvements to the dog park can enhance the users’ access and experiences.

Land Acquisition To Meet Growing Needs & Fill Gaps

The City must acquire additional parkland to serve its growing population and provide more accessible outdoor recreation for the community. As growth and expansion continue, opportunities to acquire large park sites will be more difficult and require Ridgefield to follow an intentional acquisition program as well as think creatively and foster partnerships to provide desired public parkland with sufficient room for park amenities. To implement a successful acquisition program, the City may need to actively search out potential locations and property owners to secure future park sites, ahead of or concurrent with anticipated new development. More parkland will need to be acquired for the growing population in the future.

As occurred with the sports complex, partnerships with the school district could provide further opportunities to improve school facilities in ways that may help meet community park needs. The possibility may exist for other public land management agencies such as Clark County to become partners in acquiring mutually beneficial public parklands. The near term goal is to acquire sufficient acreage for a new community park in the identified gap area, as well as new neighborhood parks in future residential developments. This will help avoid gaps and ensure sufficient sites for future park development.

Sports Fields: Continued Enhancement

Sport fields, while well-provided for at the new sports complex, will continue to be in demand as families continue to locate in Ridgefield. Existing natural grass fields in Abrams Park could be upgraded or converted to artificial turf to meet the growing needs of community sports programs if they can be designed to avoid flood risks. Continued coordination with the school district for field usage and improvements may provide added capacity for growth of the sports leagues' needs for practice and game play.

Additionally, the new all-weather turf fields will need replacement as continual use creates wear and tear and these fields have limited life spans. The need for replacement must be planned as part of the parks capital facilities program (unless the Ridgefield School District has accepted full responsibility) to ensure continued safe and functional provision of sports field infrastructure.

Recreation Programming

Exploration should continue for enhancing partnerships and arrangements with the School District, local sports leagues and neighboring cities for provision of recreation programs focusing on youth, teens and seniors. The City should continue to foster agreements or partnerships with potential programming partners as it considers its role in providing the infrastructure for a variety of recreation services within the broader community. As the park system and its responsibilities expand, the creation of additional park staffing may be warranted to support the further development of recreational partnerships and facilities available in the city.

The City should also continue its provision of special community events that offer both residents and visitors the opportunity to engage in a variety of activities, fun and exploration of Ridgefield and its special character. Community events are an important element for local identity, economic activity and social engagement that contribute to quality of life in Ridgefield.

ADA Enhancements & Park Enhancements

Minor improvements to access, such as providing ramped entrances, for site furnishings are necessary to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and ensure universal accessibility. Also, the City should evaluate the play equipment and its signage for code compliance and replace outdated equipment as appropriate. The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) includes a line item for covering small upgrades and improvements to remove barriers and improve universal access. In general, the City should make improvements to existing parks as needed to ensure proper maintenance, usability and quality of park features and grounds.

Shade structures for playground areas should be added to existing parks to extend the times when children can use the equipment safely. Hours of exposure in full sun can result in very hot surfaces that are uncomfortable or unsafe for play in the summer. Several parks are identified in the CFP for the addition of shade structures.

Tree plantings to expand and increase the shade tree canopy in active use areas like picnic and playground spaces as well as natural edges and park boundaries is recommended to improve natural habitat, human comfort and better stormwater management in parks and open spaces where tree cover may be limited or have room for enhancement.

Wayfinding & Signage

Parks, trails, urban plazas and other public open spaces are the primary targets for unifying an urban environment into a cohesive, accessible and connected community through an identifiable wayfinding program. The need for design standards for a unifying wayfinding system have been identified in this Plan at large. Ridgefield should pursue a comprehensive wayfinding program that includes both visual graphic standards and site furnishing standards. Colors, sign types, and information can help park and trail users navigate the outdoor recreation experiences offered by the City.

Park Amenity Upgrades

The City should also consider adding the following recreation features (in both existing and new parks) to expand recreational opportunities beyond the identified CFP park and trail project targets:

- Shade structures for playgrounds
- Spray parks / splash pads
- Nature playgrounds
- Playgrounds with unique features
- All-inclusive playgrounds
- Gathering spaces (picnic shelters, etc.)
- Outdoor fitness & challenge areas
- Multi-sports courts
- Public art

A general consideration for the public is to create a park system that provides year-round facilities for all ages and all abilities to gather and recreate in diverse range of safe, clean and well-maintained park facilities.

Long Term Projects and Planning

As Ridgefield continues its growth including potential annexation, additional park and recreation facilities will be needed to keep up with the quality of life desired and expected by its residents. Additional trails, neighborhood parks and special facilities like skate and bike skills amenities or Parkour/adventure parks should be planned for future implementation. The City should continue to recognize that outdoor recreation contributes to a strong economy and is a public investment like other public services and infrastructure. The community survey reported that the majority of residents recognize that parks are essential to the quality of life in Ridgefield.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

A number of strategies exist to enhance and expand park and recreation service delivery for the City of Ridgefield; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community willingness to offer financial support is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in this Plan to life.

The recommendations for park and recreation services noted in this Plan may trigger the need for funding beyond current allocations and for additional staffing, operations and maintenance responsibilities. Given that the operating and capital budget of the Parks and Recreation Department is finite, additional resources may be needed to leverage, supplement and support the implementation of proposed objectives, programs and projects. While grants and other efficiencies may help, these alone will not be enough to realize many ideas and projects noted in this Plan. The following recommendations and strategies are presented to offer near-term direction to realize these projects and as a means to continue dialogue between City leadership, local residents and partners.

Additionally, a review of potential implementation tools is included as Appendix E, which addresses local financing, federal and state grant and conservation programs, acquisition methods and others.

Inter-Departmental Coordination

Internal coordination between the Public Works and Community Development Departments can increase the potential of discrete actions toward the implementation of the proposed recreational trail network, which relies in part on street right-of-way enhancements, and in the review of development applications with consideration toward potential parkland acquisition areas, planned trail corridors and the need for easement or set-aside requests.

Volunteer & Community-based Action

Volunteers and community groups already contribute to the improvement of parks and recreation services in Ridgefield. Volunteer projects include tree planting and community event support, among others. Ridgefield should maintain and update a revolving list of potential small works or volunteer-appropriate projects for the website, while also reaching out to the high schools to encourage student projects. While supporting organized groups and community-minded individuals continues to add value to the Ridgefield parks and recreation system, volunteer

coordination requires a substantial amount of staff time, and additional resources may be necessary to more fully take advantage of the community's willingness to support park and recreation efforts.

Enhanced Local Funding

According to the City budget, Ridgefield maintains reserve debt capacity for councilmanic bonds and voter approved debt. Community conversations regarding the need for a community recreation center and the potential to bundle several projects from the capital facilities plan warrant a review of debt implications for the City, along with the need to conduct polling of voter support for such projects.

Park Impact Fees

Park Impact Fees (PIF) are imposed on new development to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from the new growth. PIF can only be used for parkland acquisition, planning, and/or development. They cannot be used for operations, maintenance or repairs of parks and facilities. The City of Ridgefield currently assesses impact fees, but the City should review its PIF ordinance and update the methodology and rate structure as appropriate to be best positioned to obtain future acquisition and development financing from renewed residential development. The City should prioritize the usage of PIF to secure additional neighborhood parkland and consider the potential to match PIF with a councilmanic or voter-approved bond to have the requisite capital to purchase key properties and develop new park amenities.

Grants

Several state and federal grant programs are available on a competitive basis, including WWRP, ALEA, USDA, FAST-Act. Pursuing grants is not a panacea for park system funding, since grants are both competitive and often require a significant percentage of local funds to match the request to the granting agency, which depending on the grant program can be as much as 50% of the total project budget. Ridgefield should continue to leverage its local resources to the greatest extent by pursuing grants independently and in cooperation with other local partners.



APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY SURVEY

City of Ridgefield Engagement and Priority Assessment

December 2, 2019



2018015

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Bottom Line

- City is outperforming benchmarks in most areas, but scores softened from 2015
- 2019 ACSI Score = 65 (70 in 2015)
 - Washington (5,001-10,000 residents) = 65
 - Washington Overall = 59
 - West = 57
 - National (5,001-10,000 residents) = 58
 - National Overall = 61
- 2019 Local Government Management Score = 68 (69 in 2015)
 - Washington (5,001-10,000 residents) = 53
 - Washington Overall = 51
 - West = 50
 - National (5,001-10,000 residents) = 55
 - National Overall = 56



Bottom Line

- There are several areas where improvement can have the most significant impact on engagement (in green):

	Ridgefield 2015	Ridgefield 2019	WA 5,001- 10,000	WA Overall	West Overall	US 5,001- 10,000	US Overall	Change
Transportation Overall	63	56	60	55	53	52	56	↓ -7
Utility Services Overall	74	73	82	79	71	68	73	↑ -1
Police Department Overall	83	84	80	74	72	74	75	↑ 1
Property Taxes Overall	64	60	62	54	52	53	58	↓ -4
Shopping Opportunities Overall	29	27	65	70	70	64	70	↑ -2
Local Government Overall	69	68	53	51	50	55	56	↑ -1
Community Events Overall	71	74	67	61	60	52	59	↑ 3
Economic Health Overall	60	57	51	52	49	53	55	↓ -3
Parks and Recreation Overall	74	74	72	72	67	61	68	↑ 0
Community Satisfaction Overall	70	65	65	59	57	58	61	↓ -5

2019 Drivers	2015 Drivers
City Government Management	City Government Management
Economic Health	Economic Health
Community Events	Community Events
Police	Parks and Recreation



Bottom Line

- Not enough walking and biking trails
 - Integrate with downtown access
- Parks remain very important, but role as a driver of outcomes has diminished
 - Themes include more walking, biking trails; more river access
- Downtown is a major element in the quality of life for residents
 - Would like more restaurants, such as quality casual, Chinese, and seafood
 - Would like more stores/shops, including grocery, a bakery, deli, and coffee shops
 - Parking and curb appeal are significant concerns
- Residents interested in more communication on future development, new amenities, and the City's plan to manage growth and infrastructure (especially traffic)
 - Email, US post, social media (Facebook), and a newsletters are the most preferred mechanisms



Methodology

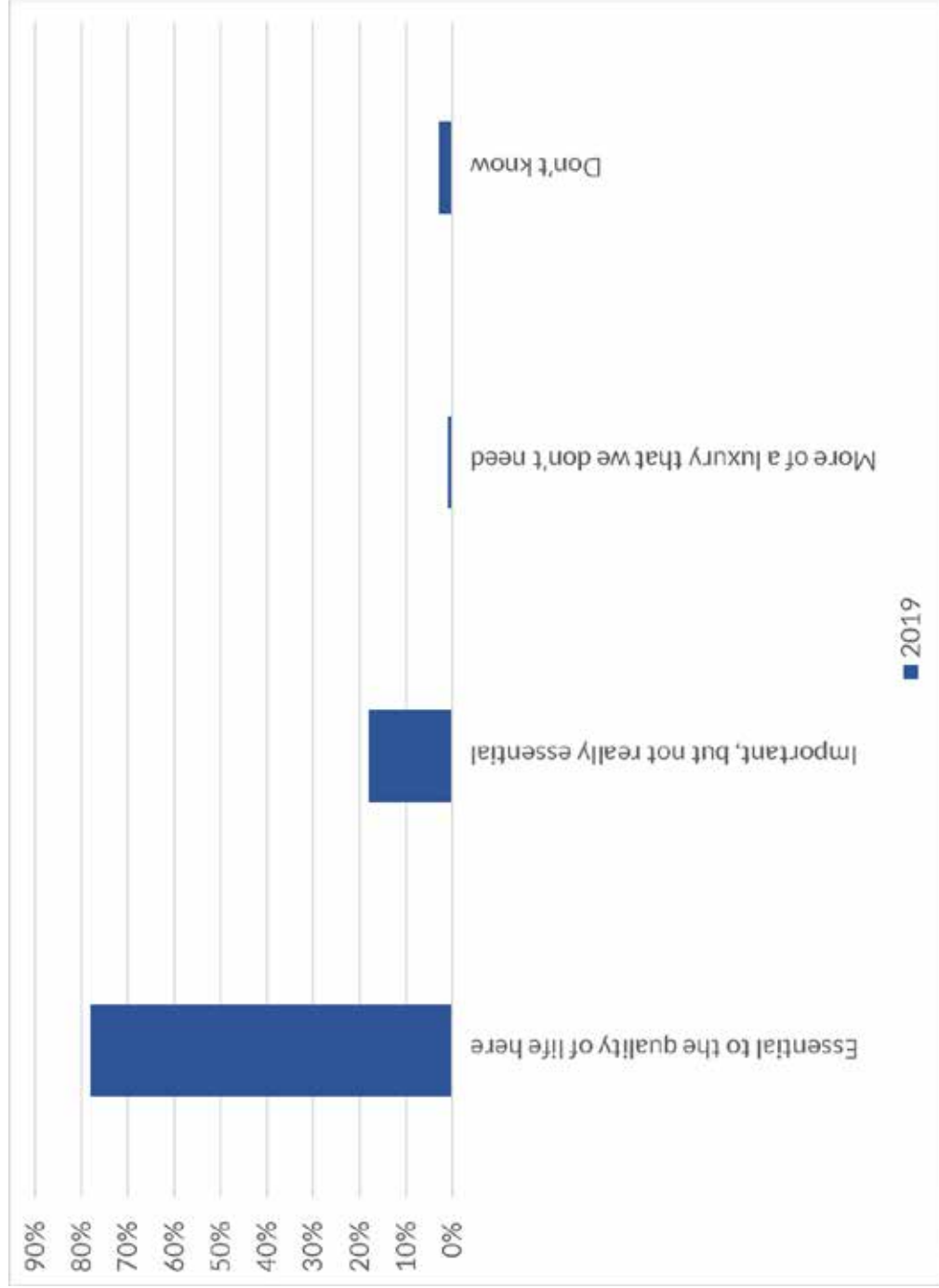
- Random sample of 1500 residents drawn from utility billing records and consumer records
- Utilized www.random.org, a well-respected utility used internationally by many universities and researchers to generate true random numbers
- Conducted using two mailings in October-November 2019
- Valid response from 393 residents, providing a solid response rate of 26 percent, and a conventional margin of error of +/- 5 percent in the raw data and an ACSI margin of error of +/- 2 percent. In addition, 106 residents participated who were not part of the sample (and who were analyzed separately). **Total response 499.**
 - Note: National surveys with a margin of error +/- 5% require a sample of 384 responses to reflect a population of 330,000,000
- Respondent pattern consistent with 2015.



