



6 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Introduction and Background

La Center adopted its first parks master plan in 1991 and has ~~since made great progress~~ ~~in developed making~~ parks, trails, and recreational facilities ~~a priority throughout the~~ ~~Community~~. In 2008, the City adopted the “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space ~~(PROS) Master Plan~~”. The previous parks master plans created a vision that resulted in major improvements, such as ~~as~~ non-motorized trails connecting community centers and parks, accessibility for ~~people~~ ~~with~~ special needs, securing land with level topography for formal sports, historic preservation, and expanding greenways. The establishment of Sternwheeler Park on the waterfront ~~of the East Fork Lewis River~~ is a prime example, combining cultural and recreational opportunities, wetland preservation, and a connection to the City’s history as a riverboat hub. Not only does the park provide open space for residents it ~~also~~ underscores the community’s identity. The ~~City~~ updated the ~~Master PROS Plan~~ in ~~2016 2017 and again in 2024~~.

Under the Growth Management Act (GMA), the City’s Comprehensive Plan must contain a park and recreation element. The park and recreation element is required to contain: (1) estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a 10-year period, (2) an evaluation of facilities and service needs, (3) an evaluation of tree canopy coverage within the urban growth area (UGA), and (4) an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand. The ~~P~~arks, ~~R~~ecreation, and ~~O~~pen ~~S~~pace ~~chapter Element~~ of the Comprehensive Plan establishes a long-term direction for the ~~City’s parks~~ recreational infrastructure by identifying needed park and recreational facilities and policies to move the City toward its desired future for parks and recreation.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element is supplemented by a technical document called the “Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan” (2024) that inventories existing recreational infrastructure in the city La Center and contains a needs assessment, including a ~~6~~six-year capital improvement plan that is adopted in the City’s Comprehensive Plan by reference. The ~~while~~ the “Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan” ~~PROS Plan~~ is the ~~City’s short-term~~ blueprint for acquiring and improving parks, trails, and recreation areas and helps the City meet the requirements under the GMA for parks and recreational elements.

Community Engagement

Community engagement for the 2024 PROS Plan consisted ~~of~~ an online survey and open house, tabling events, website content and social media postings, and Planning Commission work sessions. Approximately 300 community members participated in engagement activities for the PROS Plan and this feedback provided valuable information for the City to assess recreational needs and priorities, update policy statements, and develop the capital facilities project list.

A 15-question survey was posted to the City’s website and Facebook page and was promoted at the La Center Tree Lighting Festival between December 2022 and February 2023. The survey measured current levels of satisfaction with recreational facilities, use of recreational facilities,

future improvements, and considerations for future types of recreational amenities. Major survey findings are presented below:

- » Livability: Nearly all respondents (96 percent) think parks and recreation are important or essential to quality of life in the city.
- » Usage: City residents like to visit local parks – just over half visit parks or recreation facilities at least once a week and nearly 85 percent do so at least once a month. Respondents most frequently visit the riverfront, walk or run, walk a dog, or walk simply for relaxation.
- » Park Amenity Priorities: Respondents would generally like to see the City expand the range and number of park and recreation opportunities it offers. More than 75 percent of respondents indicated support for additional walking and biking trails, wildlife viewing opportunities, picnic areas and shelters, an amphitheater, tennis or pickleball courts, an all-inclusive playground, basketball courts, and outdoor fitness equipment.

Formatted: Font color: Text 1

An online open house was promoted via the City's website, social media, and flyers throughout the city and in its parks between March and April 2023. Major findings from the online open house included:

- » In a choice ranking question, respondents indicated the top priority as expanding trails to improve connections and fill gaps, with 56 percent of respondents noting this as their first priority. Park improvements were the focus of the second and third priorities, including adding amenities in existing parks (second priority) and renovating existing parks (third priority).

In an effort to explore trail corridors of interest, the online open house provided a map of conceptual trail corridors for consideration and asked respondents to select up to four alignments they considered priorities (Error! Reference source not found, Figure 5). Most respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77 percent) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63 percent). Two other alignments were favored by about one-third of respondents. These include an extension of the planned Lewis & Clark Regional Trail from Paradise Point to Downtown (40 percent) and an alignment along the East Fork Lewis River North Shore (39 percent).

Existing Conditions

The parks and recreation planning area includes the city limits of La Center (approximately 828574.4 acres) plus 125314.4 acres of unincorporated lands within the City's urban growth area UGA together totaling 953 acres. The planning area for parks, recreation, and open space is the City and the City's UGA (see Figure 1 for the UGA boundary).

The City's existing park, recreation, and open space system includes parks (community, neighborhood, and family), special use areas, open space, and trails and are further described in the following sections and shown in Map 1, Map 2, and Table 1.

