



## Staff Report

**To:** La Center City Council  
**From:** Bryan Kast, Public Works/Community Development Director  
**Date:** June 12, 2024  
**Re:** Ordinance 2024-03 – Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update

---

### **Overview**

Planning for future parks trails and other recreational amenities is a required element of the Comprehensive Plan per RCW 36.70A.070(8). A current Parks Plan that has been updated in the last 6-years is also a requirement to be eligible for Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant funds for parks. La Center's Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan was last updated in 2017.

In 2022 the City contracted with Conservation Technix to update the PROS plan. Conservation Technix used the 2017 plan as a basis for the plan update, updating existing conditions, inventorying current parks and equipment, and completing a needs assessment based on current and projected growth. The updated parks plan also incorporates public feedback gathered through a community survey that was completed in December of 2022. Survey data showed strong public supports for parks and trails amongst the citizens of La Center.

In parallel with the Parks Plan update, the 6-year Parks Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) was revised and updated. Projects that correct identified deficiencies and fill gaps in the park and trail system network were prioritized in the updated CFP. In conjunction with the CFP update the Park Impact Fee (PIF) rate was re-evaluated based on the costs of improvements in the CFP and the projected growth over the next 6-years.

### **Budget Impact**

Adoption of the 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and Capital Facilities Plan will result in an increase in the Park Impact Fee (PIF) charged to new residential units built within the City from \$2,842 to \$4,115 per unit.

### **Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the City Council approve Ordinance 2024-03

### **Proposed Motion**

"Mayor, I move to adopt Ordinance 2024-03, adopting the 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and 6-Year Parks Capital Facilities Plan, and amending the Park Impact Fee rate to \$4,115 per unit."

**ATTACHMENTS**

Exhibit A: Ordinance 2024-03

Exhibit B: 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan



## **ORDINANCE NO. 2024-03**

### **AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE LA CENTER CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN AND ADOPTING THE CITY OF LA CENTER PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN (2024)**

The City Council adopts the following findings:

**WHEREAS**, the City of La Center is a code city fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA), 36.780A RCW; and

**WHEREAS**, RCW 36.70A.070(8) requires all jurisdictions fully planning under the GMA to adopt a comprehensive plan park and recreation element that implements, and is consistent with, the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities;

**WHEREAS**, on May 10, 2017 the La Center City Council approved Ordinance No. 2017- 06, adopting a revised Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, Capital Facilities Plan and Zoning Maps for the City of La Center: the La Center Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (2017);

**WHEREAS**, in 2022 the City of La Center contracted with a qualified professional planning firm, Conservation Technix, to update the 2017 La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, La Center Planning Commission conducted multiple public work sessions and regular public meetings to solicit public input on the proposed update to the La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 23, 2024, the La Center Planning Commission duly advertised and conducted a public hearing on the amended La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan, received public testimony and, thereafter, voted unanimously to forward their recommendations to the La Center City Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council finds that adopting the input on the proposed La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan (2024) is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the public interest.

**NOW THEREFORE**, the City Council for the City of La Center ordains as follows:

**SECTION 1** - Incorporation of Recitals. The City Council declares and adopts the foregoing recitals and incorporates them herein as preliminary findings in support of adoption of the proposed 2024 La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan, an element of the La Center Capital Facilities Plan, adopted by this ordinance.

**SECTION 2 – Repeal.** The La Center City Council hereby repeals that portion of Ordinance 2017-06 relating to La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan element of the La Center Capital Facilities Plan.

**SECTION 3 – Adoption.** The La Center City Council hereby adopts the La Center Park, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan (2024) as an element of the La Center Capital Facilities Plan, as set forth in Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

**SECTION 4 – Park Impact Fee.** The La Center City Council hereby amends the Park Impact Fee (PIF) Rate to \$4,115 per residential Unit as set forth in Exhibit B attached hereto and incorporated herein by this reference.

**SECTION 5 – Severability.** If any section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance or its application to any person or situation should be held to be invalid or unconstitutional for any reason by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of the remaining portions of this ordinance or its application to any person or situation.

**SECTION 6 - Corrections.** The City Clerk and the codifiers of this ordinance are authorized to make necessary clerical corrections to this ordinance including, but not limited to, the correction of scrivener's/clerical errors, references, ordinance numbering, section/subsection numbers and any references thereto.

**SECTION 7 – Transmittal.** The City Clerk is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this ordinance and associated exhibits to the Washington State Department of Commerce within ten days of adoption.

**SECTION 8– Effective Date.** This ordinance shall be effective thirty days after adoption.

**APPROVED** and **ADOPTED** this 12<sup>th</sup> day of June 2024, by a majority of the La Center City Council.

AYES: \_\_\_\_\_  
NAYS: \_\_\_\_\_  
ABSTAIN: \_\_\_\_\_  
ABSENT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thomas Strobehn, Mayor

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Maria Swinger-Inskeep, Director of  
Administrative Services/City Clerk  
Page 2 of 2

\_\_\_\_\_  
Janean Parker, City Attorney

Ordinance 2024-03 (La Center PROS)



## **EXHIBIT “A”**

**City of La Center 2024 Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan**

## **EXHIBIT “B”**

### **Park Impact Fee Rate Study**





# Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan

MAY 2024



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Mayor & City Council

Tom Strobehn, Mayor

Sean Boyle, Councilmember

Liz Cervený, Councilmember

Melissa Fox, Councilmember

KC Kasberg, Councilmember

### Planning Commission

Shirin Elkoshairi, Chair

Jeremy Smith, Planning Commissioner

Dennis Hill, Planning Commissioner

Dennis Nuttbrock, Planning Commissioner

Paul Jones, Planning Commissioner Alternate

### City Staff

Bryan Kast, Public Works Director

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction & Overview.....	2
Community Profile .....	11
Community Engagement .....	16
Classifications & Inventory.....	19
Needs Assessment .....	32
Goals & Objectives.....	60
Capital Planning & Implementation .....	66
Appendix A: Community Survey Summary .....	71
Appendix B: Open House Meeting Summary .....	89
Appendix C: Recreation Trends .....	101
Appendix D: Implementation Tools & Tactics.....	113

# 1

# Introduction & Overview

**This 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, or PROS for short, reflects the City’s vision of a vibrant community that responds to the needs and interests of residents and visitors for fun, healthy, exciting and diverse activities in an engaging and active park system. The La Center Public Works Department focuses on two strategic goals when developing the City’s parks and trails: conservation of open space, fish and wildlife habitat and natural resources, and providing recreational opportunities that enrich the lives of the community through thriving, livable neighborhoods.**

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This PROS Plan is intended to guide the community’s efforts into 2030 and beyond. With community input gathered through broad engagement efforts, the Plan provides a blueprint for the growth, enhancement and management of La Center’s park and recreation system. The 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is designed to:

- Provide an opportunity for the La Center community to express their recreational interests and their vision for the City’s park system.
- Provide updated inventories, demographic conditions and needs analyses that reflect the current state of the City and its park system.
- Establish specific goals, objectives, recommendations and actions for developing, conserving and maintaining high-quality recreation amenities, parks and open spaces across the City.
- Assess the need for additional parkland, greenways, trails and recreation facilities.
- Guide elected officials, Public Works staff and residents when making decisions or taking actions



regarding planning, acquiring, developing or implementing park and recreation facilities and programs.

- Meet the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act, as well as eligibility requirements for state and local funding and grant programs.

This plan updates and builds upon La Center's 2017 Park, Recreation and Open Space Master (PROS) Plan. La Center has experienced significant changes since the adoption of the 2017 PROS Plan – the city has grown by over 1,000 residents and is now home to a more diverse, slightly younger, more educated and wealthier community.

As a six-year guide and strategic plan for enhancing park and recreation amenities for the community, the citywide PROS Plan establishes a path forward for enabling and enhancing high quality, community-driven parks, trails, open spaces and recreational opportunities.

The Plan outlines recommendations for the improvement and growth of City recreation amenities to address community needs. The 2024 PROS Plan provides updated system inventories, community profile, needs analyses and a comprehensive capital project list. The Plan identifies parks and recreation goals and establishes a long-range plan for the La Center park and recreation system, including action items and strategies for implementation over the next six or more years. The recommendations in this Plan are based on community input, evaluations of the existing park system, operating conditions and fiscal considerations. This Plan envisions an innovative and inclusive system of parks that promotes recreation, health, environmental conservation and fiscal responsibility as integral elements of a thriving, livable La Center.

The PROS Plan is part of the City's broader Comprehensive Plan and is consistent with the guidelines established by Washington's Growth Management Act. The PROS Plan must be updated every six years for the City to retain eligibility for state grants through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), which administers a variety of outdoor recreation and conservation grant programs.

## PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

Public input is important to make sure the goals and priorities identified in the PROS Plan are consistent with community interests. The City hosted a series of public outreach efforts that included an online-based survey, a virtual open house and other engagement. In addition to the public feedback, the Planning Commission was repeatedly engaged in the preparation of the PROS Plan. The Planning Commission shared their thoughts at three sessions during 2023 on the current state of parks and recreation in La Center, provided guidance and direction on visioning and challenges, and shared ideas for key projects and policy considerations.

A review of the existing park inventory became the basis for determining the current performance of the system and for identifying needed maintenance and capital repair projects. An overarching analysis was conducted for parks, trails and natural areas to assess current needs and forecast future demand to account for population growth and shifting demographics. The Plan's capital facilities section, and accompanying implementation and funding strategies, were prepared to guide future City park and recreation investments, while recognizing operational realities.



## DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The La Center Public Works Department manages 31.7 acres of parks and open spaces that provide local recreational opportunities – ranging from community parks to neighborhood parks to riverfront launching sites for small watercraft. The City also manages 1.5 miles of local trails.

### Parks Operations

The Public Works Department operates and is responsible for maintaining and improving public playgrounds, parks, open space, athletic fields, forested areas, riverfront access and trails. As the steward of these valuable community assets, the City sustainably maintains these properties to protect the public investment and to provide safe, accessible parks, open space and trails. Park properties include Holley Park, Heritage Park, Elmer Soehl Park, Riverside Park, Sternwheeler Park, John Pollock Water Trail Park and River Access Park. Trails managed by the Department include the Brezee Creek Trail and Heritage Trail.

### Recreation Programs

While the City of La Center does not directly provide recreation programs, the City accommodates recreational uses through its facilities of parks, sports

fields and community center. Through an agreement with non-profit sports organizations, youth sport programs, such as Little League, utilize City facilities including the community center, concession stand and Michael J. Nolan Fields.

### Planning Commission

The Planning Commission provided guidance on policy decisions for park and recreation services within the community. In a steering committee role, the Planning Commission was instrumental in guiding the updating of the PROS Plan as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan and making recommendations on these projects to the City Council.

## RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 2017 PROS Plan has been a strong guide for City officials, management and staff in making decisions about planning, acquiring, developing and implementing park improvements. Accomplishments realized since the adoption of the previous plan include the John Pollock Park and Boat Launch constructed in 2018 on the western banks of the East Fork of the Lewis River, the development of Riverside Park, and the design of a pedestrian path along NW Pacific Highway.





## GUIDING DOCUMENTS

Past community plans and other relevant documents were reviewed for policy direction and goals as they pertain to the provision and planning for recreation, parks and trail opportunities in La Center. The development of each plan or study involved public input and adoption by their respective responsible legislative body.

### Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan adopted in 2017 provided direction and updates from the previous 2007 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. As an update to the previous park system plan, the 2017 PROS Plan sought to capture the effects of changing environments triggered by rapid growth in Clark County and plan for the future needs for parks and open space. The PROS Plan measured the current levels of service being provided based on the adopted standards for the City's community and neighborhood parks to determine needed additions to park acreage and locations as well as the performance to standards for trail mileage. The PROS Plan identified the need for an interconnected system of trails to connect residents to public lands and to integrate the East Fork of the Lewis River and the La Center Bottoms into the park system. The service area mapping revealed the need for eight future neighborhood parks to be provided throughout future residential districts. A capital improvement program was identified for existing and future park and open space facilities to ensure a long-range guide for delivery of park, recreation and open space services. The 2017 PROS Plan also recommended that future residential development should provide park, trail and open space opportunities within development to serve future residents. Following Plan adoption, the City enacted a revision to Title 18 of the La Center Municipal Code requiring future housing development to provide these needed amenities.

### City Comprehensive Plan

The City's 2016 Comprehensive Plan was amended in 2021 and updated to address anticipated future needs for the City's capital facilities and services as growth and development in the County and at the I-5 interchange continues to expand the local population. The Comprehensive Plan is consistent

with the Shoreline Master Program (amended in 2021) that established goals, policies and regulations for development of the City's shoreline jurisdiction along the East Fork of the Lewis River. The Comprehensive Plan outlines La Center's general goals to address diverse transportation infrastructure and mobility needs in a unified vision. The parks, recreation, and open space chapter of the Comprehensive Plan established a long-term direction for the City's park infrastructure, while the 2017 PROS Plan is recognized as the City's short term blueprint for acquiring and improving parks, trail and recreation areas. The Comprehensive Plan reinforced the future need for eight new neighborhood parks, as well as improvements for a regional boat launch trailhead.

### Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail Plan

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department led a water trail planning process in 2012 to identify the opportunities to improve the existing recreational paddling resources along portions of targeted waterways in western Clark County. The water trail identifies the paddling opportunities in the western section of the county along the North and East Fork of the Lewis River, Lake River and Vancouver Lake. The Water Trail Plan formally designates the location of the water trail and identifies needs for additional amenities, access points and other improvements in an effort to facilitate a better recreational experience for the community. La Center contains two water access sites for the East Fork of the Lewis River at the current northeast extent of the identified official Water Trail. The plan identifies a number of recommendations, including specific improvements to publicly-owned access sites; a water trail sign system for wayfinding, user safety along with property and resource protection; development of a water trail paddling guide; and consideration of the water trail plan in local jurisdictions' capital facilities planning, among others.

### Playground Audit Action Plan 2019-2020

The City of La Center's certified playground safety inspector conducted playground inspections and prepared playground audits at three public playgrounds in January 2016. These playground audits included Holley, Heritage and "Elm" (Elmer Soehl) Parks. The audits pre-date the playground at



Riverside Park that was installed in 2022 when the park was developed. The Playground Audit Action Plan describes the various immediate repairs that were addressed as a result of the 2016 audits and prioritizes the remaining issues and how they can be addressed to ensure public safety and reduce risks associated with play equipment. The Plan suggested that Holley Park should be the first park for complete playground replacement, as its equipment was the oldest, resulting in more needs for updating or modifications to meet current safety specifications.

### Transportation Capital Facilities Plan

The adopted Comprehensive Plan's Transportation chapter identified the comprehensive needs for motorized and non-motorized connections across the city and established goals and policies for developing an effective transportation system within the La Center urban growth area. The City also developed its Transportation Capital Facilities Plan to ensure the transportation network could maintain acceptable service levels as populations and employment growth continues to increase. The Plan outlines strategies and projects that are important for enhancing mobility in La Center for the next 20 years. Following an analysis of existing conditions, service levels and forecasted needs, the Transportation Capital Facilities Plan identifies a prioritized list of improvement projects to meet current and future demands. A finance plan is developed to serve as the basis for the six-year transportation improvement program. Many of the proposed roadway improvements recommended reconstruction with pedestrian and bicycle facilities. A pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Brezee Creek connecting the existing trail on the west side of the creek to La Center High School was proposed in the improvement list.

### La Center Junction Subarea Plan

The La Center Junction Subarea Plan was developed to guide future development of a 940-acre zone in the vicinity of La Center Road and Interstate 5. The intent of the Plan is to foster economic development that creates jobs for La Center and residents of north Clark County. The Plan seeks to coordinate land use and transportation improvements with specific types of development. Required infrastructure improvements to support future development include roadways, sewer services, I-5 interchange improvements, and trails. The City intends that all new arterials and collectors within the urban growth area shall have on-street bike lanes. While there are no proposed public parks within the subarea, the Plan cited that "family parks" are required for each 35 units of medium density residential development. This requirement is expected to yield roughly two acres of parks within the MDR-16 zoning districts. With the bulk of the subarea in non-residential zoning, the focus will primarily be on trails. Roughly 5.5 miles of trails are planned.

The Subarea Plan cited the City's Capital Facilities Plan that calls for six City trails. Four of the trails are on-street; the fifth follows a McCormick Creek's tributary along the southeastern subarea border; and the sixth follows an unnamed tributary of the East Fork Lewis River in the northeast quadrant of the subarea. In addition, Clark County Parks envisions regional trails along the East Fork Lewis River, as well as trails along Paradise Park Road, McCormick Creek and Allen Canyon Creek.





## CURRENT CHALLENGES

### Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated health mandates for social distancing have transformed the way municipalities plan for and conduct public engagement. To develop this Plan, the City implemented a sound public process that was compliant with health mandates by using a range of online tools for communications, engagement and community feedback.

In addition, the increase in usage of parks during the pandemic impacted parks maintenance operations through increased demand for routine maintenance, such as litter and garbage removal, restroom cleaning and repairs.

### Asset Management

Established park systems require ongoing maintenance in order to safely and effectively serve the community. Public recreation providers across the country consider maintaining existing park facilities to be a key management issue. Poorly maintained assets – from benches to playgrounds to pools – can fail, either structurally or operationally, posing safety risks and reducing their recreational value. However, recreation providers often struggle to

establish adequate funding mechanisms for routine and preventative maintenance and repair of facilities, as well as the major rehabilitation of existing outdoor recreation facilities at the end of their useful life.

This Plan includes a condition assessments of City parks to provide a baseline of current conditions to inform facility, maintenance and operations policies and improvements. Proper maintenance of recreation assets will prevent deterioration thereby reducing long-term capital and operating costs, maintaining safety, improving public perception and increasing community use.

### Fiscal Challenges

As a small, rural city with a limited tax base, tremendous pressure exists on capital and operating funding sources for the maintenance and expansion of City services and amenities. This PROS Plan is structured with these constraints in mind and considers listed capital projects for their potential to leverage other funding sources, affects to future maintenance and operations demands, and estimated development costs.

### Equity, Access & Accessibility

With the intent to provide a balanced suite of recreation experiences, the City must continue to

find ways to provide complete and safe access to park facilities and strive to ensure that all residents have equitable access to recreational resources and services, while balancing the City's financial and operational capacity. Research on recreation also provides information on how park distribution, park proximity, park facilities and conditions have an impact on people's desire to engage in physical activity. It may be valuable to re-evaluate current park designs and maintenance policies to ensure barrier-free, engaging park environments and operational efficiencies. The City will continue to play a major role in enabling healthy lifestyles for the La Center community and should continue to enhance the park system and recreational offerings.

### Balancing Passive & Active Uses

From accessible playgrounds to splash pads to natural play areas, the range of play experiences offered by the City should change and diversify over time as the City continues to grow. The demand for new amenities must be balanced against maintaining traditional recreational uses and open space. New amenities may require the use or re-use of existing parkland, or additional parkland may be required to support the community's future needs.

### Obesity Epidemic

The nation is facing an obesity epidemic that has prompted the U.S. Surgeon General to issue a call to action to recreation planning professionals. His call is to "reclaim the culture of physical activity" in our country. Scientific research now indicates that walking a minimum of 22 minutes a day can greatly decrease one's chances of acquiring diabetes or heart disease. These two health issues cause 70% of deaths in the U.S. and account for over \$1 trillion in costs.

This call to action is now re-emphasizing the preventative side of health where the costs are much lower. Despite the existing recreation opportunities, the system of parks in La Center includes some barriers that prevent residents from potentially reaching these goals. This Plan makes specific recommendations on how the City can reduce barriers within its recreation infrastructure and support improved access to safe and accessible places to walk, bike and play.

## PLAN CONTENTS

The remainder of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Community Profile – provides an overview of the City of La Center and its demographics.
- Chapter 3: Community Engagement – highlights the methods used to engage the La Center community in the development of the Plan.
- Chapter 4: Classifications & Inventory – describes the existing recreation and park system.
- Chapters 5: Needs Assessment – discusses survey results and recreation trend data and provides context to the identification of potential system enhancements.
- Chapter 6: Goals & Objectives – provides a policy framework for the recreation and parks system grouped by major functional or program area.
- Chapter 7: Projects & Implementation Strategies – details a six-year program for addressing park and recreation facility enhancement or expansion projects and describes a range of strategies to consider in the implementation of the Plan.
- Appendices: Provides technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, stakeholder notes, funding options, among others.



# BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

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

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



## Physical Activity Benefits

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



## Community Benefits

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



## Economic Benefits

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

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





”

**HAVE A COMMUNITY HELP DAY WHERE THE WHOLE COMMUNITY CAN COME TOGETHER AND HELP TAKE CARE OF THE PARKS AND TRAILS. PAINTING, PICKING UP TRASH, MAKING TRAILS, MAKING A BIKE PARK ETC. MAYBE DO IT TWICE A YEAR.”**

Survey Respondent





# 2

# Community Profile

La Center is a small city of approximately 3,800 residents in Clark County, Washington. The City straddles the East Fork of the Lewis River and is bordered to the west by Interstate 5. La Center is surrounded by the farms, forests and riparian areas of the Columbia River Valley, southwest of Mt. St. Helens. It offers residents a small-town feel, convenient access to the greater Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area and easy access to the recreational opportunities of Paradise State Park, the Lewis River, Columbia River, Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge and Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

La Center's downtown features small businesses, City Hall and Sternwheeler Park, along East 4th Street. Much of the City's older neighborhoods and the three table game casinos are located adjacent to downtown. Much of the remainder of the northern half of the city (north of the East Fork Lewis River) has been developed into single-family residential neighborhoods, with recent residential growth on the western side of the city. The northeastern portion of the City also includes La Center High School and a large parcel owned by the La Center School District.

The portion of the City south of the East Fork extending to Interstate 5 remains rural and has significant development potential. La Center has limited commercial areas, and light industrial use is allowed in the Junction Plan zone. Also, the City has identified an industrial reserve area adjacent to its urban growth boundary.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Today, La Center is a rapidly growing community whose population has more than doubled over the past twenty years. It is home to many families with children, making up more than four in ten households, who enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by the City's parks and open spaces. La Center's residents are well educated, have high rates of employment, and have higher average incomes than other county residents.

Figure 1. Population Characteristics: La Center, Clark County, and Washington State

Demographics	La Center	Clark County	Washington
<b>Population Characteristics</b>			
Population (2022) <sup>1</sup>	<b>3,835</b>	520,900	7,864,400
Population (2010) <sup>2</sup>	<b>2,800</b>	425,363	6,724,540
Population (2000) <sup>3</sup>	<b>1,654</b>	345,238	5,894,121
Percent Change (2000-20) <sup>4</sup>	<b>131.9%</b>	50.9%	33.4%
Persons w/ Disabilities (%) <sup>4</sup>	<b>9.2%</b>	12.2%	12.7%
<b>Household Characteristics <sup>5</sup></b>			
Households	<b>1,036</b>	171,522	2,800,423
Percent with children	<b>43.0%</b>	34.0%	30.8%
Median Household Income	<b>\$91,375</b>	\$82,719	\$82,400
Average Household Size	<b>3.06</b>	2.69	2.55
Average Family Size	<b>3.31</b>	3.17	3.1
Owner Occupancy Rate	<b>79.4%</b>	66.5%	63.6%
<b>Age Groups <sup>5</sup></b>			
Median Age	<b>35.8</b>	38.7	37.9
Population < 5 years of age	<b>6.0%</b>	5.9%	5.9%
Population < 18 years of age	<b>24.5%</b>	23.8%	22.1%
Population 18 - 64 years of age	<b>60.5%</b>	60.7%	63.4%
Population > 65 years of age	<b>15.0%</b>	15.5%	15.5%

Sources:

\*1: Washington State Office of Financial Management, April 1, 2022 Population of Cities, Towns and Counties.

\*2: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.

\*3: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census.

\*4: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\*5: Household totals from U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; all other data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2019.

## Population

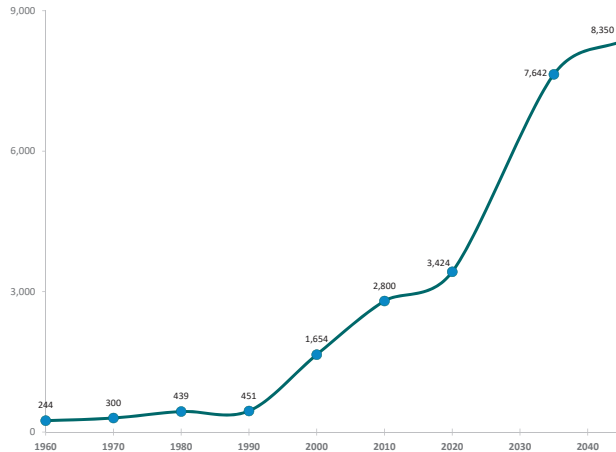
After incorporation in 1909 with a population of about 300 residents, La Center's population remained relatively stable through most of the 20th Century, reaching a population of just 451 residents by 1990. In the 1980s, the City faced funding challenges that limited its ability to provide critical services for new development and halted further construction. The approval of non tribal cardroom gambling led to significant gambling tax revenue that righted the City's finances. Soon after, the development of the Ilani Casino just west of the city, large urban growth boundary expansions and annexations spurred the construction to major new housing developments. By 2000, the City reached a population of 1,654 resident. Since then, the City's population has grown to 3,835 residents.

The 2015-2035 Clark County Comprehensive Plan projects that the La Center urban growth area, which aligns with the current city limits, will continue to grow rapidly over the coming years, reaching approximately 8,350 residents by 2045.

The size of a community and its anticipated growth over time are key indicators of whether existing park and recreation facilities will be sufficient to meet future needs. Population growth also can result in increased residential density and/or the development of currently vacant land within a city, potentially increasing the need for away-from-home recreation opportunities, while simultaneously reducing potential locations for park and open space acquisition. Planning for parks and recreation facilities can help ensure residents can enjoy sufficient, conveniently located parks, open space and recreation facilities as the community grows and evolves.



Figure 2. Population Change - Actual and Projected: 1950 - 2045



## Age Group Distribution

La Center's population has a median age of 35.8 (2021), much younger than Clark County as a whole (38.7) and the statewide averages (37.9). Young adults between 15 and 34 years old make up the City's largest 20-year population group, comprising 33% of the overall population in 2021. This has important implications for park and recreation needs.

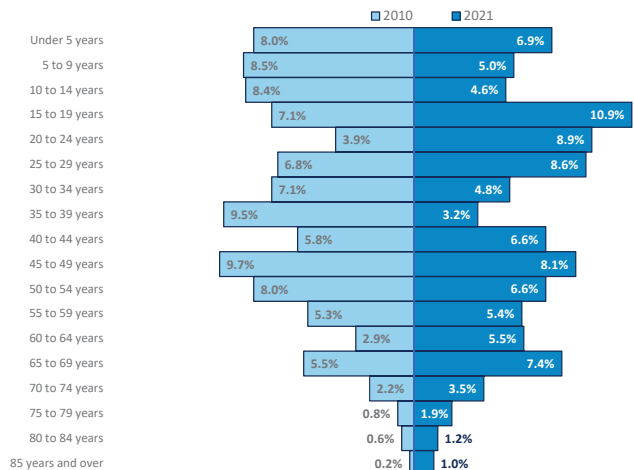
- Adults ages 25 to 34 years are users of adult programs. About 13% of residents are in this age category, see Figure 2. These residents may be entering long-term relationships and establishing families. About 43% of households in the City are families with children.
- Adults between 35 and 54 years of age represent users of a wide range of adult programs and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters. This age group makes up 24% of La Center's population.
- Older adults, ages 55 years plus, make up 26% of La Center's population. This group represents users of adult and senior programs. These residents may be approaching retirement or already retired and may be spending time with grandchildren. This group also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

While most of La Center's residents (64%) are adults over 25 years of age, approximately one-in-three are youth and young adults.

- Youth under 5 years of age make up 7% of La Center's population. This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.

- Children 5 to 14 years make up current youth program participants. Approximately 10% of the City's population falls into this age range.
- Teens and young adults, age 15 to 24 years, are in transition from youth program to adult programs and participate in teen/young adult programs where available. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers. About 20% percent of the City's residents are teens and young adults.

Figure 3. Age Group Distributions: 2010 & 2021



## Race & Ethnicity

In 2021, over 88% of the population of La Center identified as White. Just under 9% of residents identified as Asian and 0.4% as American Indian or Alaskan Native. Approximately 1.6% of residents identified as two or more races and 1% identified as a race not listed in the American Community Survey options. No residents identified as Black or African American or Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander alone. About one in every eighteen residents (5.6%) identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race, with most identifying as Mexican. While La Center is home to relatively few people of color, the City has become more diverse over the past decade, see Figure 4, with increases in the percentage of residents who identify as Asian or Hispanic/Latino.

According to the 2021 American Community Survey, nearly 95% of La Center's residents were born in the United States, with about 5% born abroad. The majority of foreign-born residents (86%) have lived in the U.S. for at least a decade. Approximately 7% of residents speak a language other than English at home though only 1% speak English less than very well. In addition, residents who speak languages other than English may face barriers in finding, accessing, and participating in park and recreation facilities and programs. As it plans for future park and recreational opportunities, the City should consider how to best meet the recreational needs of all community members.

Figure 4. Changes in Racial Composition - 2010 to 2021

Racial Identification	2010	2021
White	93.9%	<b>88.2%</b>
Two or more races	4.4%	<b>1.6%</b>
Asian	0.0%	<b>8.8%</b>
Some other race	0.4%	<b>1.0%</b>
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.1%	<b>0.4%</b>
Black or African American	1.4%	<b>0.0%</b>
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	<b>0.0%</b>
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1.4%	<b>5.6%</b>

## Persons with Disabilities

The 2021 American Community Survey reported 9% (293 persons) of La Center's population as having a disability that interferes with life activities. This is much lower than county and state averages (12-13% each). Approximately 1% of youth under 18 years of age, 10% of adults 18 to 64, and 25% of residents over age 65 live with a disability, signaling a potential need to design inclusive parks, recreational facilities and programs.

Planning, designing and operating a park system that facilitates participation by residents of all abilities will help ensure compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to ADA, there are other accommodations that people with disabilities may need to access parks and participate in recreation programs. La Center should consider community needs for inclusive and accessible parks, recreational facilities, programs, marketing and communications.

## Household Characteristics

In 2019, the average household in La Center was 3.06 people, higher than the state average (2.55). The average family is larger, at 3.31 people. Of the 1,036 households in the City, 43% were families with children under 18, and 13% were individuals living alone.

Most households own their home (79%), which is significantly higher than the average throughout Clark County (66.5%). This high level of owner-occupied units reflects, in part, the predominantly single-family housing stock available in La Center.

## Employment & Education

The 2021 work force population (16 years and over) of La Center is 2,753 (79%). Of this population, 60% is employed, 3.8% is unemployed, and 36.1% is not in the labor force. In 2021, the City's unemployment rate was 6.0%, higher than the county (5.3%) and statewide (5.4%) rates. However, the 2019 COVID-19 emergency and related business impacts caused a recession with deep impacts to business earnings and viability, consumer confidence and unemployment rates – in addition to significant health and social impacts to residents. The near and long-term economic impacts of this crisis have yet to be fully determined.

Residents work in a wide variety of industries. In 2021, about 24% of La Center's employed residents worked in the education and health care industry. Several other industries – professional and management services, manufacturing, retail trade sectors – each employ between 10% and 14% of workers and contribute significantly to the local economy.

The vast majority (95%) of La Center residents over 25 years of age have a high school degree or higher, higher than the statewide average (92%). About 21% of City residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, which is somewhat lower than statewide rates (37%).

Higher levels of employment and educational attainment positively correlate with both the income and health status of a community – both of which have further impacts on the use and need for park and recreation facilities, as described in the next two sections.

## Income & Poverty

A community's level of household income can impact the types of recreational services prioritized by community members, as well as their ability to pay for recreational services. In 2021, the median household income in La Center was \$91,375. This income level was about \$8,650 (10%) higher than the median income for Clark County households.