Parks Planning

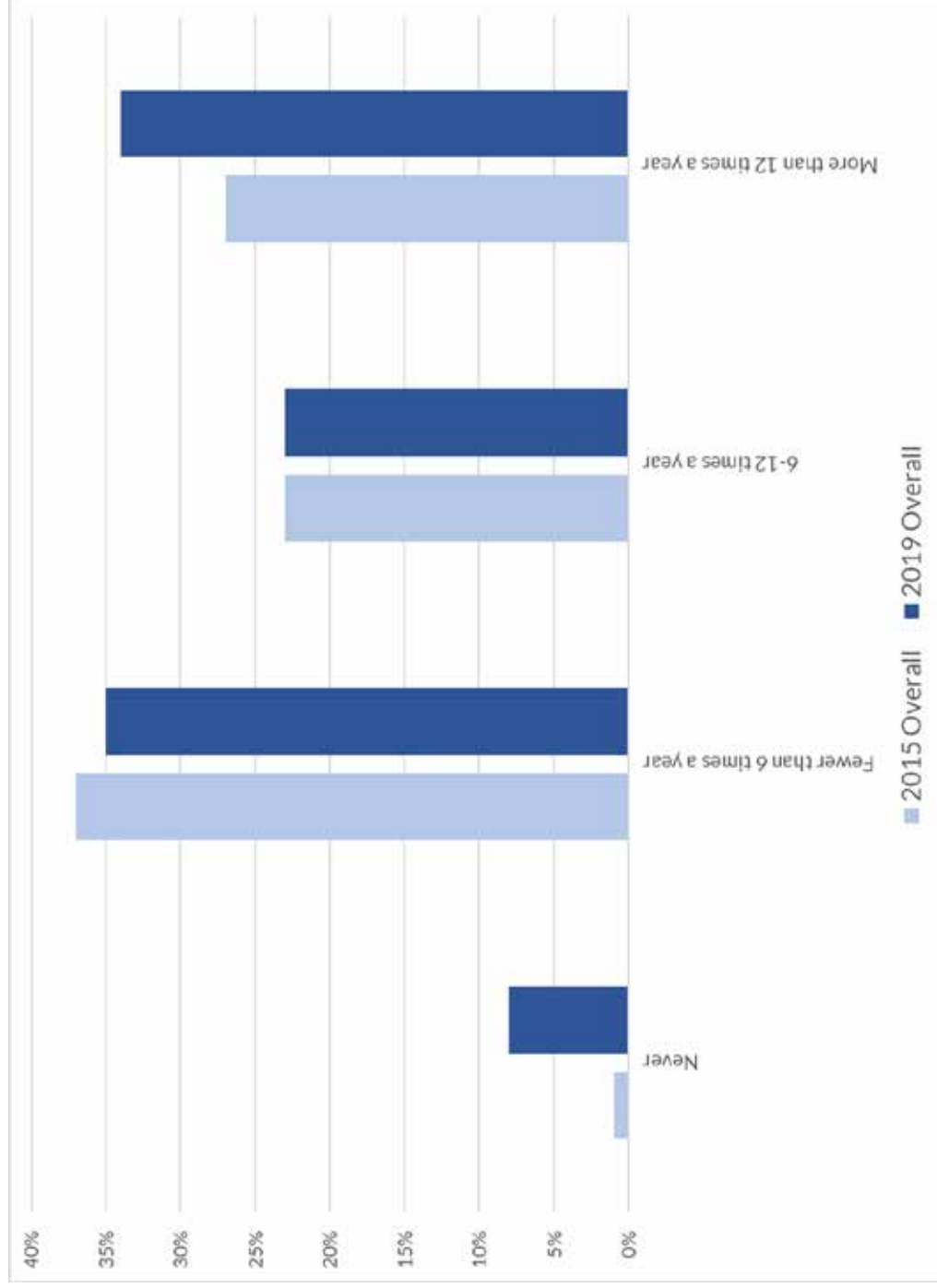


Parks Importance of Parks for Quality of Life



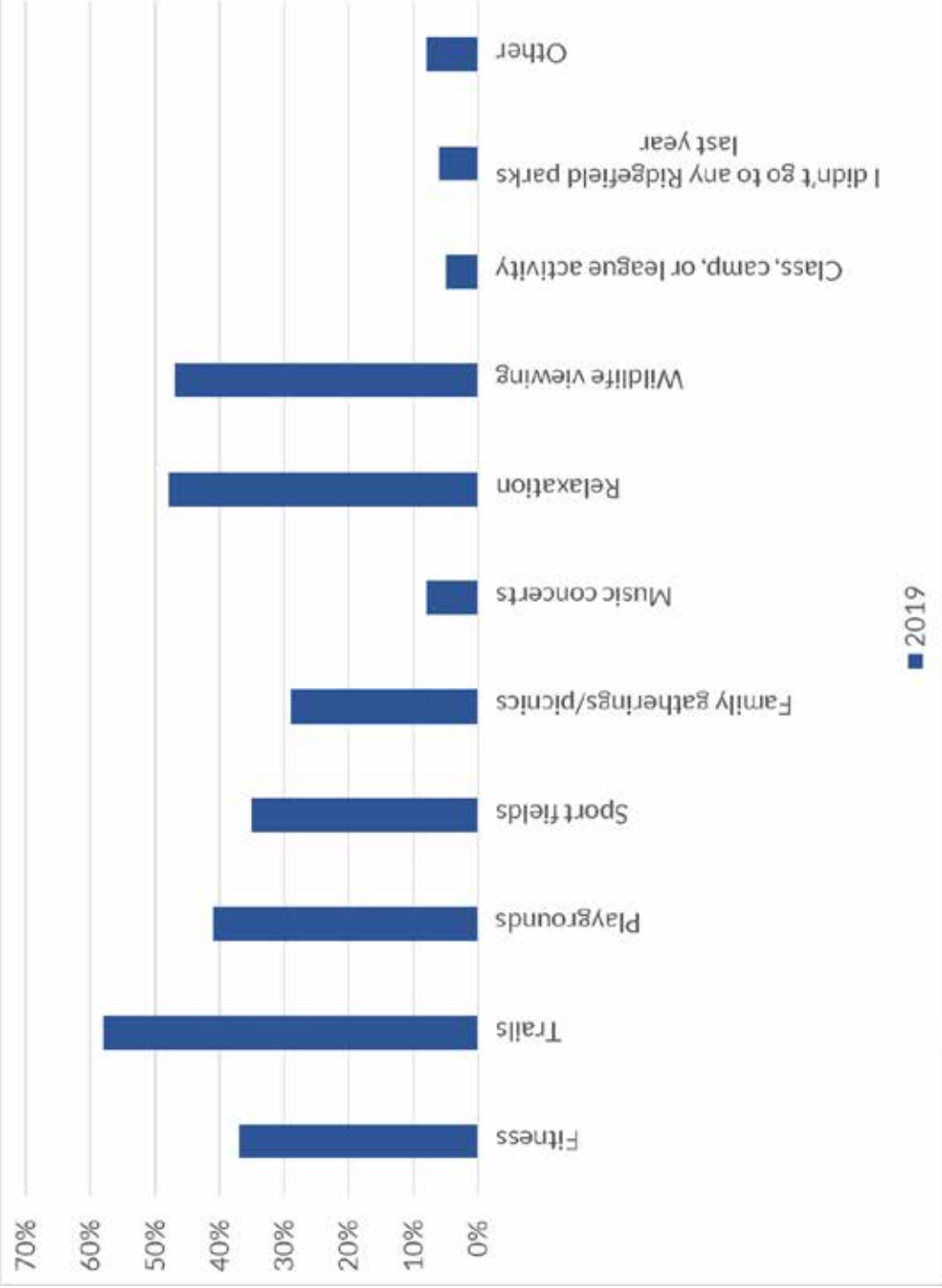


Parks Use of Parks



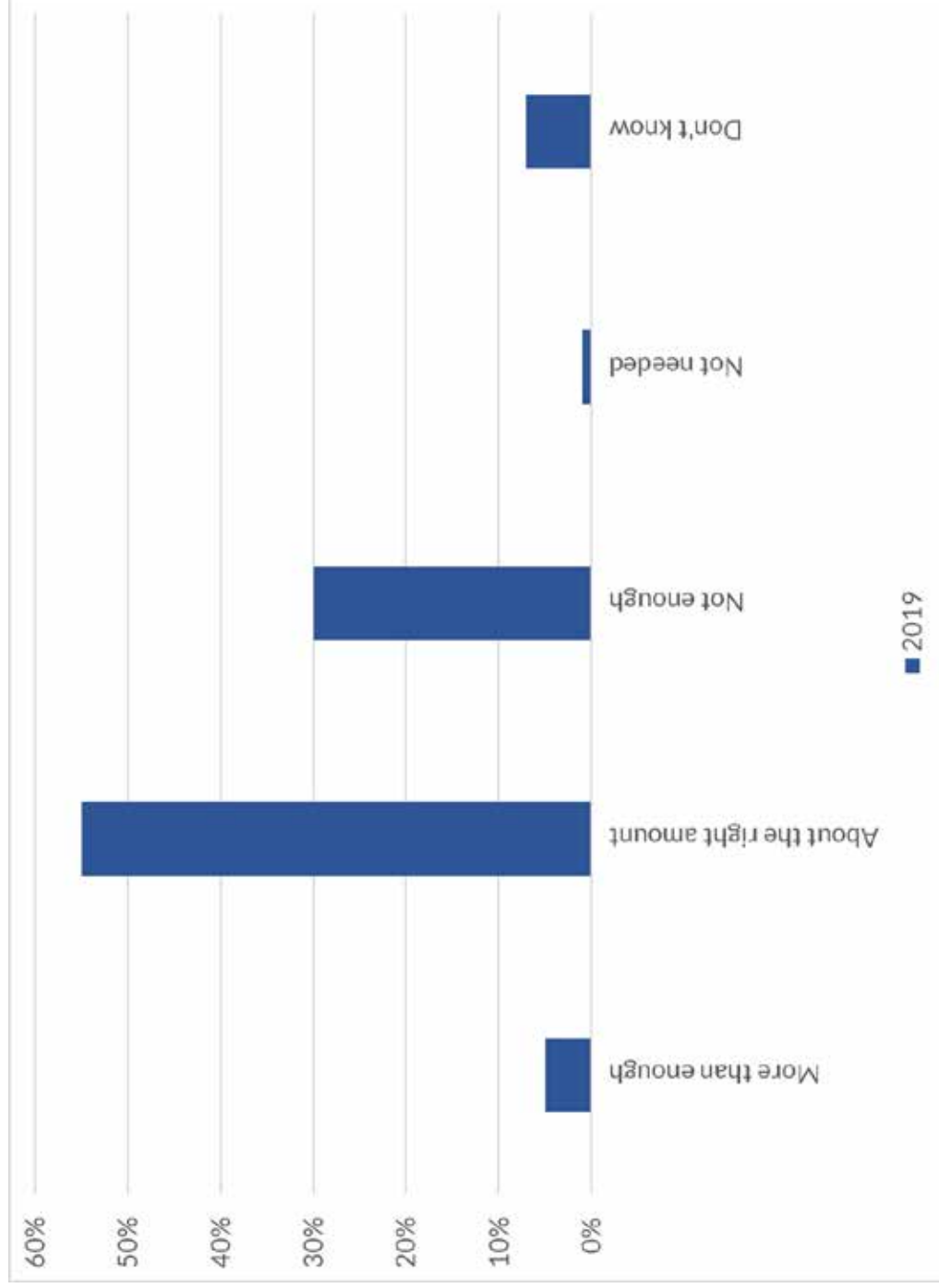
Parks

Main Reasons for Visiting

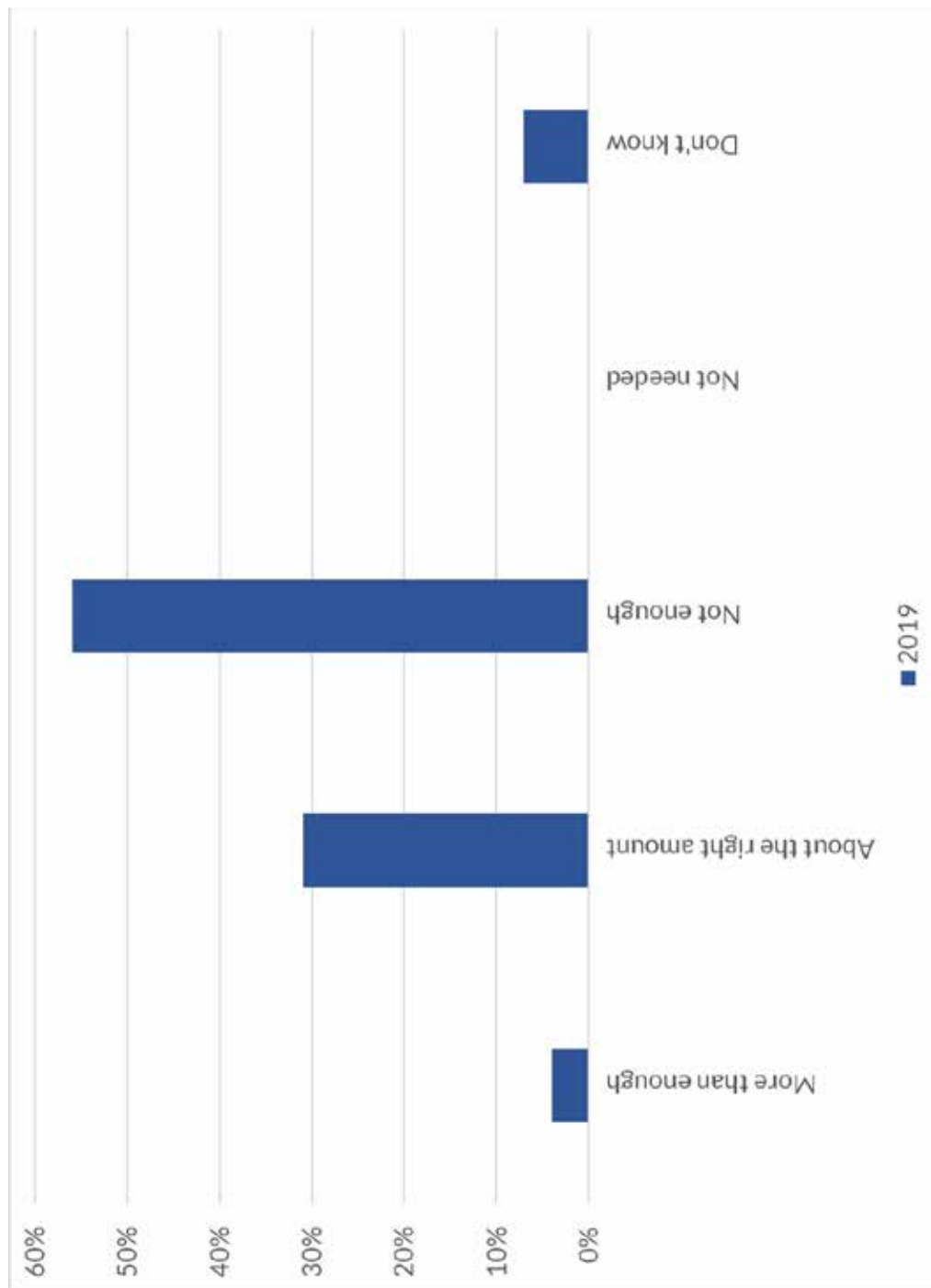




Parks Playgrounds, lawn areas, restrooms



Parks Walking/hiking trails

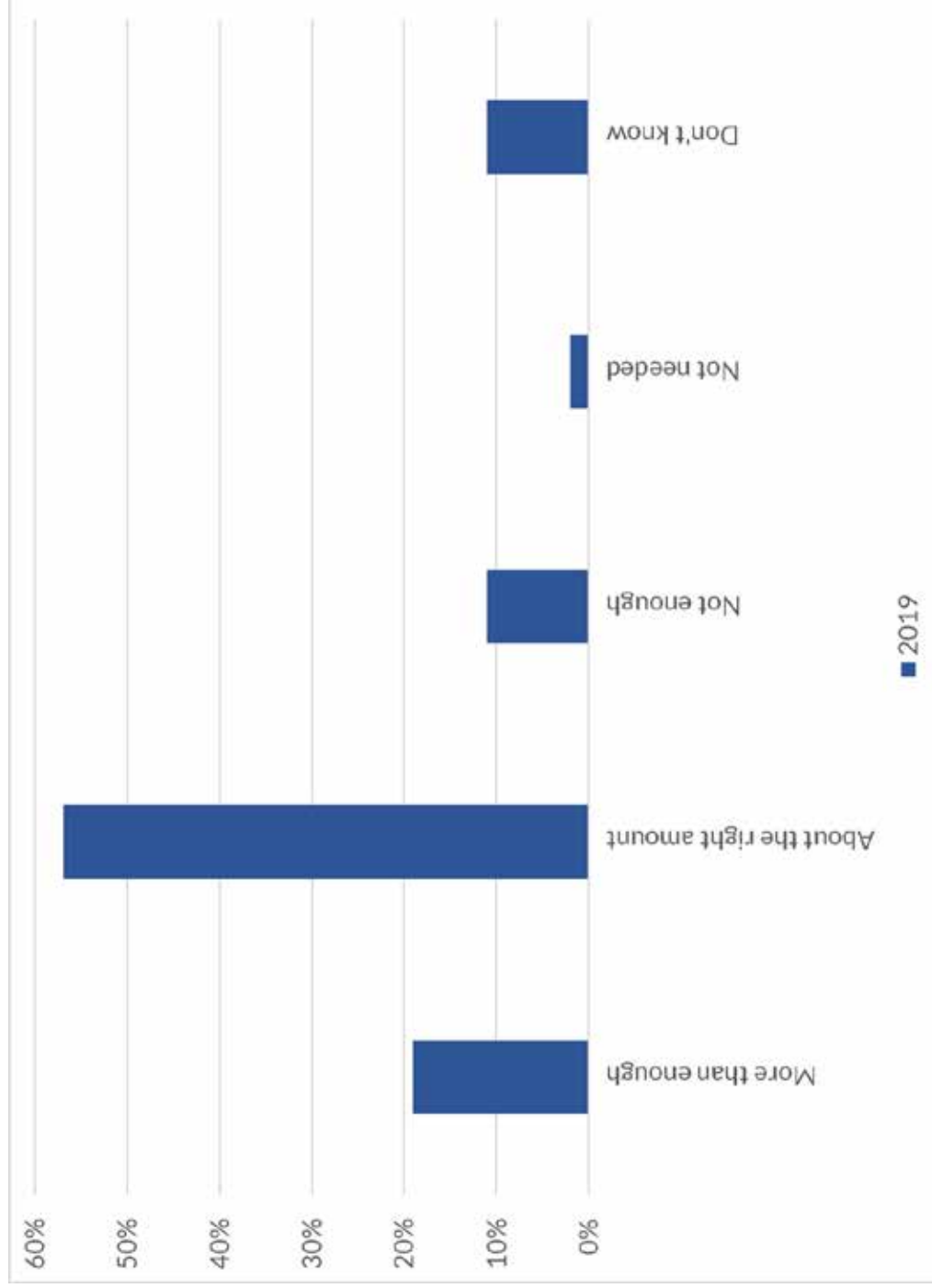


