



VANCOUVER-CLARK PARKS & RECREATION

Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan

May 2007



VANCOUVER-CLARK COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

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Executive Summary



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* update, initiated in the fall of 2005, establishes a community-supported road map for the provision of high quality parks, trails, recreation facilities, and open spaces throughout Vancouver and Clark County. The comprehensive plan identifies current and future recreation needs within the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department (VCPRD) service area. It establishes goals, objectives, standards, and guidelines to improve parks, trails, recreation facilities, and open spaces. In addition, the plan develops a financing strategy for the implementation of capital and non-capital projects that will provide the most benefit to

the community. The result will be an accessible, community-oriented park system that meets resident needs for the next 20 years.

Updating the *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* will allow VCPRD, Clark County, and the City of Vancouver to:

- Ensure the plan accurately reflects the needs, desires, and priorities of the community;
- Remain current with changing social, economic, and environmental conditions;
- Meet the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act; and
- Remain eligible for grants through the Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES: THE FOUNDATION FOR VCPRD SERVICES

Guiding principles are the overarching ideals that govern the provision of parks, recreation services, and open space by the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. These principles provide the foundation for the vision, goals, and objectives included in the comprehensive plan. The Department's guiding principles include the following:

- *Recreation Opportunities:* The VCPRD strives to provide the highest quality parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities and aims to make all parks, facilities, and programs geographically, physically, socially, and economically accessible. The VCPRD will work to hire exceptional staff, meet expectations, and serve as a leader in the provision of park and

recreation opportunities on local, state, and national levels.

- *Green Infrastructure:* The VCPRD will build and maintain a more environmentally sustainable parks, recreation, and open space infrastructure. With an eye to the future, the Department will foster community stewardship, implement environmentally sensitive design, construction, and maintenance practices, and create a system of parks and open space that will enrich the community for years to come.
- *Community Health:* The VCPRD will help build a livable community that includes diverse opportunities for improving health and wellness. The Department will support active lifestyles by providing safe, accessible parks, facilities, and programs that foster physical activity, mental challenges, and social engagement.
- *Economic Development:* The Department recognizes the role of parks, trails, recreation services, and open space in improving the community's image as an attractive place to live and work. VCPRD will continue to work with the City of Vancouver and Clark County to develop parks and recreation a component of a vibrant and economically sustainable community.
- *Connectivity:* The VCPRD will develop an interconnected system of parks and open space, acquiring missing links and contiguous parcels to provide maximum wildlife, recreation, and transportation benefits.

OUR VISION AND MISSION: WHAT WE DO

Residents of Vancouver and Clark County recognize the many benefits provided by parks, trails, open space, and recreation programs. Parks and recreation facilities help to protect fragile ecosystems, build stronger communities, and foster healthier lifestyles. The VCPRD plays a critical role in providing these benefits, in accordance with the following vision:

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation will help build a healthy community, protect the natural environment, and support a high quality of life for all residents.

We will achieve this vision by following our mission, *to meet community needs by providing an interconnected system of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas that support environmental stewardship and diverse recreational programs and opportunities.* Together, this vision and mission will guide us in creating a premier park system that improves the quality of life in our community.

OUR PARK SYSTEM: PLACES THAT CONNECT US

A successful park system provides a variety of recreation opportunities throughout the community that encourage residents to lead active, healthy lifestyles. The ideal park system for Vancouver-Clark County includes diverse park and open space areas with amenities and facilities that support the park and recreation experiences desired by the community. This system will help protect community resources, preserve our historic and cultural heritage, and reflect the changing needs of our community.

VCPRD'S goal of providing a balanced, comprehensive, and interconnected park, trail, and open space system is the foundation of this plan. This comprehensive plan envisions a network of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that are connected via trails, transit, bikeways, transportation routes, and wildlife corridors. When implemented, this integrated system will link all parts of the VCPRD planning area and provide a wider variety of recreation opportunities to all Clark County residents.

This balanced system will ensure that all residents within the Urban Growth Area are served by accessible neighborhood parks and community parks. Additional recreation opportunities will be provided throughout the County in natural areas and open space, regional parks, trails and greenways, and special use areas. These diverse parks will support a variety of amenities and facilities, such as sports fields, gymnasiums, off-leash areas, and skate parks, and provide valuable educational and recreational opportunities.

OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE

This comprehensive plan includes goals and objectives designed to enhance our parks, recreation facilities, and open space areas. Goals and objectives were based on public involvement and technical analysis, and include:

- Provide a balanced, comprehensive, and interconnected park, trail, and open space system.
- Provide diverse recreational opportunities for all residents.
- Be effective stewards of the land.

