

# VANCOUVER-CLARK PARKS & RECREATION

## Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

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### QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

#### **WHAT IS VANCOUVER-CLARK PARKS & RECREATION?**

Vancouver and Clark County combined their parks departments in 1997, creating Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation. Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation is responsible for planning, design, and development of urban park facilities and recreation services within the City of Vancouver and in the unincorporated urban area around Vancouver, and regional park facilities and services countywide.

#### **WHAT IS THE COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN?**

The Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan will guide the Department's efforts to acquire and develop parks and open spaces, and enhance and expand recreation programs throughout Clark County. The Plan focuses on parks, trails, special facilities, conservation and greenway systems, and wildlife habitat within Clark County. The Plan will reflect the community's vision for providing parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces, and lays out a six year work plan to meet the park and recreation needs of the community.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC WORKSHOPS?**

To gather public input about park facility and recreation service needs and priorities, for use in updating the Vancouver-Clark Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Public input is important so that the Department knows what people like about current facilities and services and what our priorities should be in providing new and improved facilities and services.

#### **WHY DOES THE PLAN REQUIRE AN UPDATE?**

Currently, there are similar older plans for the City of Vancouver (2002) and the unincorporated areas of Clark County (2000). These plans designed to last for six years. Since this Comprehensive Plan will cover both the City of Vancouver and Clark County, an update is needed in 2006. There are a number of other reasons why the Plan should be updated now, including:

- 1) To ensure that the plan addresses the needs and priorities of the residents;
- 2) To update the plan and its priorities to reflect changing conditions, particularly since the region is growing rapidly;
- 3) To meet the requirements of Washington's Growth Management Act, which requires periodic updates of comprehensive plans and capital facility plans; and
- 4) To remain eligible for grant funds administered by the Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, which requires that park and recreation plans be reviewed and re-certified every six years.

#### **WHAT GUIDES THE PLANNING PROCESS?**

The update process is guided by community needs and desires as well as Washington's Growth Management Act and the Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation, the major source of grant funds for local park projects.

#### **WHAT KINDS OF PARK LAND DOES THE PLAN INCLUDE?**

The Plan will include an analysis of need and recommendations for neighborhood, community, and regional parks, as well as habitat conservation areas, trails and greenways, and special facilities.

#### **WHAT OTHER PLANS HAVE ALREADY BEEN COMPLETED?**

This Plan will complement a variety of other plans that have already been completed by the Department, including the Clark County Trails and Bikeways Systems Plan (2006), the Vancouver Paths and Trails Master Plan, the Facilities and Services Strategic Plan, the 2000 Recreation Program and Cost Recovery Plan, the Sports Field Master Plan, and site master plans for individual parks.

**WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES IN PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES BETWEEN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER, THE UNINCORPORATED URBAN AREA, AND OTHER AREAS OF CLARK COUNTY?**

The City of Vancouver and Clark County provide varying of levels of park and recreation service through Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation. The City of Vancouver provides acquisition and development of neighborhood and community parks, sports fields, and recreation facilities and programs within the city limits. Within the urban-unincorporated area around Vancouver (within the urban growth boundary, but outside the city limits), Clark County acquires land for neighborhood and community parks and youth sports fields. A number of these parks are being developed thanks to funding from the Greater Clark Park District, formed in 2005. The County does not provide recreation programs, but County residents are welcome to attend recreation facilities and programs at Vancouver facilities at no additional fee. The other cities within Clark County are responsible for planning, developing, and managing park facilities within their city limits.

**WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR COMPLETING THE PLAN?**

A draft of the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan will be available for public review June of 2006. The Plan will then be submitted to the Vancouver and Clark County Planning Commissions in July and the Vancouver City Council and Board of County Commissioners in September.

**IS TIME FOR MORE PUBLIC INPUT SCHEDULED?**

Yes! We are holding public meetings at the following dates and locations. All meetings will be held from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday, February 28th

Alki Middle School  
1800 NW Bliss Rd, Vancouver

Thursday, March 2nd

Firstenburg Community Center  
700 N.E. 136th Ave, Vancouver

Thursday, March 9th

Battle Ground City Hall  
109 S.W. 1st Street, Battle Ground

Wednesday, March 1st

Luepke Center  
1009 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver

Monday, March 6th

Washougal Community Center  
1681 C Street, Washougal

We will also be holding a similar series of meetings this summer so that residents can review the draft plan and submit their comments. Look for advertisements and flyers for these meetings, or check the Parks & Recreation website at [www.vanclarkparks-rec.org](http://www.vanclarkparks-rec.org). You can also submit comments or ideas to Michelle Kunec, her contact information is below.

**WHO DO I CONTACT TO GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Michelle Kunec, Park Planner  
Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation  
610 Esther Street, PO Box 1995  
Vancouver, Washington 98860  
Phone: (360) 619-1144  
Email: [michelle.kunec@ci.vancouver.wa.us](mailto:michelle.kunec@ci.vancouver.wa.us)

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### DEFINITIONS

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS</b></p> <p>Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity, and preserve neighborhood open space. These parks are designed primarily for non-organized recreation. Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, they are generally three to five acres in size and serve residents within a ½-mile radius. Neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playgrounds, turf areas, picnic tables, and benches.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Carter Park, Homestead Park, Heritage Park</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>OPEN SPACE &amp; NATURAL AREAS</b></p> <p>Open spaces are permanently undeveloped green spaces which are managed for both their natural value and for light impact recreational use. Open spaces range in size from one to thousands of acres, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitats, or stream corridors. Open spaces provide opportunities for nature-based recreation such as bird-watching and environmental education. They may also be located to preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as endangered animal and plant habitat.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Vancouver Lake Wildlife Area, Lower East Fork of the Lewis River</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>COMMUNITY PARKS</b></p> <p>Community parks provide a focal point and gathering place for broader groups of users. Usually twenty to 100 acres in size, community parks are used by all segments of the population and serve residents from a one to three-mile area. Community parks often include recreation facilities for organized sports, such as sports fields, skate parks, and play courts. Community parks may also incorporate passive recreation space and community facilities like community or senior centers. Because of their large service area, community parks require more support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Leverich Park, Orchards Park, HB Fuller</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SPECIAL USE FACILITIES</b></p> <p>Special use areas are freestanding specialized use facilities such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, skate parks, or boat launches. Since special use areas vary widely in function there are no minimum sizes, but special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities including parking and restrooms are often included.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Marshall Center, Tennis Center, Happa Boat Launch, Vancouver Girls Softball Complex</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REGIONAL PARKS</b></p> <p>Regional parks are recreational areas that serve residents from throughout Clark County and beyond. Regional parks are usually larger than 50 acres in size, and provide opportunities for diverse recreation activities. Facilities can include sports fields, extensive trail systems, or large picnic areas. In addition, regional parks often include passive recreation space and specific features, like access to lakes or rivers, which make them unique. Because of their large size and broad service area, regional parks typically require more support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.. They are usually designed to accommodate large groups of people.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Lewisville Park, Frenchman’s Bar</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>TRAILS &amp; GREENWAYS</b></p> <p>Greenways are corridors that follow linear features such as streams, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, or power lines. Greenways often contain trails and may also include viewpoints, seating areas, and interpretive displays. Greenways provide public access to trail-oriented activities, including walking, biking, or running, and preserve open space. Greenways along streams can also help protect water and habitat quality.</p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Waterfront Trail, Salmon Creek Greenway</p>