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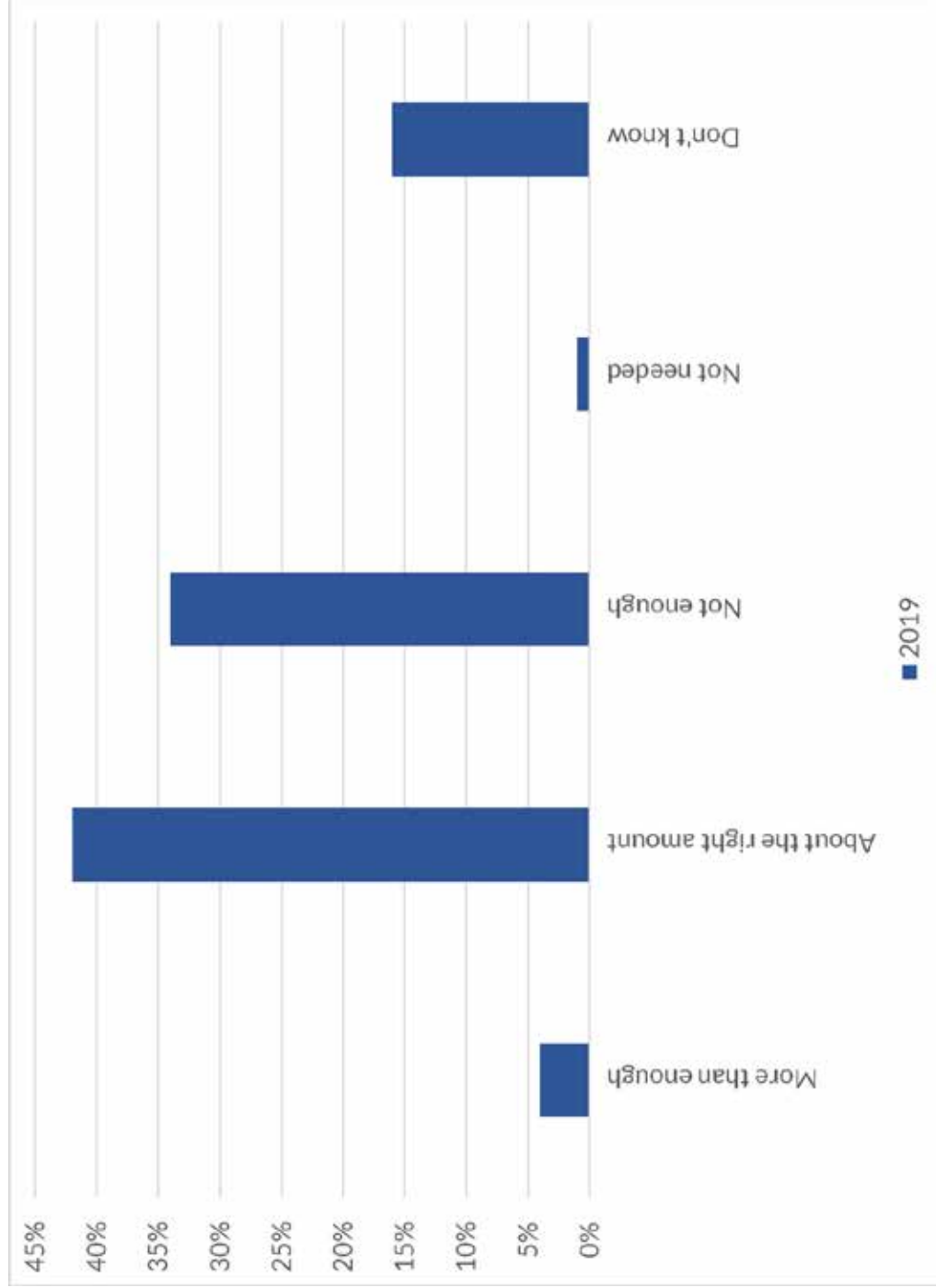
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Parks Sport fields and sport courts



Parks Picnic areas and shelters

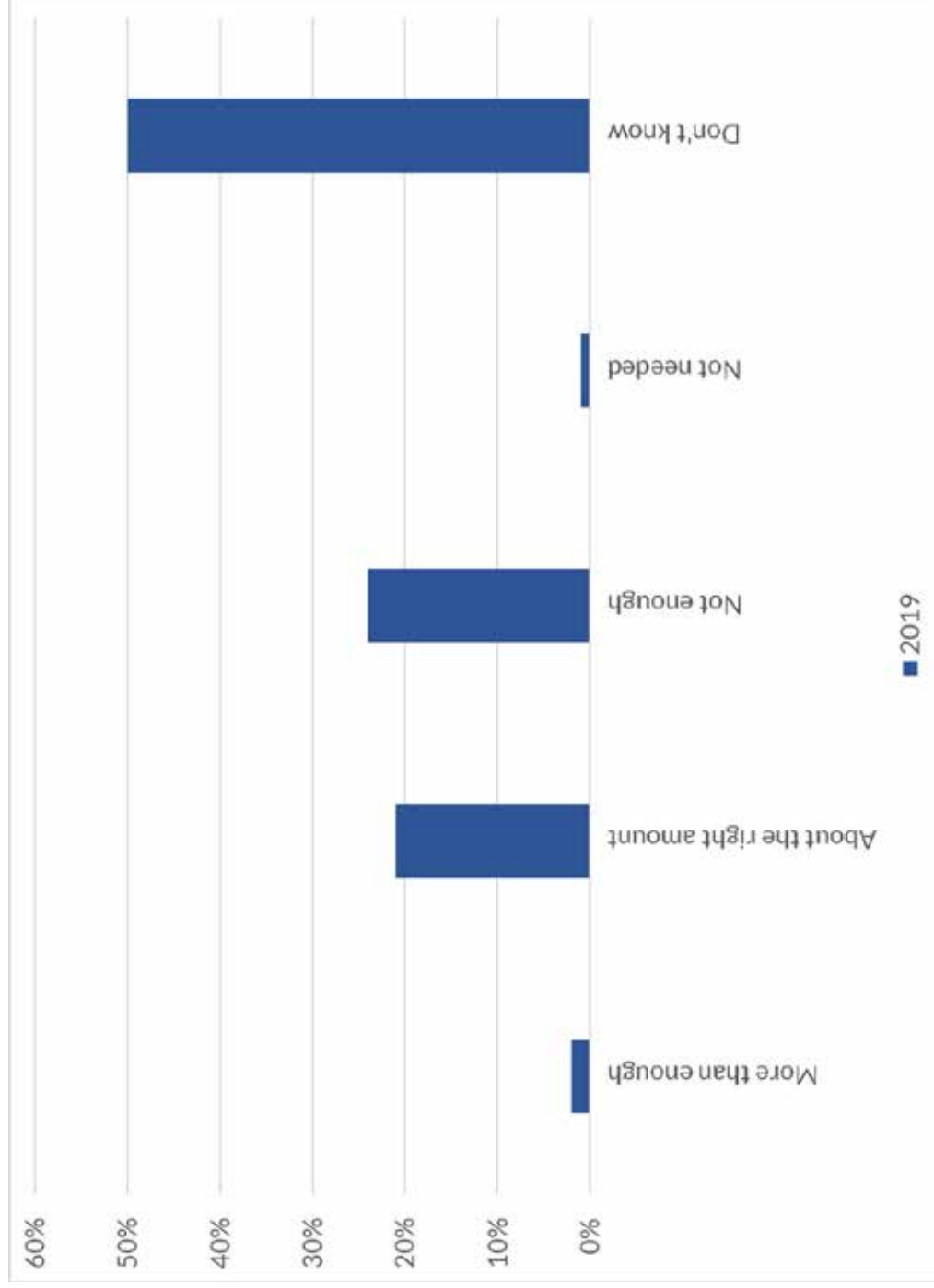


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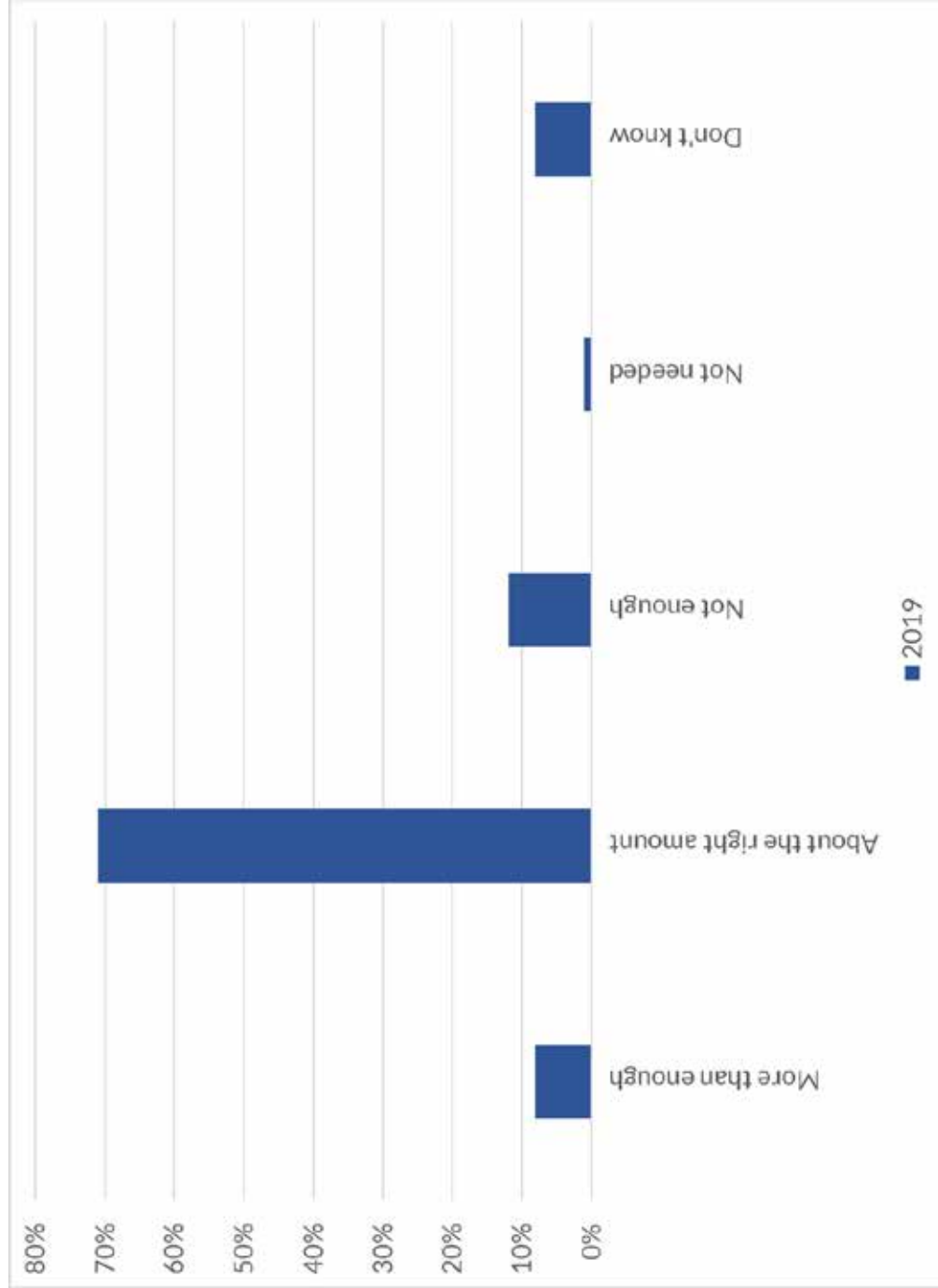
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Parks Children's activities