Map 1. Existing Parks, Trails & Open Space

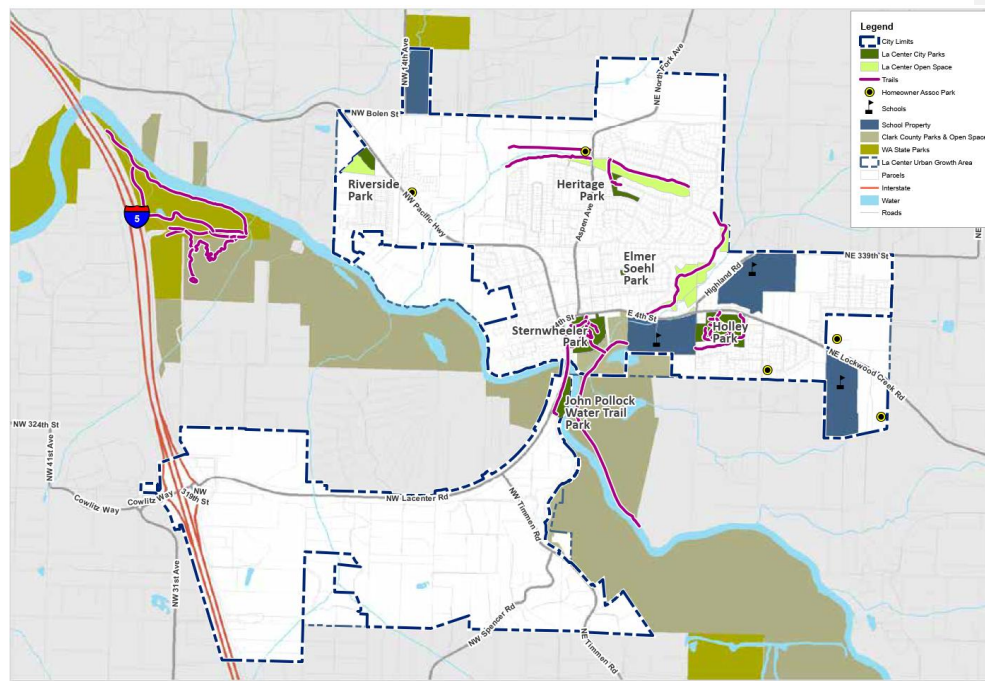


Figure 1. Riverside Park



Formatted: Caption, Don't keep with next

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Keep with next

Formatted: Keep with next



Formatted Table

Formatted Table

Formatted Table

Existing Parks and Special Use Areas	Acres	Classification	Description	Amenities
			playground, benches, picnic tables, and lawn area with adjacent on-street parking.	
Heritage Park	2.1	Neighborhood Park	Heritage Park is a 2.05-acre neighborhood park located north of downtown in the Southview Heights neighborhood. The park facilities include a playground, gazebo, picnic tables, paved pathways, benches, restrooms, and a natural area.	Basketball 1/2 Court, Drinking Fountain, Gazebo (with power), Composite Play Structure, Merry-Go-Round, Restrooms, Picnic Tables, Four Bay Swing (2 belt and 2 toddler swings), Heritage Trail (asphalt paving), Footbridge, Split Rail Fence, Trail Signage, Ornamental Clock, Park Identification Sign, Open Lawn, Plaza Area, Benches, Trash Receptables, Single Table Shelter, Dog Waste Station, Concrete Paved Paths (Loop)
Holley Park	11.14	Community Park	Holley Park is the center for community events and activities, including the community center building, baseball fields, sports courts, picnic shelter, playground, skate spot, splash pad, paved pathways, parking, and restrooms. The 11.14-acre community park is located off of Northeast Lockwood Creek Road near the downtown core of La Center and just south of La Center High School.	Park Identification Signs, Splash Pad (seasonal), Skate Park (seasonal), (2) Baseball Fields, (1) Softball Field, (1) T-Ball Field, Bleachers, Basketball Court, Tennis/Pickleball Court, Concession Stand, Scoreboards, Playground, Four Bay Swing (2 belt and 2 toddler swings), Arch Climber, Picnic Shelter, Drinking Fountain, Picnic Tables, Benches, Bike Racks, Small Backstop, Interpretative Signage, Pathways, Batting Cage (covered), Batting Cage (uncovered with netting), Exercise Station, Nolan memorial, Dog Waste Station, Off-street Parking
John Pollock Water Trail Park	3.8	Special Use Areas	A developed, 3.8-acre special use area, the John Pollock Water Trail Park provides amenities along the East Fork Lewis River to support river access for watercraft recreation. Parking, a shore launch, some natural trails, and picnic tables support water-based activities. The water trail park is accessed from Northwest Pollock Road, parallel to Northwest La Center Road.	Park Identification Signs, Parking, Trails, Kayak Launch, Trash Receptacle, Portable Potty, Dog Waste Station, Picnic Tables, Interpretive Signage, "No Lifeguard" Sign, Off-street Parking

Formatted Table

Existing Parks and Special Use Areas	Acres	Classification	Description	Amenities
River Access Park	2.0	Special Use Areas	This 2-acre special use area provides <u>direct</u> shoreline access to the East Fork Lewis River. With unpaved parking, picnic tables, open lawn, and natural areas and trails, the site provides a point of access to the riverfront. <u>This special use area lies at the foot of the Northwest La Center Road bridge on the south shore.</u>	Off- <u>street</u> Parking (<u>g</u> ravel), Picnic Tables, Open Lawn Areas, Water Access, Trails, Natural Areas, Trash Receptacles, No Lifeguard on Duty Sign, Dog Waste Station, Regulatory Signage at Entry
Riverside Park	<u>5.2</u>	Neighborhood Park	A newly developed 5.2-acre neighborhood park <u>in the northwest area of the city</u> , Riverside Park provides a playground, basketball <u>1/2</u> court, picnic tables, benches, paved pathways, open lawn, natural areas, drinking fountain, lighting, portable toilets, and off-street parking. Approximately 3.3 acres of the property is classified as open space for the retained wetland area.	Park Identification Sign, Play Equipment, Basketball <u>1/2</u> Court, 3 Bike Racks, Benches, Picnic Tables (<u>s</u> quare and <u>r</u> ectangle), Bollard and Overhead Lighting, Perimeter Paved Path, Open Lawn, Porta Potty <u>y</u> in Parking Lot, Trash Receptacles, Drinking Fountain with Dog Water Bowl, Dog Waste Station, Adjacent Wetland Views, Adjacent Pasture Views, Split Rail Perimeter Fence, Connector Path to Adjacent Apartment Buildings, Off- <u>street</u> Parking
Sternwheeler Park	<u>7.44</u>	Community Park	Sternwheeler Park is a 7.44-acre community park that hosts community concerts and <u>events</u> , provides play equipment, public art, picnic areas, paved pathways, natural areas, and restrooms. The park is located between <u>Fourth</u> Street and the East Fork Lewis River, and public parking is available along <u>Fourth</u> Street. <u>It is adjacent to La Center City Hall.</u>	Amphitheater, Artwork, Drinking Fountain, Gazebo (with power), Kayak Rack, Picnic Tables, Walking Trails, Restrooms, Trash Receptacles, Dog Waste Station, Benches, Jack Fillman Memorial, Open Lawn, Restoration Area, Interpretive Signage, Off- <u>street</u> <u>P</u> arking