Higher income households generally have an increased ability to pay for recreation and leisure services and often face fewer barriers to participation. Approximately 46% of La Center households have

household incomes in the higher income brackets (\$100,000 and greater), which is higher than the county average (40%).

Lower-income residents may face barriers to physical activity, such as poor access to parks and recreational facilities, a lack of transportation options, a lack of time and poor health. Lower-income households may also be less able financially able to afford recreational service fees or to pay for services, like childcare, that can make physical activity possible. In La Center, 6% of households earn less than \$25,000 annually, and 6% of local families live below the poverty level (\$26,500 for a family of four), which is on par with county rates. Poverty affects 17% of youth under 18 and 4.6% of adults.

## Health Status

The overall health of a community's residents can impact their ability to participate in recreation and other physical activity and may also reflect, in part, the locality's level of access to appropriate and convenient green spaces, recreation opportunities and active transportation facilities.

Information on the health of La Center's residents is not readily available. According to the 2022 County Health Rankings, Clark County ranks in the higher-middle range compared to all Washington counties for health outcomes, including length and quality of life, and the top quartile for health factors like health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors and the physical environment.

Approximately 18% of Clark County adults aged 20 and older report getting no leisure-time physical activity – a rate lower than the statewide average of 19% and the nationwide average of 26%. In Clark County, 89% of residents have access to adequate physical activity opportunities, which is higher than the average for all Washington residents (80%). This suggests that the County has a reasonable number of places where residents can participate in physical activity, including parks, trails and public or private community centers, gyms or other recreational facilities. Approximately 33% of Clark County adults are overweight or obese, higher than the average among all Washington adults (28%).



## 3

# Community Engagement

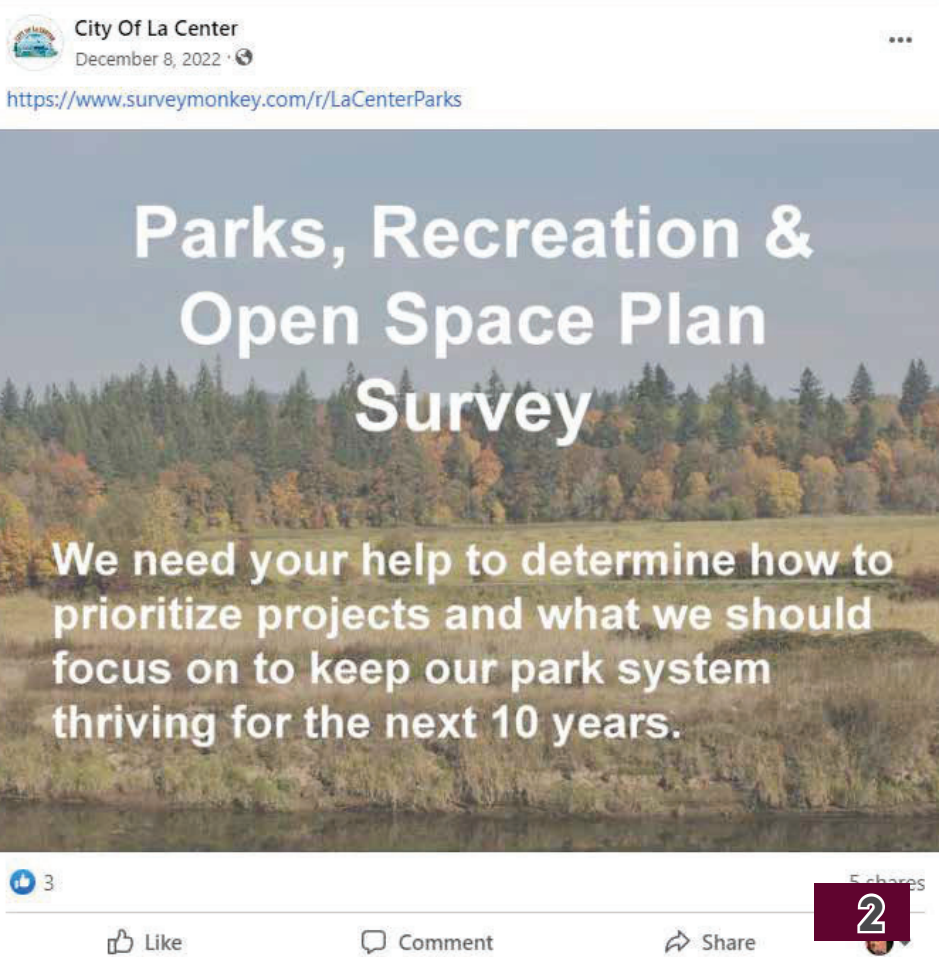
**~300**  
**COMMUNITY MEMBERS**  
**PARTICIPATED IN THE PROS PLAN**

Community engagement played an important role in establishing a clear planning framework that reflects current community priorities. A variety of public outreach methods were used, including:

- Online community survey
- Online open house
- Community tabling events
- Website content & social media postings
- Planning Commission sessions

Throughout this planning process, the public provided information and expressed opinions about their needs and priorities for parks, trails and recreation facilities in the community. This feedback





## 1. TREE LIGHTING TABLING

Attendees provided ideas for improvements, upgrades and priorities.

## 2. SURVEY PROMOTIONS

Webpage and social media posts promoted the community survey.

## 3. ONLINE OPEN HOUSE

The 2-week long open house allowed for convenient community participation.

was crucial in updating policy statements and prioritizing the capital facilities project list contained within this Plan.

### Community Survey

A community-wide, online survey was conducted to assess the recreational needs and priorities of La Center residents. The 15-question survey was posted to the City's website and Facebook page on December 1, 2022. Also, the survey was promoted at the La Center Tree Lighting Festival on December 4, 2022. The survey was closed on February 10, 2022, and data were compiled and reviewed. In all, 195 surveys were completed.

The survey measured current levels of satisfaction and which facilities were primarily being used by residents. Residents were asked about future improvements and the types of recreational amenities they would like to see considered for the park system. Survey respondents were asked about:

- Performance and quality of programs and parks
- Usage of city parks and recreation facilities
- Overall satisfaction with the value of services being delivered by the city

- Opinions about the need for various park, recreation, and trail improvements
- Priorities for future park and recreation services and facilities

Significant survey findings are noted below, and a more detailed discussion of results can be found in the needs assessment chapter covering parks, recreation and trails (Chapters 5).

### Major Survey Findings:

- **Livability:** Nearly all respondents (96%) think parks and recreation are important or essential to quality of life in La Center.
- **Usage:** La Center's residents like to visit local parks – just over half visit parks or recreation facilities at least once a week and nearly 85% do so at least one a month. Respondents most frequently visit for riverfront, walking or running, walking a dog, or 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% 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.

- **Other Feedback:** Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of La Center do to improve park, trail and open space system. Themes from the 147 responses included the desire for an expanded and well-connected system of trails, enhanced maintenance and security in parks, protection of open space and habitat areas, improvements to river access, and interest in a variety of park amenities, ranging from restrooms and lighting to playgrounds and dog parks.

The complete survey summary is provided in Appendix A.

## Open House Meeting

On March 24, 2023, the City published an online open house that stayed open for two weeks to allow community members to participate at their convenience. The online open house was prepared to provide residents an opportunity to respond to a series of questions about park and recreation services and solicit input about which park and recreation programs, services and facilities are important to them. The online open house was promoted via the city's website, social media and flyers posted throughout the city and in city parks. The survey was closed on April 7th, and preliminary data were compiled and reviewed. In all, 81 responses were collected.

### Major Findings

- In a forced ranking question, respondents indicated the top priority as expanding trails to improve connections and fill gaps, with 56% of respondents noting this as their first priority. Park improvements were the focus of the second and third priorities, with adding amenities in existing parks (2nd priority) and renovating existing parks (3rd priority).
- A second prioritization question sought to explore community priorities for a specific selection of potential recreational amenities or improvements to the La Center park system. Hypothetical relative costs were indicated by the use of dollar symbols (\$) for each system investment. Of the choices provided, a majority of respondents noted walking and biking trail as the top priority (60%). Providing picnic areas and shelters, adding all-inclusive playgrounds and providing for wildlife viewing opportunities also ranked as top tier priority improvements of interest.

- 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. Majorities of respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77%) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63%). 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%) and an alignment along the E Fork Lewis River North Shore (39%).

A summary of the public meeting is provided in Appendix B.

## Planning Commission Meetings

The Planning Commission provided feedback on the development of the PROS Plan during three regularly scheduled public sessions. The first session occurred in February 2023 to review the project timeline and explore future opportunities and challenges. At subsequent sessions, the Commission reviewed and commented on community survey results, project priorities, and strategies to implement improvement projects.

## Other Outreach

In addition to the direct outreach opportunities described above, the La Center community was informed about the planning process through a variety of media platforms. The following methods were used to share information about the project and provide opportunities to participate and offer their comments:

- City website and PROS Plan project webpage
- Social media: Facebook
- Media releases



# 4 Classifications & Inventory

**Park classifications help identify the types of uses and facilities offered in each park in La Center's system. Parkland classifications are useful for planning the outdoor recreational needs for the community. The classifications can inform design development during site planning and help anticipate the predicted maintenance and operational needs for a developed park.**

Each park classification defines the site's function and expected amenities and recreational uses. The characteristics of each classification serve as general guidelines addressing the size and uses within each park type. La Center's park system contains seven classifications for its parklands, as follows:

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Family Parks
- Special Use Areas
- Open Space
- Trails

## Community Parks

Community parks, typically 10 to 15 acres in size, contain more active-use recreational amenities, such as sport fields, amphitheaters/band structures and/or community/aquatic centers that are planned for structured or programmed activities. Community parks can also provide passive and non-organized recreation opportunities with park elements that may include parking, picnic shelters, playgrounds, sport courts, skate spots, exercise stations, multi-use trails, restrooms and off-leash areas. A community park's service area extends to a three-mile radius, assuming most park users would drive to the park. The parking and restrooms accommodate longer visits and more opportunities to enjoy a range of amenities.

## Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks, typically ranging from two to five acres in size, are intended to serve residents within a one-half mile walking or biking distance. These parks provide non-programmed recreational amenities that may include playground, picnic shelter, open lawn areas, paved pathways, sports courts, benches, BBQ grills and picnic tables. Typically, neighborhood parks do not provide parking or restrooms. Access to neighborhood parks is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located such that people living within the service area can reach the park safely and conveniently.

## Family Parks (Non-City/Private)

Family parks are mostly similar to the neighborhood parks, except that they are developed and maintained by the local Home Owners Association (HOA). These parks focus on adjacent residences, are typically targeted toward young children and teens, and are within a one-quarter mile walking or biking distance. These parks are developer-financed, without the use of Park Impact Fees (PIF). The typical size for a family park ranges from one to five acres. Amenities may include benches, picnic tables, play equipment, open lawn and plantings. The La Center Municipal Code requires future residential developments to provide park facilities on-site.

## Special Use Areas

Special use areas are stand-alone recreational parklands that are intended to provide a specific specialized use, such as a skate park, boat launch, sports complex or community center. Some specialized facilities may also be provided within a park of another classification. No standards exist or are proposed concerning special facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.

## Open Space

Open space typically is comprised of undeveloped, natural areas that may contain environmentally sensitive areas that should not be developed with active recreational uses and may include wildlife habitat, wetlands, steep slopes, stream corridors and trail greenways. Open space may provide for some passive recreation, such as trail uses and wildlife viewing.

## Trails

Trails can be stand-alone corridors or comprised of loops and connections within any park type. Trails are non-motorized recreation and transportation networks generally separated from roadways. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple or shared uses, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, or a single use. Recreation trail alignments aim to emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint. La Center promotes the use of trails to help connect and create a more walkable community. Trails may be installed along greenways, within parks or connect to sidewalks.

Water trails can connect watercraft users to communities along the East Fork, into the Columbia River, and connecting to Lake River.

Chapter 5 provides more detail on the recreational trails system in La Center.



## INVENTORY

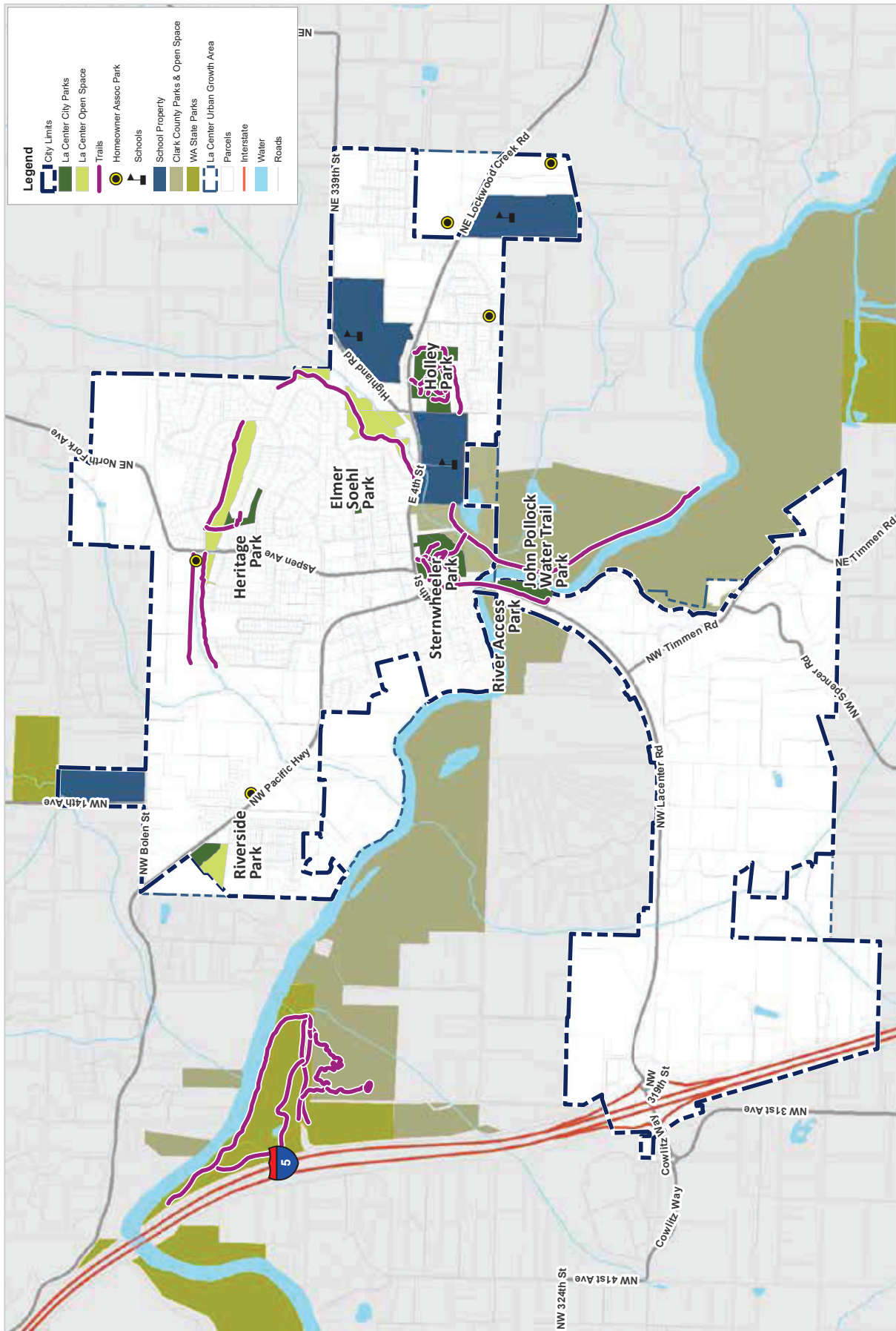
La Center's Park system comprises 59 acres of parks, open space and special use areas, in addition to two short trail corridors. With two community park, three neighborhood parks and two riverfront access sites, the park system strives to provide a variety of outdoor recreation amenities and facilities.

Each park and special use area has its own unique features and recreational offerings. The following descriptions provide a brief summary of site characteristics and recreational amenities.

Figure 5. City Park & Trail Inventory (within UGA)

PARKS & OPEN SPACE	Acres	Classification
Elmer Soehl Park	0.2	Neighborhood Park
Heritage Park	2.1	Neighborhood Park
Holley Park	11.5	Community Park
John Pollock Water Trail Park	3.8	Special Use Areas
River Access Park	2.0	Special Use Areas
Riverside Park	1.9	Neighborhood Park
Sternwheeler Park	7.9	Community Park
City Open Space	29.8	Open Space
TRAILS	Miles	
Breeze Creek Trail	0.59	Trail
Heritage Trail	0.81	Trail
Hillside Farm HOA Trail	0.32	Trail
Holley Park	0.70	Trail
La Center Bottoms (County)	0.21	Trail
Sternwheeler Park	0.48	Trail
Water Trail Park to Sternwheeler	0.33	Trail





Map 1: Existing Parks, Trails & Open Space



## ELMER SOEHL PARK

620 East Elm Avenue

0.2 acres

### Description

Elmer Soehl Park (sometimes referred to as “Elm Park”) is a small 0.21-acre neighborhood park located at the corner of Elm Avenue and 7th Street. The park provides a playground, benches, picnic tables and lawn area with adjacent on-street parking.



Neighborhood Park

### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- Provide accessible path to picnic table or relocate to existing paved accessible path and provide pad.
- Upgrade 2 benches and 1 picnic table.
- Replace playground edging with concrete curb and install ramp into playground.
- Add shade trees
- Add Park ID and rules sign.
- Consider adding swings and expanding safety surface.
- Add paved companion space next to bench.
- Either replace existing wood chips with new Engineered Wood Fiber Safety Surfacing or substitute with universally accessible surfacing such as rubberized or artificial turf safety surface. Add landscape plants to perimeter of property.

### Maintenance Considerations:

- Clean or replace site furnishings.
- Clean or replace play equipment.
- Bark mulch is flowing over irrigation boxes. Make finish grade flush next to boxes so debris doesn't fall into the boxes when they're opened.

### AMENITIES:

- Playground
- Picnic Table
- Benches
- Small Lawn Area
- Trash Receptacle
- Dog Waste Station
- 3' Chainlink Perimeter Fence

## HERITAGE PARK

### 525 E Heritage Loop

2.1 acres

#### Description

Heritage Park is a 2.05-acre neighborhood park located north of the downtown in the Southview Heights neighborhood. The park facilities include a playground, gazebo, picnic tables, paved pathways, benches, restrooms and a natural area.



### Neighborhood Park



#### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- Provide more vegetative buffer between gazebo area and adjacent neighbors.
- Replace the edging around the play area with concrete curbs and install ADA ramps into play area. Either replace existing wood chips with new Engineered Wood Fiber Safety Surfacing or substitute with universally accessible surfacing such as rubberized or artificial turf safety surface.
- Remove rubber mats in playground area, the edges create barriers between rubber mat and wood chips and are not ADA compliant.
- Picnic table pads are eroded along edges. Bring adjacent finish grade to match edge of pads.
- Provide accessible pathway connection to at least 20% of picnic tables and increase size of pad to provide 4' of clearance around table. Replace 20% of tables with ADA tables.
- Replace site furnishings with matching products.
- Merry go round is old and may not meet safety requirements. Verify that it meets safety requirements or replace with new equipment.
- Provide playground rules sign
- Remove top course of concrete block retaining wall and integrated bench and planters, and renovate plaza and associated furnishings to provide updated aesthetic and ADA compliance.
- Add park rules sign
- Suggest adding shade trees (native, canopy) near some picnic tables, along Heritage Trail, around playground, plaza and park perimeter.

#### Maintenance Considerations:

- Repair damaged pavement in plaza and sidewalks.
- Replace plants that have died around the playground.
- Repaint single picnic table shelter
- Reseed bare lawn areas.
- Repair Restroom Building.
- Remove exposed tree stump and roots to avoid tripping hazards.

#### AMENITIES:

- Basketball ½ 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 Receptacles
- Single Table Shelter
- Dog Waste Station
- Concrete Paved Paths (Loop)

# HOLLEY PARK

## 1000 East 4th Street

11.5 acres

### Description

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 near the downtown core of La Center.



## Community Park



### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- Restripe basketball courts. Consider adding a chainlink fence along the north side of the court to avoid errant balls in the parking lot.
- Upgrade storage area for sports field dressing.
- Upgrade existing exercise station and add additional stations throughout park.
- Add more shade trees.
- Play equipment is outdated, consider replacement.
- Lawn in ballfields was wet and squishy on a dry day, these fields could benefit from drainage improvements. Consider upgrading one or more of the natural turf fields to artificial turf with lighting if the demand warrants it.
- Consider adding backstop padding to baseball and softball fields.
- Skate park needs safety upgrades along perimeter to address erosion problems and unsafe drop offs and potential skate conflicts with adjacent storm grates. There are risk management concerns that need to be addressed as a high priority.
- Provide ADA access to dugouts and bleachers.
- Relocate porta potty away from the bleachers in a permanent spot that is central to the ball fields and is ADA accessible..
- Install ADA ramp into playground.
- Assess demand for existing tennis/pickle ball court and basketball courts to determine if additional tennis/pickle ball courts are warranted.
- Add park rules sign
- Create ADA accessible routes to all recreation amenities, including exercise station.
- Bleachers require safety railing to meet international Building Code.

### Maintenance Considerations:

- Lawn damage resulting from burrowing animals such as moles or gophers. Remove moles or gophers and repair lawn.
- Infield is overgrown with weeds, remove weeds and rehab infield.
- Pitcher warmup bullpens need repair.
- Buildings need fresh paint, soffit repair, etc.
- Reseed and repair bare spots in lawn and sports fields.
- Reorganize tables in picnic shelter area to provide ADA accessible maneuvering space.
- Scoring tower eave/soffit needs repair.

### AMENITIES:

- Park Identification Sign
- Splash Pad (seasonal)
- Skate Park (seasonal)
- (2) Baseball Fields
- (1) Softball Field
- (1) T-Ball Field
- Bleachers
- Basketball Court
- Tennis/Pickle Ball 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
- Interpretive 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

32399 NW Pollock Rd

3.8 acres

### Description

A developed, 3.8-acre special use area, the John Pollock Water Trail Park provides amenities along the East Fork of the Lewis River to support river access for watercraft recreation. Parking, a shore launch, some natural trails and picnic tables support water-based activities.



### Special Use Park



### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- Pave gravel parking lot with asphalt and reconfigure ADA Parking Stall and loading zone.
- Add retaining wall to repair failing slope.
- Provide accessible path and pad to make 2 of the 4 picnic tables accessible.
- Provide accessible path and access to the water.
- Consider adding a picnic shelter.
- Widen boat loading area.
- Add floating dock with accessible kayak launch.

### Maintenance Considerations:

- Remove debris and gravel from ADA parking stall and sidewalk to picnic table to maintain access.
- Remove weeds in lawn and shrub beds.
- Modify adjacent landscape and drainage to keep water and debris from washing over the concrete pad and path to picnic table.
- Remove invasive weeds throughout the site.
- Reseed bare lawn areas.
- Lawn damage resulting from burrowing animals such as moles or gophers. Remove moles or gophers and repair lawn.
- Cleanup and remove lawn and weeds from pathways.

### AMENITIES:

- Park Identification Sign
- Parking
- Trails
- Kayak Launch
- Trash Receptacle
- Portable Potty
- Dog Waste Station
- Picnic Tables
- Interpretive Signage
- "No Lifeguard" sign
- Off street parking

## RIVER ACCESS PARK

2.0 acres

### Description

This 2-acre special use area provides shoreline access to the East Fork of the Lewis River. With unpaved parking, picnic tables, open lawn and natural areas and trails, the site provides a point of access to the riverfront.



## Special Use Park



### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- There is no accessible parking, add ADA parking stalls
- Add accessible routes and pads to 20% of picnic tables
- Replace existing plastic trash receptacles with park standard site furnishings.
- Improve beach access.
- This site is currently used as an informal dog park. Consider improving or creating a dog park at a different location so this site can be focused on water access.
- Add one car at a time signage to access drive.
- Add Identification Sign to park entry.
- Install more landscape plantings around parking lot.
- There are various existing trails through the blackberry bushes. Consider formalizing these trails and removing invasive species.

### Maintenance Considerations:

- Lawn damage resulting from burrowing animals such as moles or gophers. Remove moles or gophers and repair lawn.
- Reseed bare lawn areas.
- Remove invasive weeds
- Cleanup graffiti on overpass.

### AMENITIES:

- Off Street Parking (Gravel)
- 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

34512 NW Pacific Hwy

1.9 acres

### Description

A newly developed 5.2-acre neighborhood park, Riverside Park provides a playground, basketball  $\frac{1}{2}$  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.



## Neighborhood Park



### Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- This is a new park and looks good, including ADA compliance throughout park.
- Consider a permanent restroom in the future.
- Add interpretive signage for adjacent wetland and buffer.
- Consider a small shade structure.

### Maintenance Considerations:

- Side slopes are covered in weeds. Kill weeds and reseed.
- Open lawn area doesn't appear to be draining well and isn't fully established. Solve drainage issue and reseed.

### AMENITIES:

- Park Identification Sign
- Play Equipment
- $\frac{1}{2}$  Basketball Court
- 3 Bike Racks
- Benches
- Picnic Tables (Square and Rectangle)
- Bollard and Overhead Lighting
- Perimeter Paved Path
- Open Lawn
- Porta Pott 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 Street Parking



# STERNWHEELER PARK

100 East 4th Street

7.9 acres

## Description

Sternwheeler Park is a 7.44-acre community park that hosts community concerts and provides play equipment, public art, picnic areas, paved pathways, natural areas and restrooms. The park is located between 4th Street and the East Fork of the Lewis River, and public parking is available along 4th Street.



## Community Park



## Capital Improvement & Planning Opportunities:

- Restore creek area (remove invasive weeds, replace with native plants).
- Streambank restoration where needed.
- Provide ADA compliant benches and companion spaces along creek paths.
- Assess existing slopes of accessible routes to creek and provide renovation design and repairs as needed.
- Provide more picnic tables and benches throughout.
- Consider developing southwest open lawn area as a small dog park if demand warrants.
- There are informal trail connections in southwest section of the park. Consider improving these into formal trails/pathways.
- Replace missing bollard at bridge (or remove bollard base/tripping hazard).

## Maintenance Considerations:

- Repair damaged picnic tables
- Repair upheaved pavers
- Reseed bare lawn spots
- Assess and rehab uneven paver areas and fill voids between pavers. May require complete removal and replacement of pavers in larger areas.
- Repair asphalt
- Remove invasive weeds
- Repair drainage problems
- Remove weeds in lawn

## AMENITIES:

- Amphitheater
- Artwork
- Drinking Fountain
- Gazebo (with power)
- Kayak Rack
- Picnic Tables
- Bike Racks
- Shelter with Picnic Tables
- Walking Trails
- Restrooms
- Trash Receptacles
- Dog Waste Station
- Benches
- Jack Fillman Memorial
- Open Lawn
- Restoration Area
- Interpretive Signage
- Off street parking

## OTHER RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES NEAR LA CENTER

La Center's location in Clark County provides residents with access to a broad range of nearby recreation resources, such as state and county parks, fairgrounds and a public golf course. The ownership and management of recreational resources in the greater La Center area involves several public agencies. Facilities include parks, trails, boat launches and other attractions. While some of these facilities are not located within city limits, their close proximity for La Center residents makes them important components of the broader recreation ecosystem.

### School District Lands

The La Center School District provides education for over 1,700 students through its elementary, middle and high schools. School facilities are used from early morning until late at night for both student instruction and community events and activities. Learning opportunities include Advanced Placement, Running Start, La Center Home School Academy, in addition to music, drama and athletic programs. Extra-curricular activities provided through the district include the chess team, environmental action team, equestrian team, Future Business Leaders of America, choirs, National Honor Society and science club. Outdoor school sport facilities include the high school football, soccer, softball and baseball fields and the elementary school track and playground.

### Clark County Sites

Clark County provides and maintains a system of regional parks, special facilities, regional trails, greenways and natural areas, in addition to neighborhood and community parks and sports fields in or proximate to the Vancouver urban unincorporated area. The county provides over 3,300 acres of public parks and recreation facilities distributed among 88 sites, along with an additional number of greenway parcels that comprises over 3,135 acres of conserved public open space. Clark County provides regional park and open space facilities, including the East Fork Lewis River Greenway, Fairgrounds Park, Whipple Creek Park, Lewisville Park, Frenchman's Bar Park, Vancouver Lake Park and Mud Lake (undeveloped). Clark County also owns and operates the 80-acre primitive

campground, Bratton Canyon (formerly the Woodland DNR campground), located three miles east of Woodland on NW 389th Street. In addition, Clark County owns and maintains the Tri Mountain Golf Course, a public course.

### Tri-Mountain Golf Course

Tri-Mountain Golf Course is a public golf course located in Ridgefield at the base of a valley surrounded by views of Mount St. Helens, Mount Adams and Mount Hood. Tri-Mountain Golf Course features an 18-hole golf course, practice facility, clubhouse and professional golf shop.

### Clark County Event Center

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

### East Fork Lewis River Greenery

The East Fork of the Lewis River Greenery is located in the southwest corner of Gifford Pinchot National Forest. A series of public conserved lands, managed by Clark County are located along the Greenway include preserved wildlife habitat, public parks, riverfront boat and fishing access. Paradise Bluff and La Center Bottoms Wetlands are the most proximate conserved natural areas. Further upriver, Lower Daybreak Park, Lewisville Park, Lucia Falls Park, Moulton Falls and the 2.5-mile trail from Moulton Falls Park to the Hantwick Road trailhead.

### La Center Bottoms

La Center Bottoms Park abuts Sternwheeler Park and is operated by Clark County. The 314-acre site includes 3,500 feet of shoreline on the East Fork of the Lewis River. The property is one of three state-designated "Watchable Wildlife" sites in Clark County. Facilities include a 0.66-mile walking trail, viewing blinds and interpretive signage. The park will remain in its mostly natural, conserved state.

## State & Federal Sites

### Paradise Point State Park

Paradise Point State Park is an 88-acre state park with 6,180 feet of shoreline along the East Fork of the Lewis River, immediately east of Interstate 5. Owned and operated by Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, this park provides an access point along the 32-mile Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail. Named for its original peacefulness, the park has lost some of its reputation for quiet since the Interstate 5 freeway went in. The area still possesses great natural beauty and the noise of Interstate 5 can be avoided by using the woodland campsites. Facilities include camping, hiking trails, boating, boat launch, fishing, swimming, disc golf and interpretive activities.

### Battle Ground Lake State Park

Battle Ground Lake State Park, at 280 acres, features a crater lake of volcanic origin that supports swimming, boating and fishing. Two primitive equestrian camping sites, 35 standard campsites, 15 primitive walk-to camp sites, six partial hook-up sites, four cabins and one RV dump station support overnight stays. Located three miles northeast of Battle Ground, the park also hosts a day-use picnic area with two kitchen shelters, play fields (baseball, softball, volleyball and badminton), horseshoe pits and ten miles of trails. The park is managed by the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

### The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge

The Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Service, is located immediately west of Ridgefield and serves as a primary reserve for migrating waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway. The Refuge protects over 5,200 acres of floodplain and wetland habitat and provides important wintering habitat for migrating waterfowl, including the dusky Canada goose and lesser Sandhill cranes. Recreational and educational opportunities include wildlife viewing and walking opportunities along two hiking trails (the 2.1-mile Oak to Wetlands Trail and a 1.5-mile Kiwa Trail loop) and a 4-mile auto tour route. The Refuge has expanded public trail access through a new trail in the Carty unit. This trail connects pedestrian access

from Ridgefield. Another potential trail could allow walking in the River S Unit near the visitor parking area.

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

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

### Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument is within the Gifford Pinchot National Forest and managed by the USDA Forest Service. The public lands consist of 110,000 acres around Mount St. Helens for research, recreation and education. Hundreds of miles of trails, several visitors centers, picnic areas, backcountry overnight camping, interpretive programs, crater and wildlife viewing offer a variety of outdoor environments for exploration.