Parks Community events

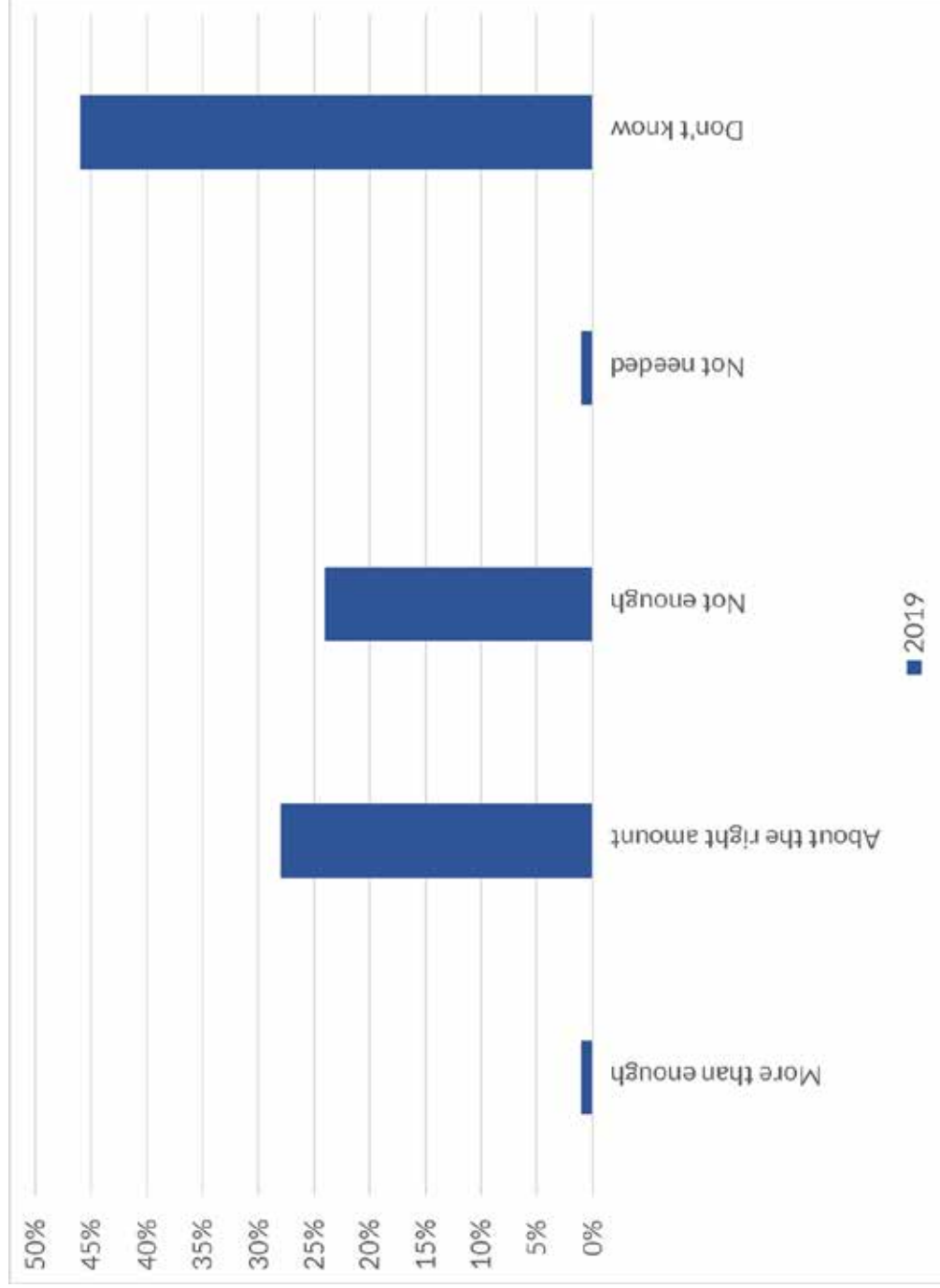


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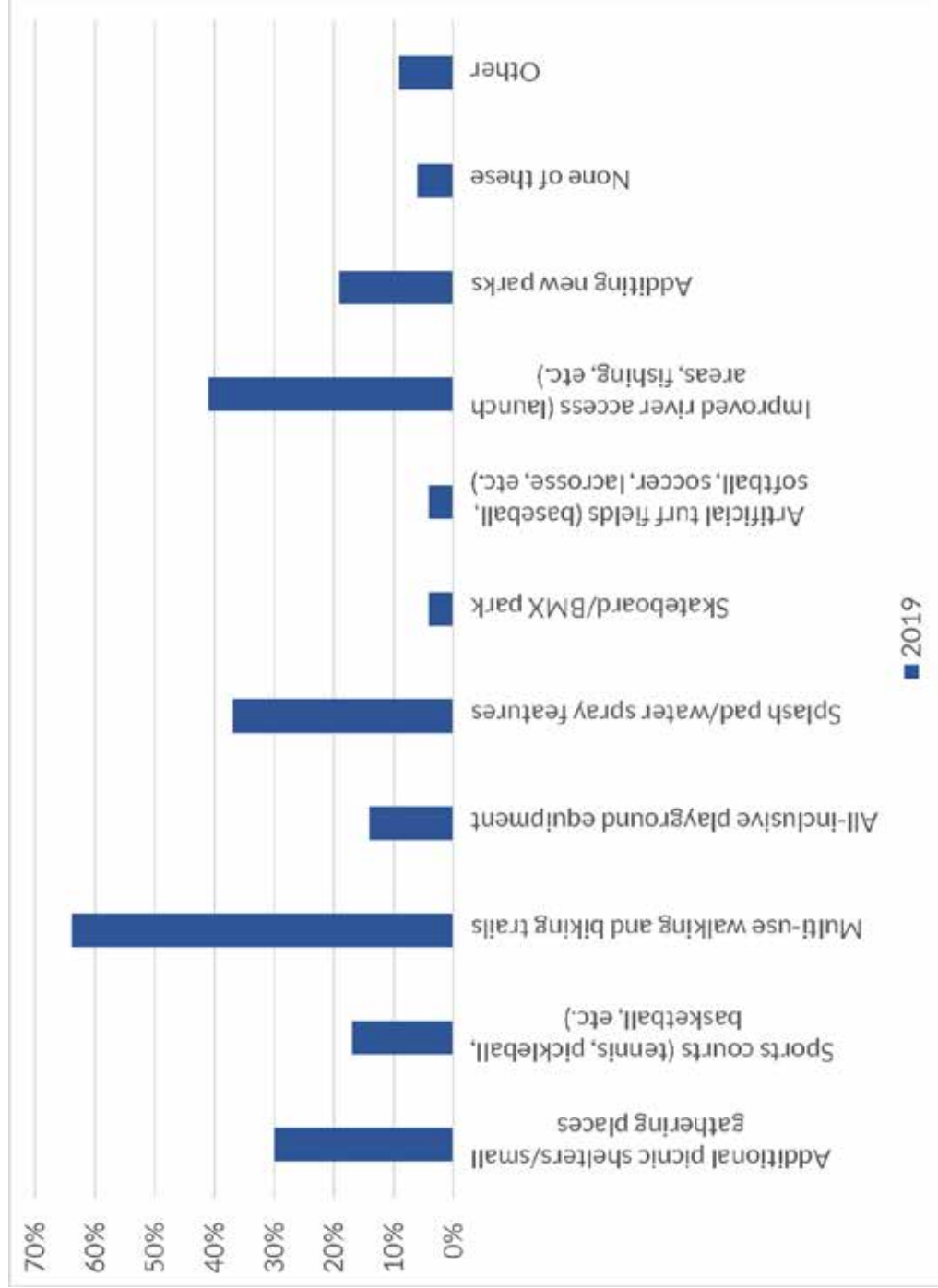
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Parks Youth activities



Parks Potential future park amenities

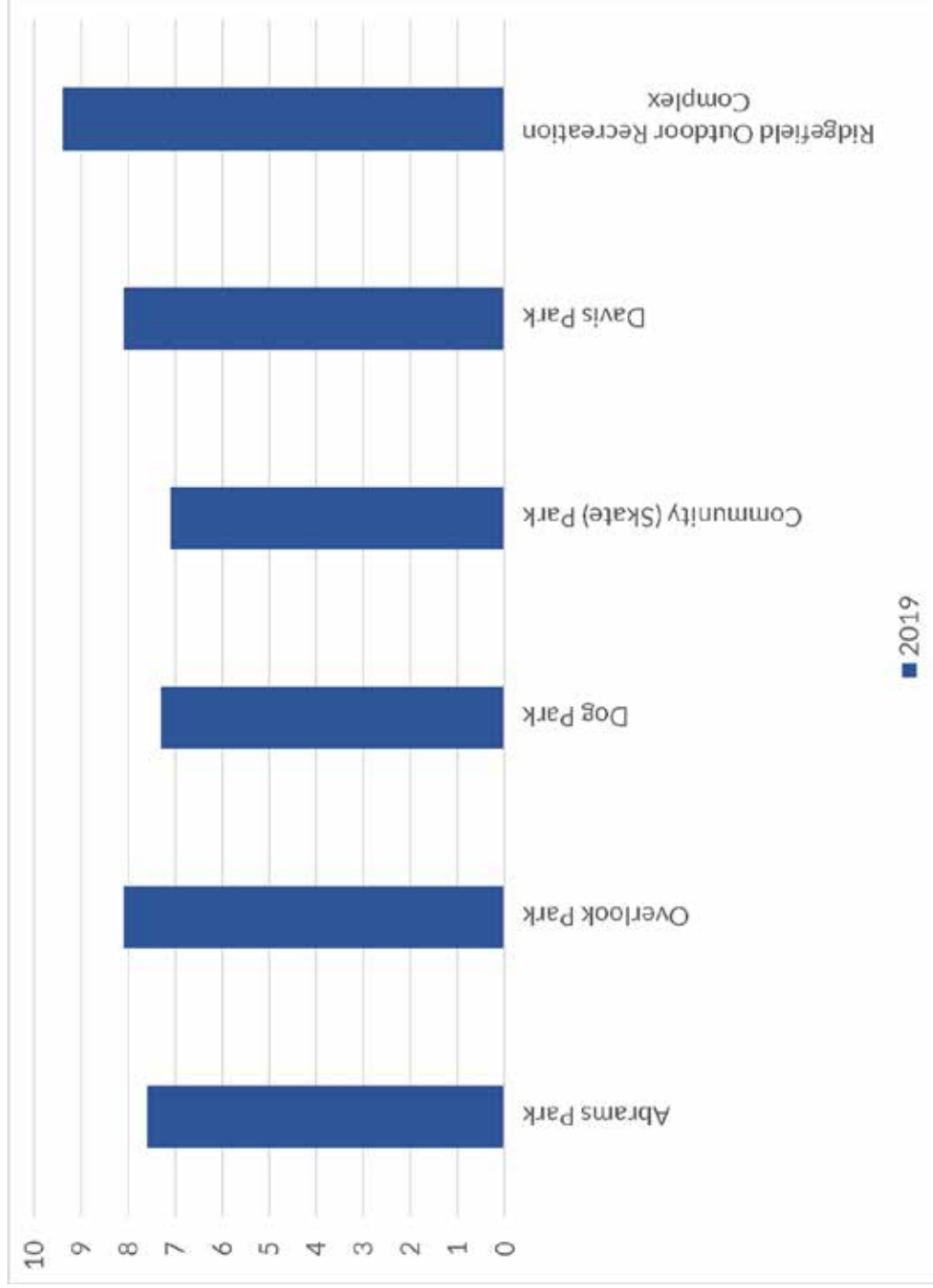


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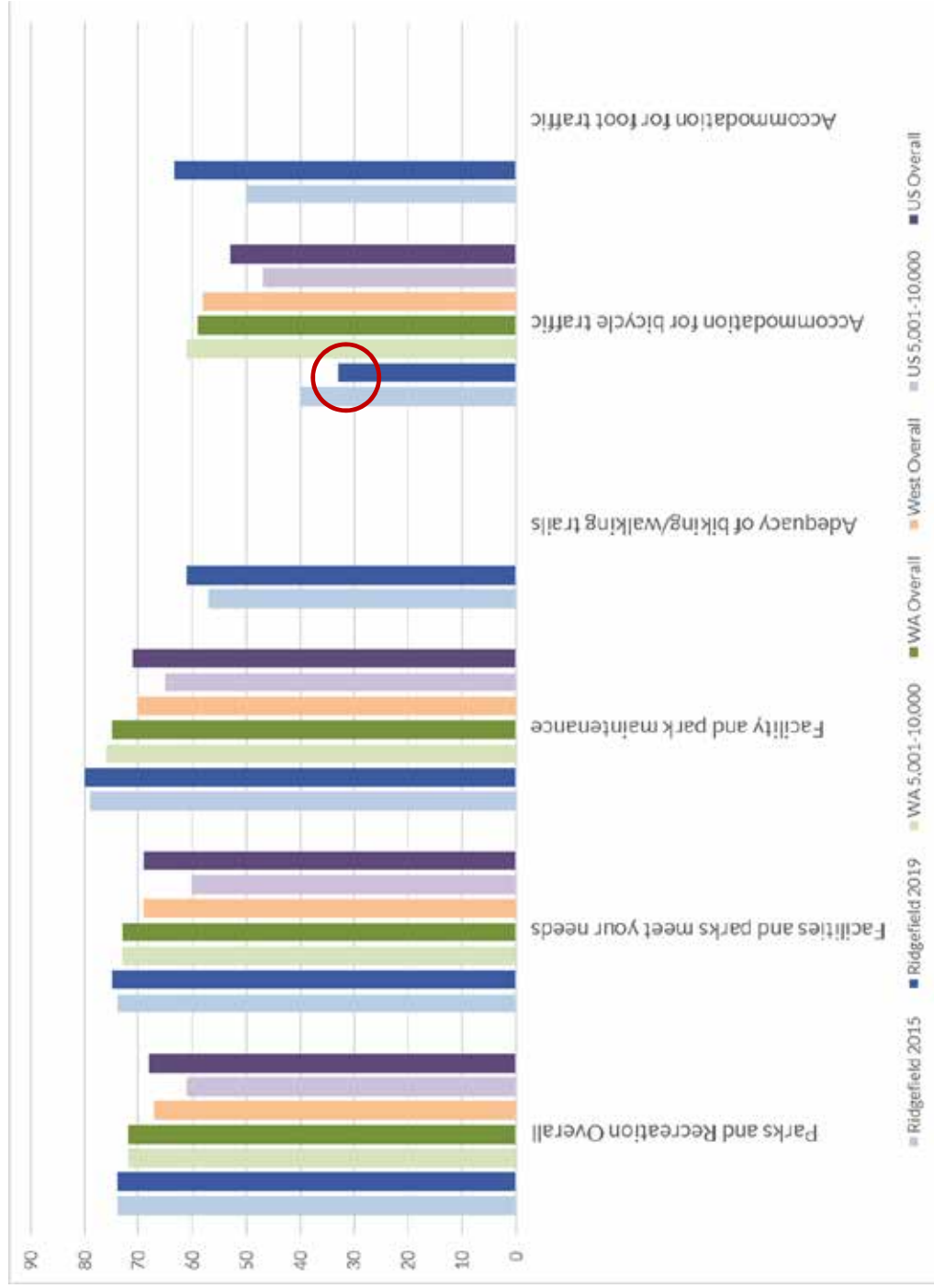
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Parks Condition of park facilities (10=excellent)



Parks





APPENDIX B: OPEN HOUSE NOTES



MEETING NOTES

PROJECT NUMBER: # 19-122PLN ISSUE DATE: September 10, 2019
PROJECT NAME: Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan

RECORDED BY: Steve Duh, Michelle Kunec-North
TO: FILE
PRESENT: Members of the public
Members of the Parks Board
City Staff
Project team members from Conservation Technix

SUBJECT: Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan: Open House #1 Notes (Sept 4th)

Community members were invited to an outdoor, open house for the Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan on Wednesday, September 4, 2019 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. at Davis Park. The project team prepared informational displays covering the major themes of the PROS Plan. These displays included Project Overview, Parks & Outdoor Recreation, Trails & Connections, and Maps.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members, record their comments and complete a written comment card. City staff and project team staff engaged with participants to identify general needs and interests for park and recreation in Ridgefield. Approximately 50 people (including about 25 youth) attended the meeting to review materials and provide comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following represents a summary of the comments received during the evening meeting.