Community Parks

La Center Holley Park

This 11.14-acre community park situated on the south side of ~~East 4Fourth~~ Street and ~~Northeast~~ Lockwood ~~Creek~~ Road is maintained by the ~~Ceity~~ of La Center. Located near the commercial center of the city, it provides a meeting place for community events and activities. ~~The~~ park's facilities include a community center building (which has standing capacity for 245 persons and seated capacity for 114 persons), three baseball fields, one tennis court, swings, slides, ~~a~~ covered picnic structure, picnic tables, ~~one~~ basketball court, ~~a~~ skate area, ~~a~~ splash pad, landscaping, ~~a~~ walking path, 147 parking spaces, (including one ~~Americans with Disabilities Act~~ [ADA] parking space), and restroom facilities. ~~Future upgrades include resurfacing the tennis and basketball courts and adding pickleball courts.~~

Figure 2. Skatepark in Holley Park



Formatted: Caption

Sternwheeler Park

A 7.44-acre community park located on ~~La Center's~~ 'Bottom Lands' between ~~East 4Fourth~~ Street and the East Fork ~~of the~~ Lewis River, Sternwheeler Park (Figure 3) is a ~~newly developed~~ natural preservation area maintained by the ~~Ceity~~ of La Center. Improvements in this park include play equipment, unique wooden sculptures, restrooms, multi-use trails, wetland preservation, interpretive signs, ~~and~~ public seating, ~~(including an amphitheater)~~ for concerts, ~~a~~ and picnic areas.

Figure 3. Gazebo in Sternwheeler Park



Formatted: Caption

Neighborhood Parks

Heritage Park

This 2.05-acre neighborhood park is located north of ~~East~~ Heritage Loop in Southview Heights, a residential neighborhood just north of downtown. Maintained by the ~~Ceity~~ of La Center, the park facilities include a play structure, swings, ~~a~~ walking path, restrooms, picnic tables, benches, a gazebo, and significant ~~landscaped~~ ~~landscape or landscaping~~ and natural open spaces.

Elmer Soehl Park

This small 0.21-acre neighborhood park is located northeast of the ~~Ceity~~ center at the intersection of ~~7th St.~~ ~~Seventh Street~~ and Elm Avenue. The ~~City~~ ~~city of La Center~~ maintains this

park, which includes a bench, play structure, on-street parking, and a chain-link fence surrounding the play area.

Riverside Park

This newly developed 5.2-acre neighborhood park is owned and maintained by the City. Located in the northwest area of the city and accessed by Northwest Pacific Highway, the park facilities include a play structure, basketball court, picnic tables, benches, natural areas, portable toilets, and off-street parking. Approximately 3.3 acres of the park is classified as open space for a retained wetland area.

Special Use Areas

John Pollock Water Trail Park

This 3.8-acre special use area is a special use park located on the East Fork Lewis River east of Northwest La Center Road (Figure 4). Maintained by the City, the park provides river access for non-motorized watercraft recreation, including park facilities, such as a boat launch, off-street parking, picnic tables, and natural trails.

River Access Park

At this is a 2-acre special use area with shoreline access to the East Fork Lewis River. Maintained by the City of La Center, park facilities include picnic tables, off-street parking, a dog waste station, and natural open spaces and trails.

Open Space Inventory

The primary open spaces include City-owned open spaces, open spaces located within the city but on private lands, and open spaces owned by the County or State. City-owned open spaces include:

- » Southview Heights riparian area
- » Areas adjacent to Brezee Creek
- » Wetland area within Riverside Park

Open spaces on private lands include:

- » McCormick Creek drainage way just outside of the existing western city limits
- » Heritage Trails open space and wetlands in South View Heights

Figure 4. John Pollock Water Trail Park



Formatted: Caption

Figure 5. East Fork Lewis River



Formatted: Caption

- » [Breeze Creek corridor that bisects the city, just east of downtown, extending to the La Center Bottoms areas and in a northeast direction beyond the La Center High School](#)
- » [Jenny Creek corridor that extends northeast from the East Fork Lewis River](#)
- » [Bolen Creek, which bisects northwestern portions of the city from Northwest Bolen Street south to the East Fork Lewis River](#)

Open spaces on County or State lands include:

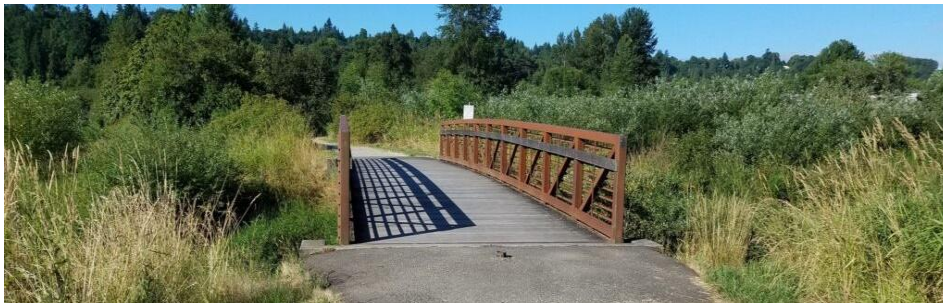
- » [East Fork Lewis River \(Figure 5 Figures 5 and Figure 66\) generally to the west and south of the city limits](#)
- » [Legacy Lands in the La Center Bottoms](#)
- » [Paradise Point State Park](#)



» **Figure 6. East Fork Lewis River in Winter**

Formatted: Caption

Figure 7: Trail bridge in the La Center Bottoms Greenway



Formatted: Keep with next

Trails Inventory

Currently, there are seven trails in the city. Combined, the city has approximately 3.44 miles of trails. [Table 2](#) provides an overview of these trails with name, characteristics, and length.