## Other Sites

### Pekin Ferry RV Park

Pekin Ferry is a private park located in Ridgefield, west of the forks on the Lewis River. The site features amenities such as a 9 hole disc golf course, swimming access, a boat launch and both tent and RV camping. The boat launch at Pekin Ferry is on the Lewis River and provides access to the Columbia River and the North Fork of the Lewis River.



# 5

# Needs Assessment

The park system planning process assesses recreational needs and priorities for parks and open space in La Center. The park assessment includes a discussion of specific local needs with consideration given to existing City park infrastructure. Public input and information on park inventory conditions were also heavily relied upon in the planning process.

By considering the location, size, and the number of park facilities by type and use, along with community interests and priorities, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan evaluates the existing and future demand for park and recreation amenities and provides recommendations for future initiatives. The six-year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), which







identifies and prioritizes crucial upgrades, improvements, and expansions, is based on the needs assessment and the recreational interests expressed by the community.

## PARK & OPEN SPACE TRENDS

A variety of resources have been summarized to offer an overview of current trends around park and recreation service delivery. This information provides perspectives that are helpful when balancing with local insights and feedback from the community to identify the demands and establish public needs during the planning process.

The following national and state data highlights some of the current trends in recreation and may frame future considerations in La Center's park system. Examining current recreation trends can help inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities that may create a more vibrant parks system as it moves into the future. Additional trend data and summaries are provided in Appendix C.





## National Trends

### 2022 Outdoor Participation Report

According to the 2022 Outdoor Participation Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation, just over half (54%) of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation at least once in 2021. The outdoor participant base has increased 6.9% since the COVID-19 pandemic began in early 2020.

The number of outdoor outings was up 8.4% in 2021 to 12.4 billion outings – matching the 2012 high-water mark. The average number of outdoor outings per participant increased 6.1% in 2021 to 75.6 outings per participant. Running, jogging and trail running in the most popular outdoor activity by levels of participation followed by hiking, fishing, biking, and camping.

New outdoor participants are more diverse than the overall outdoor participant base and are driving increasing diversity not only by ethnicity but also across age groups. However, despite slight increases in diversity across outdoor recreation, the current participant base is less diverse than the overall population and significantly less diverse across younger age groups. Currently 72% of outdoor recreation participants are white, with declining participation. If the outdoor participant base does not become more diverse over the next thirty years, the percentage of outdoor recreation participants in the population could slip from 54% today to under 40% by 2060.

### 2022 Americans Engagement with Parks Survey.

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

Key findings include:

- Eighty-three percent of survey respondents — the equivalent of 275 million people in the United States — visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the 12-month period ending in May 2022.
- Eighty-four percent of U.S. adults seek high quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.
- 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.
- Nine out of ten people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.

According to the Americans Engagement with Parks report,

“Parks and recreation’s success results from its vast offerings of parks, trail networks and other recreation facilities that deliver critical programs for every segment of a community. Each person’s relationship with parks and recreation is unique. Some people flock to their local park to stay physically fit, meet with friends and family, or reconnect with nature. Others depend on their local park and recreation agency for indispensable services that improve their lives.

But there remains much work to do. One-hundred million people do not live within a walkable distance of at least one park or recreation facility. Further, many survey respondents indicate they have felt unwelcome at a park or recreation facility or say the infrastructure and programming are not inclusive. Parks and recreation is for everyone – regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Professionals, advocates and political leaders have the opportunity to narrow any accessibility or inclusivity gaps through greater community engagement and addressing inequitable funding and infrastructure investments that have deprived millions of people of access to parks and recreation.”

## 2022 State of the Industry Report

Recreation Management magazine's 2022 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry summarizes the opinions and information provided by a wide range of professionals (with an average 21.9 years of experience) working in the recreation, sports, and fitness industry.

### Partnerships

The 2022 report indicated that most (82.3%) recreation, sports, and fitness facility owners form partnerships with other organizations as a means of expanding their reach, offering additional programming opportunities or as a way to share resources and increase funding. Local schools are shown as the most common partner (59.6%) for all facility types. Youth-serving organizations (Ys, JCC, Boys & Girls Clubs) and park and recreation organizations were the most likely to report that they had partnered with outside organizations, at 98% and 94% respectively.

### Facilities and Improvements

A majority of park respondents (43%) reported plans to add features at their facilities and were also the most likely to be planning to construct new facilities in the next few years (39%). The top 10 planned features for all facility types include:

1. Splash play areas
2. Synthetic turf sports fields
3. Playgrounds
4. Fitness centers
5. Park shelters
6. Dog parks
7. Park restroom structures
8. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment
9. Exercise studio rooms
10. Disc golf courses & Concession areas

### General Challenges

Facility managers were asked about the challenges they anticipated impacting their facilities in the future. Generally, overall budgets are the top concern for most respondents including staffing (63%) and their ability to support equipment and facility maintenance needs (50%).

With COVID-19's impact on the wane, we asked respondents to tell us about their top goals for their facilities in the coming year. The most common responses centered on increasing participation and membership, as well as building and renovating facilities. Recruiting and training staff, as well as just "getting back to normal" also made up a large number of the responses.

## 2019 Special Report on Paddlesports & Safety

In 2019, the Outdoor Foundation produced a report focused on paddlesports data based on a participation survey (over 20,000 online interviews with a nationwide sample of individuals and households). In 2018, 22.9 million Americans (approximately 7.4% of the population) participated in paddle sports. This represents an increase of more than 4 million participants since the study began in 2010. Over the last five years, there continues to be an increase in paddlesports popularity among outdoor enthusiasts, with significant portions of the nationwide growth occurring in the Pacific region.

Recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity but may be driving some of the decline in canoeing. The popularity of stand-up paddling has soared, increasing by 1.5 million participants over the past five years, though it does not have nearly as high a participation rate as either recreational kayaking or canoeing.

Most paddlers are Caucasian, other racial and ethnic groups are largely under-represented. However, Caucasian participation has remained relatively flat while participation by people identifying as Hispanic or Black/African American has grown by 0.5% to 1% per year since 2013. This growth has led to more than 773,000 new Hispanic paddlers in just six years, signaling the importance and potential of engaging minority groups in paddlesports.

Among adult paddlers, most participate for excitement and adventure, for exercise, or to be close to nature. Kayakers, rafters, canoers and stand-up paddlers often enjoy, or would be willing to try, other paddlesports. Many also enjoy similar outdoor "crossover" activities such as hiking, camping, walking, and nature viewing.

## State Trends

The 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State provides a strategic direction to help assure the effective and adequate provision of outdoor recreation and conservation to meet the needs of Washington State residents.

The plan identifies the following five near and long-term priority areas and establishes specific actions within each priority to help meet the outdoor recreation and conservation needs within the state:

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



## Playground Trends

La Center residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities. Reported in Landscape Architect magazine, the top five playground industry trends for 2021 were compiled from data and feedback from parks professionals, landscape architects and educators.

1. Inclusive Playgrounds, increasingly popular over the last few years, have been evolving beyond meeting basic ADA guidelines. Designers are seeking to expand accessible playground equipment, consider multi-generational play, and leverage inclusive play to help overcome societal barriers.
2. Rope-based Playgrounds, climbers and playground nets provide a technique for working around natural environments and unusual topography. Their flexibility in placement offers more options for connecting with the landscape rather than working around difficult topography.
3. Outdoor Fitness has increased importance during the COVID-19 pandemic as many gyms and indoor fitness centers closed and forced more people to seek outdoor options. Outdoor fitness spaces are being increasingly integrated into park and trail designs to encourage health and physical fitness for all ages.
4. Outdoor Learning has been implemented during the pandemic to replace or supplement indoor classrooms. Outdoor classrooms can encourage activity in children to counteract the reduction in recess time due to hybrid class schedules and remote learning. Seating, tables, shelters, hand sanitizer stations and other outdoor products are helping create outdoor classrooms.
5. Human-powered Play engages users to provide physical energy to “power-up” the activity, such as turning a handle, pressing foot pedals, rotating wheels. These products often relate to sensory experiences like lights and music, story-telling or social games.

Spurred on by the social distancing of the pandemic, these five trends in playground design and development point to more human-to-human interactions that reinforce the value of social connections, even in a physically distanced environment.



## LOCAL INTERESTS & NEEDS

Local recreation demands and needs were explored through a variety of public engagement to gather feedback on strengths and limitations of existing recreational resources and parks available to La Center residents. Public outreach included a community survey and an online open house to explore project priorities and opportunities to enhance the City's park system.

### Community Survey

On April 30, 2021, an on-line community survey with 15 questions was posted to the City's website and Facebook page on December 1, 2022. The survey was promoted via multiple city Facebook posts and promoted at the La Center Tree Lighting Festival on December 4, 2022. The survey closed on February 10, 2022 with 195 completed responses. As an on-line-only survey, open to the public, respondents were not necessarily representative of all city residents.

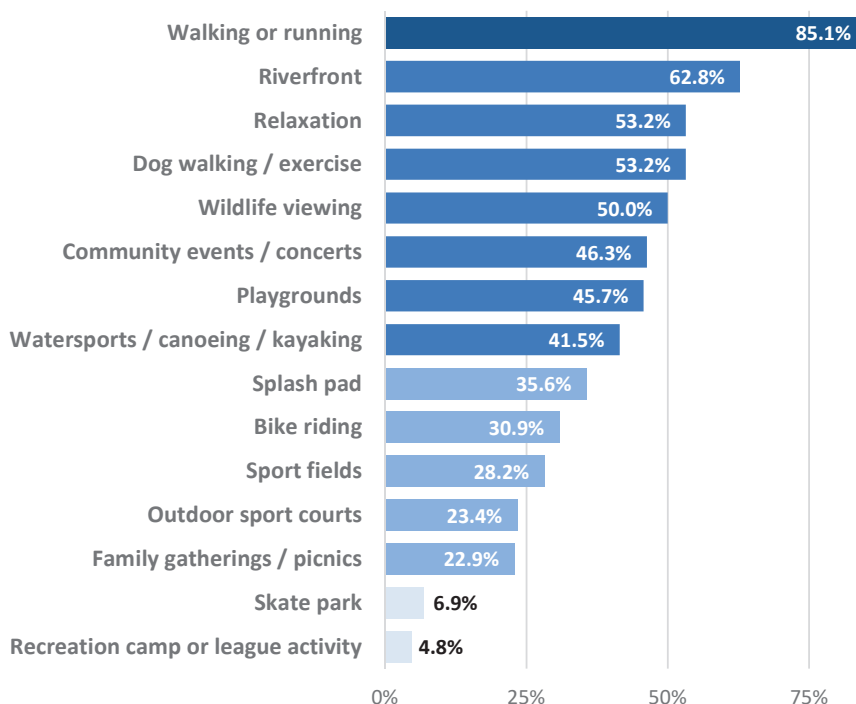
Virtually all respondents (96%) feel that local parks, recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in La Center. Residents were asked how often they visit a City park or open space in a typical year. More than half of respondents (54%) visit at least once a week, if not every day. Another 30% visit one to three times per month

# 88%

**VERY OR SOMEWHAT  
SATISFIED WITH LA CENTER'S  
PARKS, AND OPEN SPACES**

La Center residents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons. The most popular activity, by far, is to walk or run – 85% of respondents cite this as a reason they have visited a La Center park in the past year, see Figure 6. Other popular reasons include to visit the riverfront (63%), walk or exercise a dog (53%), to relax (53%), or to view wildlife (50%). More than three in ten respondents have visited to attend a community event or concert (46%), visit a playground (46%), participate in watersports on the East Fork Lewis River (41%), or use a splash pad (36%). Between 23% and 31% of respondents visit parks to ride a bike, use a sports field or court, or for a family gathering or picnic.

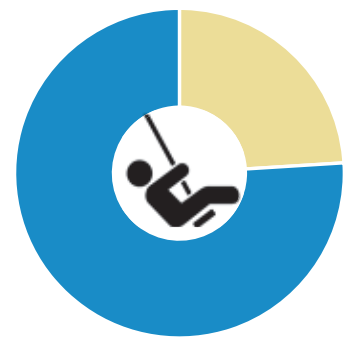
Figure 6. Main Reasons for Visiting Local Parks and Recreation Facilities



When asked why they do not visit La Center's parks or open spaces more often, nearly half of respondents responded that they do visit (46%). However, some respondents responded that they do not visit more often because of a lack of restrooms (17%) or because parks are too crowded or busy (11% each). Fewer than one in ten respondents stated that outdated equipment (9%), safety concerns (8%), lack of parking (8%), equipment availability (7%), and maintenance or cleanliness of parks (6%) prevented them from visiting more often.

1. Not enough restrooms (17%)
2. Too crowded (11%)
3. Too busy (11%)

Residents were generally split on whether they feel the City provides enough park, trails, and recreation facilities. A majority of survey respondents think that La Center does not have enough walking and biking trails (66%), while 51% would like the City to provide more picnic areas and shelters. Approximately 40% of respondents would like to see more sports fields and courts, parks with playgrounds and open lawn areas, and community events.

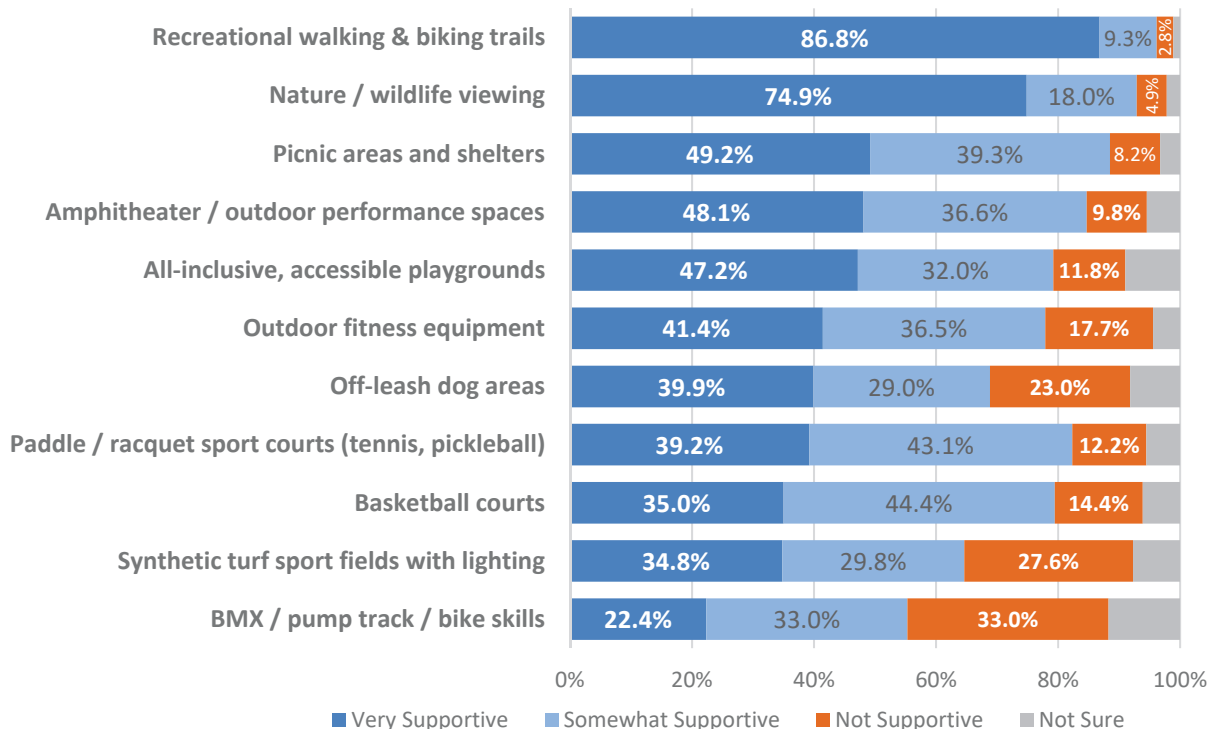


**76%**

**VISIT PARKS AND OPEN SPACE AT LEAST A FEW TIMES PER MONTH**

The survey asked about local support for a variety of potential additions to the park system, and virtually all respondents (96%) are either very or somewhat supportive of additional walking and biking trails (96%), places to view wildlife (93%). Large majorities are also supportive of the City adding more picnic areas and shelters (89%), and amphitheater (85%), tennis or pickleball courts (82%).

Figure 7. Support for Amenities to Add to Park System



Residents also were asked to rank a list of potential park and recreation investments, and the top priorities are to expand trails and add amenities in existing parks:

1. Expanding trails
2. Adding amenities in parks
3. Renovating existing parks

This local demand for trails, across multiple survey questions, is aligned with national trends that indicated walking, running, hiking, and cycling saw significant increases in participation since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of La Center do to improve parks, trails, recreation facilities, and/or open space. While respondents left 147 specific comments and ideas, a few themes emerged:

- Respondents would like to see expansion and improvement of the local trail system for walking and biking. Many comments also focused on ensuring trails were connected to each other and to major destinations like schools and parks. Some respondents requested improved information and signage and others are looking for unpaved trails suitable for mountain biking or trail running.
- Many respondents asked the City to continue to maintain the City's park system. In particular, numerous respondents expressed a desire for enhanced maintenance and safety of local parks and open spaces. Respondents mentioned concerns about general maintenance (including cleaning restrooms and weeding), homeless campsites, off leash dogs, security and the desire for increased police presence.
- Given the pace of recent development in La Center, a number of respondents commented that the City should take steps to protect access to open space and natural habitat for both people and wildlife.
- Some respondents expressed a desire for more and improved playgrounds, potentially featuring natural and/or accessible elements. Multiple commenters would like to see improved playground equipment at Holley Park and Heritage Park.

**“La Center bottoms is becoming known as a great place to paddle (my family loves to paddle there too!!). The bathrooms and parking are not keeping up with demand. I would like to see improved public bathroom facilities and parking for our over access areas and launches.”**

*-Survey respondent*

## Online Open House

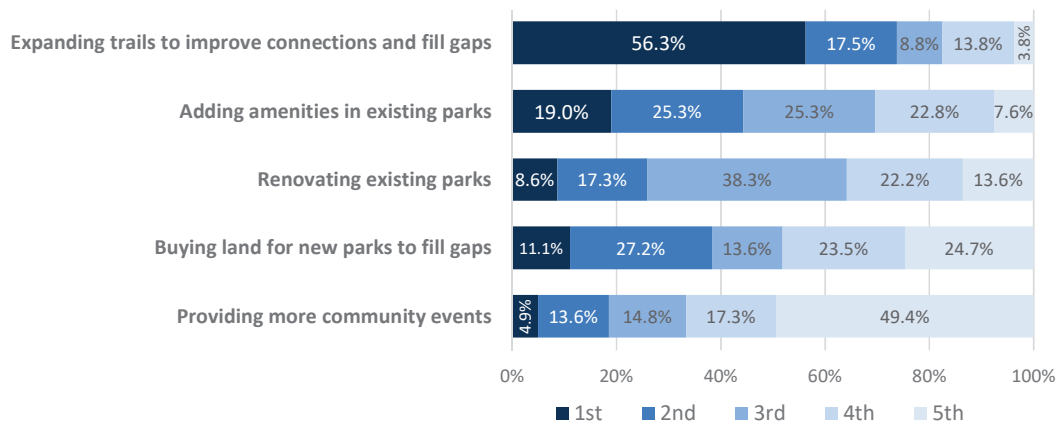
The City of La Center conducted outreach with the public between March 24 and April 7, 2023 to share information about the La Center Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and solicit input about which park and recreation programs, services and facilities are important to them. The online open house was promoted via the city's website, social media and flyers posted throughout the city and in city parks. The survey was closed on April 7th, and preliminary data were compiled and reviewed. In all, 81 responses were collected.

As a way to explore some of the community priorities noted in the community survey, the online open house asked respondents to consider their priority for a sampling of project types that were favorably noted in the community survey.

In a forced ranking question, respondents indicated the top priority as expanding trails to improve connections and fill gaps, with 56% of respondents noting this as their first priority. Park improvements were the focus of the second and third priorities, with adding amenities in existing parks (2nd priority) and renovating existing parks (3rd priority). The sentiment toward supporting park development aligns with community survey data where respondents indicated an unmet need for picnic areas, developed parks with playgrounds and walking trails.



Figure 8. Ranking of Top Five Park System Priorities for La Center Park System



A second prioritization question sought to explore community priorities for a specific selection of potential recreational amenities or improvements to the La Center park system. Hypothetical relative costs were indicated by the use of dollar symbols (\$) for each system investment. Of the choices provided, a majority of respondents noted walking and biking trail as the top priority (60%). Providing picnic areas and shelters, adding all-inclusive playgrounds and providing for wildlife viewing opportunities also ranked as top tier priority improvements of interest.

**“Upgrade Holley Park with new play structure”**

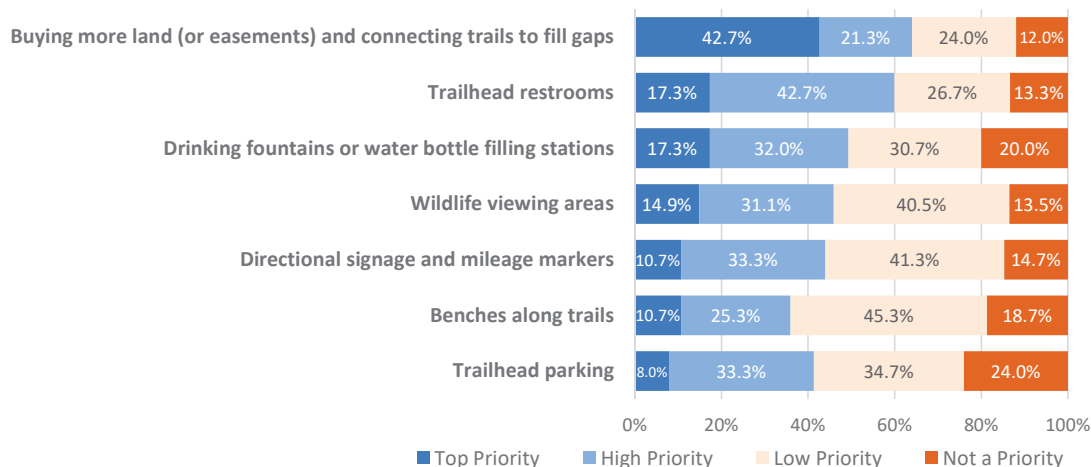
-Survey respondent

A third prioritization question focused on trail system improvements. Consistent with prior responses, a majority indicated that buying more land for trail connections as the top or a high priority. For other trail improvements, restrooms and drinking fountains were supported as high priorities to install along trails. Support for the remaining items listed was mixed and noted as priorities by fewer respondents.

**“Make the area under the bridge better. The take out and in for kayak is not good and dangerous. Needs some work. And more walking trails that are safe.”**

-Survey respondent

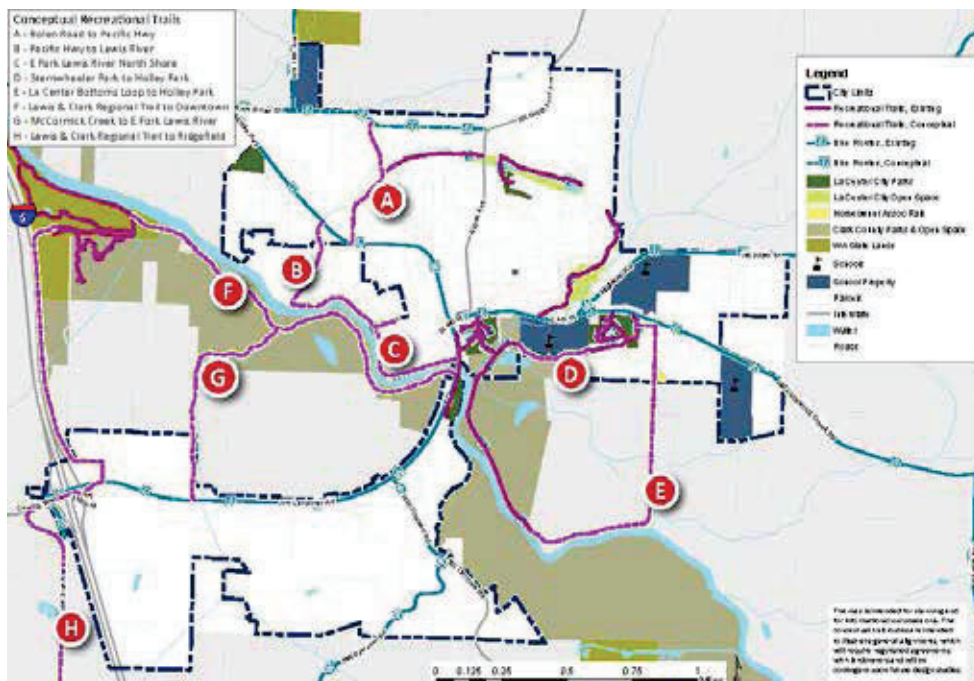
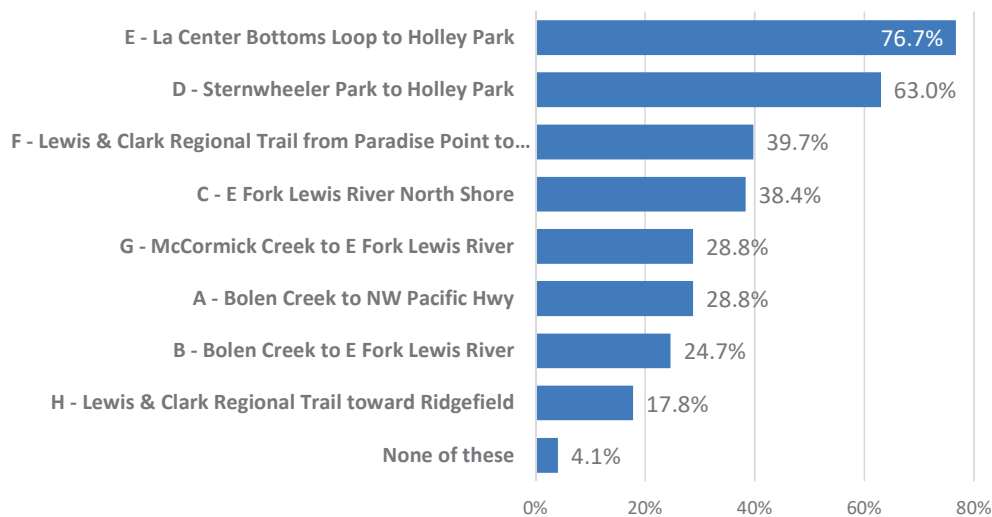
Figure 9. Priorities Toward Potential Trail System Improvements



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. Majorities of respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77%) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63%). 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%) and an alignment along the E Fork Lewis River North Shore (39%).

The feedback and inputs received from the survey and online open house help to identify the top priorities for the parks system capital program and will guide the use and implementation of the City's park resources for the future.

Figure 10. Priorities Toward Potential Trail System Corridors





# PARK SYSTEM CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT


In fall 2022, the consultant landscape architect team conducted site assessments of the outdoor recreation facilities owned and operated by the City to discern the level of care and need for improvements by visually observing the conditions in the park system.

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

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

- 

1 – Good Condition: In general, amenities in good condition offer full functionality and do not need repairs. Good facilities have playable sports surfaces and equipment, working fixtures, and fully intact safety features (railings, fences, etc.). Good facilities may have minor cosmetic defects. Good facilities encourage area residents to use the park.
- 

2 – Fair: In general, amenities in fair condition are largely functional but need minor or moderate repairs. Fair facilities have play surfaces, equipment, fixtures, and safety features that are operational and allow play, but have deficiencies or time periods where they are unusable. Fair facilities remain important amenities for the neighborhood but may slightly discourage use of the park by residents.
- 

3 – Poor: In general, amenities in poor condition are largely or completely unusable. They need major repairs to be functional. Poor facilities are park features that have deteriorated to the point where they are barely usable. Fields are too uneven for ball games, safety features are irreparably broken, buildings need structural retrofitting, etc. Poor facilities discourage residents from using the park.

Generally a feature with a rating of “3” should have higher priority for resolution through maintenance, capital repairs or as a new capital project. Park amenity conditions were also averaged across park elements to indicate which types of elements are in greater need for significant upgrades, renovations or overall improvements. Based on this assessment, the City’s park system is in need of playground upgrades, signage, tree management and improved ADA compliance.

The conditions matrix offers a quick look at the ratings across the system to help discern where the most immediate needs might be for repairs or improvements.



Figure 11. Park & Outdoor Amenity Condition Assessment Matrix

Site Name	Acreage	Classification	Recreation Amenities								Site Amenities					Park Structures					Vegetation			ADA			
			Playgrounds	Paved Courts: Basketball	Paved Courts: Tennis	Baseball / Softball Fields	Pathways / Trails	Waterfront/Beach	Splash Pad	Skate Park	Shore Launch	Site Furnishings	Lighting (Y/N)	Signage	Parking Areas	Public Art	Restrooms	Picnic Shelters	Concession Building	Amphitheater	Turf	Park Trees	Landscaped Beds		Natural Areas		
PARKS																											
Heritage Park	2.1	Neighborhood Park	2.0	2	1.5		2				2	Y	1.5			2	2			1.5	2	3	2	3	2		
Holley Park	11.5	Community Park	1.7	2	2	2	1		1	3		1	Y	2	1		1	2		2	1	1.5		2	2		
Sternwheeler Park	7.9	Community Park	1.4				2					1.5	N	1	1	1	2	1		1	2	1	1	2	1.5		
Elmer Soehl Park	0.2	Neighborhood Park	1.8	1.5			1					2	N							1		2		3			
Riverside Park	5.2	Neighborhood Park	1.1	1	1		1					1	Y	1	1					2	1	1		1	1		
SPECIAL USE AREAS																											
John Pollock Water Trail Park	3.8	Special Use Area	2.1				2	2			2	1	N		2					3	2	1.5	2	3	3		
River Access Park	2.0	Special Use Area	2.3					2			2	2	N		2.5					3	2		2	3			
Subtotal			32.5	Averages:	1.7	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.5	2.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	1.5	-	1.4	1.5	1.0	2.0	1.3	2.0	1.0	1.5	1.7	2.0	2.4
* Note: Does not constitute a comprehensive ADA assessment of every park element																											

Rating Scale: 1 = Good 2 = Fair 3 = Poor

\* Note: Does not constitute a comprehensive ADA assessment of every park element

## Park & Facility Condition Assessment

### RATING SCALE

#### Playgrounds:

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

#### Paved Courts:

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

#### Signage:

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

#### Public Art:

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

#### Park Structures (Restrooms, Picnic Shelters, Etc.):

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

#### Park Trees:

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

#### ADA Compliance:

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

#### Sport Fields:

1	In good condition: thick grass with few bare spots; few depressions; no noticeable drainage issues, proper slope and layout; fencing if present is functional; free of protrusions, and free of holes.
---	--

#### Pathways / Trails:

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

#### Turf:

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

#### Site Furnishings:

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

#### Parking Areas:

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

#### Natural Areas:

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

#### Amphitheater/Stage:

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

#### Landscaped Beds:

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



## Site Conditions Summary

In addition to the matrix, the following narrative summarizes the overall considerations resulting from the visual observations. The individual park facility conditions assessments and this summary were also reviewed by parks staff.

### Site Furnishings

Many park agencies have planned their typical site furnishings such as picnic tables, benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, bollards, trash receptacles and dog waste bag dispensers to a specific unified style. By adopting this style as the park system standard and ensuring that all features are ADA compliant, park design, maintenance, repairs and renovation can be simplified and applied universally across the system.

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

A number of barriers to access were identified in the conditions assessments that warrant immediate removal. The minimum ratio of ADA-compliant tables and benches is below the required ADA standards.

