



CITY OF NEWPORT PARK SYSTEM MASTER PLAN STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS SUMMARY



The City of Newport adopted its current Park System Master Plan in 1993. In the 25 years since, the City has experienced population growth and shifts in demographics, expanded its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), made upgrades and additions to its parklands, constructed a large recreation and aquatic center, and expanded its recreational programming. As an initial step in the Master Planning process, City staff and consulting team members from Angelo Planning Group and GreenWorks conducted interviews with key community stakeholders to help identify key park and recreation goals, needs and issues that should be considered in preparing the Master Plan. A list of interviewees is found at the end of this summary. This document summarizes the results of the interviews and is organized by interview question.

1. How do you or your organization currently use park and recreational facilities in Newport?

Interview participants partner with the City in a variety of ways to help provide recreational and other programs within the City's parks and also have helped construct and maintain individual park facilities and trails. Examples include:

- Building a nature preserve, which will open in 3 years, and have public access via trails or kayak. There will be around 8 miles of hiking, trees, an interpretive center, and barrier-free trails.
- Volunteering to build and maintain trails and parks, including ivy pulls at Forest Park and working on the trail system
- Providing Meals on Wheels through 60+ Center commercial kitchen
- Personal use of public facilities and trails, like Ocean to Bay, 60+ facility, Aquatic Center, disc golf, dog parks, mountain biking, skateboarding, Rec. Center, playgrounds at Coast Park, Wilder Twin Park and others, and visiting public beaches and parks with family and friends
- Use mountain biking trails in Wilder area and informal trails near Big Creek reservoir
- Organize annual Mountain Bike race
- Use trails near Forest Park and Big Creek for high school cross country team practices
- Partner in improvement projects, including Agate Beach's Ernest Bloch Memorial Wayside
- Referring tourists and visitors to areas to recreate
- Water quality testing
- Maintenance
- Take grandchildren to the parks with playgrounds
- Literacy park for music
- Use Frank Wade and Betty Wheeler parks for soccer primarily during Fall season. Have used up to 4 evenings per week for practices (primarily at Betty Wheeler). Run indoor program in rec center in winter.

2. What types of parks and open space related activities are the most important to you (e.g., walking on improved trails, walking in natural areas, swimming or other indoor recreation, outdoor organized sports (soccer, baseball, etc.), bicycling, family or community gatherings, etc.)?

Many participants mentioned the recreation and aquatic center, as well as beach access. Participants also singled out the family-friendly aspects of the parks, including playgrounds and beaches. Specific activities mentioned include:

- Hiking, use of beaches and Ocean to Bay trail
- Walking/hiking in natural areas, including Big Creek, Forest Park areas
- Spending time in open spaces
- Dog Walking on trails and open space
- Cycling on the trails
- Fishing in the reservoir
- Fitness activities outdoors
- Projects featuring water quality or environmental improvements (stormwater management, wetlands, nonpoint source pollution mitigation, etc.)
- Access to recreational waterways away from the beaches
- Playgrounds
- Mountain biking
- Coast Park
- 60+ Center
- Recreation Center
- Being able to walk or ride a bike to parks and playgrounds
- Activities/amenities for young families and young professionals to keep them in Newport

3. What are the aspects or components of the park system that work well currently that we should preserve and maintain?

Most participants noted the Recreation Center and Pool and 60+ Center, citing how well they work, including strong programming, the ability to accommodate lots of different uses and people. The Ocean to Bay trail and Big Creek Park were also mentioned as key community assets by several people. Parks with wind protection were mentioned, as it was easier to visit when there was difficult weather. Other valuable facilities and assets mentioned included:

- Leave natural areas as undeveloped as possible. Add to parks rather than convert one kind to another (active to passive and vice versa).
- Quiet areas
- Covered area at Big Creek Park is great for groups
- Open spaces for sports
- Furthering watershed preservation or enhancements