Table 22: Existing Trails

Existing Trail	Trail Characteristics	Miles
Breeze Creek Trail	Runs along Breeze Creek between East Fourth Street and East 14th Circle and connects to the historical downtown area.	0.59
Heritage Trail	Runs throughout Heritage Park and open wetland spaces.	0.81
Hillside Farm HOA Trail	Connects three subdivisions to the Heritage Park trail system, park, and neighborhood.	0.32
Holley Park	Located within the park and provides connections to La Center school facilities.	0.70

Formatted: Caption

Formatted Table

La Center Bottoms (County)	Runs from Sternwheeler Park to the east bank of the East Fork Lewis River.	0.21
Sternwheeler Park	Connects the park to the John Pollock Water Trail Park and La Center Bottoms Trail.	0.48
Water Trail Park to Sternwheeler	Runs along the East Fork Lewis River before terminating near the eastern extent of the La Center Bottoms.	0.33

La Center School FacilitiesOther Recreational Opportunities in or near La Center

School District Lands

The [La Center City's](#) [Comprehensive and Capital Facilities Plans](#) encourage the [City](#) to form an interagency agreement with the La Center School District. The agreement would help facilitate and formalize the existing practice of the school district allowing the community at large to make use of school district recreational facilities and property. Both the La Center park system and school district mutually benefit from each other's facilities. The majority of the athletic playing fields within the [urban growth area-UGA](#) are owned and operated by the La Center School District. These facilities are generally open for public recreational use at no charge. However, the school district charges a small fee for use of the playing fields by profit making ventures. Following is a list of the facilities that exist in the La Center School District:

La Center High School

The public school facility, located at [1780-725 Northeast Highland Road](#), encompasses about 12 acres and includes football, baseball, softball and soccer fields, and a full-size track.

La Center Elementary School

Located at 700 East [4Fourth Street](#), the facility totals about 20 acres and includes playgrounds, [a track and field facility](#), basketball courts, and baseball and football fields.

La Center Middle School

~~A new middle school is being built on a~~[The approximately 877-acre sitefacility \(Figure 8\) is located](#) at the east end of the [City](#) [at 2001 Northeast Lockwood Creek Roadjust south of Lockwood Creek Road](#). The school ~~was is being~~ constructed ~~in 2020 to facilitate approximately 550 students and 41 employees,~~ and includes parking and pedestrian access. The school ~~includes will have~~ playgrounds and sports courts.

Paradise Point State Park

[This Washington State Park is just north of the I-5 exit to La Center next to the East Fork Lewis River. Paradise Point State Park is one of many Washington State Parks that is a camping park](#)

Figure 8. La Center Middle School



Formatted: Caption

Formatted: Heading 4_NoNumbers

Formatted: Heading 5, Indent: Left: 0", Hanging: 0.64"

Formatted: Heading 5, Indent: Left: 0", Hanging: 0.64"

Formatted: Heading 5, Indent: Left: 0", Hanging: 0.64"

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

conveniently located off I-5, on the East Fork Lewis River. The park features a sandy riverfront swimming area, campsites in a meadow and woodsy areas, as well as a disc golf course.

Tree Canopy Assessment

The City recognizes the integral role that urban tree canopies play in enhancing the quality of life for its residents. The tree canopy assessment supplements the parks and recreation element and is adopted in the Comprehensive Plan by reference. This assessment outlines the benefits of expanding and maintaining urban tree canopies, including existing and proposed preservation strategies, such as development guidelines, maintenance programs, and public awareness, and shows the current tree canopy coverage within the City's UGA. Based on the 2021 data from Clark County's MapsOnline GIS database, the City's current tree canopy coverage is 32 percent. Figure 9 reflects the proportion of the City's UGA covered by trees, indicating a significant presence of green space within La Center's urban environment. To ensure the continued health and preservation of the tree canopy, the City will consider implementing a monitoring plan to conduct monitoring of canopy coverage every three to five years. This regular assessment will help track changes in tree coverage, identify areas needing improvement, and evaluate the effectiveness of tree management strategies.

Formatted: Head 3 no numbers

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

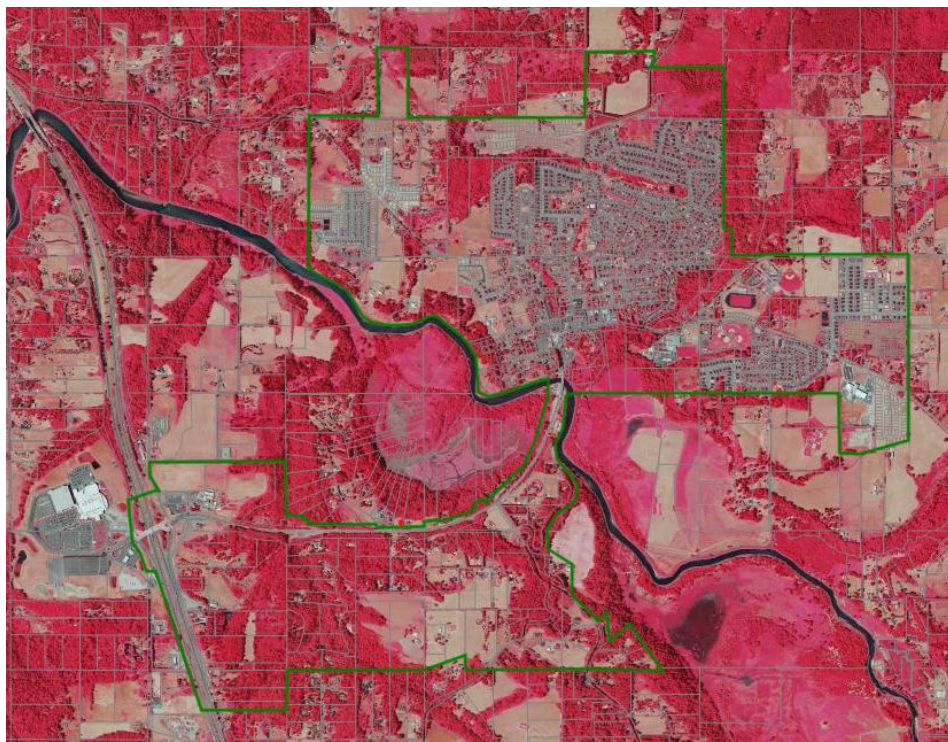
Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Figure 9. 2021 Infrared Photo of La Center with UGA Outlined in Green