There was a lack of companion spaces adjacent to ADA-compliant benches. Minimum clearances surrounding picnic tables were often not met. Accessible routes to at least 50% of the picnic tables was not provided. Many of the playgrounds lack ADA ramps leading into the play pit areas and several playgrounds do not have the minimum number of ADA accessible features.

### Open Grass Lawn Areas

A number of parks and special use areas exhibited damage from burrowing rodents. Mounds of unearthed soil, holes in the grass turf and uneven surfaces were creating undesirable conditions in these mown lawn areas. While it can be difficult to completely control damage from burrowing rodent digging, particularly adjacent to natural areas, some controls should be considered to reduce grass lawn damage. In open mown grass areas where park users are expected to play informal games, the soil piles and rodent holes can be a tripping hazard.

## Playground Safety & Equipment Life-cycling

Most of the playground surfacing consists of wood chips, not meeting play equipment safety specifications. These materials should be replaced with new Engineered Wood Fiber Safety Surfacing or substituted with universally accessible surfacing such as rubberized or artificial turf safety surface.

Older play equipment may not meet current ADA compliance or universal access design standards. As play equipment ages the frequency of safety inspection and repeated repairs may warrant complete replacement. Most play equipment has an expected lifespan and should be replaced before aging, wear and tear and potential safety issues require removal.

The Playground Audit Action Plan identified the play structure at Holley playground as the highest priority for replacement timing. As these and other park features are planned for replacement or major renovation, their design should ensure that characteristics are both ADA compliant and universally accessible.

### Natural Areas Management

Sternwheeler Park was noted as needing streambank restoration and the removal of invasive species and replacement with native plantings along the riparian corridor. The park conditions assessments identified sites where invasive plant species were evident and needed management or control. In most of the undeveloped open space in parks, dense vegetation included invasive species. Plans should be developed for invasive species control as part of the cyclical grounds management tasks.

Parks with natural areas could benefit from stewardship management plans that could identify methods for controlling invasive growth, proposed tree planting areas, trail maintenance and designated mow/no-mow zones. Stewardship plans could help identify tasks for volunteer engagement and volunteer work force activities.

### Trails & Pathways

Some of the parks have vegetated open spaces within or adjacent to the property and may be good candidates for trail expansion opportunities. In some cases, there are already existing informal footpaths that may be good indicators for identifying



formalized trail opportunities and alignments. Open spaces that link neighborhoods and parks together could provide an alternative route to the parks from multiple neighborhoods.

Pavement surfacing warrants regular inspection to address tripping hazards and to ensure consistent accessibility. Paver areas in Sternwheeler Park were identified as needing to be repaired as well as areas needed repairs for asphalt pavement. Holley Park and Heritage Park both had asphalt pavement in need of repairs.

### **Signage & Wayfinding**

As with park site furnishings, signage for the park system should be planned as part of the branding of the City's park system. Unified park identification signs, rules signs, directional signs, and interpretive signs could all be designed to reflect the graphic styles (colors & fonts) used by the City. As the trail system grows and helps connect public spaces and neighborhoods, a wayfinding signage system could be coordinated to help trail users navigate along trails and to contribute to the City's branding of its public infrastructure.

La Center has multiple wetlands, rivers and/or creeks that are adjacent to or go through the existing developed parks. These facilities may offer opportunities to incorporate interpretive and educational experiences within the parks for a relatively low implementation cost. Educational amenities might include viewing blinds and overlooks accompanied by interpretive signage and seating.

### **Trees & Canopy Coverage**

Holley Park and Heritage Park were specifically targeted as sites that should have more shade trees. In general, parks should consist of a significant tree canopy, particularly in denser urban areas where natural areas may be scarce and the cool shade from canopy trees offer a needed relief. Canopy trees make a significant contribution to stormwater management, cooling runoff, absorbing excess rainwater and removing excess nitrates and phosphates. New tree plantings should consist of native Pacific Northwest canopy trees as much as possible to provide more resilience to park landscapes and natural areas in the face of changing climate conditions.

### **Park Amenity Opportunities**

The park conditions assessments revealed opportunities for additional amenities in the park system to add a more diverse character and recreational values. Destination uses such as rock climbing, fitness equipment, nature play, inclusive play and/or themed designs could be considered. Existing park uses suggested the need for an off-leash dog park. More trails & connections, picnic shelters, shade structures, viewing blinds and overlooks with interpretive signage were also noted as potential improvements during the site assessments.

## PARK DISTRIBUTION – GAP ANALYSIS

Understanding the known gaps in the park system and evaluating the City's existing levels of service for parks will provide a foundation for strategic planning as a basis for a balanced distribution of parks, trails and recreation amenities in the future.

To better understand where acquisition efforts should be considered, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the city. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially zoned lands were isolated, since neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas. Additionally, travelsheds were defined for neighborhood parks using a ¼-mile primary and ½-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 ¼-mile, ½-mile, 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.

Maps 2 through 4 illustrate the application of the distribution criteria from existing parks. Areas in white do not have a public park within reasonable walking distance of their home. The illustrated 'walkshed' for each existing La Center park highlights that certain areas within the city do not have the desired proximity to a local park.

Striving to provide a neighborhood park within a reasonable walking distance (e.g., ½-mile) will require acquiring new park properties in currently under-served locations and/or improving multi-modal transportation connections to allow local residents to safely and conveniently reach their local park. As La Center continues to develop and acquisition opportunities diminish, the City should consider taking advantage of acquisition opportunities in strategic locations and as funding allows to fill remaining gaps. In concert with the search for developable park land, the City should continue to coordinate with proposed residential

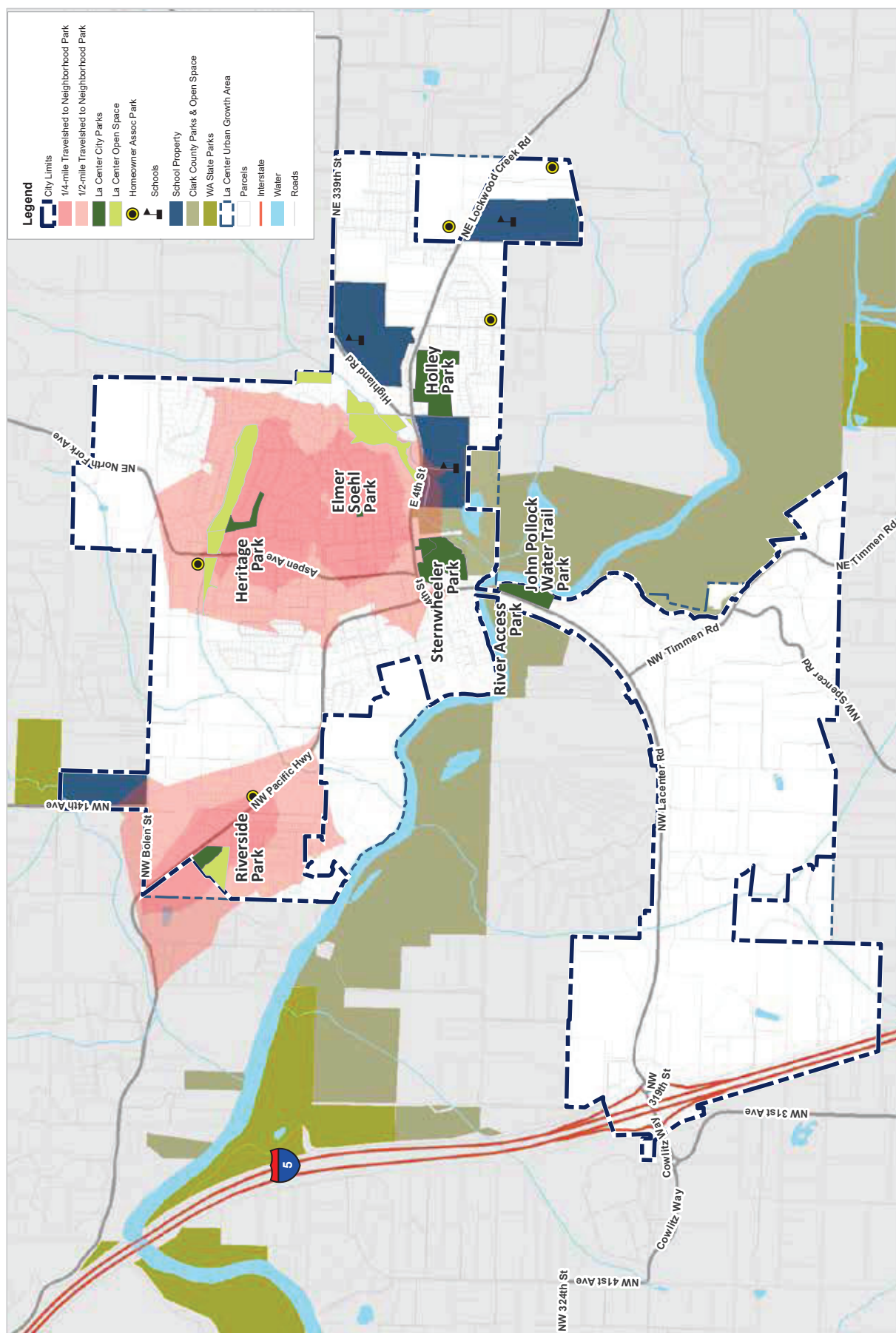
land development projects to consider where and how a family park (or public trail connection) could be incorporated into the planning of proposed residential areas, as per existing zoning requirements. The City should also stay abreast of the pace and scale of larger, planned residential development projects that would trigger the family park requirement. If proposed developments fall below the threshold requiring family park, the City should be prepared to acquire lands for future neighborhood parks, especially in the southwest portion of La Center, to ensure that future residents of these areas have reasonable access to local recreational lands.

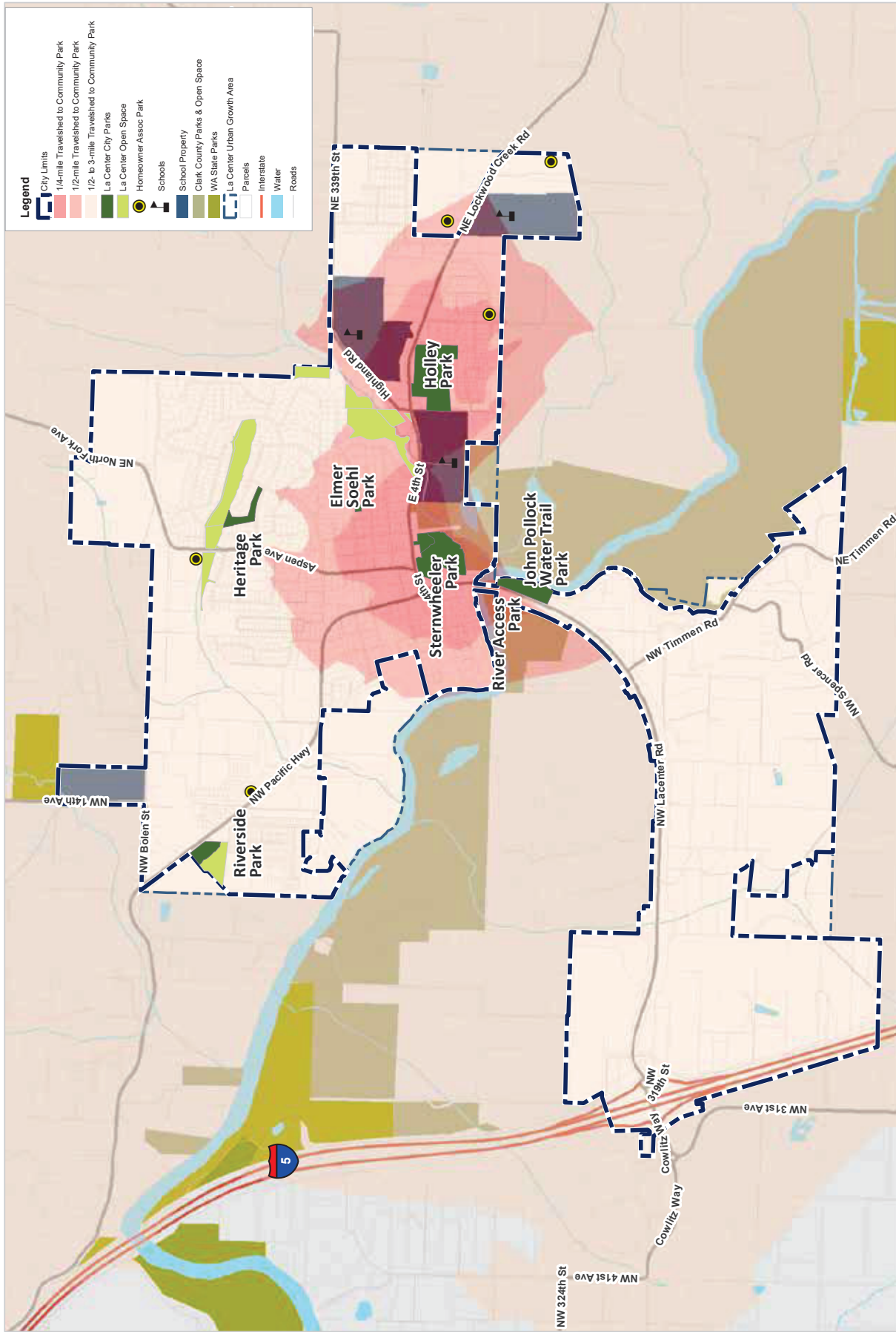
Resulting from this assessment, potential acquisition areas are identified for future parks (Map 5) and are noted in the Capital Planning chapter of this Plan. The mapping targeted five generalized areas within the City and UGA for future parks for the near- to long-term:

- Acquisition area A (La Center Road area; multiple family parks estimated between 2-6 acres across southwestern La Center)
- Acquisition area B (multiple family parks estimated between 1-2 acres in eastern La Center)
- Acquisition area C (multiple family parks estimated between 0.5-1 acre in northeastern La Center)
- Acquisition area D (potential for community park with extension of Heritage Trail, plus multiple family parks estimated between 0.5-1 acre in northwestern La Center)
- Acquisition area E (potential riverfront site and to support E Fork Lewis River North Shore Trail concept)

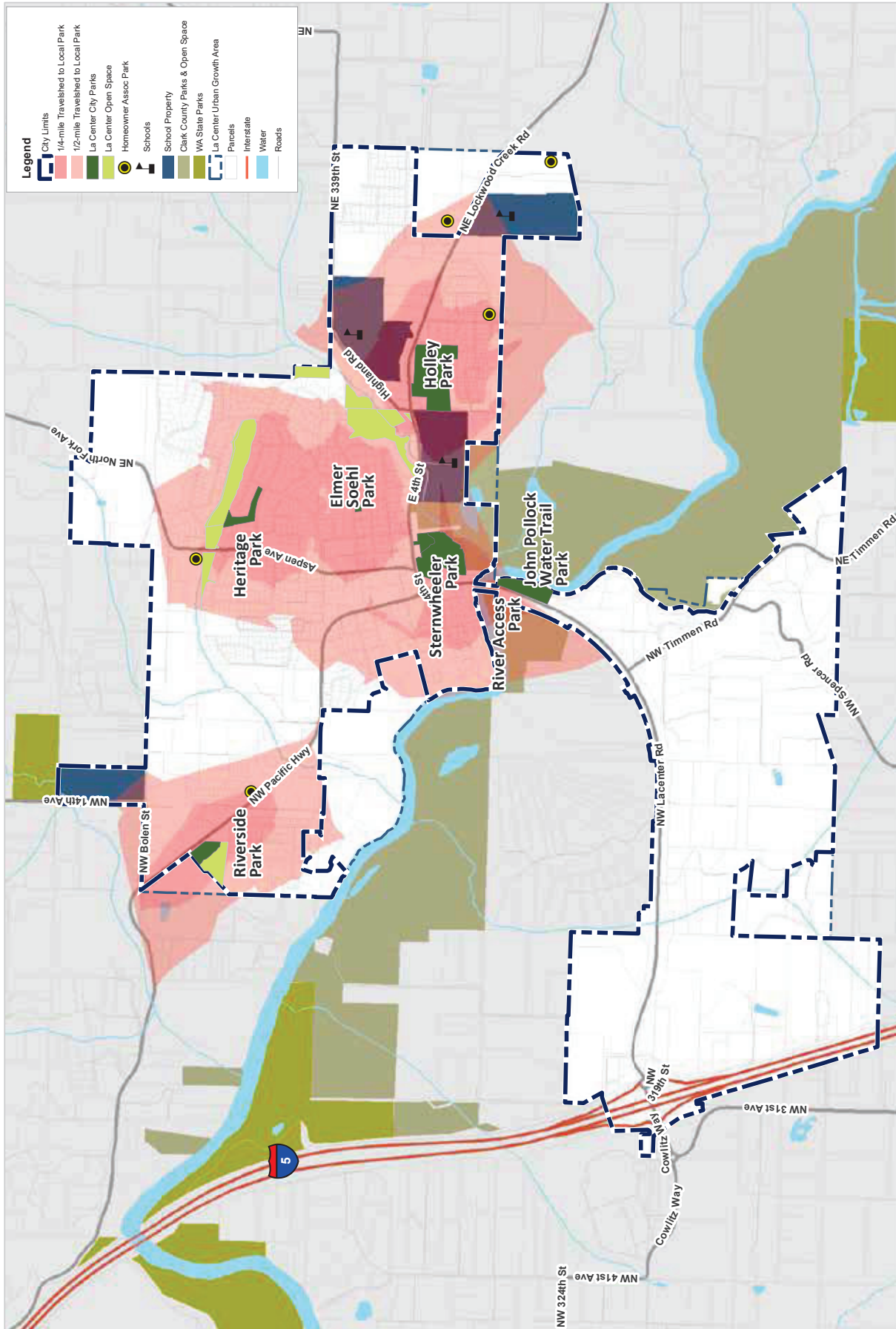
While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving parkland distribution across La Center.



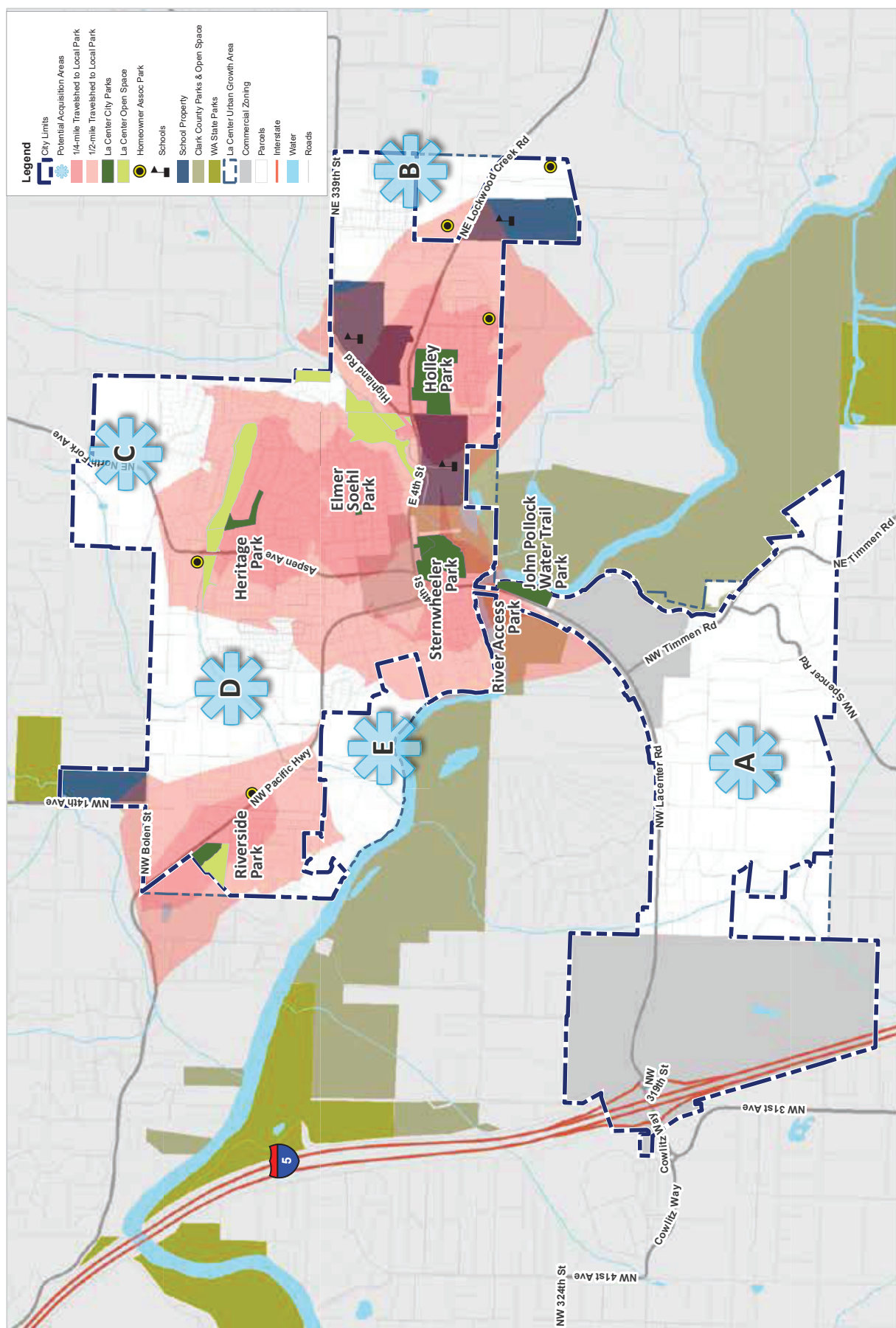




Map 3: Travelsheds for Community Parks (3-miles)







# LEVEL OF SERVICE ASSESSMENT

A level of service (LOS) review was conducted in addition to and in support of the gap analysis as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification and for a broader measure of how well La Center 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 their parks system; the level of service is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting the adopted standards.

In the past, the City of La Center has used acreage and trail mileage per capita, as well as park distribution to define its standards and measure its level of service for parks and recreation. While adopted acreage standards have been a long-standing traditional measure of park provision, current trends in park system assessment utilize a broader and more customized analysis of how well parks are benefitting their service area and where improvements should be focused. In the 2017 PROS plan, La Center adopted per thousand population targets for the quantity of its park facilities.

“Adding a larger-scale playground (ADA-friendly) to a multi-use park would be so impacted to bring the community. The current playground options are too small.”

-Survey respondent

Figure 12. Park Acreage Level of Service based on Existing Standards

Type of Park	Existing Inventory	Existing LOS (ac./1,000)**	Existing Acreage Standard	Current Need
Community	19.3 acres	5.0 acres/1,000	6.5 acres/1,000	5.6 acres
Neighborhood	4.2 acres	1.1 acres/1,000	1.5 acres/1,000	1.6 acres
Open Space*	35.6 acres	9.3 acres/1,000	- acres/1,000	- acres
<b>Park Subtotals</b>	<b>59.1 acres</b>	<b>15.4 acres/1,000</b>	<b>8.0 acres/1,000</b>	<b>7.2 acres</b>
Recreational Trails	3.4 miles	0.9 miles/1,000	1 mile/1,000	0.4 miles

\* La Center does not maintain an acreage standard for open space. Information provided for reference only. Include special use facilities.

\*\* Based on city population of 3,835

Today, the City is close to attaining the acreage for community and neighborhood parks based on the existing standard, with modest, existing deficits of 5.6 acres and 1.6 acres, respectively. As the City grows, the need to provide community and neighborhood parkland will increase with population.

The City’s development code will help accommodate for the provision of small, family parks as new subdivisions are built, so the City should continue to

review land development applications and coordinate with developers to encourage the inclusion of additional public parks within La Center. Also, it should be noted that per capita acreage standards do not apply to, and were not previously provided for, special use facilities or open space classifications. These two classifications are combined in Figure 12, and the levels of service is provided merely for reference.

Considering the potential for growth, competition for developable land and the resources required to grow and maintain the park system, a minor adjusted to parkland acreage standards is recommended. The future population growth predicted for La Center in 2045 (population forecast as 8,350) will result in a need for 27 community park acres or an equivalent of one large community park, plus eight acres of neighborhood parkland or an equivalent of two to three neighborhood parks. The proposed adjustments to the acreage standard is intended to help focus future acquisitions and development resources on the most important park and recreation facility provision without over-extending local resources or expectations. Additionally, the requirements of the City's development code will support the addition of approximately five to 10 acres of family parks as residential areas develop, which will help meet the need for smaller parks. The proposed acreage standards for neighborhood and community parks would recalibrate the combined acreage standards from the 2017 PROS Plan 8.0 acres per 1,000 population to 7.0 acres per 1,000 population.

**Expanded trails system; connecting Brezee Creek with access to La Center Bottoms trail (without having to go through the Elementary school. And extend riverfront trails"**

*-Survey respondent*

Figure 13. Future Park Acreage Needs using Proposed Standards

Type of Park	Existing Inventory	2024 Proposed Standard	2045 Future Need*
Community	19.3 acres	5.5 acres/1,000	26.6 acres
Neighborhood	4.2 acres	1.5 acres/1,000	8.3 acres
<b>Park Totals</b>	<b>23.5 acres</b>	<b>7.0 acres/1,000</b>	<b>34.9 acres</b>
Recreational Trails	3.4 miles	1 mile/1,000	5.0 miles

\* 2045 population estimated as 8,350

A review of metrics from national data provides additional color to the assessment. Comparisons are provided below based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) data that reflects the current levels of service of park agencies across the country based on a variety of factors: population size, population density, number of full-time equivalent employees, number of park facilities, acres of parkland and more. The NRPA Park Metrics data are used to compare different park and recreation providers in communities across the country; however, the Park Metrics database relies on self-reporting by municipalities. Some agencies only include developed, active parks, while others include natural lands with limited or no improvements, amenities or access. The comparative standards in the table on the following page should be viewed with this variability in mind.

A few highlights from the NRPA agency comparison provide perspectives on La Center's park system. When compared with other park agencies, La Center's neighborhood and community park acreage (6.1 acres per 1,000 population) falls below the median of park providers. While parkland acreage alone should not be the sole measure of performance, the acquisition of additional parklands is warranted.

Looking at the provision of recreation amenities within the park system provides another perspective on the adequacy of park service delivery. From the NRPA Park Metrics data, seven amenities were compared with the median values from an aggregate of all agencies across the country. The comparisons indicate that La Center is providing a strong suite of recreational amenities for its population and is slightly deficient in tennis courts and soccer fields.



Figure 14. Acres of Parkland from NRPA Metrics

	All Agencies	Pop. under 20,000	La Center
Acres of Parkland / 1,000			
Median Acres/1,000	10.4	12.9	6.4
Number of Residents / Amenity			
Playgrounds	3,750	1,986	959
Baseball-youth	7,000	3,107	1,918
Softball-youth	11,339	5,339	3,835
Soccer-youth	7,382	3,504	0
Basketball courts	7,403	3,750	1,918
Tennis courts	5,608	2,723	3,835
Skate Parks	53,708	11,100	3,835



The City's park system also was assessed using the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) level of service metrics provided in their planning manual. In reviewing the park system as a whole, Figure 15 illustrates the current levels of

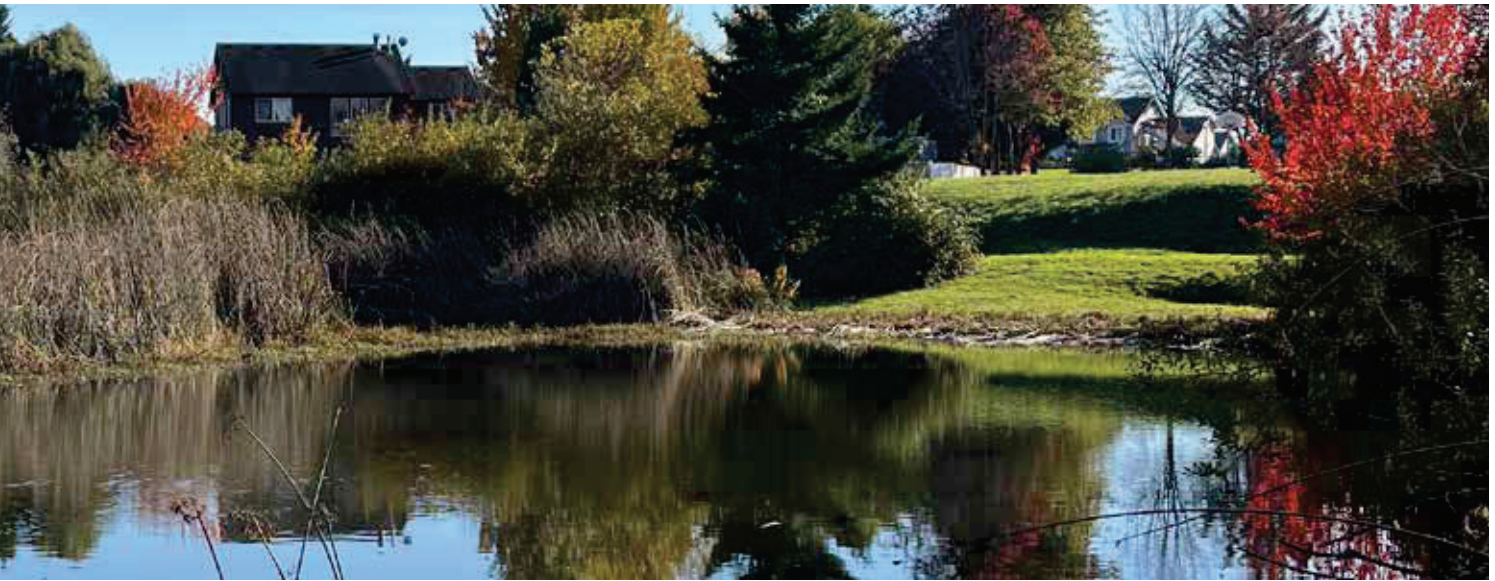
service across different performance measurements. From the community survey results, public satisfaction of the facilities and amenities that La Center provides ranked as the strongest indicator for the park system.

Figure 15. Levels of Service with RCO Metrics (System-wide)

Quality Criteria		
<b>Public Satisfaction</b>		
Satisfaction with City Parks & Open Space (rated as Very/Somewhat Satisfied)		87.8%
LOS Grade		<b>B</b>
Condition of City Parks (rated as Excellent or Good)		80.7%
LOS Grade		<b>B</b>
<b>Agency-based Assessment</b>		
Condition Assessment Rating of Existing Parks (3-point scale)		1.60
LOS Grade		<b>B</b>
Distribution Criteria*		
<b>Parkland Access (within 1/2-mile travelshed)</b>		
Percent Service Area with Access to City Parks		48.8%
LOS Grade		<b>D</b>
<b>Trail System Access (within 1/2-mile travelshed)</b>		
Percent Service Area with Access to Recreational Trails		44.9%
LOS Grade		<b>F</b>
Usage / Visitation Criteria		
<b>Frequency of Park or Trail Usage</b>		
Percent Visiting Parks at Least Multiple Times per Month		75.8%
LOS Grade		<b>C</b>

\* Note: The percentage of land area covered by service area walksheds is a proxy for the population within the residential portion of the City.





Today, the City only is partially meeting the goal of providing neighborhood parks within a ½-mile of residents. The City has a minor, existing deficit for community parks, and as was previously noted, the future development of publicly-accessible, family parks as new subdivisions are constructed will significantly improve the park distribution gaps. The recommended acquisition targets identified earlier in this chapter will further reduce parkland deficits based on numerics and, more importantly, based on parkland distribution.

Consistent with the 2017 PROS Plan, no numeric standards are recommended or proposed for special use facilities or open space classifications. While numerical planning standards are common for helping to determine a desirable number of neighborhood parks per thousand residents, they do not translate easily to special use facilities or natural area open space because of the uniqueness of the site or land base itself. Rather than being guided by numerical standards for open space, the priority for future open space acquisitions, if any, should be focused toward those lands that expand ownership of adjacent city-owned properties or to ensure sufficient property is available to accommodate public access and future trail connections.