Responses on Recreation Opportunities (What's missing or in short supply?)

- 58 – New, expanded skatepark
- 20 – Splash pad / water play
- 17 – All-inclusive playgrounds
- 14 – Picnic shelters / pavilions
- 7 – Improved water access (launches, fishing)
- 2 – Replace existing skatepark ramps
- 2 – Parks designed with views of mountains/volcanos (preserve views with future development)
- 1 – Sport courts (add Bocce)
- 1 – Community center with pool
- 1 – Environmental education opportunities to monitor water quality, fish, etc.
- 1 – Interpretation of the cultural (pre-European history) and natural environment
- 1 – Fitness park

Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan: Open House #1 Notes (Sept 4th)

Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan

Project Number # 19-122PLN

Page 2

Walking & Biking Trail Ideas

- Walking & Biking Trail Ideas
- Bikes lanes on Main
- Trail along creek in Cedar Ridge (Tee Creek)
- Connect trails
- Bike lanes
- Show planned HOA trails
- Connect neighborhoods (north of Pioneer & east of 32nd) to downtown
- Create safe route to downtown along Pioneer
- Need for cross country running trail outside of Refuge – connect to high school – Hillhurst to RORC
- Outdoor fitness equipment along trails
- Connect trail near Crow's Nest Park toward Rose Homestead Park
- Provide trail along Royle from RORC to Pioneer

Future Park Needs

- Provide places to sit and chat at the parks, not a picnic bench
- Improve hand-carry access at the Port for kayaks; Existing large rocks are tripping hazard; Add small rocks for better wheel a cart to the water

Recreation Program Ideas

- Youth Programs & Camps: Learn outdoor survival skills / Boy Scouts
- Teen Drop-in & Camps: All-ages oriented events
- Senior Activities: Senior fitness/wellness programs, senior center, tai chi, senior stretch exercises, senior center with kitchen, senior activities
- Adult Sport Leagues: Yoga in the park
- Adult Enrichment: Adult painting, Lectures

General Comments from Parks & Open Space Map

- Preserve/maintain vistas of mountains (i.e., St. Helens, Mt. Hood)
- Provide safe trail route along Pioneer into downtown

General Comments

- Splash pad
- Fancy splash pad – potentially convert into ice/roller rink in off-season
- Bathroom at Hayden Park please; Covered area would be nice too
- Thanks for working to connect trails!
- Gee Creek Trail (status?)
- Guided night hikes (owls)
- Summer outdoor concert series

Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan: Open House #1 Notes (Sept 4th)

Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan

Project Number # 19-122PLN

Page 3

- All-inclusive park – playground, swings, path
- Center a park space around one of the great Mt. views to preserve that!
- New development is blocking mountain views, consider a park designed to preserve a view of our volcanos
- Bike trails connecting new developments (Rosauers, housing/apts) to downtown
- Pioneer Trail – path parallel to road
- Cedar Ridge Trail to downtown
- Bigger skatepark for skate, scooters, bmx
- Bike lanes from downtown to Rosauers
- Splash pad with Ridgefield theme (farm, wildlife, spuds, etc.) at Overlook Park
- Accessibility is important!
- Reconsider disc golf in Abrams Park and/or work with people to carefully manage vegetation; vegetation treatments have reintroduced weeds
- Bocce ball court
- Large wall (outdoor) for racquetball
- I'd love bocce ball court
- Outdoor concerts
- Guided hikes
- Community center and pool and indoor rec sports
- Greenspace on Hillhurst, not a gas station
- Skatepark is great; would love to see it expanded/improved
- Extend waterfront trail for running with dog
- City trails are great – need better wayfinding or online map
- More playground space for toddlers (2-5 year olds)
- Repair split rail fence at Eagle's View and add sign
- More natural trails (run, walking dogs, biking)
- Mountain bike trails and road bike trails with amenities
- Playground like this (Washougal picture)
- Covered picnic pavilions (at Davis, Abrams, Overlook)
- Please expedite trail networks (i.e., Washougal to Refuge trails)
- Skatepark with better, safer, more visible design and adjacent uses, like shelter and splash pad

Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

cc: Bryan Kast; Lisa Blake
File

A photograph of a man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a denim jacket over a patterned shirt, and a young child in a red shirt and shorts, both drinking from a public water fountain. The man is leaning over the child, who is holding the fountain's spout. The background shows a sunny outdoor setting with trees and a building.

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER NOTES



DISCUSSION NOTES

Project Name:	Ridgefield Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan	Project No.:	Proj-# 19-122PLN
Location:	RACC	Date:	September 19, 2019
Notes by:	Steve Duh	Time:	12:30 pm
Attendees:	Marykay Lamoureux, Ridgefield Main Street Eric Anderson, Ridgefield Wildlife Refuge Carlos Urbina, Ridgefield School District		Rob Aichele, Planning Commission Bryan Kast, Public Works Director Steve Duh, Conservation Technix
Subject:	Stakeholder Group Session (09/19/19)		

Following brief introductions and an overview of the project scope and timeline, the group discussion generally followed a series of questions to gather perspectives regarding park, program and facility needs for the City of Ridgefield.

What do you value about Ridgefield's parks and open spaces?

- Connectivity for biking and walking – between neighborhoods and the parks and between the different neighborhoods
- Pathways that connect Discovery Ridge to downtown, as well as Clover Hill
- Parks as sanctuaries and well-maintained – facilities for kids/citizens
- Should be a walking community; there are limited options for safe trail riding options/connections in town
- Rural roads are attractive to regional bikers and cyclists from Vancouver; road design and safety issues with rural, county roads
- While the Refuge is providing habitat, it's extent is limited. In the tension between growth and open space preservation, the open space is not being conserved, and the wildlife corridors are marginalized. They are usually the minimum width required by code

What would you like to see happening over the coming 10 years?

- Provide directional and distance signage along and throughout the trail network (i.e., 1.3 miles to Abrams Park; .8 miles to Downtown, etc.). Have better wayfinding and illustrate/show the 'system'
- For the Refuge it will be important to continue to create experiences for visitors in the right way and right time. Implement development plans with minimal disturbances (i.e., the trail to the Plank House – was done without much impact and in an area not heavily used by geese.)
- Make sure the City is a partner and is involved with future development plans for Millers Landing (Port), which needs to have a public park space and relate to the Refuge

Interview Notes (continued)

- Holistically look at the visitor experience and have a nice suite of experiences – seamless between the different land managers (Port, City, USFW). For example, visitors can use dog park and picnic areas provided by City; then visit riverfront developed by Port; then walk through natural area of the Refuge.

Ideas

- With the partnership with RSD, cross promotions of material is important to reach the different groups in the community – work more toward coordinated marketing and more overlap with the other community groups in town (i.e., Main Street program).
- For the future 10 acre park near the new apartments, consider providing a dog park for the 300+ apartment and studio units coming to that area.

Amenities

- Splash pad / water play – maybe use the site of the former PW office at Davis Park as a future splash pad area
- All-inclusive playground
- YMCA is looking at the Ridgefield area for a potential site for community center operations
- In the downtown, space for gatherings and events is near or at capacity (farmers market, Hometown Celebration, 4th of July); as the city grows, consideration should be given toward options for expanded community gathering spaces and possibly structured parking
- The RORC is at maximum capacity now and Abrams is still heavily used; additional field space will be needed in the future; the City and RSD should continue to collaborate and partner on options to expand the footprint of the RORC for school and community needs
- A community recreation center for indoor activities (gym for basketball/volleyball) and room for classes should be considered
- RSD assets are available to the community for use through scheduled use, but at some point in the future, additional indoor space might be needed that is beyond what the school district can provide.

Where should the City focus resources & energy?

- Gee Creek Trail from Abrams to the Refuge is a high priority
- The new plan should highlight community values, needs and modalities; the 2014 plan was helpful in securing grant funding
- Make incremental improvements and progress on trails; show the sections the City prioritizes and promote accomplishments. Do celebrations and ribbon cuttings with information about the next sections that are planned

Interview Notes (continued)

After the group session, a response to the discussion questions was provided by Bruce Carpenter:

What is your history with Ridgefield's park system, and what do you value about Ridgefield's parks and open spaces?

- Provided testimony on the Teal Crest development plan. Offered pickleball as an option for the new 10 acre park and provide photos of other SW locations.
- The local neighborhood parks are too small. I don't visit the dog park. The RACC is a nice addition to Ridgefield.

Are there any age or user groups that need specific attention?

- Seniors and adults with no school aged children in the room.

Where does the idea of recreation programs fit within your vision for priorities for Ridgefield?

- It is important for those with children, but less for empty nesters.

How can your organization partner with the City of Ridgefield?

- HOAs can be an important communication avenue for the neighborhood communities

Opportunities for the future.

- Add pickleball courts. Currently, there are few options for non-students to participate in outdoor fitness-related activities.
- 1) Complete the 10 acre park. 2) provide irrigation to local parks to make them usable during the summer months. 3) Connect the trail system. 4) If the trails have a multi-modal directive, ensure the developers place a hard surface on the trail, not bark or pea gravel.

-- End of Notes --

APPENDIX D: RECREATION TRENDS



The following summaries from recognized park and recreation resources provide background on national, state and local trends that may reflect potential recreational activities and facilities for future consideration in Ridgefield's park system. Examining current recreation trends can help inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities that may enhance the community and create a more vibrant parks system as it moves into the future.

2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review

The 2019 NRPA report summarizes the key findings from the National Recreation and Park Association's NRPA Park Metrics, their benchmarking tool that assists park and recreation professionals in the effective management and planning of their operating resources and capital facilities. The report offers a comprehensive collection of park- and recreation-related benchmarks and insights to inform professionals, key stakeholders and the public about the state of the park and recreation industry. The 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review contains data from 1,075 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2016 and 2018.

Key Findings and Characteristics:

Park Facilities

- There is typically one park for every 2,181 residents.
- The typical park and recreation agency has 10.0 acres of park land for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction.
- An overwhelming majority of park and recreation agencies has playgrounds (94.4%) and basketball courts (86.1%) in their portfolio of outdoor assets.
- A majority of agencies offers community centers and recreation centers; two in five agencies offer senior centers.
- Programming
- Key programming activities include team sports, social recreation events, fitness enhancement classes and health and wellness education.
- 82.4% of agencies offer summer camp for their community's younger residents.

Staffing

- The typical park and recreation agency has a payroll of 38.2 full-time equivalent staff (FTE's).
- The typical park and recreation agency has 8.3 FTEs on staff for each 10,000 residents in its jurisdiction.
- Operations and maintenance, programming and administration are the main responsibilities of park and recreation workers.

Budget/Finance

- The typical park agency has annual operating expenditures of \$3,834,500.
- The typical park and recreation agency has annual operating expenses of \$78.69 on a per capita basis.
- The median level of operating expenditures is \$6,750 per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency.
- The typical park and recreation agency spends \$93,230 in annual operating expenditures for each employee.

- At the typical park and recreation agency, personnel services account for 54.9% of the operating budget.
- The typical park and recreation agency dedicates 44.3% of its operating budget to park management and maintenance and 41.8% to recreation.

Agency Funding

- Park and recreation agencies derive 59.3% of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support.
- The typical park and recreation agency generates \$20.11 in revenue annually for each resident in the jurisdiction.
- The typical park and recreation agency recovers 27.3% of its operating expenditures from non-tax revenues.
- Park and recreation agencies spend a median of \$4,007,250 million in capital expenditures over the next five years.
- On average, just over half of the capital budget is designated for renovation, while 30.9% is aimed at new development.

Park facilities differ greatly across the local and regional park and recreation agencies in America. The typical agency participating in the NRPA park metric survey serves a jurisdiction of 39,183 people but population size can vary widely. The typical park and recreation agency has jurisdiction over 19 parks comprising a total of 432.5 acres. Park facilities also have a range of service levels in terms of acres of parkland per population and residents per park. These metrics are categorized by the agency's population size.

Figure D1. Median Residents per park based on Population Size

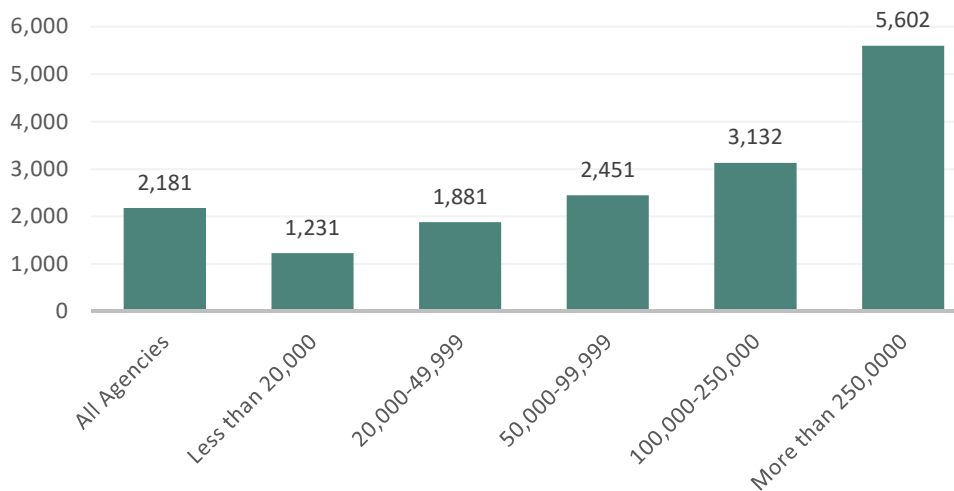
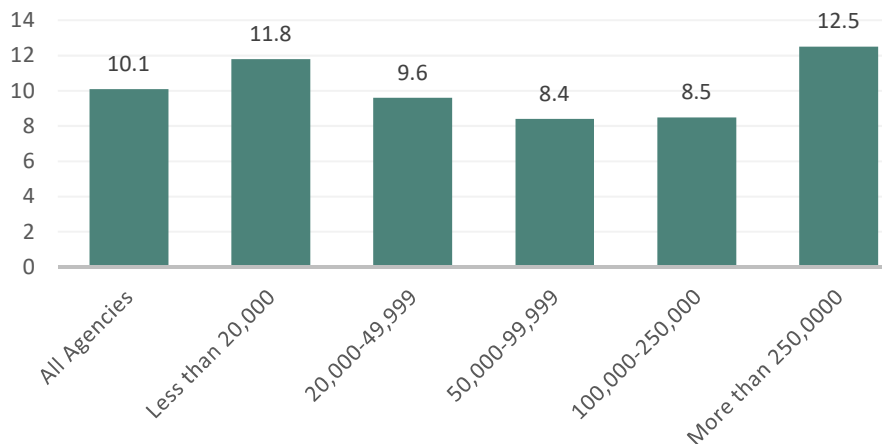


Figure D2. Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents based on Population Size



The typical park and recreation agency that manages or maintains trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking has 11.0 miles of trails. Agencies serving more than 250,000 residents have a median of 82.0 miles of trails under their care.