Formatted: Keep with next

Needs Assessment

The 2024¹⁶ Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master ROS Plan evaluated the needs for recreational improvements in light of park and open space trends, local interest and needs, a parks system conditions assessment, a park distribution gap analysis, and level of service assessment. Key findings are described in the following sections. surveyed existing conditions, identified the city park and recreation service area 4) and forecasted future needs based upon the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) level of service standards (LOS) used throughout America.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Park and Open Space Trends

Current recreation trends from national and state data were examined to inform future considerations for the City's park system. National trends include data from the 2022 Outdoor Participation Report, 2022 Americans Engagement with Parks Survey, 2022 State of the Industry Report, and 2019 Special Report on Paddle sports & Safety. Key findings include:

Formatted: Not Highlight

- » Running, jogging, and trail running are the most popular outdoor activities by levels of participation, followed by hiking, fishing, biking, and camping (2022 Outdoor Participation Report).
- » At 84 percent, U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live (2022 Americans Engagement with Parks Survey).
- » Nearly three quarters of U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space, or recreation center within walking distance of their homes (2022 Americans Engagement with Parks Survey).
- » Facility managers reported that future challenges impacting their facilities include overall budgets as the top concern, as well as staffing (63 percent), and their ability to support equipment and facility maintenance needs (50 percent) (2022 State of the Industry Report).

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Bullets, No bullets or numbering

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

State trends include five priority areas within the 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State, which include a focus on growth, equity, youth needs, changing demographics, and recreation and conservation as a public service. Broader industry trends in playground design and development, as reported in Landscape Architect magazine for 2021, also help inform playground design considerations for La Center.

Local Interest and Needs

Formatted: Head 3 no numbers

Public outreach for the PROS Plan included a 15-question online community survey and open house to explore project priorities and opportunities to enhance the City's park system. Topics covered in the survey included main reasons for visiting/not visiting local parks and recreation facilities and top priorities for park and recreation investments. Popular reasons for visiting local parks and recreation facilities included walking or running, visiting the riverfront, for relaxation, dog walking or exercise, and wildlife viewing. Alternatively, lack of restrooms, crowdedness, and outdated equipment were among reasons for residents not visiting parks or open spaces more often.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Community members who participated in either the online survey or open house both expressed an interest in future investment to expand trails and adding amenities in existing parks as top priorities. This local demand for trails is aligned with national trends showing significant increases in walking, running, hiking, and cycling participation since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants in the online open house also indicated their priorities for potential trail system corridors. Many respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77 percent) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63 percent). Feedback from both the survey and online open house will help identify top priorities for the parks system capital program and will guide the future use and implementation of the City's park resources.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Conditions Assessment

In fall 2022, a consultant landscape architect team conducted site assessments of the outdoor recreation facilities owned and operated by the City. The existing conditions of parks and special use areas in the city were assessed to identify issues and concerns and opportunities for future improvements. Results were summarized in a condition assessment matrix and can be used to help prioritize needed park improvements. The condition assessment matrix used a rating system that ranks the condition of the park element based on a three-tiered scale. Table 3 shows the average rating for each park site.

Table 3: Park and Outdoor Amenity Condition Assessment Matrix¹

Parks and Special Use Areas	Acreage	Classification	Park Site Average
Riverside Park	5.2	Neighborhood Park	1.1
Sternwheeler Park	7.9	Community Park	1.4
Holley Park	11.5	Community Park	1.7
Elmer Soehl Park	0.2	Neighborhood Park	1.8
Heritage Park	2.1	Neighborhood Park	2.0
John Pollock Water Trail Park	3.8	Special Use Area	2.1
River Access Park	2.0	Special Use Area	2.3
Subtotal	32.5	Averages	1.7

¹1 – 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.

In addition to the matrix, a narrative summarized park site conditions with the following considerations: site furnishings, ADA compliance, open grass lawn areas, playground safety and equipment life-cycling, natural areas management, trails and pathways, signage and wayfinding, trees and canopy coverage, and park amenity opportunities. Similar to feedback received during the online survey and open house, the site conditions summary identified future opportunities for trail expansion and additional amenities.

Park Distribution – Gap Analysis

A gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the city and understand where acquisition efforts should be considered. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers, and other factors to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt

Formatted: Not Highlight

zoned lands were isolated because neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas. Additionally, travelsheds were defined for neighborhood parks using a 1/4-mile primary and 1/2-mile secondary service area with travel distances calculated along the road network starting from known and accessible access points at each park. Travelsheds for community parks were derived using 1/4-mile, 1/2-mile, and 3-mile travel distances to acknowledge that these park types (including athletic fields) serve a wider array of users, and driving to such sites is typical.

Results of this analysis produced a map (Map 3) with potential acquisition areas within the city and UGA for future parks and trails for the near to long term. The five acquisition areas are described below, and while the areas do not identify specific parcels for consideration, each area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. Acquisition areas can include both neighborhood (City-owned) and family parks (Non-City/Private). The City should consider taking advantage of acquisition opportunities to develop neighborhood parks in strategic locations, especially in the southwestern portion of the city, and as funding allows to fill remaining gaps. In addition to the search for developable parkland, the City should continue to coordinate with proposed residential development projects to consider where and how a family park (or public trail connection) could be incorporated into the planning of proposed residential areas, as per zoning requirements.

Acquisition Area A

Multiple neighborhood or family parks estimated between 2 to 6 acres across southwestern La Center, near Northwest La Center Road.

Acquisition Area B

Multiple neighborhood or family parks estimated between 1 to 2 acres in eastern La Center, north of Northeast Lockwood Creek Road.

Acquisition Area C

Multiple neighborhood or family parks estimated between 0.5 to 1 acre in northeastern La Center, near Northeast North Fork Avenue.