## Other Considerations

Assessing physical conditions within each park facility, mapping distribution of existing parks, measurements of park acreage, and comparing park amenity provision represent four methods for assessing the park system. While this Plan uses total parkland acreage and parkland access as primary indicators of parkland need, the City could also consider other factors as its population grows, including:

**Availability of park amenities:** Park systems should include an equitable distribution and quantity of the most common amenities like playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports courts, sports fields and trails to meet local needs and help distribute the potential usage of individual parks. Working to provide well-distributed basic park amenities, while also offering unique outdoor experiences, will result in a varied park system with a range of different recreational opportunities for residents.

## LA CENTER TRAIL SYSTEM

The City of La Center has been working to create a network of trails to connect important destinations and help create a more walkable community. Individual parks typically have their own internal (and usually paved) pathways that provide walking opportunities within the greenspace. While these are popular amenities for park visitors and help provide access to recreational amenities, their isolation from other destinations limits their value. The creeks and riparian natural areas in La Center have been target locations for aligning connecting off-road trails as opportunity arises. Trail connections and walking or biking links have been voiced as the highest priority for future improvements to La Center's park system.

Sternwheeler Park and Holley Park have internal trails, and Sternwheeler Park connects to La Center Bottoms and the John Pollock Water Trail Park. The Brezee Creek Trail connects East 14th Circle with a 0.59-mile pathway to the intersection of East 4th Street and Stonecreek Drive. The trail offers benches and picnic tables and connects the Heritage Trail to local schools and downtown. The Heritage Trail connects Heritage Park for a 0.81-mile walking and biking link to Heritage Park and to the Brezee Creek Trail. The trail also provides benches and picnic tables. A 0.32-mile pathway currently is being installed as part of the Hillside Farm subdivision.

### Trail Demand

During the public outreach, 66% of participants feel there are not enough trails, and 85% clearly identified that walking or running was a top reason for visiting La Center's parks. Park pathways are popular recreational amenities and significant contributors for promoting physical activity. This recreational trend is notable in state and national recreation surveys. Running, jogging and trail running are the most popular outdoor activities across the nation, based on levels of participation. The need for more walking and biking trail connections that link parks together has been reinforced in the local surveys and other public feedback. The online open house polled opinions about potential trail links and which were the highest priority. Majorities of respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77%) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63%). Two other alignments were favored by about one-third of respondents. These

include a an extension of the planned Lewis & Clark Regional Trail from Paradise Point to Downtown (40%) and an alignment along the E Fork Lewis River North Shore (39%).

### Transportation Planning

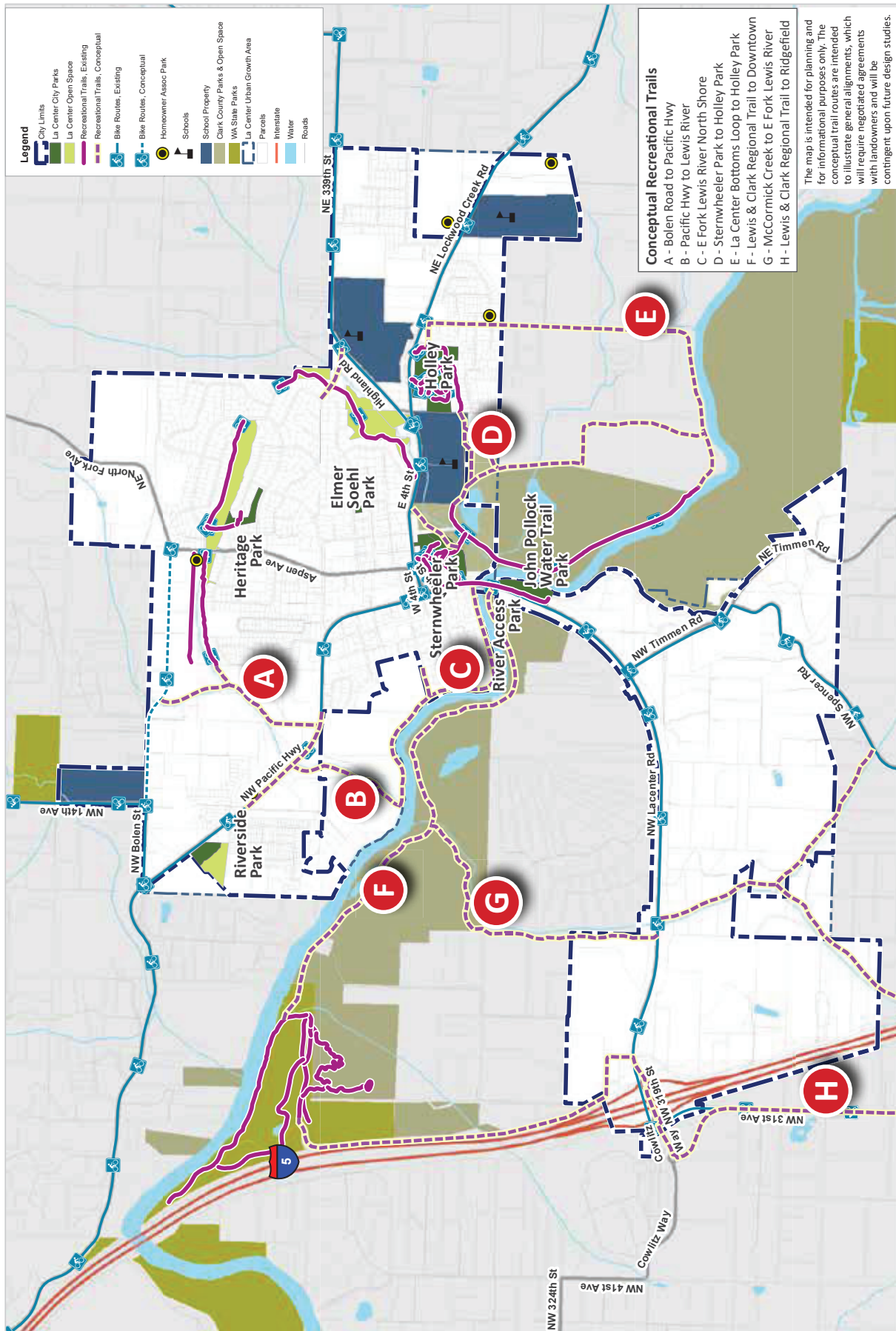
The City of La Center has a number of targeted trail improvement projects that will help further the alternative transportation options for residents. The City's Transportation Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) from 2018 lists its planned road, bridge, intersection, sidewalk, bikeway and trail projects. Funding and project partners are identified for each planned improvement project. Trail improvement projects listed in the Transportation CFP include:

- La Center Road between 4th Street and Timmen Road with a multi-use path on the south/east side.
- La Center Road between Timmen Road and Paradise Park Road with a multi-use path on the south side.
- Brezee Creek Trail connections and crossing improvements.
- Pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements noted in multiple individual projects.

Regional projects where trails connect to other cities typically involve partnerships (with Clark County, cities, tribes, and WSDOT) that contribute to the planning and funding of the target project. These partnerships are critical to the ability to implement effective planned trail connections. In funding these projects, the Public Works Department should identify the trail project need in their capital improvement programs to be eligible to seek grants from different state and federal funding resources. Regional trail planning for La Center will requiring on-going coordination with Clark County for trail corridors of public interest that create a larger loop at La Center Bottoms and trail extensions along the East Fork of the Lewis River connecting to Paradise Point State Park.

Additionally, planned Lewis River-Vancouver Lake Water Trail Plan formally designates the location of the water trail and identifies needs for additional amenities, access points and other improvements in an effort to facilitate a better recreational experience for the community. La Center contains two water access sites for the East Fork of the Lewis River at the current northeast extent of the identified official Water Trail. The City should aim to implement the





Map 6: Existing & Conceptual Recreational Trails

recommendations of the Water Trail Plan, to include improvements to publicly-owned access sites, a water trail sign system for wayfinding, user safety along with property and resource protection, and the development of a water trail paddling guide.

As with roadway system and transportation planning, planning for recreational trails should be geared toward connectivity, rather than mileage. The use of policies and objectives is more appropriate for the expansion of the trails network with a focus on connectivity, than the use of a per capita distance metric (e.g., miles per 1,000 population). Therefore, this Plan does not propose a mileage-based trail facility standard. This Plan recommends a connectivity goal that re-states and reinforces the desire to improve overall connections across the City and enhance off-street linkages between parks and major destinations, as feasible. To be clear, the proposed exclusion of a mileage-based standard for trails does not diminish or reduce the importance of or value in continuing to expand and grow the trail network; the intent is merely to orient the City's efforts toward a policy-based approach to trail connectivity.

### Trail Acquisitions & Development

Additional trail connections are needed, as well as sidewalk and bike lanes improvements, to help link destinations across the community and park system to offer more walkability and promote healthier outdoor lifestyles. Acquisitions of easements, corridors and parcels will be needed to create the comprehensive linkages for La Center's future recreational trail system. The City will need to collaborate between parks and transportation funding sources for project planning to ensure the most appropriate links that improve the park and trail system.

Local trails that provide access through parks should connect smoothly with sidewalks and include information on how to connect to additional trail segments that may be located nearby. The online open house survey revealed support for acquiring more open space that also could offer trail development and walking opportunities. The trail system gap analysis identified generalized areas where access to recreational was missing or insufficient, and future acquisitions should target those gap areas to also accommodate bike and pedestrian options.

## Trail Design Considerations

### Alignment

The future growth of the trail network will need to balance between alignments that are optimal from trail user, trail experience and connectivity perspectives and those that are practical from cost, design and engineering, regulatory and availability perspectives. Future consideration should be given toward finding alignment options that can accommodate different trail use types (i.e., commuter vs. recreational/destination oriented, and ADA accessibility), as well as potentially interim solutions that rely on wider sidewalks to serve trail users or routing that utilizes existing or planned sewer lines or utility corridors. Accommodating alignments for local, neighborhood link trails as connections to regional, shared-used trails or major park trails is important for providing access and reducing the sole reliance on trailheads for providing access to the trail network.

### Access & Trailheads

Safe, convenient entryways to the trail network expand access for users and are a necessary component of a strong, successful system. A trailhead typically includes parking, kiosks and signage and may include site furnishings such as trash receptacles, benches, restrooms, drinking fountains, and bicycle parking. Trailheads may be within public parks and open space or provided via interagency agreements with partner organizations (e.g., county, school district, etc.) to increase use and reduce unnecessary duplication of support facilities. Specific trailhead design and layout should be created as part of planning and design development for individual projects and take into account the intended user groups and unique site conditions. Trail connections and walking or biking linkages also are good access point to designated local and regional trails.

### Trail Development Limitations

One underlying tenet of the recreational trail system is to enable the placement of trails within or close to natural features to provide access to the city's unique landscapes, as well as accommodate outdoor recreational access to creeks, hillsides and waterfront. The future planning and design of trail routes through natural areas should be based on sensitive and low-impact design solutions that offer controlled access that protects the resource, while providing





for a positive experience for trail users. Trail routes should consider intended and unintended impacts to natural areas, such as soil erosion, especially near streams and shorelines. The determination of future trail alignments should place high priority on natural resource and natural hazards planning and protections, in part to meet local land use policies, as well as Washington State requirements.

### Trail Signs & Wayfinding

Coordinated signage plays a crucial role in facilitating a successful trail system. A comprehensive and consistent signage system is a critical component for the trail network and is necessary to inform, orient and educate users about the trail system itself, as well as appropriate trail etiquette. Such a system of signs should include trail identification information, orientation markers, safety and regulatory messages and a unifying design identity or element for branding. The following signage types should be considered and consistently implemented throughout the network:

- Directional and regulatory signage
- Trail user etiquette and hierarchy signage
- Continuous route signage for route identification and wayfinding
- Mileage markers or periodic information regarding distance to areas of interest

- Warning signs to caution users of upcoming trail transitions or potential conflicts with motor vehicles
- Interpretive information regarding ecological, historical and cultural features found along and in proximity to the trail
- Add QR codes to signs to provide links to additional information

Also, the installation of kiosks at trailheads is a best practice that should continue and provides important trail information, while reinforcing the visual brand of the La Center trail experience.

### Ongoing Maintenance

Following trail construction, ongoing trail monitoring and maintenance will keep the trails functioning as designed, while working to protect capital investments in the network. Future trail renovation projects should be included in the Capital Improvement Plans as a means to identify and secure appropriate resources for needed enhancement, such as adding additional capacity to the trail. The City should maintain and expand their connection to and communications with the robust network of local volunteers to provide support as appropriate.



# 6 Goals & Objectives

**The goals and objectives described in this chapter define the park and recreation services that La Center aims to provide.**



The Growth Management Act (GMA) adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 1990 provided a foundation for land use planning in selected cities and counties throughout the state, including Clark County and the City of La Center. The GMA's purpose is to help communities deal efficiently with the challenges of growth to ensure their long-term sustainability and high quality of life. It identifies 14 planning goals to guide the development of comprehensive plans and development regulations (codified in Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington). Four of these goals directly affect the development and implementation of this plan.

“Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks.” RCW 36.70A.020(9)

- “Protect the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water

quality, and the availability of water.” RCW 36.70A.020(10)

- “Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.” RCW 36.70A.020(13)
- “Carry-out the goals of the Shoreline Management Act with regards to shorelines and critical areas.” RCW 36.70A.020(14)

Furthermore, the La Center Comprehensive Plan, the previous park system plan and county-wide planning policies provide a framework for this PROS Plan update.

Also, the Plan’s goals align with the National Recreation and Parks Association’s Three Pillars, which are foundational concepts adopted by the national organization in 2012. These core values are crucial to improving the quality of life for all Americans by inspiring the protection of natural





"We need a more expansive park with lots to do (sports fields (rec leagues?), multiple playgrounds, events, etc., that is easily accessible, walkable, and also has enough parking."

- Survey respondent

resources, increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating, and empowering citizens to improve the livability of their communities.

- Health & Wellness: Valuing the role parks and recreation plays in improving health and wellness.
- Conservation: Valuing open space, connecting children to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices.
- Social Equity: Valuing accessibility of local parks and recreation to all residents and visitors.

## Goals

**A goal is a general statement that describes the overarching direction for the parks and recreation system.**

## Objectives

**Objectives are more specific and describe an outcome or a means to achieve the stated goals.**

## Key Projects

**Key project recommendations are specific actions intended to implement and achieve the goals and objectives and are contained in the Needs Assessment and Capital Planning chapters of the PROS Plan.**





## MAINTENANCE & MANAGEMENT

### **Goal 1: Maintain and operate a modern, efficient park system that provides a high level of user comfort, safety and aesthetic quality, and protects capital investments.**

- 1.1. Maintain existing park and trail facilities to protect the safety and longevity of capital assets and recreational values.
- 1.2. Plan for upgrades, repairs and improvements to continually ensure ongoing outdoor recreational opportunities and diverse experiences in the park system.
- 1.3. Develop, maintain and update asset management plans for major assets to support improved stewardship, reduce costs, and increase maintenance and replacement efficiency.
- 1.4. Allocate adequate funding for maintenance, staffing and asset preservation.
- 1.5. 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.
- 1.6. 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.
- 1.7. Periodically update the capital facilities plan to address facility improvement needs.
- 1.8. Update the Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan periodically and approximately every six years to ensure facilities and services meet current and future community needs and maintain eligibility for State grants.





## PARKS

### Goal 2: Develop parks and outdoor recreational amenities to meet community needs.

- 2.1. Provide 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.
- 2.2. Proactively acquire or secure parkland identified within this Plan to provide geographically accessible and equitable distribution of community and neighborhood parks and open space.
- 2.3. Provide a distributed park and open space system, such that all residents live within a ½-mile access of a park, trail or open space.
- 2.4. Plan for urban parks, open space and recreational opportunities within urban growth areas.
- 2.5. Work with property developers to acquire park and open space properties to meet the goals of this plan. Provide for public access to parks created in partnership with developers through public access easements or property acquisition.
- 2.6. Coordinate the planning and development of parks and recreation facilities with nearby jurisdictions.
- 2.7. Develop 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.
- 2.8. Develop standardized park site furnishings (benches, signs, picnic tables, etc.) to provide for more efficient maintenance, park identify, ADA-compliance and cost-effectiveness.
- 2.9. Design, 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.
- 2.10. Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities; consider the use of native vegetation for landscaping in parks to conserve the integrity of native wildlife habitat and limit maintenance requirements.



## TRAILS

**Goal 3: Secure trail corridors to provide for an interconnected park system that offers a wide variety of year-round recreation opportunities and experiences which support and enhance La Center’s identity and the natural environment.**

- 3.1. Encourage and promote the acquisition and development of a citywide pedestrian and bicycle trail system to connect schools, parks, neighborhoods and other facilities.
- 3.2. Connect the community to nature and parks and open spaces through a system of regional and local trails and paths for walking and bicycling.
- 3.3. Continue to coordinate with Clark County to support a connected trail network that provides continuous walking and biking access between parks and other key destinations.
- 3.4. Provide development standards for trails and open space to provide adequate recreational facilities and accommodate pedestrian, bicycle, horse, ADA and aging population users.
- 3.5. Provide trailhead facilities, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, restrooms and other amenities.





## OPEN SPACE, CONSERVATION & STEWARDSHIP

### Goal 4: Protect open space, critical areas and waterfront to maintain La Center's sense of history and provide opportunities for public access.

- 4.1. Develop more shoreline and water-based recreation facilities to connect with the Lewis River – Vancouver Lake Water Trail.
- 4.2. Acquire land for open space and riverfront access through state or municipal programs such as stormwater management, salmon recovery and wildlife/wetland protection.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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 program.
- 4.5. Provide a “big canoe” launch pier to support local tribal access for cultural activities.
- 4.6. Partner with local conservation and non-profit groups to help support stewardship and restoration activities.
- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. Engage in riparian corridor reforestation and streambank restoration to improve water quality and aquatic habitat.

### Goal 5: 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.

- 5.1. Incorporate sustainability and low impact development into design, development and maintenance of the park system and be a leader in sustainable building practices. 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.
- 5.2. Utilize, as appropriate, native and lower resource requiring 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.
- 5.3. Identify, prioritize and, when feasible, repair and/or restore environmental degradation within parks and open spaces, including site-specific restorations plans.
- 5.4. 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 fire and drought.





# 7

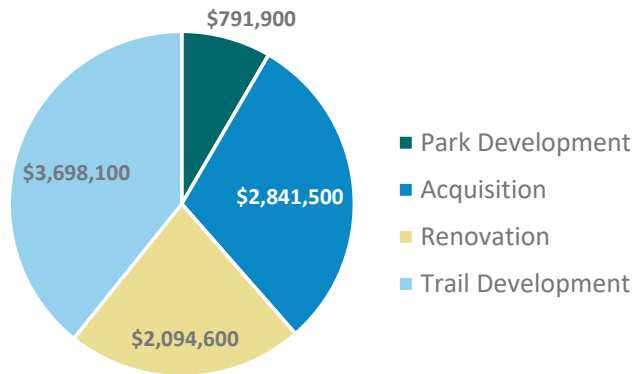
## Capital Planning & Implementation

The continued support of a healthy park and recreation system that preserves and enhances the safety, livability, and character of La Center will require commitment from the City and its residents.

---

The following Capital Facilities Plan 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 survey results and other feedback, La Center residents have indicated an interest in park facility upgrades, enhanced trail connections and acquisition for future parklands as priorities, and the Capital Facilities Plan is reflective of that desire. The following table summarizes the aggregate capital estimates by park types for the next six years.

Figure 16. Capital Facilities Plan Expenditures Summary



The following Capital Facilities Plan provides brief project descriptions and sequencing to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.

Overall, the current costs for projects identified in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) total over \$9.4 million. As projects are phased over the next six or more years, the planning-level project costs have been inflated at an increase of 4.5% annually. The proposed project list focuses primarily on improving existing facilities through timely repairs, replacements and upgrades to ensure an ongoing, healthy and safe recreation system for La Center.

La Center PROS  
6-Year Capital Facilities Plan  
2024-2029

Inflation factors: 4.5% per year for development projects; 8% per year for acquisition for years beyond 2024

Park Site	Project Description	Project Type	Estimate	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030-2035	Sum
Holley Park	Repair safety & erosion issues at skate park	R	\$15,000	\$15,700							\$15,700
	Resurface & restripe basketball court	R	\$35,000		\$39,900						\$39,900
	Replace & upgrade playground as all-inclusive feature, including ADA access & surfacing	R	\$500,000		\$546,000						\$546,000
	Create ADA accessible routes to all recreation amenities	R	\$50,000		\$54,600						\$54,600
	Upgrade existing & add new exercise stations	R/D	\$85,000			\$101,400					\$101,400
Stemwheeler Park	Plant more native shade trees (est. 30-60 landscape-sized trees for 50% canopy cover)	D	\$30,000		\$34,200						\$34,200
	Rehabilitate ballfields & improve drainage	R	\$75,000		\$85,600						\$85,600
	Install additional picnic tables	D	\$25,000	\$26,100							\$26,100
	Install ADA compliant benches and companion spaces	D	\$20,000		\$21,800						\$21,800
	Formalize trail connections in southwest section	D	\$60,000		\$65,500						\$65,500
Riverside Park	Restore creek area (e.g., remove invasive weeds, replace with native plants)	R	\$40,000	\$41,800							\$41,800
	Install small shade structure	D	\$45,000		\$51,400						\$51,400
	Install permanent restroom	D	\$150,000			\$178,900					\$178,900
	Create formal natural-surface trail system	D	\$25,000			\$29,800					\$29,800
	Add interpretive signage for wetland and buffer	D	\$15,000		\$17,100						\$17,100
Heritage Park	Replace & upgrade playground, including ADA access	R	\$250,000		\$285,300						\$285,300
	Repair damaged pavement in plaza and sidewalks	R	\$70,000		\$76,400						\$76,400
	Create ADA accessible routes to all park amenities	R	\$60,000		\$65,500						\$65,500
	Replace picnic tables & other site furnishings with ADA & matching design	R	\$55,000		\$62,800						\$62,800
	Plant native shade trees along trail	D	\$15,000	\$16,400							\$16,400
Elmer Soethl Park	Repair restroom building	R	\$40,000	\$41,800							\$41,800
	Replace playground edging & install ramp	R	\$25,000	\$26,100							\$26,100
	Create ADA accessible routes to all recreation amenities	D	\$35,000				\$43,600				\$43,600
	Plant native shade trees	D	\$30,000					\$37,400			\$37,400
	Upgrade site furnishing to ADA compliant style	R	\$15,000					\$18,700			\$18,700
Park Acquisitions	Replace/enlarge playground equipment & add swings	R	\$175,000	\$191,100							\$191,100
	Secure 15-20 acre community park (north-central area)	A	\$2,000,000			\$2,385,000					\$2,385,000
	Secure 3-5 acres along north bank of EFLP	A	\$400,000		\$456,500						\$456,500
	Provide accessible path and access to the water with floating dock	R	\$200,000				\$249,200				\$249,200
	Install picnic shelter	D	\$60,000				\$74,800				\$74,800
John Pollock Water Trail Park	Pave parking lot with asphalt and reconfigure ADA parking stall & loading zone	D	\$75,000				\$93,500				\$93,500
Trail Corridors	Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (Trail D, Map 6)	A/D	\$750,000		\$819,000						\$819,000
	La Center Bottoms Loop to Holley Park; Coordinate with Clark County (Trail E, Map 6)	A/D	\$175,000		\$199,700						\$199,700
	Bolen Road to Pacific Hwy (Trail A, Map 6)	A/D	\$690,000							\$898,600	\$898,600
	Pacific Hwy to Lewis River (Trail B, Map 6)	A/D	\$350,000							\$455,800	\$455,800
	E Fork Lewis River North Shore (Trail C, Map 6)	A/D	\$850,000							\$1,106,900	\$1,106,900
Systemwide	McCormick Creek to E Fork Lewis River; Coordinate with Clark County (Trail G, Map 6)	A/D	\$175,000					\$218,100			\$218,100
	Minor ADA upgrades & enhancements	R	\$15,000/yr	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$105,000
	Signage & wayfinding	R	\$45,000		\$49,100						\$49,100
	Minor capital repairs	R	\$20,000/yr	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$140,000
Total Park Improvements			\$7,710,000	\$186,500	\$1,940,400	\$1,267,500	\$2,730,100	\$670,600	\$134,700	\$2,496,300	\$9,426,100

NOTES:  
This list identifies planning-level cost estimates and does not assume the value of volunteer or other non-City contributions. Detailed costing may be necessary for projects noted.  
This list is not an official budget and intended as a guiding document for City staff in the preparation of departmental budgets.

Project Type  
A Acquisition  
P Site master planning  
D Development  
R Replacement / Renovation



## Implementation Considerations

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

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

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

### Park Impact Fees & Real Estate Excise Tax

Park Impact Fees (PIF) are imposed on new development to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from the new growth. PIF only can be used for parkland acquisition, planning, and/or development. They cannot be used for operations and maintenance of parks and facilities. The City of La Center currently assesses impact fees, but the City should review its PIF ordinance and update the methodology and rate structure periodically, as appropriate, to be best positioned to obtain future acquisition and development financing from the planned growth of the community. The City should prioritize the usage of PIF to secure new park properties and finance park or trail development consistent with the priorities within this Plan.

The City currently imposes both of the one-quarter percent excise taxes on real estate, known as REET 1 and REET 2, allowable by state law. The REET must be spent on capital projects listed in the City's capital

facilities plan element of their comprehensive plan. Eligible project types include planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, and trails. Acquisition of land for parks is not a permitted use of REET 2 funds. REET is used for other city projects, such as facility construction and public works projects, may be used to make loan and debt service payments on permissible projects. Through annual budgeting and with discussions with City Council, the Public Works Department should continue to seek access to REET funds and use the capital facilities plan to compile compelling projects to enhance service delivery of the amenities for which the community has indicated strong support.

### Conservation Futures Program

Clark County assesses the maximum allowable excise of \$0.0625 per \$1,000 assessed value to fund the Conservation Futures program and provides cities a venue to access these funds through a local grant process. The city should continue to submit applications for support in financing the acquisition of additional natural areas identified in the most recent Legacy Lands Program Natural Areas Acquisition Plan to facilitate the protection of these lands and enable improved linkages to expand the trail network.

### Parkland Donations & Dedications

Parkland donations from private individuals or conservation organizations could occur to complement the acquisition of parklands and open space across the city. Gift deeds or bequests from philanthropic-minded landowners could allow for lands to come into city ownership upon the death of the owner or as a tax-deductible charitable donation. Also, parkland dedication by a developer could occur in exchange for Park Impact Fees or as part of a planned development where public open space is a key design for the layout and marketing of a new residential project. Any potential dedication should be vetted by the City to ensure that such land is located in an area of need or can expand an existing city-owned property and can be developed with site amenities appropriate for the projected use of the property.

## **Grants & Appropriations**

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

Appropriations from state or federal sources, though rare, can supplement projects with partial funding. State and federal funding allocations are particularly relevant on regional transportation projects, and the likelihood for appropriations could be increased if multiple partners are collaborating on projects.

## **Enhanced Local Funding**

Community conversations regarding the potential to acquire and develop additional trails, waterfront amenities, park improvements and/or bundle several projects from the Capital Improvements Plan may warrant a review of debt implications for the City, along with the need to conduct subsequent polling to explore voter support for such projects.

## **Public-Private Partnerships**

Public-private partnerships are increasingly necessary for local agencies to leverage their limited resources in providing park and recreation services to the community. Corporate sponsorships, health organization grants, conservation stewardship programs, and non-profit organizations are just a few examples of partnerships where collaboration provides value to both partners. The City has a variety of existing agency and community-based organization partners and should continue to explore additional and expanded partnerships to help implement these Plan recommendations.

## **Volunteer & Community-based Action**

Volunteers from community groups may support for a variety of activities including park clean-up days, invasive plant removal, tree planting and community event support, among others. La Center should maintain and update a revolving list of potential

small works or volunteer-appropriate projects for the website, while also reaching out to civic groups and the high school to encourage student projects. While supporting organized groups and community-minded individuals continues to add value to the La Center park and recreation system, volunteer coordination requires a substantial amount of staff time, and additional resources may be necessary to more fully take advantage of the community's willingness to support park and recreation efforts.

## **Other Implementation Tools**

Appendix D identifies other implementation tools, such as voter-approved funding, grants and acquisition tactics that the City could utilize to further the implementation of the projects noted in the Capital Improvements Plan.

# Appendix A:

## Community Survey Summary



---

**To:** Bryan Kast, Public Works Director

**From:** Steve Duh, Conservation Technix, Inc.

**Date:** February 28, 2023

**Re:** City of La Center Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan  
Community Survey Summary Results

---

Conservation Technix is pleased to present the results of a survey of the general population of the City of La Center that assesses residents' park and recreation needs and priorities.

## KEY FINDINGS

La Center residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities.

Nearly all respondents (96%) think parks and recreation are important or essential to quality of life in La Center. Very few, about 4%, feel they are useful, but not necessary, or not important at all.

Residents visit very frequently and are generally very satisfied with existing parks, trails and recreation facilities.

La Center residents like to visit local parks – more than half visit parks or recreation facilities at least one a week and nearly 85% do so at least one a month. In the past year, nearly nine in ten respondents have visited La Center's most popular parks, Sternwheeler Park and Holley Park. About three quarters of respondents visited Water Trail Park or Heritage Park. These parks were popular with respondents citywide. Respondents most frequently visit to walk or run or visit the waterfront.

A large majority of respondents are satisfied with La Center's recreation, parks, and open spaces, though a small percentage – about one in ten – are either somewhat or very dissatisfied. Respondents are also generally pleased with the condition of local parks, with about 75-85% of respondents rating each park's condition as excellent or good.

While residents would like the City to maintain existing parks and facilities, they would also like to see the system expanded and enhanced.

Residents would generally like to see the City expand the range and number of park and recreation opportunities it offers. More than 75% 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.

When asked to rank their priorities for future City investment, respondents ranked expanding trails and adding amenities in existing parks as their top two priorities. Respondents ranked acquiring additional land for new parks and expanding community events as their lowest priorities.

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of La Center do to improve park, trail and open space system. Themes from the 147 responses included the desire for an expanded and well-connected system of trails, enhanced maintenance and security in parks, protection of open space and habitat areas, improvements to river access, and interest in a variety of park amenities, ranging from restrooms and lighting to playgrounds and dog parks.

## SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In close collaboration with City of La Center staff, Conservation Technix developed a 15-question survey that was estimated to take less than ten minutes to complete.

Information about the survey and a link was posted to the City's website and Facebook page on December 1, 2022. The survey was promoted at the La Center Tree Lighting Festival on December 4, 2022. The survey was closed on February 10, 2022, and data were compiled and reviewed.

Due to the nature of the survey, respondents self-selected to participate and were not necessarily representative of all City residents. See the table below for age demographics for the survey as well as comparative percentages for La Center's population. In general, the survey had fewer responses from residents under 35 than necessary to fully reflect the City's population.

Figure 1. Age demographics of survey respondents

Age group	Survey Respondents	City of La Center	
		All residents	>20 yrs only
Under 20	1%	27%	n/a
20 to 34	11%	22%	31%
35 to 44	27%	10%	13%
45 to 54	21%	15%	20%
55 to 64	17%	11%	15%
65 to 74	17%	11%	15%
75 and older	4%	4%	6%

Percentages in this report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

## DETAILED FINDINGS

### Value and use of parks and recreation

#### How much do residents value parks and recreation?

Virtually all respondents (96%) feel that local parks, recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in La Center. Four out of five respondents feel that they are essential; while an additional 16% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential. Only about 5% of respondents believe parks are useful, but not important, or not important.

There were no major differences in how respondents value parks and recreation based on age, location of residence, or number of children in the home.

**Figure 2.** When you think about what contributes to the quality of life in La Center, would you say that public parks and recreation opportunities are...