Park and recreation agencies take on many responsibilities beyond their traditional roles of operating parks and related facilities (96%) and providing recreation programming and services (93%). In addition to those two core functions, the key responsibilities for park and recreation agencies are listed in the table below, based on percent of agencies.

Figure D3. Key Responsibilities of Park and Recreation Agencies

Key Park & Recreation Responsibilities	Percent of Agencies
Operate and maintain indoor facilities	87%
Operate, maintain or manage trails, greenways and/or blueways	78%
Conduct major jurisdiction-wide special events	76%
Operate, maintain or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	71%
Include in its operating budget the funding for planning and development functions	67%
Operate and maintain non-park sites	65%
Operate, maintain or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks	59%
Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	57%
Operate, maintain or contract tennis center facilities	51%
Administer community gardens	40%

Other responsibilities of park and recreation agencies can include golf courses, tourist attractions, outdoor amphitheaters, indoor swim facilities, farmer's markets, indoor sports complexes, campgrounds, performing arts centers, stadiums, arenas, racetracks and/or fairgrounds.

Beyond the comparative metrics of park and recreation agencies, the NRPA performance report also noted trends that have significant impact on agency performance. The report predicts that investments in park infrastructure will rise in 2019-2020 thanks to increased revenues from local tax receipts. As a result, park and recreation agencies - regardless of size, location, population served or budget - will likely be able to plan for and construct more recreation facilities. The growth of new recreation facilities and capital improvements will result in positive impacts on local, regional and state economies.

Technology will continue to have influence on parks from monitoring systems and beacon counters to biometric identification systems. Questions of data security will remain paramount as these technologies become less expensive and more prevalent. Recreational and commercial scale drones are more prevalent and both the advantage for imaging, mapping and monitoring and the potential for disruptive uses will become factors in application and management.

The consolidation of public services continues to affect park and recreation agencies. The potential opportunity to reduce costs and allow for greater efficiencies may pressure governments to combine park facilities with public schools or consolidate with public works. This trend can present both opportunities and threats to the efficient and effective functioning of park and recreation services.

Emerging trends will continue to encourage park and recreation providers to become more nimble and more adaptable to the ever changing conditions and public expectations for sustained high-level performance. Agencies must be proactive in assessing their position and be fully grounded in reliable data about their investments, operations and tangible results.

The State of the Industry Report

Recreation Management magazine's 2018 State of the Managed Recreation Industry report summarizes the opinions and information provided by a wide range of professionals (with an average 21.3 years of experience) working in the recreation, sports and fitness facilities. The 2018 report indicated that many (86.6%) recreation, sports and fitness facility owners form partnerships with other organizations, as a means of expanding their reach, offering additional programming opportunities or as a way to share resources and increase funding. Local schools are shown as the most common partner (61.3%) for all facility types. Parks and recreation organizations (95.8%) were the most likely to report that they had partnered with outside organizations.

Survey respondents from urban communities are more optimistic about positive changes to revenues, while rural respondents are not. In 2018, 41 percent of respondents said that revenues increased from 2016 to 2017, while 11.1% reported a decrease. Looking forward from 2018 to 2019, 50 percent of urban respondents expect revenues to increase, and just 4.3 percent project a decrease.

In last year's report, parks respondents had reported increases in their average operating expenditures with operating costs that grew by 58% between fiscal 2013 and fiscal 2016. After a significant increase in operating expenditures in fiscal 2016, costs have fallen again in 2017, and are expected to rise more steadily over the next two years, though not to the high reported last year. From 2017 to 2018, respondents said they expect their operating expenses to increase by 1.7 percent, followed by a further increase of 4.9 percent projected in fiscal 2019. The greatest decrease (16.8%) in average operating costs from 2016 to 2017 was reported by parks and recreation respondents.

Relative to costs and revenues, few facilities covered by the survey reported that they cover more than 90 percent of their operating costs via revenue. The percentage recovered varied with type of organization with the average percentage of costs recovered for all respondents hovering near 50%. For parks, the cost recovery rate increased from 43.4 % to 43.9 % from 2017 to 2018.

Over the past decades, public parks and recreation departments and districts have faced a growing expectation that facilities can be run like businesses. Many local facilities are expected to recover much of their operating costs via revenues. While this is the business model for for-profit facilities like health clubs, it's a relatively recent development for publicly owned facilities, which have typically been subsidized via tax dollars and other funding sources. Most recreation providers (80.5%) have been taking actions to reduce expenditures. Cost recovery actions typically involve reduction in expenses with improving energy efficiency as the most common action (48.3% of respondents). Increased fees and staffing cost reductions and putting off construction or renovation plans were reported as other common methods for reducing operating costs.

Utilization of recreation facilities has shown steady increases by the majority of respondents. Looking forward, more than half of respondents expect to see further increases in the number of people using their facilities. The expectation is that this trend will continue in the next two years.

This year saw a fairly significant drop in the average number of people employed at the organizations covered by the survey. After several years of steady growth, to a high of 147.6 employees in 2017, the average number of employees dropped by 21.7% in the past year. On average, this year's survey respondents employ 28.2 full-time workers, 39.8 part-time employees, 44.8 seasonal workers, 43.2 volunteers, and 9.1 employees of some other designation. In 2018, more than three-quarters (77.7%) of respondents said they plan to maintain existing staff levels, up from 57% in 2017.

A majority of respondents (83.2%) require certifications for some of their staff members to help measure and verify specific types of professional knowledge and skill. Of those respondents that require certification, the most common types of certification required included CPR/AED/First Aid (required by 90.3% of those who said they require some staff members to be certified), background checks (83.4%), and lifeguard certification (56.3%).

Over the past five years, the percentage of respondents who indicate that they have plans for construction, whether new facilities or additions or renovations to their existing facilities, has grown steadily, from 62.7 percent in 2013 to 69.5 percent in 2018. Construction plans of all kinds are most common among camps and parks. For camp respondents, 47.1 percent are planning new facilities, 45.9 percent are planning additions, and 60 percent are planning renovations. They were followed by parks, 33.9 percent of whom have plans for new construction, 32.6 percent for additions, and 57.7 percent for renovations.

Parks saw modest increases to their construction budgets from 2016 to 2018, with respondents expecting to see increases of 13.5%. Public organizations saw the sharpest increase to their construction budgets from 2016 to 2018, with an increase of 28.7 percent, from \$3,877,000 in 2016 to \$4,990,000 in 2018.

Parks respondents were more likely than other facility types to include: playgrounds (86.7% of parks respondents had playgrounds); park shelters (80%); park restroom structures (75.6%); outdoor sports courts (74.4%); community and multipurpose centers (58.4%); bike trails (46.4%); skate parks (41.1%); dog parks (38.8%); community gardens (33.7%); disc golf courses (32.9%); fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (32.6%); splash play areas (30.7%); golf courses (19.9%); ice rinks (17.6%); waterparks (16.8%); and bike/BMX parks (11.4%).

Park respondents (56.2%) reported plans to add features at their facilities. The top 10 planned features for all facility types include:

1. Splash play areas (23.6%)
2. Synthetic turf sports fields (17%)
3. Fitness trails and/or outdoor fitness equipment (16.4%)
4. Fitness centers (16.3%)
5. Walking/hiking trails (15.5%)
6. Playgrounds (15.2%)
7. Park shelters (13.6%)
8. Dog parks (13.5%)
9. Exercise studios (12.9%)
10. Disc golf courses (12.9%)

Respondents from community centers, parks and health clubs were the most likely to report that they had plans to add programs at their facilities over the next few years. The 10 most commonly planned program additions in 2018 include:

1. Fitness programs (planned by 25.9% of those who will be adding programs)
2. Educational programs (25.7%)
3. Mind-body balance programs (23.3%)
4. Teen programs (22.7%)
5. Environmental education (20.7%)
6. Day camps and summer camps (20.3%)
7. Special needs programs (18.9%)
8. Adult sports teams (18.5%)

9. Holidays and other special events (18.3%)
10. Individual sports activities (17.5%)

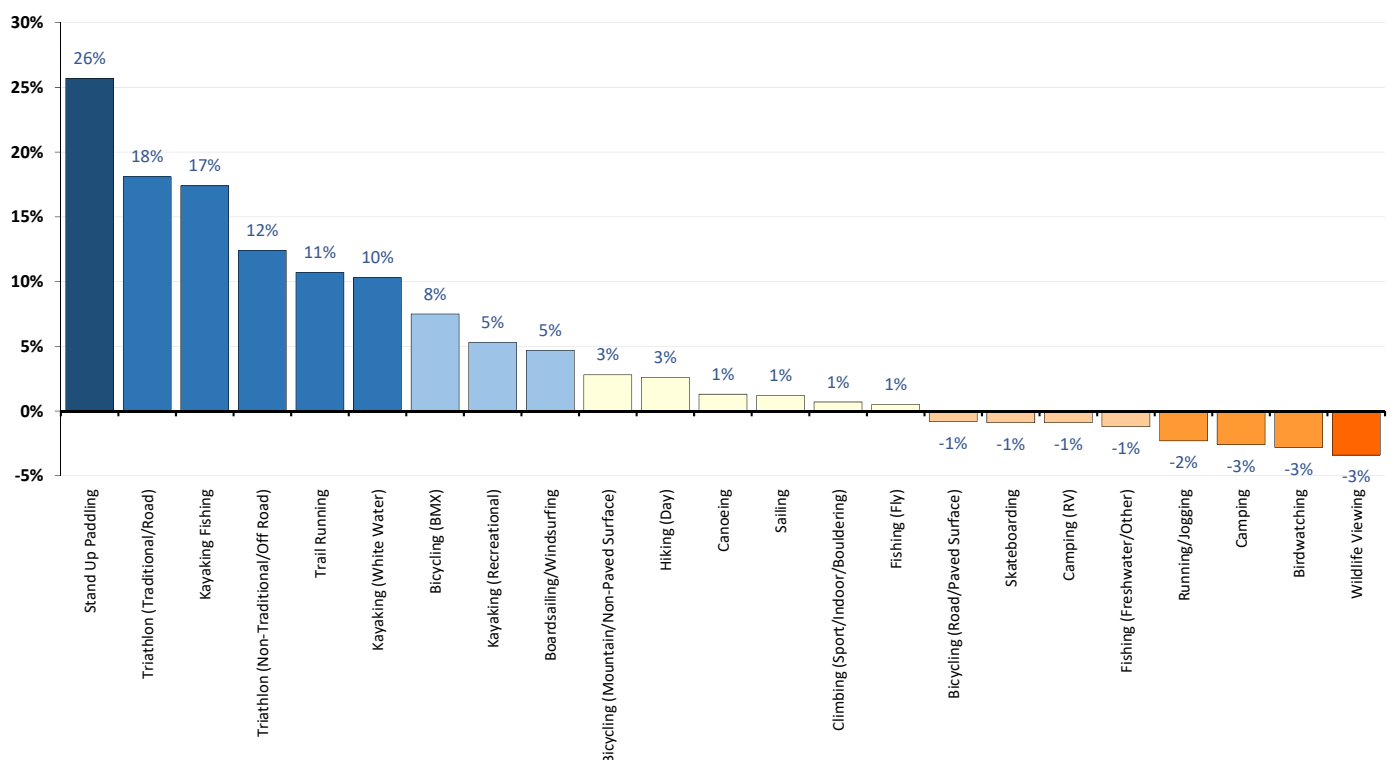
While in general, overall budgets are the top concern for most respondents, equipment and facility maintenance lead the issues of budgetary challenges with staffing as the second most common concern. Marketing, safety/ risk management, and creating new and innovative programming are continuing challenges for facility managers. Current concerns on the rise in 2018 include older adult fitness and wellness, legislative issues, environmental and conservation issues and social equity and access.

The Outdoor Participation Report

According to 2018 Outdoor Participation Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation in Boulder, Colorado, more than 146.1 million Americans (49%) participated in an outdoor activity at least once in 2017. These outdoor participants went on a total of 10.9 billion outdoor outings, a decrease from 11.0 billion in 2016. Participation in outdoor recreation, team sports and indoor fitness activities vary by an individual's age. Recent trend highlights include the following:

- Twenty percent (20%) of outdoor enthusiasts participated in outdoor activities at least twice per week.
- Running, including jogging and trail running, was the most popular activity among Americans when measured by number of participants and by number of total annual outings.
- Nineteen percent (19%) outdoor participants lived in the South Atlantic region of the US, making its population the most active in outdoor activities.
- Walking for fitness was the most popular crossover activity where 45.8% of all outdoor participants also walked.
- Data shows that adults who were introduced to the outdoors as children were more likely to participate in outdoor activities during adulthood than those who were not exposed to the outdoors as children.
- The biggest motivator for outdoor participation was getting exercise.

Figure D4. 3-Year Change in Outdoor Recreation Participation of Youth (6-24)



Favorite activities and participation rates range with demographics. In 2017, the average participant had 15 years of experience enjoying outdoor recreation. The data shows, as would be expected, that the amount of experience increased as the participant aged. Those ages 45 and up averaged 25 years as outdoor participants.

Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report

Prepared by a partnership of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and the Physical Activity Council (PAC), this 2018 participation report establishes levels of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation in the US. The largest focus of activities continues to be toward fitness sports. Winter sports gained the most of all categories, increasing 2% over the last year. The interest in activities has started moving toward outdoor recreation. The top aspirational activity for all age segments was outside, ranging from camping to biking to birdwatching.

Fitness sports/activities continues to have the highest participation rates; having 64% of the US population ages 6 and over engaging in activities like running/jogging, high intensity/impact training, row machines, and swimming. Outdoor activities remained second but was flat from 2016; seeing a increase in day hiking and backpacking, but lost participants in canoeing and adventure racing.

While age clearly affects how often someone participates, what they do can also be age dependent. Young kids, ages 6 to 17, who tend to be more active overall, focus on team sports and outdoor activities, while Boomers prefer fitness activities, especially low impact activities such as aquatic exercise, cycling, and walking. Millennials are more likely than the other generations to participate in water sports, such as stand up paddling, boardsailing, and surfing.

Inactivity rates remain higher than 10 years ago despite the promotion of the benefits of an active lifestyle. Over a quarter of the US population (ages 6 and over) did not participate in even the lowest caloric activity in 2017. Trends continue to show how income affects inactivity. Generally, the affluent are getting more active while the less affluent are becoming more inactive.

Despite aspirations to become more active, the biggest influence on engaging more participants is having a friend or family member to take part in the physical activity. First time participation depends on who you are doing it with more than if you have the time.

National Survey on Recreation and the Environment

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) is a comprehensive survey that has been collecting data and producing reports about the recreation activities, environmental attitudes and natural resource values of Americans since the 1980s. The NSRE core focus is on outdoor activity participation and personal demographics. The most recent 2012 NSRE reports the total number of people participating in outdoor activities between 2000 and 2007 grew by 4.4% while the number of days of participation increased by approximately 25 percent. Walking for pleasure grew by 14% and continued to lead as the top favorite outdoor activity.

Nature-based activities, those associated with wildlife and natural settings, showed a discernible growth in the number of people (an increase in 3.1% participation rate) and the number of days of participation. Americans' participation in nature-based outdoor recreation is increasing. The fastest growing type of nature-based recreation activity measured is viewing, photographing, or otherwise observing nature.