- Recreation center (well maintained, good equipment)—lots of people appreciate the kids' structures
- Agate Beach Dog Park
- Big Creek Park (great location, unprogrammed space for kids to run, peaceful, restful place and wind protected)
- Coast Park (vibrant family park, centrally located, inviting)
- Forest Park as a wild/open space (minor trail improvements would be OK)
- Aquatic facility with its huge range of users (although it may be underutilized at non-peak times)
- Literacy Park
- Wilder Park, including the play structure and equipment
- Mountain biking areas at Wilder
- Ocean to Bay Trail (not fully accessible but easier than driving)
- Don Davis Park
- Recreation Center Playgrounds should be maintained for kids
- Trails should be maintained. People need a place to get out and walk – Health is important
- Middle School Fields (new turf fields provide for extended use and lower maintenance)
- Nothing is working as well as it should be, given limited staffing and funding for maintenance and operations
- Beach access at Don Davis

4. Currently, what is missing from the park system? (either missing altogether or missing in specific geographic areas of the community)

Interview participants cited a variety of gaps. Most frequently cited were the need for more playing fields, particularly for soccer and including associated amenities (restrooms, seating areas, etc.); and additional amenities in existing parks (e.g., restrooms, drinking fountains, etc.) and trails (connectivity, access, etc.). Additional priorities and specific needs also included the following:

- A good plan is missing
- Include Bartons' nature preserve in the City's Park System
- Playing Fields: The City has a real deficit of flat sites for playing fields. Need space for practice, including baseball, football, soccer and lacrosse. Replacing surfaces with artificial turf would extend use. Need to update usage policies to more efficiently manage use of existing facilities. Another possible future area could be at the fairgrounds where school backs up to it. Space for soccer is "desperately needed"
- Basketball hoops and active recreation in South Beach
- Indoor youth recreation space
- Indoor recreational space for older adults
- Climbing wall
- Fitness trail or vita course
- More playground equipment
- Water/bay access for kayaking
- Community gardens

- Playground in South Beach
- Playground in existing Agate Beach Park
- More picnic areas and picnic area near playgrounds for parents (could be rented out as well)
- Additional small park or play area on Bayfront (e.g., on Port property); opportunity for recreation in one of our most heavily visited areas
- Innovative playground at Coast Park is great, it would be great to see more of that in other parks
- Bike pump track
- Few lengthy trails for strenuous activity
- More large spaces for concerts and large events
- Accessibility: Most parks not very accessible for handicapped access (e.g. Big Creek Park, where you can get to the shelter but not around the park, and limited beach access points)
- Covered, wind-blocked outdoor activity and gathering spaces (e.g. Yachats Commons)
- Non-motorized connections
- Ocean to Bay trail – full buildout of trail missing
- Safe way to walk from North Newport to central Newport
- A non-motorized boat and SUP launch in the Bay
- Parking issues, especially for people with mobility issues
- Toilet facilities and drinking fountains, especially at the southern end of town's beach access points (e.g. Hallmark Parking Lot)
- Lighting on trails
- Local parks need toilet facilities that aren't intimidating to young children
- Biking linkages: more trails for bicyclists—trails and roads. Increase connectivity between trails. Provide better signage.
 - Links to and across 101
- Landscaping: Need master list of trees and plants that will survive in this climate and are easy to maintain. Landscaping is important to be welcoming—imparts a sense of place.
 - Not nearly enough funding for maintenance
 - Most landscape architects don't understand vegetation issues — no flowering trees survive or thrive here. The weather is very inhospitable, only a few types of trees and vegetation will survive and grow well in Newport
 - Need Attractive easy to maintain plants – minimalist approach
- Wayfinding: better signage, standardize some things with signs and use custom signs for others, only where needed
 - Show distance and elevation change
 - The best beaches are not signed
 - Should be beautiful, understandable, meaningful for non-English readers, modern
 - Murals can provide valuable wayfinding
- Staffing: Don't have enough properly trained staff to maintain our parks or landscaped areas, need more local use and knowledge
 - Need to standardize operations, less things open to interpretation