Acquisition Area D

Potential for community park with extension of Heritage Trail. Multiple neighborhood or family parks estimated between 0.5 to 1 acre in northwestern La Center. Potential areas for family parks include areas near Northwest Ninth Avenue, Northwest Bolen Street, Northwest 14th Avenue, West 16th Street, and Northwest 11th Avenue.

Acquisition Area E

Potential riverfront site south of Northwest Pacific Highway and to support East Fork Lewis River North Shore Trail concept.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Superscript/ Subscript, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Superscript/ Subscript, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

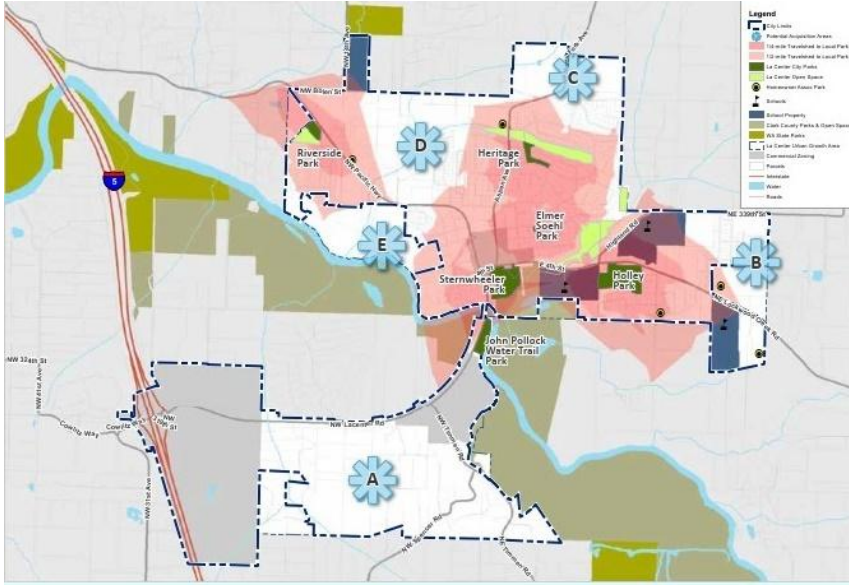
Formatted: Not Superscript/ Subscript, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Don't keep with next

Map 3. Travelsheds for Parks & Potential Acquisition Targets



Formatted: Keep with next

Level of Service Assessment

A level of service (LOS) review was conducted in addition to and in support of the gap analysis to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification. It also aids to understand a broader measure of how well the City is serving its residents with access to parks, trails, and open space. Service standards are the adopted guidelines, or benchmarks, the City is trying to attain with its parks system; the LOS is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting the adopted standards.

Existing adopted acreage LOS standards, as shown in the 2017 PROS Plan, include an adopted acreage, expressed by acres per thousand population, for the target quantity of the City's park facilities. Based on existing standards of 8 acres per thousand, the 2017 PROS Plan shows a deficit of 5.6 acres for Community Parks and 1.6 acres for Neighborhood Parks. Considering the potential for growth, competition for developable land, and the resources required to grow and maintain the park system, a minor adjustment to parkland acreage standards from 2017 is recommended. The future population growth predicted for the city in 2045 will result in a need for 27 community park acres, or an equivalent of one large community park, plus 8 acres of neighborhood parkland, or an equivalent of two to three neighborhood parks. Additionally, the requirements of the City's development code will support the need for smaller parks with approximately 5 to 10 acres of family parks as residential areas develop. Proposed adjustments to acreage standards are provided in Table 4.

Formatted: Head 3 no numbers

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Table 4: Future Park Acreage Needs with Proposed Standards¹

Type of Park	Existing Inventory (ac.)	2024 Proposed Standard	2045 Future Need ² (ac.)
Community	19.3 acres	5.5 acres/1,000 population	26.6 acres
Neighborhood	4.2 acres	1.5 acres/1,000 population	8.3 acres
Totals	23.5 acres	7.0 acres/1,000 population	34.9 acres

¹Family parks are developed by private developers and maintained by local Home Owners Associations. Therefore, only community and neighborhood parks, which are owned and maintained by the City, are shown in the LOS assessment.

²2045 population estimated as 8,350.

Capital Facilities Plan

The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) identifies the park, trail, and facility projects considered for the next six years or more. The majority of these projects entail the maintenance, acquisition and development of parks, recreation amenities, and trails. Based on feedback from community engagement activities, residents have indicated an interest in park facility upgrades, enhanced trail connections, and acquisition for future parklands as priorities. The CFP also provides strategies for implementation of the identified projects and potential funding mechanisms and opportunities. The potential projects included in the six-year plan (2024-2029) can be found in the 2024 PROS Plan.

Formatted: Font: Myriad Pro Light, 10.5 pt, Character scale: 80%, Not Highlight

Formatted Table

Formatted: Font: Myriad Pro Light, 10.5 pt, Character scale: 80%, Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Myriad Pro Light, 10.5 pt, Not Bold, Character scale: 80%, Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt, Not Superscript/ Subscript

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt, Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt

Formatted: Font: 9.5 pt, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goals and Policies

The following Goals and Policies provide guidance for the City in making decisions to deliver the desired parks, recreation, and open space amenities and services to all citizens of the community. The City aims to provide these amenities and services to maintain and enhance a quality of life expressed and embraced by the community.

Goal 6.1 Maintenance & Management Goal

La Center shall maintain and operate a modern, efficient park system that provides a high level of user comfort, safety, and aesthetic quality, and protects capital investments. The park system should also work to protect, preserve, and enhance native flora, fauna, fish, and wetlands, as well as the ability of the public to enjoy their environment.