- Preserve our historic and cultural heritage.
- Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation facilities.
- Create a dynamic and effective organization.
- Acquire adequate funding to meet needs.
- Build strong partnerships.
- Reflect the community we serve.

By implementing these goals and objectives, VCPRD can develop the most suitable park system for our community. Developing the recommended park system for Vancouver-Clark County will involve:

- *Acquiring new park sites:* This plan recommends the acquisition of 28 neighborhood parks, eight community parks, seven regional parks, more than 30 parcels for trail corridors, 21 open space areas/greenways, 11 conservation areas, three sites for rural sport field development, and two sites for new community centers. Of these, underserved areas, areas of anticipated population growth, and sites that contain unique characteristics or increase connectivity were considered high priorities for acquisition.
- *Developing needed facilities:* Along with new parks to be developed in underserved and growing areas, this plan recommends that VCPRD focus on developing several older, undeveloped and minimally developed sites in established neighborhoods. Urban and rural sport field development is proposed, and new facilities are recommended to meet plan guidelines for community centers, gymnasiums, off leash areas, pools, skate parks, and trails.

- *Maintaining and renovating existing resources:* Projects that upgrade and revitalize parks and facilities will protect existing investments, enhance public safety and accessibility, maximize maintenance cost efficiency, support recreation activities, and reduce environmental impacts. Located throughout the system, renovations recommended in this plan include ADA accessibility improvements and facility upgrades. In addition, this plan proposes the development and implementation of maintenance standards and an integrated pest management plan.
- *Improving connectivity:* The plan includes recommendations that support the development of an accessible trails system which promotes connectivity between parks, recreation facilities, schools, employment centers, and other community destinations. Priority was given to trail projects that are included in the *Regional Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan (2006)* or that help complete trail segments, improve pedestrian and bike safety, or enhance alternative transportation choices.

CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN: BUILDING THE FUTURE

The goals and objectives recommended in the comprehensive plan suggest numerous capital and non-capital projects. The anticipated cost for implementing all improvements would far exceed the Department's available funds, so these projects were prioritized. High-priority projects were incorporated into a six-year Capital Facilities Plan, and lower priority projects are presented in a 20-year capital projects list. The actual timeline for

implementation will depend on securing community support and necessary funding.

Planned projects in the six-year Capital Facilities Plan by jurisdiction include:

- City of Vancouver – 131 projects, including urban park, trail, and facility acquisition and development, major repairs, and natural area acquisitions, estimated at nearly \$70 million
- Urban-Unincorporated Areas – 93 projects including park, trail, and facility acquisition and development, major repairs, and natural area acquisitions, estimated at over \$112 million
- Clark County Regional System – 57 projects, including regional park, trail, and special facility acquisition and development, major repairs, and conservation area acquisitions, estimated at nearly \$49 million

Together, the estimated costs for all projects in the six-year Capital Facilities Plan total approximately \$231 million.

The financing strategy for implementing these projects involves a variety of funding mechanisms, including revenue from park impact fees, real estate excise taxes, Conservation Futures, Park District revenues, a general obligation bond, grants, and donations. Together, all sources of revenue total approximately \$133 million, leaving an estimated shortfall of approximately \$97 million.

Options for meeting the projected funding shortfall include:

- Expanding or updating existing revenue sources, such as impact fees;

- Maximizing available revenues by taking greater advantage of public and private partnerships, grants, donations; and
- Exploring new revenue sources, such as additional impact and user fees, matching fund programs, sponsorship and enterprise programs, and bonds.

MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS: PROTECTING OUR RESOURCES

When completed, the projects included in the comprehensive plan CFP will increase total maintenance costs for the VCPRD system by a significant margin. High priority projects in the comprehensive plan alone will add almost \$9 million annually to projected maintenance costs for the City of Vancouver and Clark County. In order to offset these estimated costs, various funding sources are explored in this plan, including intergovernmental revenue, user fees, and additional general fund allocations.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES: GETTING IT DONE

The comprehensive plan contains a long list of objectives designed to allow the VCPRD to provide a premier park, recreation, and open space system. This list includes several key actions that the VCPRD should pursue in the

immediate future. These key strategies include planning, acquiring, and developing parks, facilities, and trails; establishing partnerships; building a volunteer base; developing funding mechanisms; improving maintenance and operations; designing for universal accessibility; enhancing communications and marketing; and improving organizational processes.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING: WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE

In the past, City and County park and recreation operations have been directed by several planning documents. This is the first Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan to cover both jurisdictions in their entirety, under the consolidated Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department.

As the first of its kind, the comprehensive plan presents a unique opportunity for the City of Vancouver and Clark County to merge their resources into one unified park and recreation system. This plan ensures that this jurisdictional and community collaboration will continue with a united effort to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open space for the benefit of the entire community.