- Very limited use of volunteers, some used primarily for trash pickup at specific facilities
- Use County Corrections workers for big jobs
- Peak times tough to manage, even though there are some seasonal workers
- More specific contracts for volunteers needed, including certain standards for commitment and duration
- Maintenance was common complaint, especially run-down playground equipment and landscaping (Big Creek, Frank Wade, Coast Park)
- Funding: Low funds and funding of the maintenance department—limited resources
 - Potential to save money by doing field repair work in-house
- Coordination between groups: better connectivity between OPRD and City Parks facilities
- Reporting tool for complaints and maintenance requests—it's not clear where specific complaints should go from the website form or calling the main public works number
- More benches/places to sit
- Parks in the northeast area of Newport, where there is more low-income housing
- Bike skills course on Harney and 7th: great opportunity site, near middle school and county fairgrounds/commons
- Mountain biking/multi use trails
- Difficulties with homeless use of facilities which leads to significant maintenance needs, and real or perceived safety issues; large increase in this problem during the past several years
- More parks and trails in south beach
 - Trails between SE 40th and 50th
- Drinking fountains
- Well maintained irrigation system

5. Are specific parks/facilities in need of repair or improvements? What types of improvements do they need and how would these improvements help your organization better use the system? Are there targeted or modest improvements that could be made a low cost that would improve the quality or usability of certain parks?

Suggested improvements included the following:

- All playground equipment to be replaced or updated
- Coast Park: Improve equipment maintenance. Erosion issues with hills and landscaping maintenance. Add wind protection.
- Forest Park Trail: Interpretive signage and a picnic space at Sam Case end of trail. Eroding in some places.
- [Potential] Idaho Point Recreation Area: The weather is generally more pleasant than places closer to the ocean. Possible locations to develop are:
 - The marina is currently in estate trust, and could potentially be bought and converted into a park, so visitors could have access to King Slough for kayaking and

Yaquina River mudflats for clamming. There's space for parking, picnics, dog walking, and recreational activities.

- Use ROW to former Spruce Railroad to provide a kayak launch at the point and provide parking.
- Railroad ROW can provide a multiuse trail to travel from Idaho Point to the trail along Ferry Slip Road south of the airport and north to the trail leading into South Beach State Park along Marine Science Drive.
- Ocean to Bay Trail: Full build-out of the trail is missing.
 - Boardwalk is very slippery when wet (especially in the winter) and needs maintenance and extension
 - Move power lines to other side of the road on Big Creek Road so fishing line won't get tangled
- Bay Road: Close at off-peak times during the summer to allow for biking, skating and walking. It's currently closed to eastbound traffic during the marathon, and a trial closure one morning during the summer would allow the City to assess the impact on local residents. *Note: The majority of this road is under County jurisdiction.*
- Coast Guard Trail: Would be good opportunity for partnership with Army Corps of Engineers. Needs repairs and extensions
- Bathrooms need more regular maintenance, especially in the summer
- Tennis courts can be converted to other sports
- Literacy Park: not well used
- Sam Moore Trail:
 - really challenging site, needs rehabilitation and could have been done sooner with more resources. Points out need to be able to do things quickly.
 - Add lights and increase exposure
 - Increase use, opportunity for fitness trail and improve connectivity
 - Safety issues currently (significant transient use, needles on ground, dark, etc.)
 - Needs restrooms
 - Build retaining wall in park along path
 - Work to reduce flooding
 - Boulderling wall or structure along the retaining banks south of the skatepark for an expansion on the playground.
 - Clearing brush for a nature trail that winds in and out of the wooded hillside north of the paved trail along the creek
 - Desperately needs a positive cultural shift
 - Needs operational water fountain
- Big Creek Park:
 - Broken benches
 - Lawn area floods heavily in winter
 - Shelter
 - Rejuvenation of play structures needed

