

MAINTENANCE AND STAFFING NEEDS

A key theme of the park planning process is the need for better management and maintenance of Newport's parks, trails, and open spaces. A problem faced by jurisdictions across the country is that new parks, trails and facilities are not generally accompanied by commensurate increases in the budget for staff and maintenance. In addition, maintenance responsibilities are often spread between park and recreation facilities and other public facilities such as public restrooms. In Newport, two full-time maintenance staff and a small number of seasonal employees are available to maintain parks and recreation facilities but are also responsible for maintaining a variety of other municipal facilities. While parks system development charges (SDCs) and other revenue sources can be used to build new facilities, they cannot be allocated for maintenance of those or other existing facilities. Specific recommendations for maintenance staffing levels and other considerations are found in the Capital Improvement Component associated with this document (Appendix A).

Staffing levels and tools for maintenance of the parks and recreation system and performance assessment:

The Capital Improvement Component of this Plan (Appendix A) describes current maintenance costs, staffing levels, sources of funds used to pay for these costs, and how this data compares to other similar cities in Oregon, as well as related national standards or metrics. The Capital Improvement Component also recommends the following strategies.

- The City should develop several metrics to track quality of service as they relate to Park and Recreation Department staffing levels. This approach would produce data that is accurate and unique to the Newport parks system. With that data, the City will have a clear picture of the adequacy of current staffing levels and can make more informed staffing level decisions.
- Similar to the overall recommendation for how to adjust staffing levels (see previous section), the City should develop metrics to track maintenance performance as it is related to maintenance staffing levels. This practice will help the City understand its own staffing needs.
- It is also worth exploring options for how to most efficiently allocate staffing resources at the fund level. Other peer cities dedicate more staff and use specific fund for their park maintenance needs. This practice could potentially benefit the City of Newport as well.

Public/private and volunteer partnerships for maintenance of facilities:

One strategy for leveraging additional resources for maintenance of park and recreation facilities is to engage volunteer groups in helping maintain local facilities. This can include "adopt-a-park" programs, regular park cleanup or maintenance by local or out-of-town volunteers, community service-related activities, youth volunteer efforts through collaboration with the School District, or others. Example programs include:

- **Lincoln City, Oregon.** The city has a half-time volunteer coordinator who organizes volunteer maintenance activities for the community's parks and open space properties. These groups typically engage in trail surface maintenance, invasive vegetation removal, cleanup of debris from homeless activities, and other similar efforts. Volunteers include individuals and organized groups from both inside and outside the community and play a significant role in maintaining the city's park and open space areas.
- **Portland, Oregon.** The city has an extensive volunteer program for helping maintain its parks and natural areas. Activities and strategies include coordination with established partner groups such as Friends of Forest Park, use of regular volunteer groups at specific facilities (e.g., the Crystal Springs Rhododendron Garden); designated park cleanup days with associated volunteer campaigns; and ongoing, regular volunteer activities. All of these activities are coordinated and organized by City staff, sometimes in partnership with other groups.
- **Metro (Portland), Oregon.** While Metro is a much larger organization than the City of Newport, they have a well-run volunteer program and their program also can provide lessons and best practices for Newport.

Metro's volunteer Website (<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/how-metro-works/volunteer-opportunities>) provides general information about the types of volunteer activities available, a sign-up form to request information about specific opportunities, a calendar of upcoming activities, and a series of FAQ documents that provide more detailed information about the volunteer process and activities.

All of these programs include several key components that make implementation possible. The City of Newport should evaluate the potential benefits and required resources needed to implement an organized volunteer program and determine whether the benefits outweigh the costs, and whether the City has the capacity to implement the program. If and when implementation of a volunteer program is desired and warranted the City should take the following steps:

- Determine staffing needs and designate or hire a volunteer coordinator.
- Conduct outreach to and establish relationship with existing community groups and organizations.
- Establish an outreach program for soliciting, responding to, and organizing volunteers.
- Create a template volunteer contract with standards specifying the volunteer commitment and duration.
- Conduct volunteer program activities in coordination with other city programs and activities.
- Establish and maintain an internal list of volunteer opportunities, duties, equipment needs, and related informational materials (i.e. volunteer orientation pamphlets).
- Acquire the necessary equipment and supplies needed for various volunteer efforts, or establish relationships with organizations from which equipment and supplies can be regularly rented or borrowed.
- Establish and maintain a public-facing volunteer page and event calendar on the City's website.