Maintenance & Management Policies

~~Policy 6.1.1—Maintain existing park and trail facilities to protect the safety and longevity of capital assets and recreational values.~~

~~Policy 6.1.2—Plan for upgrades, repairs, and improvements to continually ensure ongoing outdoor recreational opportunities and diverse experiences in the park system.~~

~~Policy 6.1.3—Develop, maintain, and update asset management plans for major assets to support improved stewardship, reduce costs, and increase maintenance and replacement efficiency.~~

~~Policy 6.1.4~~ **Policy 6.1.1** La Center shall allocate adequate funding for maintenance, staffing, and asset preservation.

~~Policy 6.1.5~~ **Policy 6.1.2** La Center shall pursue alternative funding options and dedicated revenues, such as private donations, sponsorships, partnerships, and grants, along with support through partnerships with service organizations, volunteer groups, businesses, and other agencies.

~~Policy 6.1.6~~ **Policy 6.1.3** La Center shall periodically review and update the Park Impact Fee rates and methodology and utilize impact fees to accommodate growth through the expansion of the park system.

~~Policy 6.1.7~~ **Policy 6.1.4** La Center shall periodically update the capital facilities plan to address facility improvement needs.

~~Policy 6.1.8~~ **Policy 6.1.5** La Center shall update the Parks, Recreation & Open Space PROS Plan periodically and approximately every six years to ensure facilities and services meet current and future community needs and maintain eligibility for State grants.

Policy 6.1.6 La Center shall consider future climate conditions during siting and design of capital facilities, including changes to temperature and rainfall, to help ensure they function as intended over their planned life cycle. **[cross-reference transportation, capital facilities & utilities, and resilience element policies]**

Formatted: Heading 2 no number

Formatted: Indent: Hanging: 0.34"

Formatted: Font: Source Sans Pro Light, 12 pt, Font color: Text 1, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Source Sans Pro Light, 12 pt, Bold, Font color: Custom Color(RGB(76,80,131))

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.1.7 La Center shall consider identifying and planning for climate impacts to valued community assets such as parks and recreation facilities, including relocation or replacement, [cross-reference transportation, capital facilities & utilities, and resilience elements policies].

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Heading 3

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Goal 6.2 Parks Goal

La Center shall dDevelop parks and outdoor recreational amenities to meet community needs, consistent with citizen input.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Parks Policies

Policy 6.2.1 La Center shall pProvide a diversity of park and recreation facilities and a balance of opportunities for both passive and active recreation and that meets the needs of different age groups, abilities, and interests.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.2 La Center shall pProactively acquire or secure parkland identified within thethis PROS Plan to provide geographically accessible and an equitable distribution of community and neighborhood parks and open space.

Policy 6.2.3 La Center shall pProvide a distributed park and open space system, such that all residents live within a half½-mile access of a park, trail, or open space.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.3Policy 6.2.4 La Center shall ensure that all community members have equitable access to green space within a half-mile. [cross-reference land use and resilience elements policies]

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0"

Formatted: Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.4Policy 6.2.5 La Center shall pPlan for urban parks, open space, and recreational opportunities within urban growth areas.

Policy 6.2.5Policy 6.2.6 La Center shall cCoordinate the planning and development of parks and recreation facilities with nearby jurisdictions and the La Center School District.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.6Policy 6.2.7 La Center shall dDevelop City-owned or maintained park sites based on master plans, management plans, or other adopted strategies to ensure parks reflect local needs, community input, recreational and conservation goals and available financial resources.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.7Policy 6.2.8 La Center shall dDevelop standardized park site furnishings (benches, signs, picnic tables, etc.) to provide for more efficient maintenance, park identify, ADA-compliance and cost-effectiveness.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0"

Policy 6.2.8Policy 6.2.9 La Center shall dDesign, upgrade, 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.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.2.9Policy 6.2.10 La Center shall iIncorporate 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.

Formatted: Font: Bold, Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold, Not Highlight

~~Policy 6.2.10~~ **Policy 6.2.11** La Center shall accept land dedications, when appropriate, as a partial credit towards impact fees consistent with city park plans and needs.

~~Policy 6.2.11~~ **Policy 6.2.12** La Center shall pursue the development of facilities and programs consistent with the 202412 PROS Plan LOS Assessment Parks & Recreational Needs Assessment survey results.

Policy 6.2.13 La Center shall Evaluate the feasibility of continue to requiring new, low-density residential subdivisions of 25 or more units developments to provide parks, and trails, and amenities within the subdivision developments and, if it is feasible and prudent, for subdivisions to provide such amenities these consistent with adopted levels of service create this burden on new subdivisions, develop regulations to implement this policy.

~~Policy 6.2.13~~ **Policy 6.2.14** La Center shall consider granting impact fee credits, on a case-by-case basis, if a development provides park land consistent with adopted levels of service.

Goal 6.3 Trails Goal

La Center shall sSecure trail corridors, or corridor segments, to provide for an interconnected park system that offers a wide variety of year-round recreation opportunities and experiences such as pedestrian, bicycle, pets, horseback riding, non-motorized vehicles (boats), ADA, and aging population which that support and enhance La Center's identity and the natural environment.

Trail Policies

Policy 6.3.1 La Center shall eEncourage and promote the acquisition and development of a citywide pedestrian and bicycle trail system to connect schools, parks, neighborhoods, and other facilities.

Policy 6.3.2 La Center shall cConnect the community to nature and parks and open spaces through a system of regional and local trails and paths for walking and bicycling.

Policy 6.3.3 La Center shall cContinue to coordinate with Clark County to support a connected trail network that provides continuous walking and biking access between parks and other key destinations.

Policy 6.3.4 La Center shall pProvide development standards for trails and open space to provide adequate recreational facilities and accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, horse, ADA and aging population users.

Policy 6.3.5 La Center shall pProvide trailhead facilities, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, signage directing users to stay out of ecologically sensitive areas such as riparian areas and wetlands, restrooms, and other amenities.