- Big Creek Reservoir area
 - Key opportunity site for trails for mountain bike users at all ability levels, as well as hikers and runners. One existing renegade trail there now
 - Have 100+ volunteers willing to help
 - Relatively limited potential impacts on water quality or wetlands as long as erosion control methods incorporated in design and maintenance of trails.
 - City supportive of developing trails system there
 - Need plan for how proposed trails will be built, maintained and managed
- Pool: restrictive feeling from rules makes it difficult for children to enjoy
- 60+ Center: 40 programs/months—social, education, health and wellness. Heavily used facility; 50,000-60,000 visits/year, might need expansion or rebuilding. As demographics change in Newport, use will increase
 - Funding challenges
 - Parking difficult, not able to be shared with Goodwill
 - May need to move to larger, central location in future if outgrow capacity
 - Flooding issues -- water in the basement damaged the floors; City in process of fixing issues.
 - Building is too small
- Wilder Park: Private/public partnership is very beneficial but also leads to uncertainties in terms of permanence and use of specific facilities. Open space areas used for recreation and logging. Off-leash dog park and disc golf are popular and well used but can move if Wilder decides to reuse or repurpose them. Contracts for public use can change and Wilder can remove trails at any time.
- Corvallis to Coast Trail: partially exists, more intact at east end, some very rough sections. Create and identify future connections for hiking and biking. Note: This trail currently *terminates at Beaver Creek and is a long distance from the City limits and UGB.*
- Skateboard Park: Lots of room for expansion, very popular with lots of local talent and dedicated group of potential volunteers.
 - Landscaping: Add garden for kids to work; beneficial for visitors and good outlet for kids who use park
 - Add water fountain and maintain bathroom more often
 - Users would like improved communication and coordination with city re: improvements, events (competitions, camps, etc.)
 - Funding: Rogue is partnering to host events in Portland and Newport to fundraise and donate a portion of the proceeds to maintenance and improvement initiatives.
 - Maintenance: Every 3-5 years have to reseal surface. Some “DIY” features need to be removed for safety reasons. Dreamland has submitted proposal to City for these maintenance activities.
 - Renovation and Expansion: Need to increase capacity and add space for younger kids. Potential room to expand facility on two sides.
- Patrolling and clean-up of homeless camps
- Better wayfinding and interpretive signage (low cost)

- City needs better reporting tools for complaints and maintenance requests. It is not clear where specific complaints and requests should go from the website form or calling the main public works number.
- Perception of facilities go a long way. Proper trashcans (and servicing) and restrooms that look stylized, attractive, and clean contribute to users' perception of a place
- More ADA friendly beach and recreational access needed (beach wheelchair rentals, beach "carpets", improved access ramps like at Nye Beach turnaround)
- Spraying ban has created the weed issue; landscaping hard to maintain
- Betty Wheeler field has severe seasonal drainage issues
- Frank Wade playground needs some TLC.
 - Baseball field at Frank Wade great but rest of park needs some improvement and could inspire more usage.
 - Softball field at Frank Wade and fields at Betty Wheeler need improvement, especially to extend life and season or hours of use. Same issue with tennis courts (need resurfacing).
 - Play structure needs update.
- Shelters at parks that don't have them; allow community groups to do things with those
- Connection via beach to Yaquina Bay State Park and Eads Street right-of-way
- South Beach: improve connections and add kayak launch.
 - Connection: Connect Airport with Mike Miller Park; Tsunami evacuation route trail: connect Highway 101 to South Beach State Park
 - Kayak Launch possibilities at Idaho POint or end of Marine Science Drive, dock at Rogue (Improved)
 - More active recreation (sports fields, basketball) amenities needed

6. How can the City best partner with your group or others to use, improve and maintain the park and recreational system? Please suggest new opportunities for co-use or programming of specific facilities.

Several interview participants complimented the City on the efforts it has already undertaken to partner with their groups in providing park and recreation programs and facilities. They noted that the City has provided oversight & guidance and allowed people to present ideas and implement them. This has led to good low-cost solutions, lots of volunteer work and community ownership in facilities and programs. Additional suggestions for future partnerships included the following:

- Work with the Beautification Committee, including sponsoring projects to plant and maintain plants that have been successfully used in the past. Coordinate for beautification and wayfinding.
- Find stable partners for the Nature Preserve. Location of area outside City Urban Growth Boundary and turnover at the city reduces opportunities for direct partnership with City; work with groups like OSU, NOAA, etc. Wilder is a great example of public/private partnership, because the partnership was formalized and staffed appropriately. Incentives include rental and reservation opportunities, off-site programs, and shared parking.