Americans' Engagement with Parks Survey (from NRPA)

The vast offerings of the local park and recreation agency improve the lives of people throughout our nation. From the fact that Americans on average visit their local park and recreation facilities approximately 29 times a year to the majority of Americans identifying parks and recreation as an important service provided by their local government, the general public is an untapped advocate to spread the public park and recreation story.

This annual study probes Americans' usage of parks, the key reasons that drive their use and the greatest challenges preventing greater usage. Each year, the study probes the importance of public parks in Americans' lives, including how parks compare to other services and offerings of local governments. The survey of 1,000 American adults looks at frequency and drivers of parks/recreation facilities visits and the barriers to that prevent greater enjoyment. Survey respondents also indicate the importance of park and recreation plays in their decisions at the voting booth and their level of support for greater funding.

Key Findings:

- Americans on average visit their local park and recreation facilities approximately 29 times a year, with 3 in 5 saying their most recent visit was within the past month.
- Three in four Americans agree that the NRPA Three Pillars of Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equity represent what they see as the priorities for their local park and recreation agency.
- Nine in 10 Americans agree that parks and recreation are important services delivered by their local government.
- Seven in 10 Americans say they are more likely to vote for local politicians who make park and recreation funding a priority.
- Three-quarters of Americans support increased local government spending for park and recreation agencies with solid support for a nearly 30 percent increase in funding for local park and recreation agencies.

Washington Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State provides a strategic direction to help assure the effective and adequate provision of outdoor recreation and conservation to meet the needs of Washington State residents. The plan identified near and long-term priorities with specific actions within each priority to help meet the outdoor recreation and conservation needs within the state. Five priority areas:

1. Sustain and Grow the Legacy of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands
2. Improve Equity of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands
3. Meet the Needs of Youth
4. Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics
5. Assert Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service

Sustain & Grow the Legacy

A wealth of existing recreation and conservation areas and facilities should be kept open, safe and enjoyable for all. Some modification to meet the interests of today's population may be needed at some facilities. Sustaining existing areas while expanding and building new facilities to keep up with a growing population is one of the five priority goals.

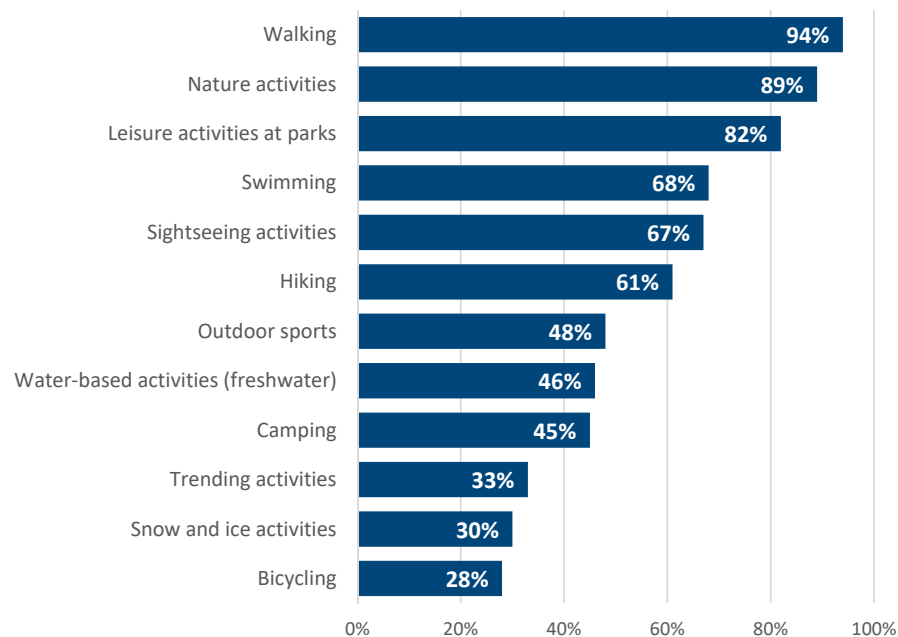
Improve Equity

The National Recreation and Park Association's position on social equity states:

"Our nation's public parks and recreation services should be equally accessible and available to all people regardless of income level, ethnicity, gender, ability, or age. Public parks, recreation services and recreation programs including the maintenance, safety, and accessibility of parks and facilities, should be provided on an equitable basis to all citizens of communities served by public agencies."

The Washington plan restates that equity goal for all its citizens. Improving equity is also a strategy for improving a community's health. Current statewide participation rates in outdoor activities were surveyed as part of the plan.

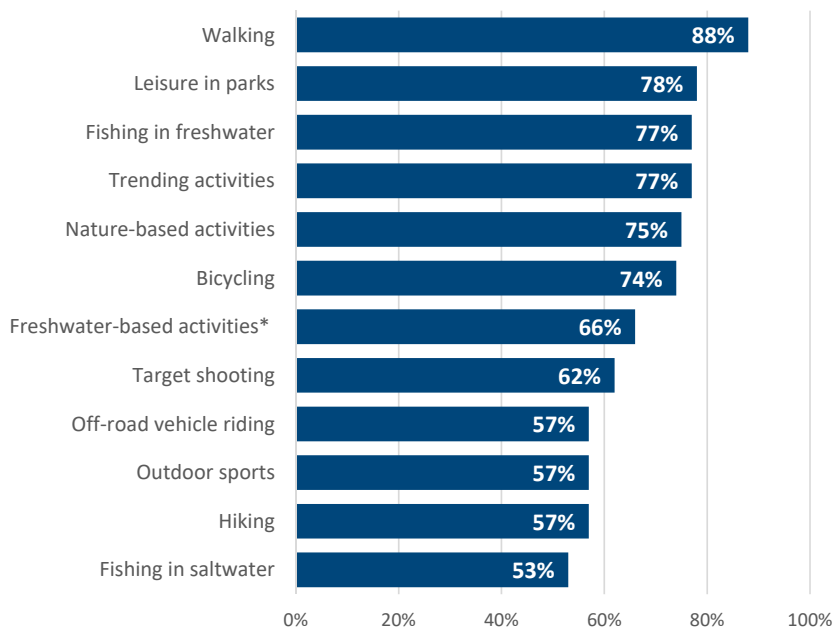
Figure D5. Participation Rates for Washington Residents in Outdoor Activities



Get Youth Outside

Washington State youth participate in outdoor activities to a greater extent than those found nationally. Park and recreation providers are urged to offer a variety of outdoor activities for youth and to support youth programs. Most youth are walking, playing at a park, trying new or trending activities, fishing in freshwater, exploring nature, and riding bikes. Other activities of interest to youth are activities in freshwater such as boating and paddling, fishing in saltwater, and target shooting, hiking, outdoor sports, and riding off-road vehicles.

Figure D6. Youth Participation Rates for Washington Residents in Outdoor Activities



Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics

Washington's population is expected to grow by 2 million people by 2040 leading to more congestion and competition for recreation resources. Between 2010-2040, the percent of people of color are expected to increase from 27 percent to 44 percent. With the cultural change in the population, preferred recreational activities also will change. By 2030, more than one of every five Washingtonians will be 65 years old or older. By 2040, there will be more seniors than youth. Park and recreation providers should be prepared to create new and diverse opportunities and accommodate the active senior population.

Assert Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service

The 2018-2022 Washington SCORP recognizes that outdoor recreation contributes to a strong economy and is a public investment like other public services and infrastructure. It cites the Outdoor Industry Association's report called *The Outdoor Recreation Economy* and other economic studies that reinforce the importance of park and recreation services locally, regionally and statewide.

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APPENDIX E: IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

LOCAL FUNDING OPTIONS

The City of Ridgefield possesses a range of local funding tools that could be accessed for the benefit of growing, developing and maintaining its parks and recreation program. The sources listed below represent likely potential sources, but some also may be dedicated for numerous other local purposes which limit applicability and usage. Therefore, discussions with City leadership are critical to assess the political landscape to modify or expand the use of existing City revenue sources in favor of park and recreation programs.

Councilmanic Bonds

Councilmanic bonds may be sold by cities without public vote. The bonds, both principal and interest, are retired with payments from existing city revenue or new general tax revenue, such as additional sales tax or real estate excise tax. The state constitution has set a maximum debt limit for councilmanic bonds of 1½% of the value of taxable property in the city.

General Obligation Bond

For the purposes of funding capital projects, such as land acquisitions or facility construction, cities and counties have the authority to borrow money by selling bonds. Voter-approved general obligation bonds may be sold only after receiving a 60% supermajority vote at a general or special election. If approved, an excess property tax is levied each year for the life of the bond to pay both principal and interest. The state constitution (Article VIII, Section 6) limits total debt to 5% of the total assessed value of property in the jurisdiction.

Excess Levy – One Year Only

Cities and counties that are levying their statutory maximum rate can ask the voters, at any special election date, to raise their rate for one year (RCW 84.52.052). As this action increases revenue for one year at a time it is wise to request this type of funding for one-time uses only.

Regular Property Tax - Lid Lift

Cities are authorized to impose ad valorem taxes upon real and personal property. A city's maximum levy rate for general purposes is \$3.375 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Limitations on annual increases in tax collections, coupled with changes in property value, causes levy rates to rise or fall; however, in no case may they rise above statutory limits. Once the rate is established each year, it may not be raised without the approval of a majority of the voters. Receiving voter approval is known as a lid lift. A lid lift may be permanent, or may be for a specific purpose and time period.

A levy lid lift is an instrument for increasing property tax levies for operating and/or capital purposes. Taxing districts with a tax rate that is less than their statutory maximum rate may ask the voters to “lift” the levy lid by increasing the tax rate to some amount equal to or less than their statutory maximum rate. A simple majority vote of citizenry is required. Cities and counties have two “lift” options available to them: Single-year/basic or Multi-year.

Single-year: The single-year lift does not mean that the lift goes away after one year; it can be for any amount of time, including permanently, unless the proceeds will be used for debt service on bonds, in which case the maximum time period is nine years. Districts may permanently increase the levy but must use language in the ballot title expressly stating that future levies will increase as allowed by chapter 84.55 RCW. After the initial “lift” in the first year, the district’s levy in future years is subject to the 101 percent lid in chapter 84.55 RCW. This is the maximum amount it can increase without returning to the voters for another lid lift.

The election to implement a single-year lift may take place on any election date listed in RCW 29A.04.321.

Multi-year: The multi-year lift allows the levy lid to be “bumped up” each year for up to a maximum of six years. At the end of the specified period, the levy in the final period may be designated as the basis for the calculation of all future levy increases (in other words, be made permanent) if expressly stated in the ballot title. The levy in future years would then be subject to the 101 percent lid in chapter 84.55 RCW.

In a multi-year lift, the lift for the first year must state the new tax rate for that year. For the ensuing years, the lift may be a dollar amount, a percentage increase tied to an index, or a percentage amount set by some other method. The amounts do not need to be the same for each year. If the amount of the increase for a particular year would require a tax rate that is above the maximum tax rate, the assessor will levy only the maximum amount allowed by law.

The election to implement a multi-year lift must be either the August primary or the November general election.

The single-year lift allows supplanting of expenditures within the lift period; the multi-year lift does not, and the purpose for the lift must be specifically identified in the election materials. For both single- and multi-year lifts, when the lift expires the base for future levies will revert to what the dollar amount would have been if no lift had ever been done.

The total regular levy rate of senior taxing districts (counties and cities) and junior taxing districts (fire districts, library districts, etc.) may not exceed \$5.90/\$1,000 AV. If this limit is exceeded, levies are reduced or eliminated in the following order until the total tax rate is at \$5.90.

1. Parks & Recreation Districts (up to \$0.60)
Parks & Recreation Service Areas (up to \$0.60)
Cultural Arts, Stadiums & Convention Districts (up to \$0.25)
2. Flood Control Zone Districts (up to \$0.50)
3. Hospital Districts (up to \$0.25)
Metropolitan Parks Districts (up to \$0.25)
All other districts not otherwise mentioned
4. Metropolitan Park Districts formed after January 1, 2002 or after (up to \$0.50)
5. Fire Districts (up to \$0.25)
6. Fire Districts (remaining \$0.50)
Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities (up to \$0.50)
Library Districts (up to \$0.50)
Hospital Districts (up to \$0.50)
Metropolitan Parks Districts formed before January 1, 2002 (up to \$0.50)

Sales Tax

Paid by the consumer, sales tax is a percentage of the retail price paid for specific classifications of goods and services within the State of Washington. Governing bodies of cities and counties may impose sales taxes within their boundaries at a rate set by state statute and local ordinances, subject to referendum.

Until the 1990 Legislative Session, the maximum possible total sales tax rate paid by purchasers in cities was 8.1 percent. This broke down as follows: state, 6.5 cents on the dollar; counties, 0.15 cents; cities, 0.85 cents; and transit districts, a maximum of 0.6 cents (raised to 0.9 cents in 2000). Since then multiple sales options were authorized. Those applicable to Parks and Recreation include: counties may ask voters to approve a sales tax of up to 0.3 percent, which is shared with cities. At least one-third of the revenue must be used for criminal justice purposes.

Counties and cities may also form public facilities districts, and these districts may ask the voters to approve a sales tax of up to 0.2 percent. The proceeds may be used for financing, designing, acquisition, construction, equipping, operating, maintaining, remodeling, repairing, and reequipping its public facilities.

Revenue may be used to fund any essential county and municipal service.

If a jurisdiction is going to change a sales tax rate or levy a new sales tax, it must pass an ordinance to that effect and submit it to the Department of Revenue at least 75 days before the effective date. The effective date must be the first day of a quarter: January 1, April 1, July 1 or October 1.

Business and Occupation Tax

Business and occupation (B&O) taxes are excise taxes levied on different classes of business to raise revenue. Taxes are levied as a percentage of the gross receipts of a business, less some deductions. Businesses are put in different classes such as manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and services. Within each class, the rate must be the same, but it may differ among classes.

Cities can impose this tax for the first time or raise rates following referendum procedure.

B&O taxes are limited to a maximum tax rate that can be imposed by a city's legislative body at 0.2 percent (0.002), but grandfathered in any higher rates that existed on January 1, 1982. Any city may levy a rate higher than 0.2 percent, if it is approved by a majority of voters (RCW 35.21.711). Beginning January 1, 2008, cities that levy the B&O tax must allow for allocation and apportionment, as set out in RCW 35.102.130.

Admissions Tax

An admissions tax is a use tax for entertainment. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action. Cities and/or counties may levy an admission tax in an amount no greater than five percent of the admission charge, as is authorized by statute (cities: RCW 35.21.280; counties: RCW 35.57.100). This tax can be levied on admission charges (including season tickets) to places such as theaters, dance halls, circuses, clubs that have cover charges, observation towers, stadiums, and any other activity where an admission charge is made to enter the facility.

If a city imposes an admissions tax, the county may not levy a tax within city boundaries.

The statutes provide an exception for admission to elementary or secondary school activities. Generally, certain events sponsored by non-profits are exempted from the tax; however, this is not a requirement. Counties also exempt any public facility of a public facility district for which admission is imposed. There are no statutory restrictions on the use of revenue.

Impact Fees

Development impact fees are charges placed on new development in unimproved areas to help pay for various public facilities that serve new development or for other impacts associated with such development. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

Counties that plan under the Growth Management Act (GMA), and cities, may impose impact fees on residential and commercial development activity to help pay for certain public facility improvements, including parks, open space, and recreation facilities identified in the county's capital facilities plan. The improvements financed from impact fees must be reasonably related to the new development and must reasonably benefit the new development. The fees must be spent or encumbered within ten years of collection.