Response options		96%
Essential to the quality of life here	80%	
Important, but not really necessary	16%	
Useful, but not important	4%	
Not important or don't know	1%	

#### How often do residents use La Center's parks and open spaces?

Residents were asked how often they visit a City park or open space in a typical year. More than half of respondents (54%) visit at least once a week, if not every day. Another 30% visit one to three times per month, while about 11% visit a few times per year. Few respondents (3%) do not visit a park at all.

Survey respondents showed a high use of parks regardless of age. However, respondents between the ages of 55 and 64 years were the most likely to visit everyday or at least once per week (69%), though majorities of all younger age groups also did so. About four in ten respondents over the age of 65 visit at least weekly. There were no significant differences in visitation based on where respondents live or how many children are in the home.

**Figure 3.** In a typical year, how often do you visit or use La Center parks or open spaces?



#### Why do residents visit parks and open spaces?

La Center residents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons. The most popular activity, by far, is to walk or run – 85% of respondents cite this as a reason they have visited a La Center park in the past year, see Figure 4. Other popular reasons include to visit the riverfront (63%), walk or exercise a dog (53%), to relax (53%), or to view wildlife (50%). More than three in ten respondents have visited to attend a community event or concert (46%), visit a playground (46%), participate in



watersports on the East Fork Lewis River (41%), or use a splash pad (36%). Between 23% and 31% of respondents visit parks to ride a bike, use a sports field or court, or for a family gathering or picnic. Only about 5 to 7% of respondents visited to use the skatepark or to participate in a recreation class or league activity.

Respondents between the ages of 20 and 44 years of age are more likely than other groups to visit to use playgrounds, sports fields and courts, the splash pad, or the skatepark, or to ride bikes, visit the riverfront, have a family picnic, or take part in recreation programs or league activities. Many activities, including watersports and paddling, running and walking, relaxation, dog walking, community events, and wildlife viewing are similarly popular with all age groups. Respondents with children in their home are more likely to visit for playgrounds, the riverfront, recreation programs, sports fields and courts, watersports, bike riding, splash pad, skatepark, and family gatherings, than respondents without children. Respondents without children are more likely than those with children to visit for wildlife viewing.

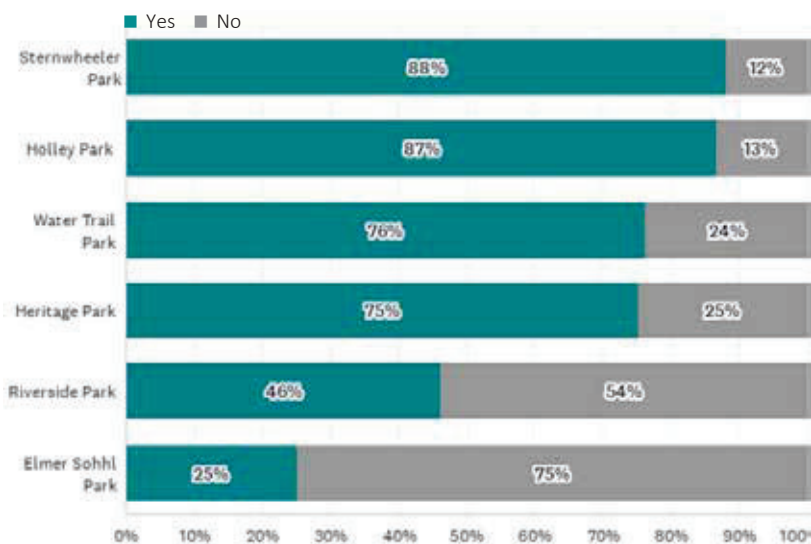
Figure 4. What would you say are the main reasons your household visited La Center parks or open spaces in the past year?

Reason	%
Walking or running	85%
Riverfront	63%
Dog walking / exercise	53%
Relaxation	53%
Wildlife viewing	50%
Community events / concerts	46%
Playgrounds	46%
Watersports/canoeing/kayaking	41%
Splash pad	36%
Bike riding	31%
Sports fields	28%
Outdoor sport courts	23%
Family gatherings / picnics	23%
Skatepark	7%
Recreation class or league activity	5%

#### Which La Center parks do residents use? How would they rate their condition?

Residents were asked about which City parks they, or members of their household, have visited in the past year and about the condition of each park. In the past year, nearly nine in ten respondents have visited La Center's most popular parks, Sternwheeler Park (88%) and Holley Park (87%). About three quarters of respondents visited Water Trail Park or Heritage Park. These parks were popular with respondents citywide. In general, respondents rated the condition of these parks as either 'excellent' or 'good' – when 'don't know' answers are removed, approximately 86% of respondents

Figure 5. Have you or any member of your household visited any of the following City of La Center parks in the last year?



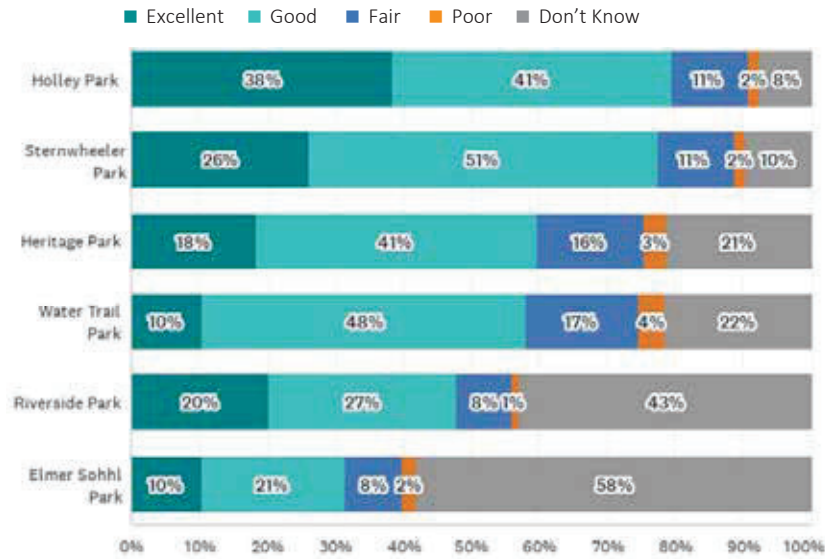
when 'don't know' answers are removed, approximately 86% of respondents

rated the condition of Sternwheeler Park and Holley Park as excellent or good, while only 75% of respondents did so for Water Trail and Heritage Parks.

Fewer respondents visited Riverside Park (46%) or Elmer Sohhl Park (25%) in the past year. This lower level of visitation is reflected in the condition ratings for these parks, where about half of respondents answered 'don't know'. When these responses are removed, 84% of respondents rated the condition of Riverside Park highly as did 75% of respondents for Elmer Sohhl Park. These high condition ratings suggest that condition is likely not driving lower rates of visitation at these parks.

Respondents with children at home were more likely to have visited Holley Park than those without children. There were no consistent significant variations in how respondents rated the condition of parks and facilities based on age or location of residence.

Figure 6. ...How would you rate the condition of each of the following parks?



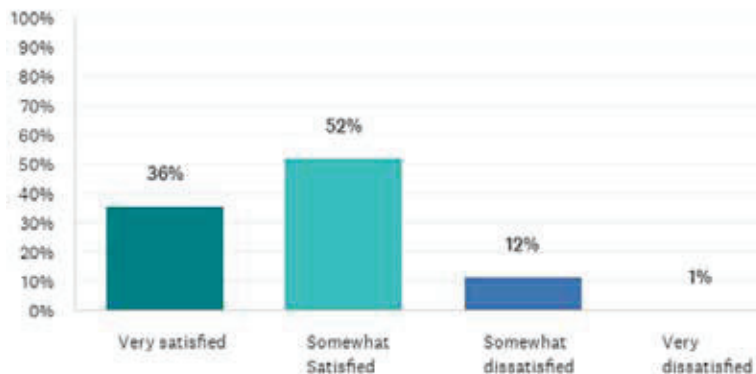
## Satisfaction with existing recreation and parks

### Are residents satisfied with La Center's recreation, parks, and open spaces?

Most residents are somewhat to very satisfied with La Center's recreation, parks, and open spaces (88%). However, more than one in ten survey respondents (12%) are either somewhat or very dissatisfied in the city's park and recreation system.

There were no significant differences in satisfaction between residents of various ages, between those with versus those without children at home, or between residents living in various areas of the city.

Figure 7. Rate your household's satisfaction with La Center recreation, parks, and open spaces.



### Why don't residents visit more often?

When asked why they do not visit La Center's parks or open spaces more often, nearly half of respondents responded that they do visit (46%). However, some respondents responded that they do not visit more often because of a lack of restrooms (17%) or because parks are too crowded or busy (11% each). Fewer than one in ten respondents stated that outdated equipment (9%), safety concerns (8%), lack of parking (8%), equipment availability (7%), and maintenance or cleanliness of parks (6%) prevented them from visiting more often.

Some respondents are too busy (11%), use parks or facilities provided by other cities or organizations (8%), or are generally not interested (1%), suggesting that further improvements would not increase their use of parks. In addition, multiple respondents wrote responses citing their age or ability, safety concerns or a lack of desired amenities (such as parking or a dog off leash area) in their response.

There were no significant differences between respondents of different ages, locations, or number of children in the home.

Figure 8. Why does your household not use La Center's parks or open spaces more often?

Reason	%
N/A – I/we use them often	46%
Not enough restrooms	17%
Too crowded	11%
Too busy	11%
Outdated equipment or facility	9%
Do not feel safe	8%
Use those provided by another city, organization, or private club	8%
Not enough parking	8%
Do not have the right equipment	7%
Are not well maintained / cleanliness	6%
I do not know what is offered	5%
Barriers related to physical accessibility	2%
Not interested	1%
Other	14%



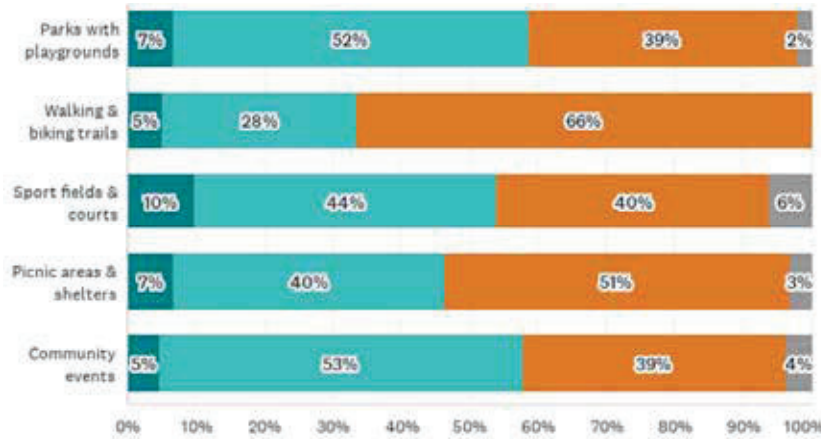
### Does the number of existing park and recreation amenities meet residents' needs?

Residents were generally split on whether they feel the City provides enough park, trails, and recreation facilities.

About two-thirds of survey respondents would like to see more walking and biking trails (66%), while 51% would like the City to provide more picnic areas and shelters. Approximately 40% of respondents would like to see more sports fields and courts, parks with playgrounds and open lawn areas, and community events.

**Figure 9.** When it comes to amenities provided by the City of La Center for meeting your needs for parks, trails, and recreation facilities, would you say there are...

■ More than enough ■ About the right number ■ Not enough ■ Don't Know



A majority of respondents between the ages of 20 and 75 years feel the City does not provide enough walking and biking trails. Younger respondents, those between 20 and 54 – were more likely than older respondents to feel there were not enough parks with playgrounds and sports fields. Respondents with children in their home are more likely than those without to believe there are not enough of every listed amenity except walking and biking trails. There were no significant differences between respondents who live in various areas of the City.

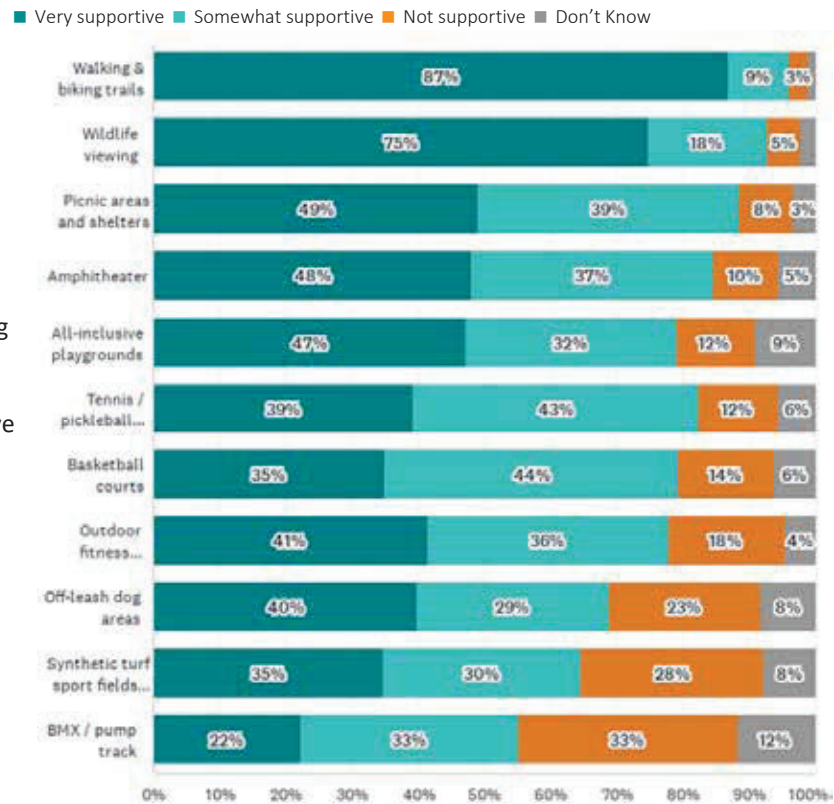
## Investment priorities

### What park and recreation amenities would residents support adding in La Center?

The survey asked residents about their support for a variety of potential additions to the park system. More than half of respondents were either very supportive or somewhat supportive of adding all listed amenities.

Virtually all respondents (96%) are either very or somewhat supportive of additional walking and biking trails (96%), places to view wildlife (93%). Large majorities are also supportive of the City adding more picnic areas and shelters (89%), and amphitheater (85%), tennis or pickleball courts (82%). About three in four respondents are also supportive of more basketball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, and all-inclusive playgrounds. More than half of respondents support the City adding more off-leash dog areas, synthetic turf fields with lighting, and a BMX / pump track.

**Figure 10.** The following list includes park amenities that the City of La Center could consider adding to the park system. Please indicate your level of support of each.



Younger respondents, especially those under 45, expressed a greater interest in sports fields and courts, a skatepark, and a BMX / pump track as compared to older respondents. Respondents with children at home were more likely to support additional inclusive playgrounds, synthetic turf sports fields, basketball courts, and BMX / pump tracks, as compared to those without children at home.

### What recreation and park investments would residents prioritize?

Residents were asked to rank a list of potential park and recreation investments. The top resident priorities are to expand trails and add amenities in existing parks, see Figure 11. Respondents then ranked renovating existing parks, buying land for new parks, and community events as their third, fourth, and fifth priorities, respectively.

Respondents did not vary significant in their priorities depending on their age, location, or whether they have children at home.

**Figure 11.** ... Indicate how you would rank the priority for each.



### Do residents have specific improvements they would like to see?

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of La Center do to improve parks, trails, recreation facilities, and/or open space. While respondents left 147 specific comments and ideas, a few themes emerged:

- Respondents would like to see expansion and improvement of the local trail system for walking and biking. Many comments also focused on ensuring trails were connected to each other and to major destinations like schools and parks. Some respondents requested improved information and signage and others are looking for unpaved trails suitable for mountain biking or trail running.
- Many respondents asked the City to continue to maintain the City's park system. In particular, numerous respondents expressed a desire for enhanced maintenance and safety of local parks and open spaces. Respondents mentioned concerns about general maintenance (including cleaning restrooms and weeding), homeless campsites, off leash dogs, security and the desire for increased police presence.
- Given the pace of recent development in La Center, a number of respondents commented that the City should take steps to protect access to open space and natural habitat for both people and wildlife.
- Some respondents expressed a desire for more and improved playgrounds, potentially featuring natural and/or accessible elements. Multiple commenters would like to see improved playground equipment at Holley Park and Heritage Park.
- Respondents expressed interest in, and enthusiasm for, specific park improvements, including the development of an off-leash dog park, pickleball courts, sports fields, and picnic shelters. Some respondents also requested more restrooms, water fountains, and lights in parks.
- Multiple respondents commented that they would like to see improvements made to river access points, including an improved launch under the bridge, additional non-motorized boat launches, and amenities like restrooms, picnic areas, and more parking.



## Communication preferences

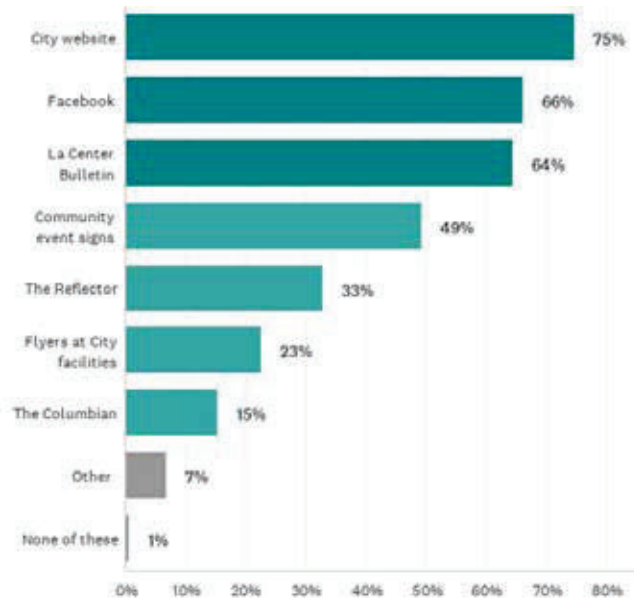
### How do residents want to hear about La Center's parks, programs, and events?

A majority (75%) of respondents prefer to learn about City parks, recreation facilities and special events through the City's website. About two-thirds of respondents would prefer to learn about City parks, recreation facilities and special events through Facebook (66%) and the La Center Bulletin (64%), as shown in Figure 12. These methods were popular across all age groups, though the City's website was generally preferred over Facebook by respondents under the age of 44 years while the website was more preferred by those over 45 years. The La Center Bulletin was top choice of respondents between the ages of 65 and 74.

Just under half of respondents prefer to learn about City offerings through community event signs. The Reflector, flyers at City facilities, and the Columbian were preferred by between 15% and 33% of respondents. Most respondents who selected "other" wrote in that they would prefer direct mail or email.

There were no significant differences in communication preferences between respondents living in different areas of the city or those with children in the home versus those without.

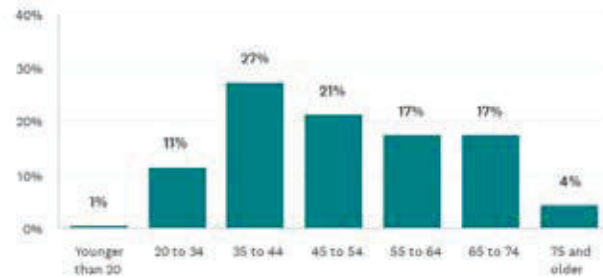
**Figure 12.** Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about La Center's parks, recreation facilities, and special events?



## Demographics

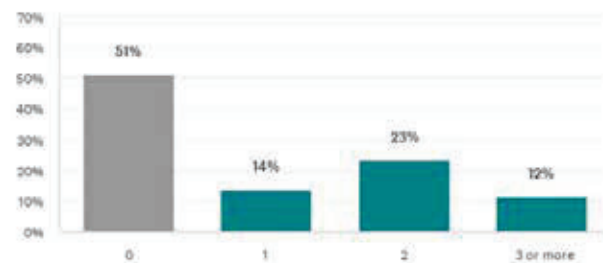
### Age

Approximately 39% of respondents were 44 years of age or younger with an equal percentage (39%) between the ages of 45 and 64. The remaining 22% of respondents were over the age of 65.



### Number of children in household

Approximately half (51%) of respondents live in a household with no children under 18, while the other half live in a household with either one (14%), two (23%), or three or more (12%) children.



### Location of residence

Nearly 90% of survey respondents live within the City of La Center, with 62% living north of the East Fork Lewis River and east of Aspen Avenue (map area B). About one quarter of respondents live north of the river but west of Aspen Avenue (map area A). A smaller portion of respondents, about 5%, live between the river and I-5 (map area C).

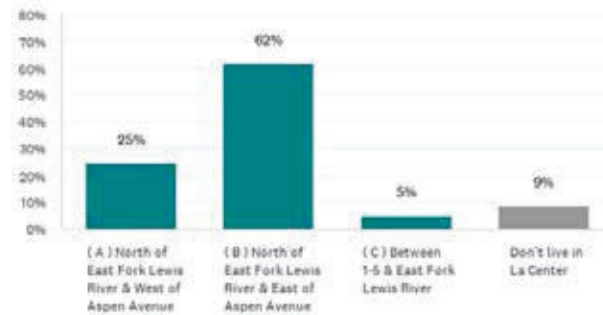
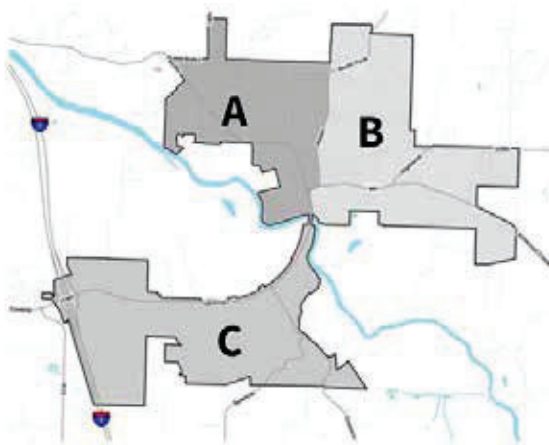


Figure 16. Location Map



- A) North of the East Fork Lewis River & West of Aspen Avenue
- B) North of the East Fork Lewis River & East of Aspen Avenue
- C) Between I-5 & East Fork Lewis River
- D) Don't live in La Center

---

## ATTACHMENT 1. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

---

### Question 7. What are the main reasons your household visited La Center parks or open spaces in the past year? (open-ended other responses)

---

- Fresh air, stress relief, enjoyment
- Outdoor playgroups
- Photography
- Photography
- Pokemon Go
- Soccer
- swimming
- The water front and trail is the number one reason we have stayed in La center! It's beautiful and convenient! We love la center!
- We are looking for a new Pickleball Court. I know multiple people in the community that would use it.
- We need a pool
- We need activities from parks and Rec for families .

---

### Question 6. Check ALL the reasons why your household does not use La Center park facilities or open spaces more often. (open-ended other responses)

---

- As a low vision resident, I can walk on the main path but can't deviate much and sometimes the paths and surrounding areas are wobbly, littered, or not well lit.
- Bored of same parks/trails
- Clean bathrooms
- Did not know about all the parks available
- Enjoy La Center parks & open spaces, but also enjoy visiting other parks/trails in other areas outside La Center.
- Go to Woodland to walk along river plus has lots of parking
- Have our own property to utilize/maintain.
- Have to drive to them. Would be nice to have one closer to where I live
- Horse manure not cleaned up, horse riders note safe, rude, horses unsafe to our dogs
- I do use the LC parks quite a bit as is.
- I like using the parks
- Kids not old enough for certain activities.
- my age and ability to walk
- Need dog area
- Need more variety
- Need more walking trails. Would bike if there was safe biking trails.
- Only a few options. More parks and trails would be great. Longer trails would also be nice.
- Out of the way; not easily walked to
- Physically limited.
- Sometimes teens making bad choices and do not want my young kids there
- Vandalism of cars at the park parking lot by the bridge.



- 
- We think La Center is a gem of town and feel lucky to live here, so we use the outdoor spaces daily
  - Would visit more if there was a dog park
  - Would visit more if there was a dog park
- 

---

**Question 11. If you wanted La Center to do just one thing to improve parks, trails, and/or open space areas, what would it be? (open-ended other responses)**

---

- A covered playground so kids can play on the many rainy days.
- A swimming pool!!!! we need a pool to educate kids on swimming and help prevent drowning and for people that cant walk /run
- Accessibility for mobility challenged community
- Add a Dog Park.
- Add a few more restrooms
- Add a fully synthetic turf sports complex for multiple sport use.
- Add a new Pickleball Court. We know 100+ people who would use it and love to bring the sport to the small community.
- Add a public pool
- Add a vendor and food cart area during the summer months. The Trump Mafia at the end of the bridge is not sufficient and many won't go to those because of the extremists. Were it in town and easily accessible, many would visit for more than just 'La Center Days'
- Add additional trails.
- Add another play structure to Holly Park, or update the one there.
- Add food carts or rentals and such down by river maybe In stern wheeler park. Take advantage of the river in summer
- Add more trails.
- Add more walking/running trails
- Add sidewalk and bike lane on the road to past the high school.
- Add sports fields to middle school
- Add walking/biking trails
- Adding a larger-scale playground (ADA-friendly) to a multi-use park would be so impacted to bring the community. The current playground options are too small.
- Adding a multi sport synthetic sports complex:)
- Adding bike trails, interconnecting existing trails, connecting schools, parks, scenic overlooks, Paradise Point, more designated bicycle shoulders/lanes/right of ways.
- adding more community based activities
- Additionally bathroom access and parking near the boat launches. Possibly additional access points to the river now that it's getting more known.
- Bathrooms
- better lighting
- Better small boat/ kayak/paddleboard put- ins.
- Bigger play structure for the kids at Holley Park!
- BMX pump track.
- Bolster the water front areas and trails.
- Bring back a police force to help us feel safe. The amount of crime happening within the town is insane. Why would I want to take my kid to parks in town when we don't feel safe?
- Bring our la center police back so we feel safe in our parks.

- Build a community outdoor pool
- Build a pool. Driving to Vancouver for lessons/teams is exhausting. There are so many opportunities with a pool type building.
- Build an off leash dog park
- Buy more land for parks. How about that stretch on Aspen from 10th to 13th? Lots of stuff could go there. Or riverfront land at 555 W 5th for sale? Lots of possibilities there too.
- Clean accessible restrooms
- Clean up some of the fringe areas better
- Connect trails for continuous walk/run
- Construct trail behind Elementary School so one can get from Holley Park area to the Bottoms without walking on Main Street. Then connect that back Bottoms trail to Breeze Creek trail (which may already be planned).
- Continue the good work
- Continue the purchase of former wetland and lead the restoration into wildlife habitat.
- Create more hiking trails, restore natural areas and remove invasive species. If I had one big wish list that we could get a big grant for would be a community pool for La Center residents. When I was growing up (in another state) we had a community pool and it gave kids a place for swim lessons, meet friends, give moms a break, and generally improved community ties. The high school kids could be the life guards. I would be willing to pay a yearly pool use fee. I don't have kids, but I think it would be good for the kids in the community. Other than that I just want more nature, more preserved land, more trails, more wildlife, more healthy ecosystems.
- Dedicated green spaces with wildlife habitats and corridors.
- Do t let them be developed! The trails are amazing!
- Dog Park: We would use it a great deal.
- Dog park!
- Drinking water
- Enforce dog leash laws. We have been attacked 3 times in the last year by off leash dogs.
- Ensure current standards of maintenance for existing parks, trails and open spaces is maintained.
- Ensure that they are safe! I no longer walk Breeze Creek or Sternwheeler trail alone anymore.
- Expand and improve on what we have
- Expand the walking trails along the river
- Expand trails
- Expand, connect, and maintain trail system.
- Expanded trails system; connecting Breeze Creek with access to LaCenter Bottoms trail (without having to go through the Elementary school. And extend riverfront trails
- Extend trail to Daybreak Park.
- Finish the trail system.
- Fix broken things at the park. Like the bench at heritage Park. For a while the little slide was broken with a big hole in it.
- Fix tennis court surface
- Fix the new kayak launch. It's too steep and dangerous.
- Focus on safety and cleanliness of the parks, keep homeless people/overnight parking out.
- For our family, new and updated playground equipment at Holley park would be the most used
- Have a community help day where the whole community can come together and help take care of the parks and trails. Painting, picking up trash, making trails, making a bike park etc. Maybe do it twice a year.
- have classes for Seniors such as Tai Chi
- Have the splash pad open more throughout the year and don't turn it off at 8:00pm
- I feel if we have to improved parks and open areas we need more police presence in the city to avoid vandalism and promote safety when at the parks

- 
- I would love to have more trails to walk and run on!
  - Improve the restrooms
  - Improve them
  - Increase law enforcement to make our parks, recreational areas, open spaces, city, neighborhoods safe. What good is having these parks, recreational areas and open spaces if you cannot keep them safe? This is ridiculous that the City Council is even sending this out, without addressing an issue the citizens of this city have been begging and clearly vocal about. Why are you turning deaf ears to the citizens?
  - Increase trails.
  - Keep existing trails safe
  - Keep the wildlife refuge at LaCenter bottoms, possibly expand the refuge and walking trails to make it a loop through the refuge.
  - La Center bottoms is becoming known as a great place to paddle (my family loves to paddle there too!!) . The bathrooms and parking are not keeping up with demand. I would like to see improved public bathroom facilities and parking for our over access areas and launches.
  - Let them be wild~ NO SPRAY!
  - Maintain (prune, weed) the greenery, trees, plants. Replace what you take out. Clean, safe restrooms and clean water fountains.
  - Maintain existing parks and trails.
  - Maintenance needs to be improved
  - Make more dog friendly walking trails
  - Make the area under the bridge better. The take out and in for kayak is not good and dangerous. Needs some work. And more walking trails that are safe b
  - Make the parks safe: Run off the homeless. Keep dogs on leash.
  - Make them look nice
  - Make them more interesting/beautiful (art, fountains, gardens, etc). They are currently very utilitarian.
  - Map or trail system / signage / connectivity of trails
  - Maybe a covered play area?
  - More Community Events. La Center has wonderful community events, they are always so much fun & have a good amount of interest
  - more connected trails around entire city
  - More covered areas with some picnic tables but not to fill all of covered area.
  - More events!
  - More hiking trails. Longer trails
  - More nature based play structures/equipment
  - More nature walks by the river
  - More places to ride bikes.
  - More play structures and outdoor fitness amenities
  - More protected open spaces, fewer new housing development. Especially high density development.
  - More running trails please :)
  - More running trails!!!
  - More shelter to be under
  - More signage/barriers to keep people out of green space/storm water area along between Heritage Trail and Southview Heights....bordered by Aspen and Heritage Loop
  - More single track trails
  - more trails



- 
- More trails
  - More trails
  - More trails for bikes and running.
  - More trails for bikes that avoid main roads and public spaces
  - More trails to run
  - More trails/greenways. Let's get a trail from La Center to Daybreak!
  - More variety of play equipment
  - More walking trails
  - More walking trails that are natural/in nature.
  - More/safer running/walking trails. The sidewalks only go so far, and the current trails help, but not far enough. Plus, you could offer 5k races and get permit fees from it.
  - multi purpose open space
  - Need more hiking and walking trails. Longer trails.
  - New playground equipment at Holley Park
  - off leash dog park
  - Off leash dog park
  - Off leash dog park I like our small town so we don't need a ton of outsiders coming in we should keep it local
  - Off leash dog park back in part of the trees in the southeast park of Holley park.
  - Open a dog park , off leash
  - Open the restrooms
  - patrol for safety, keep homeless out, monitor nasty talking kids
  - Picnic shelters
  - Please improve or make bigger and more usable beach area/picnic areas for families who use the beach area under the bridge. It needs help! It is very busy and popular spot but the beach area is not meeting the needs/demand for how popular it is. Also, we need another park/rec area attached to the new Middle School. These two things would help significantly.
  - Post how long the trail is.
  - Provide police protection.
  - purchase a large enough chunk of land (larger than Holly Park) to provide recreational youth soccer fields
  - Purchase the 4.1 acre lot currently for sale on Aspen and 11th and make a new park including dog park and sledding hill.
  - Restrooms and lighting
  - Safety
  - Some type of turf field with lighting.
  - Something for mountain bikers
  - Start charging to use riverfront Park if they do not live in La Center
  - Stop bringing in more houses.
  - Stop selling land to housing developments, and create more open areas instead that will benefit our whole community.
  - Synthetic turf fields
  - The play equipment at Holly Park needs updated. With how many people go to the splash pad, the play structure is waaaaay to small. Both my kids when they were toddlers have been pushed down there (by kids who were 5 plus— not out of meanness the other kids were sweet and playing but because there is only one up and down not multiple ways etc) . I love how a few of ridgefields parks actually have two separate equipment aimed at different ages.
  - The playground at my local park, Heritage, is outdated and many wood beams have become unsafe for kids to walk along. Updates are desperately needed.
  - The trail and lower parking area at the river beach and trail on the north side of the bridge have graffiti and damage to parking area and trail from vehicles

- Trails
- Upgrade Holley Park with new play structure
- Upgraded play structures for all ages of children
- Velosolutions BMX pump track
- We need a fenced dog park
- We need a more expansive park with lots to do (sports fields (rec leagues?), multiple playgrounds, events, etc, that is easily accessible, walkable, and also has enough parking. We do not need more housing before this and at least one grocery store is put in :D!
- We need more dog friendly walking trails. They do not have to be paved just free from obstruction.
- We need more parks
- Well maintained!
- WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE A DOG PARK IN TOWN

---

**Question 12. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about La Centers's parks, recreation facilities and special events. (open-ended other responses)**

---

- advertising by sewer treatment center
- e-mail
- electronic reader board by the bridge
- Email
- Email if one wanted to get it. Could sign up from L/C website and put article in Reflector and in newsletter.
- Email tobresidents
- How about some honest communication?
- Mail
- Mailing info to residents
- Mailings like this postcard or in sewer bill
- More signs for older residents that don't go online
- Newsletter with the sewer bilreader board.