Goal 6.4 Open Space, Conservation & Stewardship Goals

La Center shall pProtect open space, critical areas, and waterfront to maintain La Center's sense of history and provide opportunities for public access.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Custom Color(RGB(76,80,131)), Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Custom Color(RGB(76,80,131)), Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Custom Color(RGB(76,80,131)), Not Highlight

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Custom Color(RGB(76,80,131)), Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0", First line: 0"

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Open Space, Conservation & Stewardship Policies

Policy 6.4.1 La Center shall ~~d~~Develop more shoreline and water-based recreation facilities to connect with the Lewis River – Vancouver Lake Water Trail.

Formatted: Heading 3

Policy 6.4.2 La Center shall ~~a~~Acquire land for open space and riverfront access through state or municipal programs such as stormwater management, salmon recovery and wildlife/wetland protection.

Policy 6.4.3 La Center shall ~~p~~Provide a continuous system of open space and wildlife corridors to be determined by natural conditions. Connect open spaces to provide corridors and greenways, wherever feasible.

Policy 6.4.4 La Center shall establish incentives and regulations to maintain open space buffers to reduce wildfire risk. [cross-reference resilience element policy]

Formatted: Highlight

Policy 6.4.5 La Center shall strive to increase aquatic habitat resilience, including salmon, to low summer flows, especially in the East Fork Lewis River, by increasing water residence time, storing water on the landscape, conserving water, protecting groundwater, keeping waters cool, and protecting water quality. [cross-reference land use, resilience, and environmental elements policies]

Formatted: Highlight

Policy 6.4.6 La Center shall ~~c~~Cooperate with the County, neighboring jurisdictions and other organizations to identify and conserve open space of mutual benefit, and pursue funding through grants and the Clark County Conservation Futures/Legacy Lands program.

Formatted: Indent: Left: -0.06"

~~Policy 6.4.1~~**Policy 6.4.7** La Center shall ~~Provide~~explore the feasibility of a “big canoe” launch pier in coordination with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe to support local tribal access for cultural activities.

~~Policy 6.4.2~~**Policy 6.4.8** La Center shall ~~p~~Partner with local conservation and non-profit groups to help support stewardship and restoration activities.

~~Policy 6.4.3~~**Policy 6.4.9** La Center shall ~~d~~Develop a stewardship program for open spaces to preserve, enhance, and/or maintain sensitive natural areas and bodies of water within the La Center UGA, as resources are available.

~~Policy 6.4.4~~**Policy 6.4.10** La Center shall ~~e~~Encourage, support and initiate activities, where possible, to preserve, conserve or improve the natural shorelines of the East Fork Lewis River, Brezee Creek and McCormick Creek.

Policy 6.4.11 La Center shall ~~e~~Engage in riparian corridor reforestation and streambank restoration to improve water quality and aquatic habitat.

Policy 6.4.12 La Center shall restore and maintain critical areas and open space areas. [cross-reference land use, resilience, and environment elements policies]

Formatted: Highlight

Policy 6.4.13 La Center shall consider identifying opportunities to expand habitat protection and improve habitat quality and connectivity using conservation area designations, buffers, and open space corridors through its critical areas ordinance. [cross-reference resilience and environment element policies]

Formatted: Highlight

Goal 6.5 Climate Change & Park Resiliency Goal

La Center shall adapt to climate change and increase local park system resiliency by improving environmental conditions, stewardship and sustainability in parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation facilities within planning, development, maintenance and operations.

Climate Change & Park Resiliency Policies

Policy 6.5.1 La Center shall incorporate sustainability and low impact development into design, development and maintenance of the park system and be a leader in sustainable building practices. The City will maintain equipment in good working order, purchase green equipment when feasible (e.g., battery-powered or low-emissions), replace existing lighting with high-efficiency, Dark Skies compliant fixtures, and keep systems (irrigation, lighting, HVAC, etc.) updated and fully functional for maximum performance.

Policy 6.5.2 La Center shall coordinate with CPU and NW Natural to plan, build, and improve the safety and reliability of facilities, utilities, and infrastructure projects to avoid or withstand flooding from the East Fork Lewis River and to mitigate other climate associated impacts. [cross-reference transportation, capital facilities & utilities, and resilience element policy]

Policy 6.5.3 La Center shall coordinate with CPU on water conservation methods and technologies in development of irrigation infrastructure within parks, recreation, and open space areas so as to foster climate resilience. [cross-reference public facilities & utilities, resilience, and environment elements policies]

Policy 6.5.4 La Center shall identify and implement strategies to increase the resilience of the shoreline environment to climate hazards, while also protecting shoreline ecological functions, allowing water-dependent uses, and providing public access. [cross-reference environment and resilience elements policies]

Policy 6.5.5 La Center shall manage water resources sustainably in the face of climate change through smart irrigation, stormwater management, water conservation and wastewater reuse, plant selection, and landscape management. [cross-reference with public facilities & utilities and resilience elements policies]

Policy 6.5.6 La Center shall utilize, as appropriate, native and lower resource requiring dependent vegetation for landscaping in parks and city-owned properties to minimize maintenance requirements, conserve water, reduce the need for fertilizer, provide native habitat and control invasive vegetation through manual removal and other environmentally responsible means.

Policy 6.5.7 La Center shall protect, enhance, and support efforts to restore ecosystems to conserve culturally important consumptive and non-consumptive resources including foods, medicinal plants, and materials that could be adversely impacted by climate change. [cross-reference resilience, historic, archaeological, and cultural preservation, and environment elements policies]

Policy 6.5.8 La Center shall identify, prioritize and, when feasible, repair and/or restore environmental degradation within parks and open spaces, including site-specific restoration plans.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0", First line: 0"

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Not Highlight

Formatted: Heading 3

Policy 6.5.9 La Center shall develop tree planting guidelines and protocols to determine planting locations and species selection to foster resilient plant communities that can recover from disturbances and adapt to climate change and its impacts, such as ~~forest~~wild-fire and drought.

Formatted: Not Highlight

Policy 6.5.10 La Center shall continue updating the La Center Tree Canopy Assessment and implementing ordinances to maintain and expand tree canopy cover, improve tree and watershed health, prioritize carbon sequestration, and build climate resilience. [cross-reference resilience and environment elements policies]

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0"

Formatted: Highlight