- Work with ball field group to grade fields, maintain structures. Volunteers could help remove trash. A joint use agreement between the City and school district works well, district can be a great knowledge base for field improvement ideas and labor pooling.
- Possible partnership for local park facilities at or adjacent to Yaquina Bay State Park
- Oregon Parks and Recreations Department generally maintains beach access facilities, except near jetties, although City has built and maintains some (e.g., Don Davis Park and new stairs near Agate Beach).
- Surfrider would like to help with ADA enhancements and signage around beaches
- Work with groups to mitigate impact of homeless.
- The Chamber would like to help promote park clean-ups or other projects
- Volunteer opportunities, docents or guides for senior population via 60+ Center
- Trails are important for Newport High School mountain biking team and cross country teams—kids could volunteer to help build and maintain.
- Lincoln county corrections for labor.
- Funds—lots of grant money available (Travel OR, ODOT, USDOT).
- Interpretive signage could be developed in partnership with OSU, Hatfield, NOAA, Port, School District, Surfrider, etc
- Coordination in public maintenance requests between organizations
- Work on clarifying and streamlining volunteer certification procedures at the City. It is unclear to many how volunteers need to be screened and certified in general for specific events or general volunteering.
- Expand/promote “adopt a park” opportunities. Rotary successfully sponsors Literacy and Mombetsu park (among the better maintained, in peoples’ opinions).
- County Commons site is an opportunity for incorporating community recreational wants and needs in the area, e.g. trails, sports fields, etc
- Central Coast Soccer trying to work with City and School District to come up with more organized way of scheduling fields – more coordinated, holistic approach. Interested in committing labor and resources, including possible access to grant money to be partner in improving spaces.
- Work together to ensure existing recreational areas at Wilder can continue to be publicly accessible in the long term
- Determine a future new location for the Wilder dog park
- Build additional developed parks or recreation facilities in the Wilder development.
- Rent out picnic areas
- When contracting with folks, have them sign a contract or a MOU so they stay on after a park is initially cleaned up. Many times groups will do one clean up and walk away.
- Charge to use Restrooms
- Charge to park

7. In 20 years, what do you envision for the Newport Parks system and what role will your organization plan in achieving that vision?

Responses included the following:

- Maintain undiscovered beaches and other recreation areas for local use, uncrowded by tourists

- More places people can experience nature and become informed
- Environmentally friendly practices, especially in maintenance
- Space for recreational sports
- Better approach to landscaping
- Sports field improvements, including expanded and more multi-use/multi-purpose set of playing fields with improved surfaces
 - More soccer fields /multiuse fields
- Clean parks for residents and visitors
- Non-motorized Trail system and connections – including in out-of-way areas
- Potential expansion or relocation of 60+ Center – Boomers are retiring
- Future new park, recreation and open space sites
- Increased capacity for recreation
- Increased indoor facilities
- Updated amenities
- Improved coordination between City and OPRD
- Continued use of state parks resources in this area; example: increase of 145 campsites at Brian Booth State Park
- Realized marketing opportunities—e.g. business sponsorships of parks and open spaces
- Increased accessibility
- Water security and watershed protection
- Smart metering of public parks and facilities for water leaks
- Undeveloped ROW west of 101 becomes City owned and open space
- Consideration for tsunamis and sea level rise in planning and development
- Long term planning
- A bike/ped loop around town
- An alternative route to 101 for cycling and walking around town
- More kids walking to school
- Nature Preserve project is completed, adding 1,000 acres of open space for wildlife, hiking, access to the bay for kayaking, educational activities.
- A walking/biking bridge below the Yaquina Bay Bridge to allow the continuation of the Spruce Railroad/South Beach trail north. Or preserve the old bridge for pedestrians/cyclists once the new bridge is built.
- More recreational access to the Bay
- County commons space benefits locals
- Increased connectivity to parks and open spaces
- More multi-use paths
- Indoor skating rink (ice and roller)
- Climbing wall
- More trees
- Fitness/Vita trails
- More indoor activities for families and teens (movies, teen swim night)
- Better wayfinding and signage to parks