## **Appendix B:**

### **Open House Meeting Summary**



**To:** Bryan Kast, Public Works Director  
**From:** Steve Duh, Conservation Technix, Inc.  
**Date:** April 13, 2023  
**Re:** **La Center Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan**  
Online Open House Summary Results

Conservation Technix is pleased to present the results of an online open house that explored residents' recreational needs and priorities following an online open house conducted in March 2023.

## METHODOLOGY

An online open house was prepared to provide residents an opportunity to respond to a series of questions about park and recreation programs, services, and facilities.

The City of La Center conducted outreach with the public between March 24 and April 7, 2023 to share information about the La Center Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and solicit input about which park and recreation programs, services and facilities are important to them.

The online open house was promoted via the city's website, social media and flyers posted throughout the city and in city parks. The survey was closed on April 7<sup>th</sup>, and preliminary data were compiled and reviewed. In all, 81 responses were collected.

This report includes findings of community opinions. Each section also notes key differences between different demographic groups and among responses to the online-only survey, where applicable. Percentages in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



## RESULTS

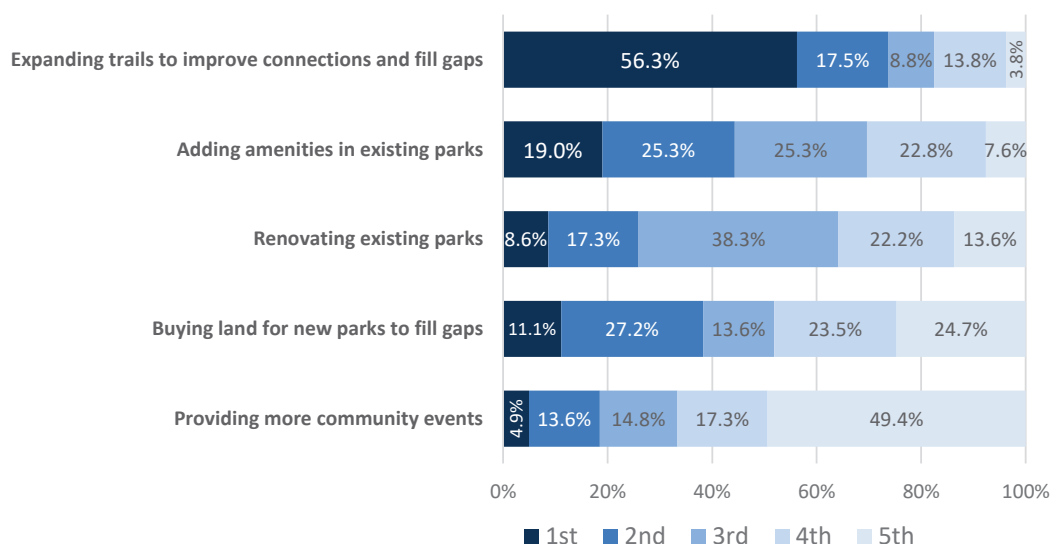
### What recreation and park investments would residents prioritize?

As a way to explore some of the community priorities noted in the community survey from February, the online open house asked respondents to consider their priority for a sampling of project types that were favorably noted in the community survey.

In a forced ranking question, respondents indicated the top priority as expanding trails to improve connections and fill gaps, with 56% of respondents noting this as their first priority. Park improvements were the focus of the second and third priorities, with adding amenities in existing parks (2<sup>nd</sup> priority) and renovating existing parks (3<sup>rd</sup> priority). The sentiment toward supporting park development aligns with community survey data where respondents indicated an unmet need for picnic areas, developed parks with playgrounds and walking trails.

Few differences were noted in the responses by subgroups (age, households with children, and geography). Respondents without children in the household had a slightly stronger response for expanding trails as a high priority. Also, respondents in Area C (between 1-5 & East Fork Lewis River) had a slightly stronger response for adding amenities to existing parks as a priority.

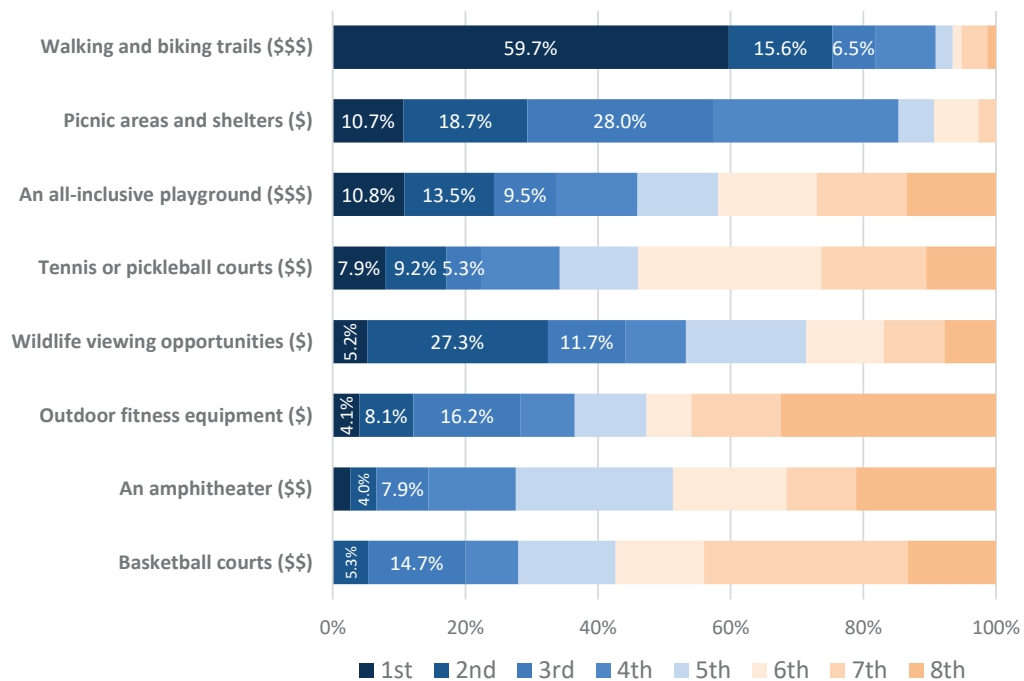
- How would you prioritize the following potential investments for the La Center's park and recreation system?  
Re-order the list to rank in order of preference with highest as 1<sup>st</sup> and lowest as 5<sup>th</sup>.



A second prioritization question sought to explore community priorities for a specific selection of potential recreational amenities or improvements to the La Center park system. Hypothetical relative costs were indicated by the use of dollar symbols (\$) for each system investment. Of the choices provided, a majority of respondents noted walking and biking trail as the top priority (60%). Providing picnic areas and shelters, adding all-inclusive playgrounds and providing for wildlife viewing opportunities also ranked as top tier priority improvements of interest. The remaining items listed

pertain to specialized facilities that were supported as priorities by fewer respondents. No significant responses were noted by subgroups.

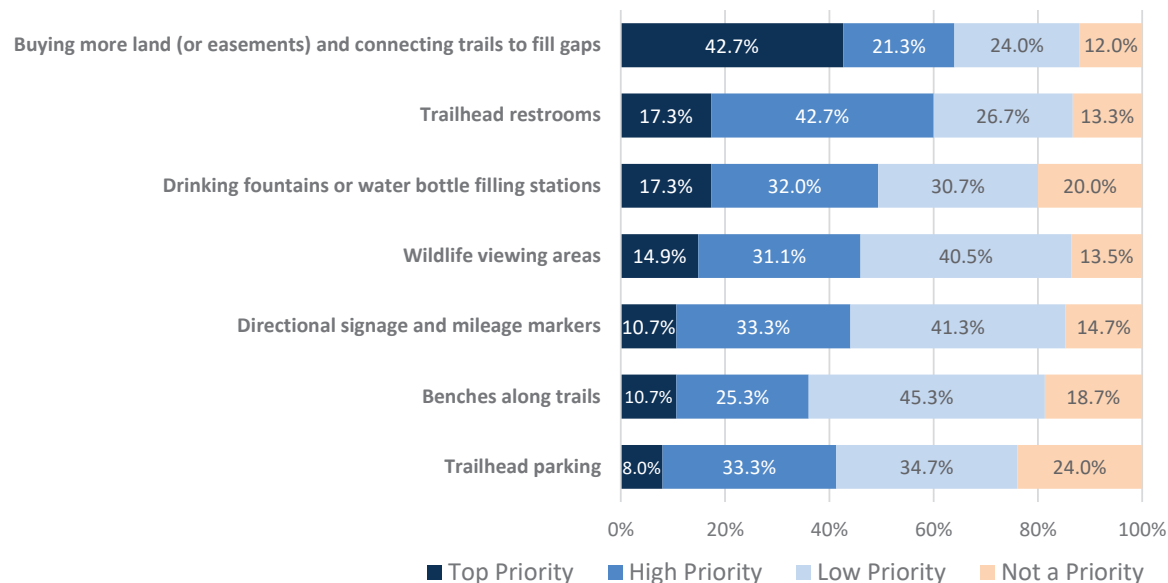
2. The winter 2023 community survey identified support for additional walking and biking trails, wildlife viewing opportunities, picnic areas and shelters, an amphitheater, tennis or pickleball courts, an all-inclusive playground, basketball courts, and outdoor fitness equipment. For the following list of eight potential park improvements, re-order the list to indicate how you would prioritize each (1st priority is highest and 8th priority of lowest). Cost estimates are shown as \$ (somewhat expensive), \$\$ (moderately expensive) or \$\$\$ (very expensive).



A third prioritization question focused on trail system improvements. Consistent with prior responses, a majority indicated that buying more land for trail connections as the top or a high priority. For other trail improvements, restrooms and drinking fountains were supported as high priorities to install along trails. Support for the remaining items listed was mixed and noted as priorities by fewer respondents. No significant responses were noted by subgroups.



3. Expanding the City's trail system was identified as the overall, highest priority for improving the La Center's park system. Of the range of potential types of trail system improvements, which of the following projects should be implemented in the immediate future (next 1 to 3 years)?

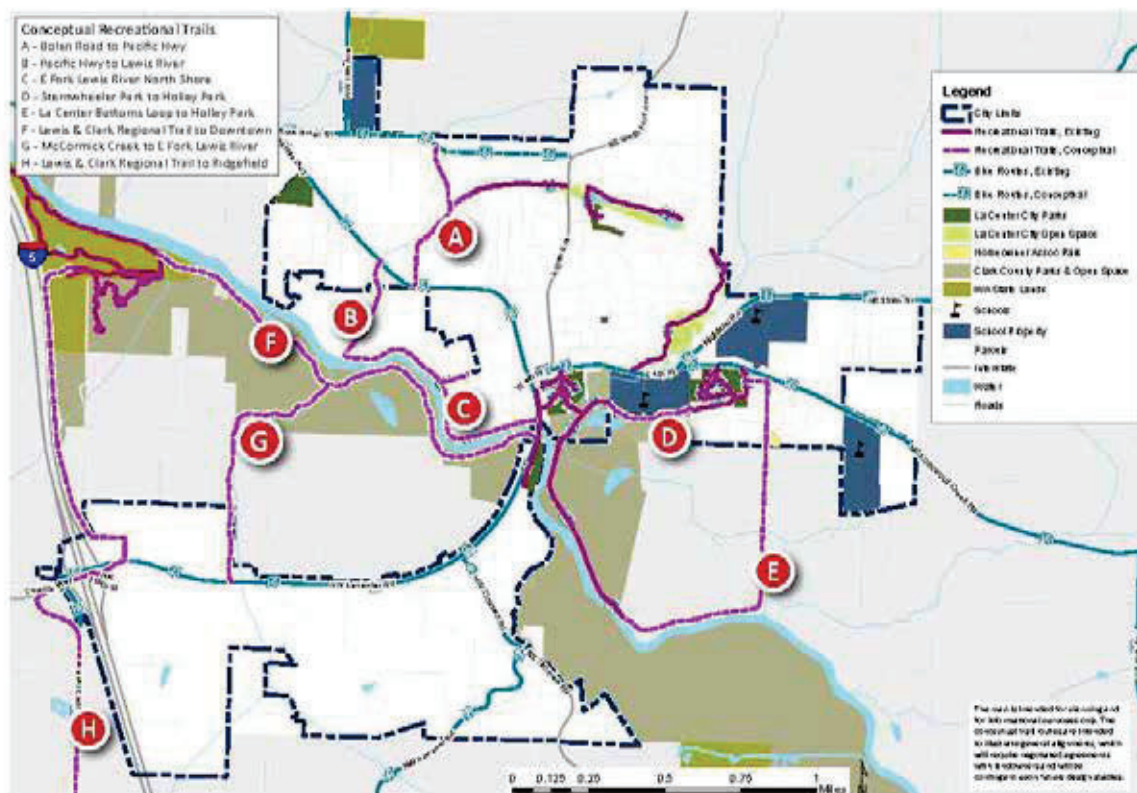
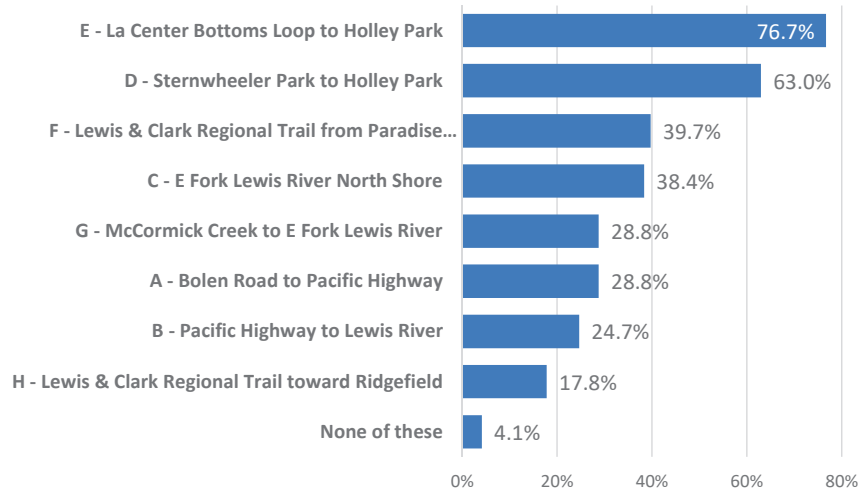


### Which conceptual trail corridors do residents prioritize?

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.

Majorities of respondents favored an alignment from La Center Bottoms to Holley Park (77%) and from Sternwheeler Park to Holley Park (63%). 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%) and an alignment along the E Fork Lewis River North Shore (39%). None of the other alignments were noted as priorities by more than one-third of respondents. No significant responses were noted by subgroups.

4. Thinking about trails and paths, which potential trail connections are the highest priority for your household? (Select up to 4.)

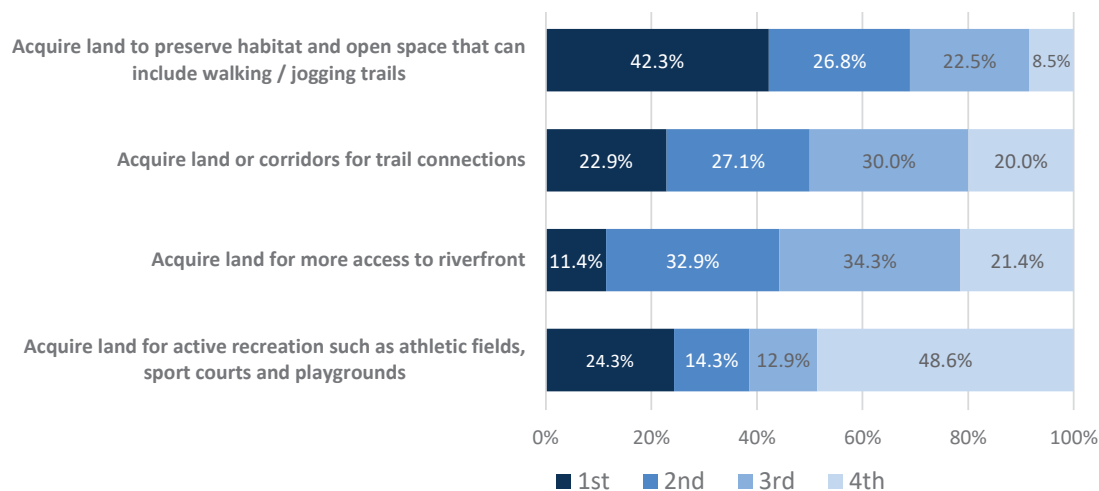


### What priorities exist for land acquisition?

The online open house targeted a question to explore community sentiment and preferences toward land acquisitions. The online open house also included a map graphic illustrating ½-mile travelsheds for existing developed parks to highlight the extent of the city that is within a ½-mile of a park (see map on following page).

The question focused on the types of land that might need to consider for acquisitions, if the city were to pursue additional purchases. Respondents were asked to rank in priority from a selection of four choices. A plurality of respondents (42%) supported as the top priority the acquisition of open space and habitat lands that also can include walking and jogging trails. The second highest ranked priority was for the acquisition of land or corridors to accommodate trail connections. Community sentiment toward the support of land acquisition to accommodate trail corridors also aligns with survey results from February, where ‘expanding trail opportunities’ was noted a top priority. No significant responses were noted by subgroups.

5. If the City were to acquire additional parkland, re-order the list to rank your priorities (1st as highest priority and 4th as lowest priority).

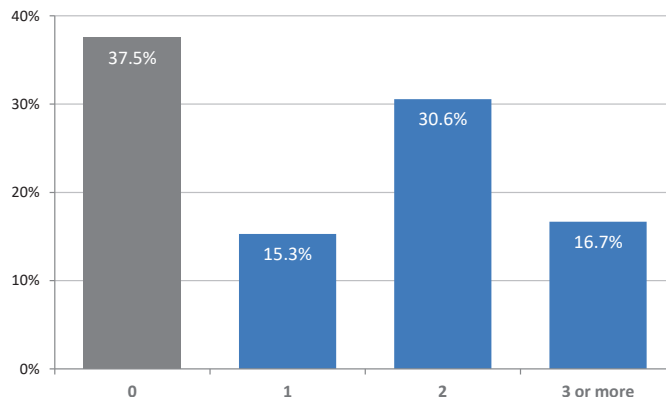




## Demographics

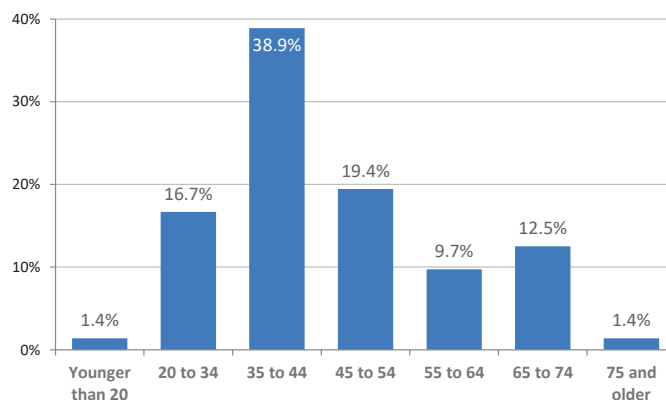
### Number of children in household

Approximately one-third (37%) of respondents live in a household with no children under 18, while the other two-thirds live in a household with either one (15%), two (31%), or three or more (17%) children. This segmentation in households by number of children includes more responses by households with children than the responses from the December to February online-only community survey.



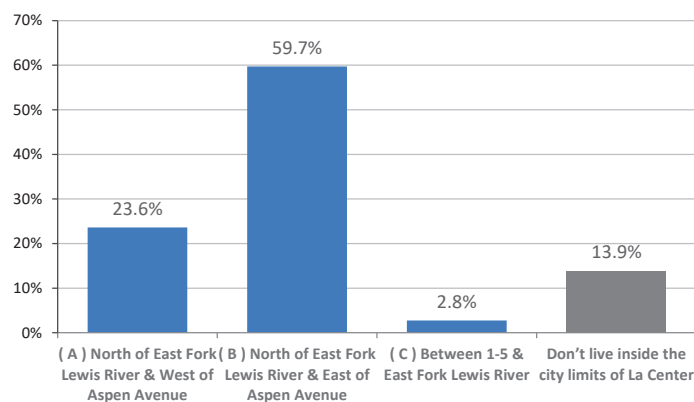
### Age

Approximately 40% of respondents were between 35 and 44 years of age, and slightly more than half of all respondents (56%) were younger than 45. Approximately one-fifth of respondents were between 45 and 54 years of age, and nearly one-quarter of responses were over 55 years of age. Respondents to this online open house were slightly younger than respondents who participated in the community survey.

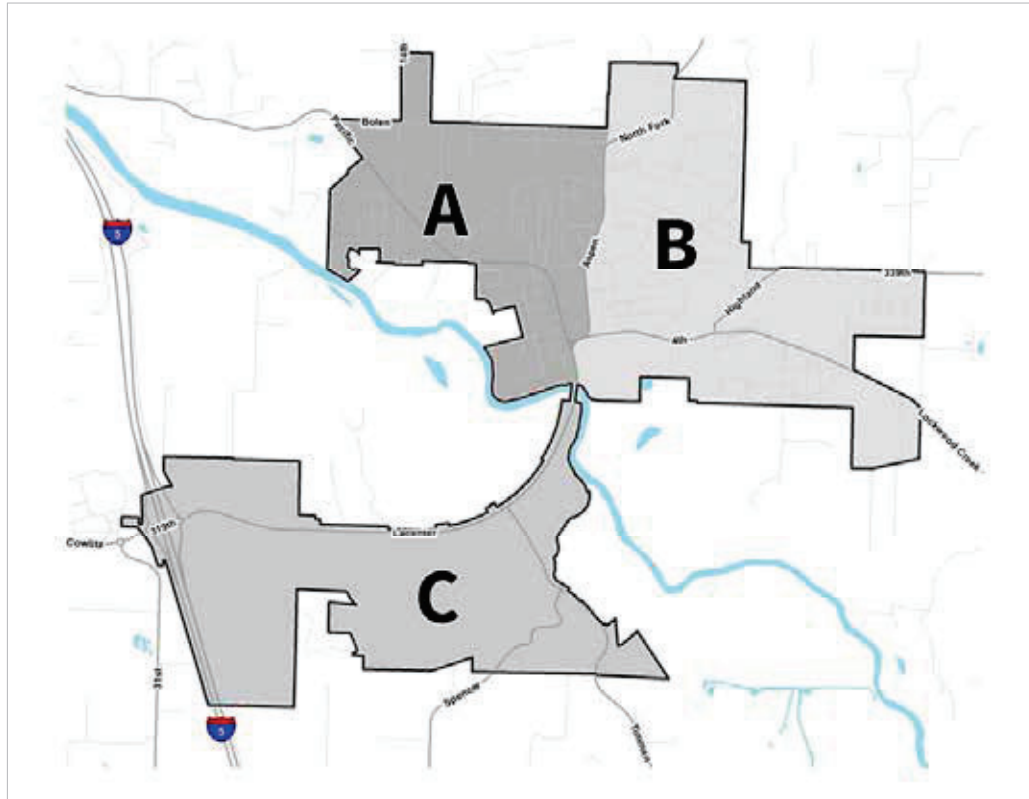


### Location of residence

Nearly 90% of survey respondents live within the City of La Center, with 60% living north of the East Fork Lewis River and east of Aspen Avenue (map area B). About one-quarter of respondents live north of the river but west of Aspen Avenue (map area A). These responses align very closely to the responses from the December to February online-only community survey.



Location Map



## ATTACHMENT 1. OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES

Question 4. Thinking about trails and paths, which potential trail connections are the highest priority for your household?  
(open-ended "other" responses)

- Please keep in mind the impact of these proposed trails to the private landowners whose land you wish to make trails on. We have seen first hand that people do not read signs and trespass on private property when in proximity to an available access point. Also, your plan for letter D has people crossing a private owned road for which you have no easement for. I know because I live on NE Ivy and fought the holley park subdivision developers who put a trail there so people could get to the school. Now we have tons of people on our road with no easement and right to. Now you're proposing to add additional crossing traffic on essentially our driveway. Due your due diligence. The road is owned by Peter Schlentz, not the school district. Use the clark county gis map to check on encroaching on private property before offering this up to the community.
- A dedicated bike/walking path along NW Pacific Hwy from Bolen Rd to 10th St



**To:** Bryan Kast, Public Works Director  
**From:** Steve Duh, Conservation Technix, Inc.  
**Date:** April 13, 2023  
**Re:** **La Center Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan**  
Online Open House Summary Results

---

Conservation Technix is pleased to present the results of an online open house that explored residents' recreational needs and priorities following an online open house conducted in March 2023.

## METHODOLOGY

An online open house was prepared to provide residents an opportunity to respond to a series of questions about park and recreation programs, services, and facilities.

The City of La Center conducted outreach with the public between March 24 and April 7, 2023 to share information about the La Center Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and solicit input about which park and recreation programs, services and facilities are important to them.

The online open house was promoted via the city's website, social media and flyers posted throughout the city and in city parks. The survey was closed on April 7<sup>th</sup>, and preliminary data were compiled and reviewed. In all, 81 responses were collected.

This report includes findings of community opinions. Each section also notes key differences between different demographic groups and among responses to the online-only survey, where applicable. Percentages in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.



PAGE LEFT INTENTIONALLY BLANK

# Appendix C:

## Recreation Trends



The following summaries from recognized park and recreation resources provide background on national, state and local park and recreation trends. Examining current recreation trends may inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities to enhance programs and services.

## 2022 NRPA AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The 2022 National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review summarizes the key findings from their Park Metrics benchmarking tool and is intended to assist park and recreation professionals in effectively managing and planning their operating resources and capital facilities. The report offers a comprehensive collection of park- and recreation-related benchmarks and insights to inform professionals, key stakeholders, and the public about the state of the park and recreation industry. The 2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review contains data from over 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported between 2019 and 2021.

### Key Findings & Characteristics

Park facilities and operations vary greatly across the nation. The typical agency participating in the NRPA park metric survey serves a jurisdiction of approximately 44,106 people, but population size varies widely across all responding jurisdictions. The typical park and recreation agency has jurisdiction over 21 parks comprising over 496 acres. Park facilities also have a range of service levels in terms of acres of parkland per population and residents per park. These metrics are categorized by the agency's population size.

#### Park Facilities

The typical park and recreation agency has:

- One park for every 2,323 residents
- 10.4 acres of park land for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction
- 14 miles of trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking

Figure C1. Median Residents per Park Based On Population Size

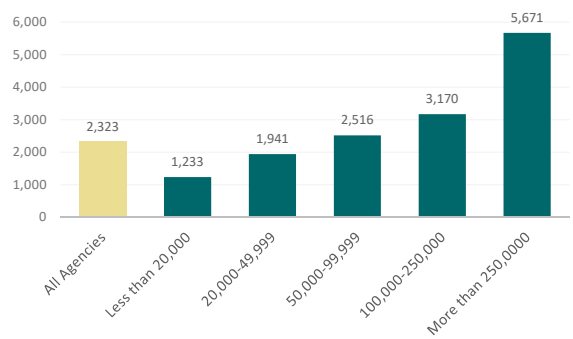
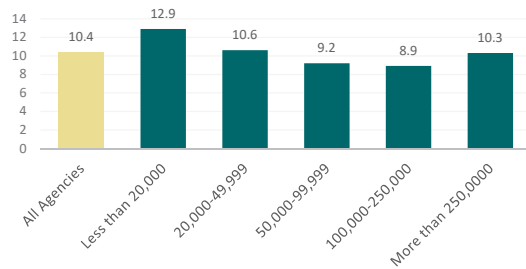


Figure C2. Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents based on Population Size



A large majority of park and recreation agencies provide playgrounds (95%) and basketball courts (86%) in their portfolio of outdoor assets. Most agencies offer community and/or recreation centers (64%), while two in five offer senior centers.

The typical park and recreation agency that manages or maintains trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking has 14 miles of trails. Agencies serving more than 250,000 residents have a median of 91 miles of trails under their care.

Park and recreation agencies often take on responsibilities beyond their core functions of operating parks and providing recreational programs. Other responsibilities may include tourist attractions, golf courses, outdoor amphitheaters, indoor swim facilities, farmer's markets, indoor sports complexes, campgrounds, performing arts centers, stadiums/arenas/racetracks, fairgrounds and/or marinas.

## Programming

More than eight in ten agencies provide themed special events (90% of agencies), team sports (87%), social recreation events (88%), youth summer camps (83%), fitness enhancement classes (82%), and health and wellness education (80%).

## Staffing

Park and recreation employees are responsible for operations and maintenance, programming and administration. The typical park and recreation agency has:

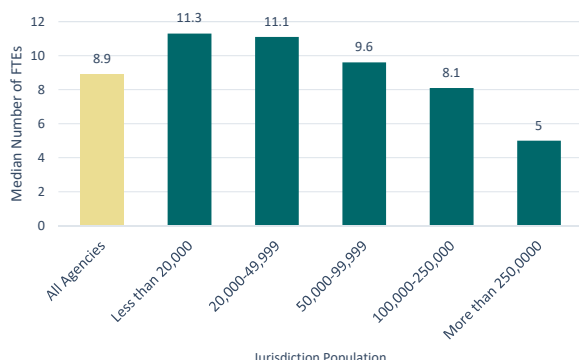
- 49.4 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) on payroll
- 8.9 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in its jurisdiction
- Median FTE counts also positively correlate with the number of acres maintained, the number of parks maintained, operating expenditures, and the population served. For example, agencies that serve populations between 20,000 and 49,999 residents employ an average of 11.8 FTE, while agencies that serve 50,000 to 99,000 people employ an average of 64.1 FTE.

Figure C3. Park and Recreation Agency Staffing: Full-Time Equivalents (By Jurisdiction Population)



Another way of comparing agency staffing across different park and recreation agencies examines number of staff per 10,000 residents. These comparative numbers hold fairly steady across population sizes with the median for all agencies at 8.9 FTEs.