Methods to minimize required maintenance of parks and recreation facilities:

A number of additional strategies are recommended to reduce the cost and improve the efficiency of maintaining parks and recreation facilities, including the following. These strategies are described in more detail in the Capital Improvement Component (Appendix A).

- Use durable, weather-resistant materials for park facility furnishing and amenities to reduce repair and replacement frequency and costs.
- Ensure that vegetation used in the city's parks and open spaces be able to withstand local weather and climatic conditions and be as inexpensive as possible to maintain.
- Consider materials, durability, maintenance needs and life-cycle costs when making decisions about and budgeting for proposed improvements and expansions to park and recreation facilities, including restrooms.
- Use volunteers to help leverage additional resources for maintenance of park and recreation facilities and reduce costs associated with those activities (described in more detail above).

ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

The City of Newport is fortunate to have a variety of community partners who are instrumental in helping provide and maintain park and recreation facilities, programs and services to Newport residents and visitors. Maintaining and enhancing these partnerships will be critical to successful implementation of this Plan. Key partnerships and associated strategies are included below, in addition to those highlighted previously.

Lincoln County School District

The City has a joint use agreement with the District which allows community members to access and use school facilities for recreation during non-school hours. School playgrounds, playing fields and other facilities are essential components of the local park and recreational system. Many of them essentially serve as neighborhood parks. Absent the use of school facilities, many neighborhoods would not be adequately served by park facilities. Continuing to maintain and strengthen this agreement is vital to the community. Specific strategies for partnering with the School District include:

- Regularly review and update joint use agreement, within the next year and then approximately every three to five years thereafter. The City's existing agreement with the school district commits both parties to providing shared use of their facilities, while also providing each organization with a reasonable amount of flexibility to meet its own needs first. The conditions in the agreement appear to be fair and reasonable and fairly typical of such an agreement. That said, the agreement is approximately 17 years old and it may be beneficial to both parties to review the terms of the agreement to ensure it continues to meet their current and projected future needs. Specific issues to review and address, as needed, could include:
 - Does the agreement specify the full range of City and District facilities which should be covered?
 - Is the process for reserving one organization's facilities by the other entity consistent with current and/or the most efficient procedures that can be used?
 - Are any specific arrangements or requirements needed to guide the use of particular facilities?
 - Are any changes needed to the maintenance clause of the agreement? For example, should one party maintain the other entity's facility in some cases, depending on the nature of the joint use?
- Partner in funding improvements that benefit both parties
- Work together to schedule school and community use of playing fields and facilities in an equitable, efficient manner
- Cooperate and coordinate in long-range planning for enhancements to facilities that are jointly used
- Partner with School District on use of expertise, labor and equipment in making improvements to City fields

Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)

Newport is fortunate to have several OPRD facilities within or in close proximity to the city, including the Agate Beach and Yaquina Bay Recreation Sites and South Beach State Park. In addition, OPRD is responsible for maintaining a number of additional beach access sites in Newport. While OPRD facilities are primarily intended for use by visitors to Newport, they represent an outstanding opportunity for residents as well. Continued cooperation, coordination and support of OPRD in managing and improving these facilities is very important. Specific strategies include:

- Cooperate and coordinate in long-range planning for enhancements to park and trail facilities that are jointly used by residents and visitors, including proposed improvements at Yaquina Bay State Park and the Agate Beach State Recreation Site.
- Concurrent with development of the proposed multi-purpose open space at the Agate Beach State Recreation Site, establish a set of procedures for allocating and scheduling use of the fields by local sports teams and/or other community members.

- Facilitate community participation in OPRD programs and activities within the parks.
- Partner in acquiring land for or constructing facilities intended for community use within or adjacent to OPRD facilities.

Newport Municipal Airport

There are several key recreational opportunities associated with the Newport Municipal Airport property, including plans for location of a new community garden, use of trails for City-sponsored events, and more informal use of trails on the property for walking, hiking and bicycling. In addition, existing or potential future trails on the property provide opportunities to connect to trails in adjacent areas and expand the City's trail system. Current airport management staff are open to and supportive of continued community use of these facilities, providing an excellent opportunity for expanding recreational opportunities in the southern portion of Newport. Specific strategies include:

- Work with Airport staff to identify, map and further describe opportunities for community use of trails and other facilities on airport property outside the runway protection zone, including potential expansion of the trail system.
- Develop a formal agreement regarding community use of and future improvements to trails on airport property.
- Partner in securing easements across intervening properties between the airport and existing or planned trails and other recreational facilities.
- Coordinate tree clearing and brushing outside the runway protection zone with potential trail expansion opportunities.
- Continue to coordinate with airport and community members regarding siting, design and implementation of a proposed community garden.