Real Estate Excise Tax

Excise tax levied on all sales of real estate, measured by the full selling price, including the amount of any liens, mortgages, and other debts given to secure the purchase. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

REET 2 must be approved by majority vote if the county chooses to fully plan under the GMA; it may be approved by legislative action if the county is required to plan under the GMA.

The state levies this tax at the rate of 1.28 percent; a locally-imposed tax is also authorized. Counties and cities may levy a quarter percent tax (REET 1); a second quarter percent tax (REET 2) is authorized. First quarter percent REET (REET 1) must be spent on capital projects listed in the city's capital facilities plan element of their comprehensive plan. Capital projects include planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, and trails.

The second quarter percent REET (REET 2) must also be spent on capital projects, which includes planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of parts. Acquisition of land for parks is not a permitted use of REET 2. Both REET 1 and REET 2 may be used to make loan and debt service payments on projects that are a permitted use of these funds.

Lodging Tax

The lodging tax is a user fee for hotel/motel occupation. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action. Cities and/or counties may impose a "basic" two percent tax under RCW 67.28.180 on all charges for furnishing lodging at hotels, motels and similar establishments for a continuous period of less than one month.

This tax is taken as a credit against the 6.5% state sales tax, so that the total tax that a patron pays in retail sales tax and hotel-motel tax combined is equal to the retail sales tax in the jurisdiction. In addition, jurisdictions may levy an additional tax of up to two percent, or a total rate of four percent, under RCW 67.28.181(1). This is not credited against the state sales tax. Therefore, if this tax is levied, the total tax on the lodging bill will increase by two percent.

If both a city and the county are levying this tax, the county must allow a credit for any tax levied by a city so that no two taxes are levied on the same taxable event. These revenues must be used solely for paying for tourism promotion and for the acquisition and/or operating of tourism-related facilities. "Tourism" is defined as economic activity resulting from tourists, which may include sales of overnight lodging, meals, tours, gifts, or souvenirs; there is no requirement that a tourist must stay overnight.

Real Estate Excise Tax - Local Conservation Areas

Boards of County Commissioners may impose – with majority voter approval – an excise tax on each sale of real property in the county at rate not to exceed 1% of the selling price for the purpose of acquiring and maintaining conservation areas. The authorizing legislation defines conservation areas as “land and water that has environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic, or low-intensity recreational value for existing and future generations...” These areas include “open spaces, wetlands, marshes, aquifer recharge areas, shoreline areas, natural areas, and other lands and waters that are important to preserve flora and fauna.”

Conservation Futures

The Conservation Futures levy is provided for in Chapter 84.34 of the Revised Code of Washington. In 1985, Clark County authorized the use of the Conservation Futures levy at a rate of \$0.0625 per \$1,000 assessed value for the purpose of acquiring rights and interest in open space, wetlands, farm, and timber lands (CCC 3.24). Conservation Futures funds are limited to acquisition purposes only.

FEDERAL & STATE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

National Recreational Trails Program

The National Recreational Trails Program (N RTP) provides funds to maintain trails and facilities that provide a backcountry experience for a range of activities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, motorcycling, and snowmobiling. Eligible projects include the maintenance and re-routing of recreational trails, development of trail-side and trail-head facilities, and operation of environmental education and trail safety programs. A local match of 20% is required. This program is funded through Federal gasoline taxes attributed to recreational non-highway uses.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

The WRP provides landowners the opportunity to preserve, enhance, and restore wetlands and associated uplands. The program is voluntary and provides three enrollment options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and 10-year restoration cost-share agreements. In all cases, landowners retain the underlying ownership in the property and management responsibility. Land uses may be allowed that are compatible with the program goal of protecting and restoring the wetlands and associated uplands. The NRCS manages the program and may provide technical assistance.

Washington State Ecosystems Conservation Program (WSECP)

This WSECP was established in 1990 and is divided into federal- and state-managed components. The federal program focuses funds on projects that help restore habitat for threatened, endangered and sensitive species and, secondarily, for species of concern. In addition, the program attempts to concentrate funds within a limited number of watersheds to maximize program benefits. The program provides funds to cooperating agencies or organizations. These grants, in turn, can be distributed among project sites. The program requires a 50% cost-share from cooperating agencies, and individual landowners at project sites must enter into maintenance/management agreements that have a 10-year minimum duration.

GRANTS AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as the Rivers & Trails Program or RTCA, is a technical assistance resource for communities administered by the National Park Service and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of NPS in communities across America.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants Program

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetland conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. Two competitive grants programs exist (Standard and a Small Grants Program) and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute toward a project, but are not eligible as match.

The Standard Grants Program supports projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats.

The Small Grants Program operates only in the United States; it supports the same type of projects and adheres to the same selection criteria and administrative guidelines as the U.S. Standard Grants Program. However, project activities are usually smaller in scope and involve fewer project dollars. Grant requests may not exceed \$75,000, and funding priority is given to grantees or partners new to the Act's Grants Program.

Community Development Block Grants

These funds are intended to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate income persons. The Department of Housing and Urban Development allocates these funds in a single or "block" grant to eligible cities and counties with the objective of improving communities. The funds are then distributed to municipalities, organizations, and groups through a competitive application process. Clark County administers this funding through the Community Services Department. CDBG funds can be used for a wide variety of projects, services, facilities and infrastructure.

Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs

The Recreation and Conservation Office was created in 1964 as part of the Marine Recreation Land Act. The RCO grants money to state and local agencies, generally on a matching basis, to acquire, develop, and enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation properties. Some money is also distributed for planning grants. RCO grant programs utilize funds from various sources. Historically, these have included the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, state bonds, Initiative 215 monies (derived from unreclaimed marine fuel taxes), off-road vehicle funds, Youth Athletic Facilities Account and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

This program, managed through the RCO, provides matching grants to state and local agencies to protect and enhance salmon habitat and to provide public access and recreation opportunities on aquatic lands. In 1998, DNR refocused the ALEA program to emphasize salmon habitat preservation and enhancement. However, the

program is still open to traditional water access proposals. Any project must be located on navigable portions of waterways. ALEA funds are derived from the leasing of state-owned aquatic lands and from the sale of harvest rights for shellfish and other aquatic resources.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

The RCO is a state office that allocates funds to local and state agencies for the acquisition and development of wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation properties. Funding sources managed by the RCO include the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The WWRP is divided into Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Accounts; these are further divided into several project categories. Cities, counties and other local sponsors may apply for funding in urban wildlife habitat, local parks, trails and water access categories. Funds for local agencies are awarded on a matching basis. Grant applications are evaluated once each year, and the State Legislature must authorize funding for the WWRP project lists.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides grants to buy land and develop public outdoor facilities, including parks, trails and wildlife lands. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions. Grant program revenue is from a portion of Federal revenue derived from sale or lease of off-shore oil and gas resources.

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program

The YAF provides grants to develop, equip, maintain, and improve youth and community athletic facilities. Cities, counties, and qualified non-profit organizations may apply for funding, and grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions.

OTHER METHODS & FUNDING SOURCES

Metropolitan Park District

Metropolitan park districts may be formed for the purposes of management, control, improvement, maintenance and acquisition of parks, parkways and boulevards. In addition to acquiring and managing their own lands, metropolitan districts may accept and manage park and recreation lands and equipment turned over by any city within the district or by the county. Formation of a metropolitan park district may be initiated in cities of five thousand population or more by city council ordinance, or by petition, and requires majority approval by voters for creation.

Park and Recreation District

The purpose of a PRSA is to finance, acquire, construct, improve, or operate any park, senior citizen activities center, zoo, aquarium, and or recreation facility, and to provide the highest level of park service. It must be initiated by petition of at least 15% percent of the registered voters within the proposed district. Upon completion of the petition process and review by county commissioners, a proposition for district formation and election of five district commissioners is submitted to the voters of the proposed district at the next general election. Once formed, park and recreation districts retain the authority to propose a regular property tax levy, annual excess property tax levies and general obligation bonds. All three of these funding types require 60% percent voter approval and 40% percent voter turnout. With voter approval, the district may levy a regular property tax not to exceed sixty cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for up to six consecutive years.

Park and Recreation Service Area (PRSA)

Purpose to finance, acquire, construct, improve, maintain or operate any park, senior citizen activities center, zoo, aquarium and/or recreation facilities; and to provide higher level of park service.

Business Sponsorships/Donations

Business sponsorships for programs may be available throughout the year. In-kind contributions are often received, including food, door prizes and equipment/material.

Interagency Agreements

State law provides for interagency cooperative efforts between units of government. Joint acquisition, development and/or use of park and open space facilities may be provided between Parks, Public Works and utility providers.

Private Grants, Donations & Gifts

Many trusts and private foundations provide funding for park, recreation and open space projects. Grants from these sources are typically allocated through a competitive application process and vary dramatically in size based on the financial resources and funding criteria of the organization. Philanthropic giving is another source of project funding. Efforts in this area may involve cash gifts and include donations through other mechanisms such as wills or insurance policies. Community fundraising efforts can also support park, recreation or open space facilities and projects.

Wells Fargo: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF): Environmental Grant Program

This program builds partnerships with local environmental non-profits that have projects that focus on strengthening the resiliency of our communities. This includes efforts focused on climate mitigation and adaptation, sustainable agriculture and forestry, water quality, land conservation, and support for building healthy urban ecosystems. The programs operate as a closed RFP, invitation-only process where Wells Fargo engages specific organizations whose work aligns with their giving priorities.

REI in the Community - Non-Profit Partnerships and Grants

Partnerships begin with store teams who may connect with non-profits by promoting or partnering for events and service projects, raising visibility with REI customers, offering product donations, and inviting and selecting organizations for an REI grant.

Kaiser Permanente Healthy Environments - Community Benefit Programs

These programs work with community-based organizations, public agencies, businesses and residents to translate their vision for healthy communities into visible, concrete changes — and ultimately healthier neighborhoods. Kaiser has several assistance programs that encompass support for Environmental Stewardship, Community Health Initiatives, Every Body Walk!, and Physical Activity Guiding Principles.

ACQUISITION TOOLS & METHODS

Direct Purchase Methods

Market Value Purchase

Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

In a bargain sale, the landowner agrees to sell for less than the property's fair market value. A landowner's decision to proceed with a bargain sale is unique and personal; landowners with a strong sense of civic pride, long community history or concerns about capital gains are possible candidates for this approach. In addition to cash proceeds upon closing, the landowner may be entitled to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price.

Life Estates & Bequests

In the event a landowner wishes to remain on the property for a long period of time or until death, several variations on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the landowner may continue to live on the land by donating a remainder interest and retaining a "reserved life estate." Specifically, the landowner donates or sells the property to the city, but reserves the right for the seller or any other named person to continue to live on and use the property. When the owner or other specified person dies or releases his/her life interest, full title and control over the property will be transferred to the city. By donating a remainder interest, the landowner may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made. In a bequest, the landowner designates in a will or trust document that the property is to be transferred to the city upon death. While a life estate offers the city some degree of title control during the life of the landowner, a bequest does not. Unless the intent to bequest is disclosed to and known by the city in advance, no guarantees exist with regard to the condition of the property upon transfer or to any liabilities that may exist.

Gift Deed

When a landowner wishes to bequeath their property to a public or private entity upon their death, they can record a gift deed with the county assessor's office to insure their stated desire to transfer their property to the targeted beneficiary as part of their estate. The recording of the gift deed usually involves the tacit agreement of the receiving party.

Option to Purchase Agreement

This is a binding contract between a landowner and the city that would only apply according to the conditions of the option and limits the seller's power to revoke an offer. Once in place and signed, the Option Agreement may be triggered at a future, specified date or upon the completion of designated conditions. Option Agreements can be made for any time duration and can include all of the language pertinent to closing a property sale.

Right of First Refusal

In this agreement, the landowner grants the city the first chance to purchase the property once the landowner wishes to sell. The agreement does not establish the sale price for the property, and the landowner is free to refuse to sell it for the price offered by the city. This is the weakest form of agreement between an owner and a prospective buyer.

Conservation and/or Access Easements

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with his or her property (often the right to subdivide or develop), and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city that permanently limits uses of the land in

order to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted. Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Typically, this approach is used to provide trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Park or Open Space Dedication Requirements

Local governments have the option to require developers to dedicate land for parks under the State Subdivision Law (Ch. 58.17 RCW) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (Ch. 43.21C RCW). Under the subdivision law developers can be required to provide the parks/recreation improvements or pay a fee in lieu of the dedicated land and its improvements. Under the SEPA requirements, land dedication may occur as part of mitigation for a proposed development's impact.

Landowner Incentive Measures

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses are a planning tool used to encourage a variety of public land use objectives, usually in urban areas. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities beyond current regulations in one area, in return for concessions in another. Density bonuses are applied to a single parcel or development. An example is allowing developers of multi-family units to build at higher densities if they provide a certain number of low-income units or public open space. For density bonuses to work, market forces must support densities at a higher level than current regulations.

Transfer of Development Rights

The Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) is an incentive-based planning tool that allows land owners to trade the right to develop property to its fullest extent in one area for the right to develop beyond existing regulations in another area. Local governments may establish the specific areas in which development may be limited or restricted and the areas in which development beyond regulation may be allowed. Usually, but not always, the “sending” and “receiving” property are under common ownership. Some programs allow for different ownership, which, in effect, establishes a market for development rights to be bought and sold.

IRC 1031 Exchange

If the landowner owns business or investment property, an IRC Section 1031 Exchange can facilitate the exchange of like-kind property solely for business or investment purposes. No capital gain or loss is recognized under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031 (see www.irc.gov for more details). This option may be a useful tool in negotiations with an owner of investment property, especially if the tax savings offset to the owner can translate to a sale price discount for the City.

Current (Open Space) Use Taxation Programs

Property owners whose current lands are in open space, agricultural, and/or timber uses may have that land valued at their current use rather than their “highest and best” use assessment. This differential assessed value, allowed under the Washington Open Space Taxation Act (Ch.84.34 RCW) helps to preserve private properties as open space, farm or timber lands. If land is converted to other non-open space uses, the land owner is required to pay the difference between the current use annual taxes and highest/best taxes for the previous seven years. When properties are sold to a local government or conservation organization for land conservation/preservation purposes, the required payment of seven years worth of differential tax rates is waived. The amount of this tax liability can be part of the negotiated land acquisition from private to public or quasi-public conservation purposes. Snohomish County has four current use taxation programs that offer this property tax reduction as an incentive to landowners to voluntarily

preserve open space, farmland or timber land on their property.

OTHER LAND PROTECTION OPTIONS

Land Trusts & Conservancies

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect special open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. The Columbia Land Trust is the regional land trust serving the Ridgefield area. Other national organizations with local representation include the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and the Wetlands Conservancy.

Regulatory Measures

A variety of regulatory measures are available to local agencies and jurisdictions. Available programs and regulations include: Critical Areas Ordinance, Ridgefield; State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); Shorelines Management Program; and Hydraulic Code, Washington State Department of Fisheries and Department of Wildlife.

Public/Private Utility Corridors

Utility corridors can be managed to maximize protection or enhancement of open space lands. Utilities maintain corridors for provision of services such as electricity, gas, oil, and rail travel. Some utility companies have cooperated with local governments for development of public programs such as parks and trails within utility corridors.



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