- Additional dog parks or spaces
- Maintenance is better
- New Housing projects to provide park space within the neighborhood
- Multiple field complex with concessions and playground
- Better sidewalk connections and connectivity
- Signage showing mileage and elevation gains
- Better parking for folks with mobility issues
- Big space for summer concerts
- City will have a broader mind set about recreational facilities and activities (e.g., mountain biking, soccer, etc.) that reflect “modern usages” of parks and addresses current and future trends
- Another potential multi-purpose indoor recreation facility – simple court-size building for indoor sports use (basketball, indoor soccer, pickle ball, futsal, etc.)
- The system provides opportunities for life-long fitness

8. Who else should we talk to or involve in this project as we move forward?

Participants identified the organizations already represented by the interviewees. Additional suggestions included the following:

- Business owners on Highway 101
- Esther and Leo Pinto (active in Chamber of Commerce)
- Motel/hotel operators and tourists
- RV park owners
- Port of Newport
- Natural landscapers
- Community garden advocates
- State natural resource managers from ODFW
- Trail runners
- Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District
- Jay Fineman & Penelope Kaczmarek (Forest Park)
- Tourists, limited voices, even though city gets 3.3 million visitors per year
- Young families, including in the Wilder area
- Daycares and schools (public and private, including preschools)
- Non-profits
- Pre-school organizations or residents or managers of apartments, etc.; get a sense of where parks and playgrounds are in relation to growing population centers (especially where small children live)

9. Do you have any additional comments:

Participants provided a variety of additional comments including the following:

- Water and wastewater issues: Must use irrigation strategically

- Stormwater design and implementation: recently completed stormwater management master plan, which requires on-site mitigation and detention if exceeding capacity. This is challenging given sites, topography, geographic hazards, etc.
- Erosion control is an issue for City.
- Tourism is a double-sided sword: Appearance of town impacts repeat visitation, especially on city owned properties
- The City is in a transition phase. We have a good base but need to establish a framework, structure and standard to meet our needs consistently. This plan is a quality of life plan.
- The future of Newport's parks and recreation is with young people and families; cater to the true residents that live here full time.
- "I would like to see The City of Newport move forward rather than fall back"
- Create opportunities for cycling for all ages, including 60+.
- Taking a more coordinated approach to park management and use, particularly of sports fields. Stronger partnerships among users will go a long way towards improving the system.

Interview Participants

- Dick Beemer, Corvallis to Sea Trail
- JoAnn Barton, Open Space Advocate and Beautification Committee
- Donna Fogarty, 60+ Center Board
- Tim Gross, Newport Public Works Director and City Engineer
- Jim Guenther, Newport Park Maintenance Supervisor
- Susan Hogg, Newport Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee member
- Julia Howell, Newport Chamber of Commerce
- Tom Hurst, Central Coast Soccer
- Tim Kaufman, Lincoln County School District Facility Manager
- Jason Nehmer, Skate Park User and Trails Advocate
- Peggy O'Callaghan, 60+ Center Coordinator
- Preson Phillips, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Charlie Plybon, Surfrider
- Jim Protiva, Newport Parks and Recreations Director
- Bonnie Serkin and Liane Brakke-Pound, Wilder/Landwaves
- Danyel Scott, Dreamland Skateparks
- Nancy Steinberg, Chair of Parks and Recreation Committee
- Newport Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
- Newport Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Newport Trails Focus Group — Ken Brown, Chuck Forinash, Tomas Follet, Tom Swinford, Jody Stecher, Jason Nehmer, Casey Miller