Figure C4. Park and Recreation Agency FTEs Per 10,000 Residents



## Capital and Operating Expenses

For capital expenses, the typical park agency:

- Dedicates about 56% to renovation projects and 30% to new development projects.
- Plans to spend about \$8 million on capital expenditures over the next five years.

For operations, the typical park agency spends:

- \$5 million per year on total operating expenses
- \$7,823 on annual operating expenses per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency
- \$93 on annual operating expenses per capita
- \$102,530 in annual operating expenditures per employee
- 54% of the annual operating budget on personnel costs, 38% on operating expenses, and 5% on capital expenses not included in the agency's capital improvement plan (CIP)
- 45% of its operating budget on park management and maintenance, 42% on recreation, and 13% on other activities

## Agency Funding

The typical park and recreation agency:

- Derives 61% of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support, 23% from generated revenues, 8% from dedicated taxes or levies, and 4% from grants, sponsorships and other sources
- Generates \$22 in revenue annually for each resident in the jurisdiction

## 2022 STATE OF THE INDUSTRY REPORT

Recreation Management magazine's 2022 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry summarizes the opinions and information provided by a wide range of professionals (with an average 21.9 years of experience) working in the recreation, sports, and fitness industry.

## Partnerships

The 2022 report indicated that most (82.3%) recreation, sports, and fitness facility owners form partnerships with other organizations as a means of expanding their reach, offering additional programming opportunities or as a way to share resources and increase funding. Local schools are shown as the most common partner



(59.6%) for all facility types. Youth-serving organizations (Ys, JCC, Boys & Girls Clubs) and park and recreation organizations were the most likely to report that they had partnered with outside organizations, at 98% and 94% respectively.

## Revenue Outlook

The year 2020 represented a dramatic departure from the norm, with nearly two-thirds (64.9%) of respondents indicating that their revenues for the year were lower than the previous year. By 2021, the number reporting a drop in revenue fell to 26.7%—still a dramatically different result from most survey years, but an obvious improvement over 2020. At the same time, while only 13.4% of respondents saw their revenues increase in 2020, by 2021, more than half (51.7%) were reporting revenues on the rise again. Respondents were much more optimistic about 2022 and 2023, with 60% indicating they expect to see higher revenues in both years. At the same time, 9.8% still expect revenues to fall in 2022.

## Facilities and Improvements

A majority of park respondents (43%) reported plans to add features at their facilities and were also the most likely to be planning to construct new facilities in the next few years (39%).

The top 10 planned features for all facility types include:

1. Splash play areas (21.4% of respondents with plans to add features are planning to add splash play)
2. Synthetic turf sports fields (19.5%)
3. Playgrounds (17.7%)
4. Fitness centers (15.5%)
5. Park shelters (14.1%)
6. Dog parks (13.6%)
7. Park restroom structures (12.7%)
8. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (12.3%)
9. Exercise studio rooms (11.8%)
10. Disc golf courses (11.8%)
11. Concession areas (11.8%)

## Programming

Nearly all respondents (96.4%) offer programming of some kind. The top 10 most commonly offered programs include: holiday events and other special events (provided by 57% of respondents); day camps and summer camps (54%); group exercise programs (53%); fitness programs (53%); educational programs (51%); youth sports teams (50%); mind-body balance programs such as yoga and tai chi (43%); arts and crafts programs (41%); adult sports teams (38%); and programs for active older adults (38%).

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

1. Mind-body balance programs (29.9%, up from 23.4% in 2021)
2. Fitness programs (27.9%, up from 25.5%)
3. Group exercise programs (27.9%, up from 25.7%)
4. Educational programs (25.9%, up from 20.8%)
5. Arts and crafts programs (21.9%, up from 17.4%)

6. Teen programs (21.9%, down from 23.7%)
7. Functional fitness programs (21.4%, up from 17.8%)
8. Performing arts programs (21.4%, up from 17.4%)
9. Environmental education (20.9%, up from 20%)
10. Holidays and other special events (20.4%, down from 21%)

## General Challenges

Facility managers were asked about the challenges they anticipated impacting their facilities in the future. Generally, overall budgets are the top concern for most respondents including staffing (63%) and their ability to support equipment and facility maintenance needs (50%).

With COVID-19's impact on the wane, we asked respondents to tell us about their top goals for their facilities in the coming year. The most common responses centered around increasing participation and membership, as well as building and renovating facilities. Recruiting and training staff, as well as just "getting back to normal" also made up a large number of the responses.

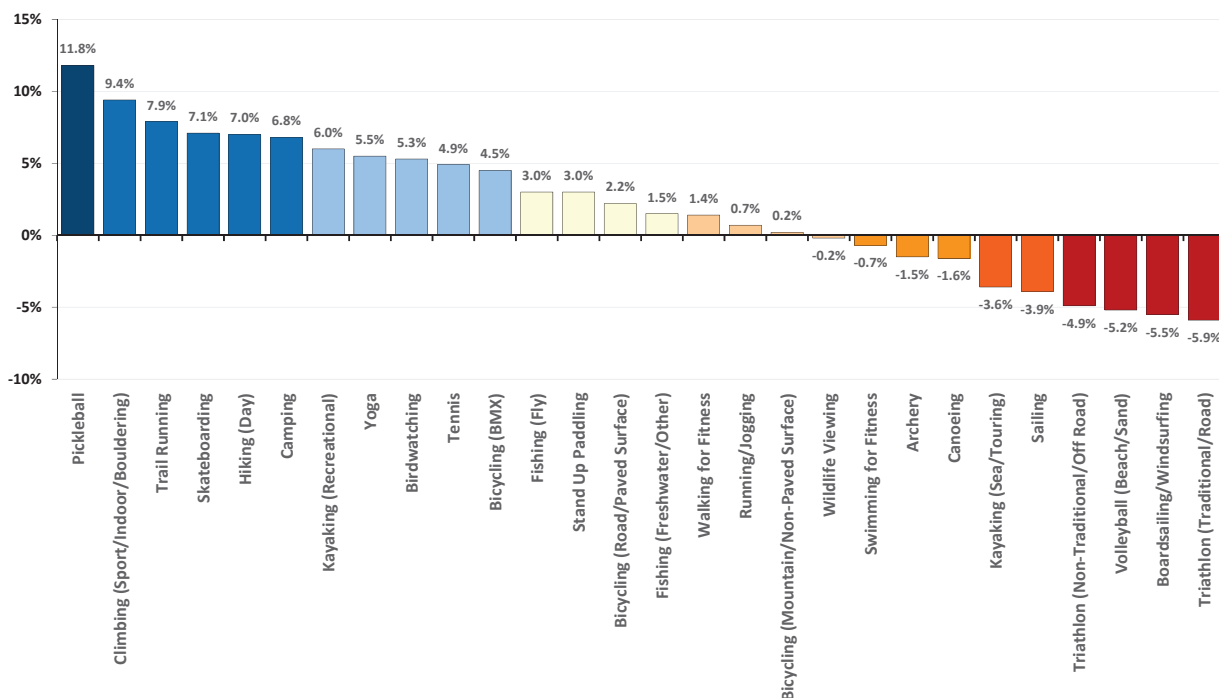
## 2022 OUTDOOR PARTICIPATION REPORT

### Overall Participation

According to the 2022 Outdoor Participation Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation, just over half (54%) of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation at least once in 2021. The outdoor participant base has increased 6.9% since the COVID pandemic began in early 2020.

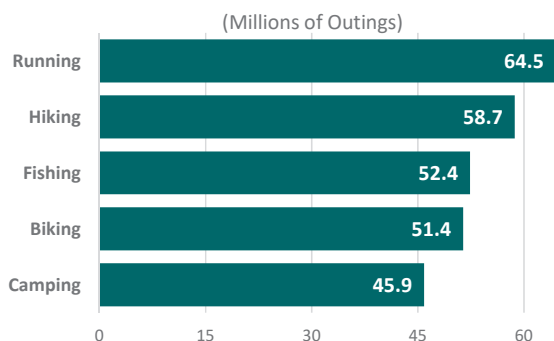
The number of outdoor outings was up 8.4% in 2021 to 12.4 billion outings – matching the 2012 high-water mark. The average number of outdoor outings per participant increased 6.1% in 2021 to 75.6 outings per participant. The frequency of outings also was strong. One-third of the 164 million participants in outdoor recreation recorded 52 or more outdoor activities per year (or one outdoor activity at least once per week or more).

Figure C5. 5-Year Change in Outdoor Sports Participation



Running, jogging and trail running in the most popular outdoor activity by levels of participation, as shown in the chart below, followed by hiking, fishing, biking, and camping.

Figure C6. Most Popular Outdoor Activities by Participants, Nationwide



New outdoor participants are more diverse than the overall outdoor participant base and are driving increasing diversity not only by ethnicity but also across age groups. However, despite slight increases in diversity across outdoor recreation, the current participant base is less diverse than the overall population and significantly less diverse across younger age groups. Notably, the projections show a decline in the number of white persons, and no ethnicity with a majority share of the total population. Currently 72% of outdoor recreation participants are white. If the outdoor participant base does not become more diverse over the next thirty years, the percentage of outdoor recreation participants in the population could slip from 54% today to under 40% by 2060.

## Youth Participation Increases

Over the past two years, participation rates are up across the board for America's youth. Since 2019, girls ages 6 to 12 are now participating at a rate 4.9% higher, and girls 13 to 17 are now participating at rate 5.3% higher. Males ages 13 to 24 were less impacted by the pandemic; their participation rates increased less than 2%. Time will tell if these impacts continue to push girls and boys toward parity in outdoor participation in the future or if the gains made by girls will fade as participants return to pre-pandemic behavioral patterns.

America's children are spending more time outdoors over the past decade, and the COVID pandemic accelerated that trend. Overall, the percentage of America's kids participating in outdoor recreation was high in 2021, at just over 70%. Younger kids (ages 6 to 12) participated at higher rates than older kids (ages 13 to 17).

## Female Participation Continues to Grow

In 2021, the share of female core participants hit a record high of 44.6% of the participant base. The record number of females participating was set in 2013 at 44.7 million female, 1.7 million more than participated in 2021.

## 2022 SPORTS, FITNESS, AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES TOPLINE PARTICIPATION REPORT

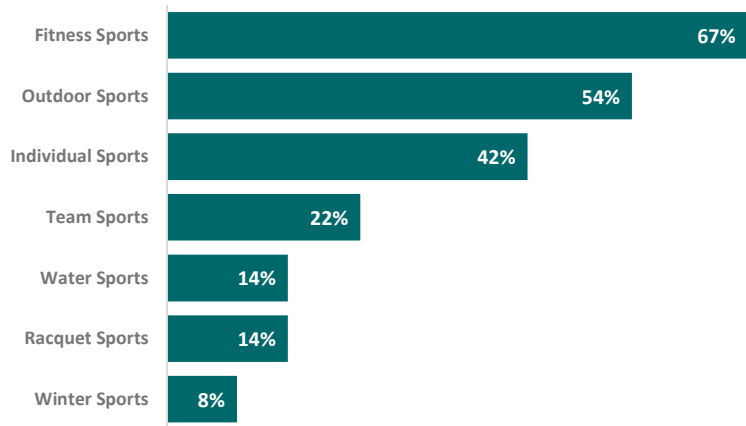
Prepared by a partnership of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and the Physical Activity Council (PAC), this February 2022 participation report summarizes levels of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation in the US. The report is based on over 18,000 online interviews of a nationwide sample that provides a high degree of statistical accuracy using strict quotas for gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity. The study looked at more than 100 different team and individual sports and outdoor activities.



Compared to 2016, activity increased by 7.8% or 16.8 million people. In 2021, there were more things to do as outdoor activities thrived, fitness at home became more popular, and team sports started back up after the COVID-19 hiatus. Sports that made great strides in the last several years include pickleball, indoor climbing, kayaking, trail running, and day hiking.

Fitness sports continue to be the go-to means of exercise for Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials. Boomers were active in all sorts of activities in 2021. Whether it was going back to the gym after restrictions lifted, joining a virtual streaming fitness group, working out at home, trying their hand at pickleball, or venturing out to a hiking path, Boomers had the highest increase in participation compared to other generations.

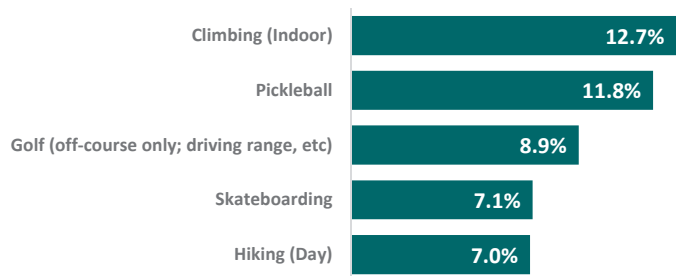
Figure C6. 2021 Total Participation Rate by Activity Category (U.S. population, ages 6+)



Fitness sports continue to be the most popular activity type. Other sports activities, including individual sports, team sports, and winter sports have seen a modest decline in participation since 2019 (pre-pandemic). Other participation data include the following:

- One big take away from 2021 was while health and fitness clubs reopened, the pandemic still impacted individuals' participation in fitness activities. While most fitness activities began to rebound from 2020 club closures, these rates have not fully bounced back to 2019 numbers.
- Yoga continued to have one of the largest gains in fitness activities. In 2021, 34.3 million people practiced yoga, up 4.7% from 2020, and averaged 5.5% increase over the last five years.
- Aquatic exercise took a hit in participation rates as it did in 2020. Partly due to temporary gym and fitness club closures, as well as the reluctance of the 65+ community to return to indoor group activities.
- Team sports were hit hard at the start of the pandemic in 2020. Sports that were typically played inside and with a team suffered the most. However, in 2021 some of these sports rebounded.

Figure C7. Activities with the Highest 5-year Increase in Participation (average annual growth, 2016-2021)



## AMERICANS ENGAGEMENT WITH PARKS SURVEY

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

- Eighty-three percent of survey respondents — the equivalent of 275 million people in the United States — visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the 12-month period ending in May 2022.
- Eighty-four percent of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.
- 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.
- Nine out of ten people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local government.

According to the Americans Engagement with Parks report,

*“Parks and recreation’s success results from its vast offerings of parks, trail networks and other recreation facilities that deliver critical programs for every segment of a community. Each person’s relationship with parks and recreation is unique. Some people flock to their local park to stay physically fit, meet with friends and family, or reconnect with nature. Others depend on their local park and recreation agency for indispensable services that improve their lives.*

*But there remains much work to do. One-hundred million people do not live within a walkable distance of at least one park or recreation facility. Further, many survey respondents indicate they have felt unwelcome at a park or recreation facility or say the infrastructure and programming are not inclusive. Parks and recreation is for everyone — regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Professionals, advocates and political leaders have the opportunity to narrow any accessibility or inclusivity gaps through greater community engagement and addressing inequitable funding and infrastructure investments that have deprived millions of people of access to parks and recreation.”*

## WASHINGTON STATE RECREATION AND CONSERVATION PLAN

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

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

## Sustain & Grow the Legacy

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

## Improve Equity

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

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

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

Figure C9. Participation Rates for Washington Residents in Outdoor Activities

Participation Rates for Top 12 Categories	
Activity	%
Walking	94%
Nature activities	89%
Leisure activities at parks	82%
Swimming	68%
Sightseeing activities	67%
Hiking	61%
Outdoor sports	48%
Water-based activities (freshwater)	46%
Camping	45%
Trending activities	33%
Snow and ice activities	30%
Bicycling	28%

## Get Youth Outside

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



Figure C10. Youth Participation Rates for Washington Residents in Outdoor Activities

Youth Participation Rates	
Activity	%
Walking	88%
Leisure in parks	78%
Trending activities	77%
Fishing in freshwater	77%
Nature-based activities	75%
Bicycling	74%
Freshwater-based activities*	66%
Target shooting	62%
Hiking	57%
Outdoor sports	57%
Off-road vehicle riding	57%
Fishing in saltwater	53%

\*(not swimming)

## Plan for Culturally Relevant parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics

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

## Assert Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service

The plan recognizes that outdoor recreation contributes to a strong economy and is a public investment like other public services and infrastructure. The report cites the Outdoor Industry Association and other economic studies that reinforce the importance of park and recreation services locally, regionally and statewide.

## 2019 SPECIAL REPORT ON PADDLESPO RTS & SAFETY

In 2019, the Outdoor Foundation produced a report focused on paddlesports data based on a participation survey (over 20,000 online interviews with a nationwide sample of individuals and households). In 2018, 22.9 million Americans (approximately 7.4% of the population) participated in paddle sports. This represents an increase of more than 4 million participants since the study began in 2010. Over the last five years, there continues to be an increase in paddlesports popularity among outdoor enthusiasts, with significant portions of the nationwide growth occurring in the Pacific region.

Recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity but may be driving some of the decline in canoeing. The popularity of stand-up paddling has soared, increasing by 1.5 million participants over the past five years, though it does not have nearly as high a participation rate as either recreational kayaking or canoeing.

Most paddlers are Caucasian, other racial and ethnic groups are largely under-represented. However, Caucasian participation has remained relatively flat while participation by people identifying as Hispanic or Black/African American has grown by 0.5% to 1% per year since 2013. This growth has led to more than 773,000 new Hispanic paddlers in just six years, signaling the importance and potential of engaging minority groups in paddlesports.

One in eight paddlers have been participating in the sport for 21 years or more. However, many participants – between thirty and sixty percent, depending on the discipline – tried a paddlesport for the first time in 2018. Such high levels of first-time participation may produce longer term growth in paddling, assuming participants continue to enjoy the sport.

Among adult paddlers, most participate for excitement and adventure, for exercise, or to be close to nature. Kayakers, rafters, canoers and stand-up paddlers often enjoy, or would be willing to try, other paddlesports. Many also enjoy similar outdoor “crossover” activities such as hiking, camping, walking, and nature viewing.

# Appendix D:

## Implementation Tools & Tactics



## LOCAL FUNDING OPTIONS

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

### Councilmanic Bonds

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

### General Obligation Bond

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

### Excess Levy – One Year Only

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

### Regular Property Tax - Lid Lift

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

A levy lid lift is an instrument for increasing property tax levies for operating and/or capital purposes. Taxing districts with a tax rate that is less than their statutory maximum rate may ask the voters to "lift" the levy lid by increasing the tax rate to some amount equal to or less than their statutory maximum rate. A simple majority vote of citizenry is required.

Cities and counties have two "lift" options available to them: Single-year/basic or Multi-year.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Sales Tax

Paid by the consumer, sales tax is a percentage of the retail price paid for specific classifications of goods and services within the State of Washington.

Governing bodies of cities and counties may impose sales taxes within their boundaries at a rate set by state statute and local ordinances, subject to referendum.

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

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

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

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

## Business and Occupation Tax

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

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

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

## Admissions Tax

An admissions tax is a use tax for entertainment. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

Cities and/or counties may levy an admission tax in an amount no greater than five percent of the admission charge, as is authorized by statute (cities: RCW 35.21.280; counties: RCW 35.57.100). This tax can be levied on admission charges (including season tickets) to places such as theaters, dance halls, circuses, clubs that have cover charges, observation towers, stadiums, and any other activity where an admission charge is made to enter the facility. If a city imposes an admissions tax, the county may not levy a tax within city boundaries.

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



## Impact Fees

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

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

## Real Estate Excise Tax

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

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

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

## Lodging Tax

The lodging tax is a user fee for hotel/motel occupation. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

Cities and/or counties may impose a "basic" two percent tax under RCW 67.28.180 on all charges for furnishing lodging at hotels, motels and similar establishments for a continuous period of less than one month.

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

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

## Conservation Futures Tax (Clark County)

The Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) is provided for in Chapter 84.34 of the Revised Code of Washington. Clark County imposes a Conservation Futures levy for the purpose of acquiring open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat and trail rights-of-way proposed for preservation for public use by either the county or the cities within the county. Funds are allocated annually, and cities within the county, citizen groups and citizens may apply for funds through the county's process. The CFT program provides grants to cities to support open space priorities in local plans and is administered by the County's Legacy Lands Program in the Parks & Lands Division of Public Works.

## FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

### Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

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

### Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs

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

#### Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

This program, managed through the RCO, provides matching grants to state and local agencies to protect and enhance salmon habitat and to provide public access and recreation opportunities on aquatic lands. In 1998, DNR refocused the ALEA program to emphasize salmon habitat preservation and enhancement. However, the program is still open to traditional water access proposals. Any project must be located on navigable portions of waterways. ALEA funds are derived from the leasing of state-owned aquatic lands and from the sale of harvest rights for shellfish and other aquatic resources.

#### Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

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

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

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

## **National Recreational Trails Program**

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

## **Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program**

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

# **OTHER METHODS AND FUNDING SOURCES**

## **Metropolitan Park District**

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

## **Park and Recreation District**

Park and recreation districts may be formed to provide leisure-time activities and recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, pools, golf courses, paths, community centers, arboretums, campgrounds, boat launches, etc.). They must be initiated by petition of at least 15% percent of the registered voters within the proposed district. Upon completing the petition process and review by county commissioners, a proposition for district formation and election of five district commissioners is submitted to the voters of the proposed district at the next general election. Once formed, park and recreation districts retain the authority to propose a regular property tax levy, annual excess property tax levies, and general obligation bonds. All three of these funding types require 60% percent voter approval and 40% percent voter turnout. With voter approval, the district may levy a regular property tax not to exceed sixty cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for up to six consecutive years.

## **Park and Recreation Service Area (PRSA)**

A quasi-municipal corporation with independent taxing authority whose purpose is to finance, acquire, construct, improve, maintain or operate any park, senior citizen activities center, zoo, aquarium, or recreation facilities; and provide a higher level of park service.

## **Business Sponsorships/Donations**

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

## Interagency Agreements

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

## Private Grants, Donations & Gifts

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

## ACQUISITION TOOLS AND METHODS

### Direct Purchase Methods

#### Market Value Purchase

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

#### Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

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

#### Life Estates & Bequests

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

#### Gift Deed

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



## **Option to Purchase Agreement**

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

## **Right of First Refusal**

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

## **Conservation and/or Access Easements**

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with their property (often the right to subdivide or develop), and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This type of easement is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city that permanently limits land uses to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted. Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Typically, this approach provides trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. The city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal through a written purchase and sale agreement. Timing, payment of real estate taxes, and other contingencies are negotiable.

## **Park or Open Space Dedication Requirements**

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

## **Landowner Incentive Measures**

### **Density Bonuses**

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

### **Transfer of Development Rights**

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

## **IRC 1031 Exchange**

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

## **Current (Open Space) Use Taxation Programs**

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

## **Other Land Protection Measures**

### **Land Trusts & Conservancies**

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect special open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. Columbia Land Trust is the regional land trust serving the La Center area, and their efforts have led to the conservation of more than 50,000 acres of forests, shorelines, parks and natural areas in the region. Other national organizations with local representation include the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and the Wetlands Conservancy.

### **Regulatory Measures**

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

### **Public/Private Utility Corridors**

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



# ***Park Impact Fee Rate Study***

## ***City of La Center, Washington***

*Submitted to:*  
City of La Center, Washington

November 9, 2023

*Prepared by:*



CONSERVATION  
TECHNIX

Conservation Technix, Inc.  
PO Box 12736  
Portland, OR 97212  
503-989-9345  
[www.conservationtechnix.com](http://www.conservationtechnix.com)



# City of La Center

## Park Impact Fee Rate Study

### Purpose

The purpose of this Park Impact Fee Rate Study is to establish the rates for impact fees in the City of La Center, Washington for publicly owned parks, open space and recreation facilities, as defined by RCW 82.02.090(7).

### Background

Impact fees are one-time payments used to construct system improvements needed to accommodate new development. An impact fee represents new growth's fair share of capital facility needs. By law, impact fees can only be used for capital improvements that expand system capacity, not for operating or maintenance costs. Impact fees are subject to legal standards, which require fulfillment of three key elements: need, benefit and proportionality.

The Growth Management Act grants counties and cities the authority to assess parks impact fees on new development. Washington law (RCW 82.02.090) defines an impact fee as “a payment of money imposed upon development as a condition of development approval to pay for public facilities needed to serve new growth and development, and that is reasonably related to the new development that creates additional demand and need for public facilities, that is a proportionate share of the cost of the public facilities, and that is used for facilities that reasonably benefit the new development.”

State code defines the limitations of impacts fees, such that they can only be imposed for system improvements that are reasonably related to the new development, cannot exceed a proportionate share of the costs of system improvements that are reasonably related to the new development, and must be used for system improvements that will reasonably benefit the new development. Additionally, impact fees may be collected and spent only for the public facilities which are addressed by a capital facilities plan element of a comprehensive land use plan.

Impact fees rates also must be adjusted to account for other revenues that the development pays that are earmarked for or proratable to particular system improvements; these other revenues may be in the form of user fees, debt service payments or taxes, among others. Impact fees may be credited for the value of dedicated land, improvements or construction provided by the developer to facilities that are identified in the capital facilities plan and that are required by the city as a condition of approving the development activity.

RCW 82.02.070 further stipulates that impact fee receipts must be earmarked specifically and retained in special interest-bearing accounts and must be expended or encumbered for a permissible use within ten years of receipt.

## Park Impact Fee Methodologies

Impact fees generally are calculated using a standards-based or an improvements-based approach. La Center's park impact fees historically have been calculated from an improvements-basis derived from the parks and recreation capital facilities plan, and the City's transportation impact fee also is calculated by an improvements-basis.

A standards-based approach is calculated using the City's adopted service standards for park and recreation facilities or classifications. Existing deficits and projected demand from population growth by park type is expressed in acres per 1,000 population. The additional need based on future growth is multiplied by the costs per unit to determine the aggregate future costs of system improvements.

An improvements-based approach is calculated from a list of planned projects in the capital facilities plan and includes the identification of the population growth-related portions of those planned projects to determine the impact fee basis.

Separately and importantly, the City must plan to correct its existing deficiencies in the park system, if any, with funds other than impact fee revenues.

## Park Impact Fee Formula and Rate Factors

The impact fee unit cost is calculated as the net cost basis divided by forecasted population growth. The result, a per capita impact fee unit cost, is then converted to the impact fee per residential dwelling unit using the assumed average occupancy rate per dwelling unit.

### Park Impact Fee Formula

La Center's impact fee component for parks, open space and recreational facilities currently is calculated using the following formula (LCMC 3.35.100, *amended via Ord 2007-07*):

$$PIF = (BF \times PPU) \times DU - A$$

"PIF" means the park, recreation, and trails component of the total development impact fee.

"BF" means "base fee," that is, the adjusted cost per person in dollars for all land appraisal, acquisition, and development for parks, recreation or trail facilities identified in the La Center CFP. The base fee equals: the total La Center CFP cost estimates for parks, recreations and trail acquisition and development; minus the estimated public capital facility costs necessary to satisfy existing deficiencies in services based upon the adopted level of service; divided by the projected growth in population during the planning period.

"PPU" means "persons per dwelling unit," that is, the adopted average number of people per dwelling unit.

"DU" means the number of dwelling units.

"A" means a reduction (adjustment) in the impact fee charged per unit as a result of a developer's contributions, in the form of easements, dedications or payments in lieu of fees, toward parks, recreation, and trail system improvement projects identified in the La Center CFP; and the city discount factor.

State statute requires that park facilities on which impact fees may be spent must be part of a capital facilities plan that is a component of an adopted comprehensive land use plan.

## **Factors Affecting the Impact Fee Calculation**

The impact fee calculation includes several variables and are described below. Each can alter the resulting impact fee rate.

### **Projected Population Growth**

From 2000 to 2020, the City's population increased by 107% with growth predicted to continue. By 2022, the population has grown to 3,835, according to the Washington Office of Financial Management. La Center's population is estimated to be 7,642 by 2035, and assuming a constant rate of growth over the 2024-2030 timeframe, the City's annual population growth rate is estimated as 5.45%. This forecast indicates a growth in population of approximately 5,862 people by 2030.

### **Occupancy Rates per Dwelling Unit**

The park impact fee municipal code amendment adopted in 2007 assumed an average of 2.9 people per household for single-family and 2.3 people per household for multi-family dwellings. As of the 2010 Census, the number of units per structure is no longer collected in the decennial census; that information is available in the American Community Survey, but it represents only sampled data and is not as detailed as the decennial census has been in the past. Based on the 2021 American Community Survey, the overall average household size for the City of La Center is 3.02 people per household. Also, from the 2015 Clark County Buildable Lands Report, Clark County assumes an average of 2.66 persons per household. This rate study retains the 2.9 people per household average to calculate proposed impact fee rates. Since La Center does not have a significant portion of its housing stock as multi-family units, a single occupancy rate is utilized to generate a single park impact fee on a per housing unit basis. La Center has historically maintained a single park impact fee per unit – without segmenting the fee by unit type.

### **Adjustment Factor**

The adjustment factor is based on state statute that requires an "adjustment to the cost of public facilities for past or future payments made or reasonably anticipated to be made by new development..." (RCW 82.02.060). Commonly known as the "proportionate public share", this adjustment is intended to reasonably relate the cost of public facility improvements with the service demands of new development. The City of La Center does not anticipate debt service payments or other payments earmarked for or proratable to park

system improvements, and since an adjustment is required, this study proposes a modest adjustment factor or 10% to account for potential or unforeseen future contributions to the park system as an offset to the full, calculated impact fee rate.

## Park Impact Fee Calculations

Park Impact Fees are calculated from a defined cost basis for the projected growth-related impacts to arrive at a per capita or per housing unit PIF rate.

### Improvements Based Approach

The improvements-based approach relies on the updated 2024 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) component. The 6-year PROS Plan CFP cost was estimated at \$7,789,700 (adjusted for 4.5% inflation). Some of the projects noted in the CFP are for repairs or renovations, which represent ineligible costs when calculating impact fees, since they are not growth related. An additional reduction in the cost basis accounts for potential future grant funding or additional, non-PIF funding to contribute to the completion of CFP projects. The revised net growth cost basis for the PIF rate was estimated as \$3,195,900. Utilizing the anticipated population growth over six years, the per capita PIF rate was calculated as \$1,577. Applying the occupancy rate (2.9 people per household) and adjustment factor (10%), the proposed park impact fee was calculated as \$4,115 per residential unit.

**Table 6: Improvements-Based Impact Fee Calculation**

6-Year Capital Facilities Plan Cost	\$6,929,800
Ineligible (non-PIF) Expenses	\$2,233,900
Estimated non-PIF Funding	\$1,500,000
Growth Cost Basis	\$3,195,900
6-Year Population Growth	2,027
Growth Cost Per Capita	\$1,577
Adjustment Factor	10.0%
Occupancy Rate	2.9
<b>Park Impact Fee per Unit</b>	<b>\$4,115</b>

## Comparable PIF Rates from Other Jurisdictions

The impact fee rates from several jurisdictions were reviewed as part of this overall impact fee update and are provided below for reference. The following table identifies the PIF rates currently imposed by jurisdictions within Clark County. It should be noted that the City of Camas currently is reviewing their PIF rates and intends to update their rates in the near future.



**Table 7: PIF Rates from Other Jurisdictions**

Jurisdiction	Single Family	Multi-Family per unit*	Apt/Townhouse
Camas \$	5,801.00	\$ 5,801.00	\$ 5,801.00
Battle Ground \$	4,270.00	\$ 3,546.00	
Ridgefield \$	4,039.83	\$ 4,039.83	
Vancouver* \$	4,757.00	\$ 3,476.00	
<b>La Center \$</b>	<b>2,842.00</b>		
Clark County* \$	4,123.00	\$ 3,182.00	
Washougal \$	6,464.19	\$ 4,684.90	

Note : Clark County rates are an average of their 10 impact fee districts (geographies)

## La Center PIF Rate History

The following table identifies the adopted PIF rates for La Center by date and is provided for reference.

**Table 8: PIF Rate History**

Adoption Date	PIF Rate
<b>8/9/2017</b>	<b>\$2,842</b>
2/23/2011	\$2,042
4/14/2010	\$2,042
5/28/2008	\$4,000