Landwaves/Wilder Community

Several important recreational facilities are located in the Wilder development, including the Wilder Twin Neighborhood Park, Wilder Dog Park, Wilder Disc Golf Course, Mike Miller Park to Wilder Twin Park Trail, and other hiking and mountain biking trails on the property. The Landwaves company has been an excellent community partner in developing and providing opportunities for community use of these facilities. Continued coordination with Landwaves to maintain these facilities and provide and maintain additional facilities as the area continues to grow and develop is essential. Specific strategies include:

- Coordinate on plans for any potential changes in location to the Wilder Dog Park and strategies for making that location permanent; identify opportunities for the City to partner in maintenance of the facility.
- Provide information about use of Wilder property trails on the City's website or via other City informational venues.
- As future phases of the Wilder property develop, work with Landwaves to ensure development of additional park and recreational facilities that meet residents' needs and are consistent with the Vision and Goals of the Park System Master Plan.

Trail Users and Advocates

Newport's 2040 Vision identifies further development of an integrated multi-use trail system that connects neighborhoods, visitor destinations, open spaces, and natural areas as a top tier priority. Local trail users and advocates have expressed a willingness to partner on trail building and maintenance. Specific strategies include:

- Establish a City trail-building program that provides opportunities for volunteer involvement.

- Encourage trail advocates to create a formal organization such as a 501.c.3 non-profit which could enter into an agreement with the City to commit to initial trail-building and future maintenance activities.
- Coordinate with community groups on proposed plans for development and maintenance of trails.
- Prioritize trail alignments based on existing topography and natural barriers / features.
- Identify the need for trailhead facilities (e.g., parking areas, wayfinding signage, trash receptacles, etc.) and ongoing maintenance in connection with planning for future trails.
- Identify opportunities within the city for creating non-motorized connections to existing and planned trails.
- Develop connector trails that provide direct bicycle and pedestrian access from neighborhoods, visitor destinations, schools, and parks onto the City's major trail networks.

Additional recommendations related to the proposed Big Creek Reservoir trail system are described previously.

Lincoln County

Lincoln County owns and operates a number of facilities that provide key opportunities for current and future recreational use, including Mike Miller Park, the Lincoln County Commons and Jump-Off Joe. Specific strategies include:

- Coordinate with the County on shared community use and future improvements to county facilities that are within or adjacent to the city.

Youth and Adult Sports Organizations

Several local organizations help maintain playing fields, schedule games, and organize teams and tournaments in Newport. Groups include Central Coast Soccer, Newport Baseball and Softball Association, Newport Parks and Recreation, The Newport Boosters Club and the Newport Baseball & Softball Association. These groups use a variety of facilities owned by the City of Newport, Lincoln County School District and others for these activities. They will continue to be important partners in helping meet local recreational needs, particularly for youth. Specific strategies include:

- Take an active role in coordinating with field users to help develop and implement a coordinated approach to scheduling, use and improvement of local playing fields.
- Support local organizations in their commitment of labor and resources to help improve and maintain playing fields.
- Provide technical support in determining the most cost-effective design for future improvements to existing fields or new fields.
- Partner in seeking grant or other funding for field improvements.
- Support potential plans for development and use of multi-purpose playing fields and a play area at the County Commons site.
- Identify potential sites, acquisition and operating costs for future development of City owned multi-purpose fields.

60+ Center Board and Volunteers

The 60+ Center provides essential facilities and programs for Newport's elders and is financially supported by the City. The City will need to continue to coordinate and collaborate with 60+ Center staff, board members and volunteers to assess future facility improvement and programming needs and help identify strategies for meeting them.

Additional Partnerships

In addition to the key partnerships described above, a number of other partnering opportunities should be pursued, including the following:

- **Newport City Committees.** Develop City standards for site furniture, wayfinding, landscaping and planting to ensure City-owned properties are planted with species that will thrive in Newport's coastal environment, signage is consistent throughout the city, and furnishings are durable, consistent and attractive. Coordinate with Newport City Committees as part of such efforts.
- **Surfrider.** Partner with Surfrider on accessibility enhancements and informational signage around beaches.
- **Newport Chamber of Commerce.** Collaborate on promoting and implementing park clean-ups or other projects, as well as assessing visitors' recreation needs and desires and providing information about park and recreation facilities and activities.