1. Introduction



1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Vancouver and Clark County, Washington, have a strong legacy of parks, recreation, and open space, dating back to the dedication of Esther Short Park in downtown Vancouver in 1853. Since then, the community's parks and recreation resources have grown dramatically, a Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission has formed, and the City and County have merged parks administration to create one consolidated Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department (VCPRD). The Department serves a community with diverse recreational interests and a strong environmental ethic.

Residents of the VCPRD planning area clearly value active preservation, active recreation, and community development through parks, recreation, and open space. Today, the VCPRD serves the community with over 7,400 acres of parkland at 239 sites.

In the past, City and County park and recreation operations have been directed by several planning documents. Clark County adopted its first comprehensive parks and recreation plan in 1965, followed by updates in 1975, 1981, 1987, 1993, and 2000. The City of Vancouver began its comprehensive park and recreation planning effort in the 1950s, with the most recent plan update in 2002. This is the first comprehensive parks, recreation, and open space plan to cover both jurisdictions in their entirety, under the consolidated Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. As the first of its kind, the consolidated comprehensive plan presents a unique opportunity for the City of Vancouver and Clark County to merge their resources into one unified park and recreation system that makes the region a better place to live, work, and play.

APPROACH

Initiated in the fall of 2005, this comprehensive plan establishes a road map for providing high quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space, and recreation facilities throughout Vancouver and greater Clark County. The purpose of the plan is to:

- Identify current and future recreation needs within the Vancouver-Clark planning area through public involvement and technical analysis;

- Update goals, objectives, and standards for parks, trails, recreation, and open space;
- Establish priorities for the acquisition and development of parks, open space, and recreation facilities and incorporate these priorities into the City's and County's capital facilities programs;
- Propose strategies and actions for improving parks, open space, and recreation facilities;
- Provide a financing strategy for the implementation of the capital and non-capital projects that will most benefit the community; and
- Provide the framework from which the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council, and the Board of County Commissioners can establish specific policies for the department.

The result will be an accessible, community-oriented park and recreation system that will meet residents' needs for the next 20 years.

The plan draws from and builds on previous planning work for the park, recreation, trail, and open space system, including:

- *2006 Regional Trails and Bikeways System Plan*
- *2005 City of Vancouver Canopy Report*
- *2004 ED Hovee Sports Field Needs Assessment*
- *2003-06 Vancouver Urban Forestry Work Plan*
- *2003 Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan*
- *2002 Vancouver Urban Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*

- *2000 Clark County Regional Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*
- *2003 City of Vancouver Comprehensive Plan*
- *2004 Clark County Comprehensive Plan*
- *2000 Vancouver Recreation Program and Cost Recovery Plan*
- *1999 Vancouver-Clark Facilities and Services Strategic Plan*
- *1998 Clark County Sports Fields Master Plan*
- *1992 Clark County Open Space Commission Report*

This plan is the third update that has occurred under the framework of the 1990 Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The need for coordinated planning and for park and recreation services and facilities are addressed in the legislative findings and within the 13 primary planning goals of the GMA. The GMA also requires cities and counties to update their comprehensive land use plans and development regulations at least every five years to ensure compliance with state statutes.

Updating the comprehensive plan will allow VCPRD, Clark County, and the City of Vancouver to:

- Ensure the plan accurately reflects the needs, desires, and priorities of the community;
- Remain current with changing social, economic, and environmental conditions;
- Meet the requirements of the Washington State Growth Management Act; and
- Remain eligible for grants through the Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC).

PLANNING AREA DESCRIPTION

LOCATION

Clark County lies in southwest Washington, 70 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, just north of the State of Oregon. The County is bordered on the south and west by the Columbia River, on the north by the Lewis River, and on the east by the Cascade Mountains.

The County includes 627 square miles of land and over 41 miles of Columbia River waterfront. Urban development is focused in the southern part of the County and along the Interstate 5 corridor. Cities in this area include Vancouver, the County's largest city, and Camas, Washougal, La Center, Ridgefield, Battle Ground, and Yacolt.

Most new development in Clark County is expected to occur inside the City of Vancouver's Urban Growth Area (UGA). To facilitate planning, the City and County jointly divided the UGA into ten separate park districts in the early 1990s. Three of these districts fall completely within the City limits, four fall completely outside the City limits in the unincorporated area, and three cross jurisdictional boundaries. These park districts provide the planning framework for Park Impact Fee (PIF) assessments, and they are sometimes referred to as PIF Districts. Figure 1 shows the boundaries of Clark County, the City of Vancouver, and the Urban Unincorporated Area.

PHYSICAL SETTING

Clark County boasts a wide variety of vegetation and habitat, ranging from pasture and croplands to wetland and riparian vegetations. The County's alluvial floodplain contains mostly marshes and hardwoods,

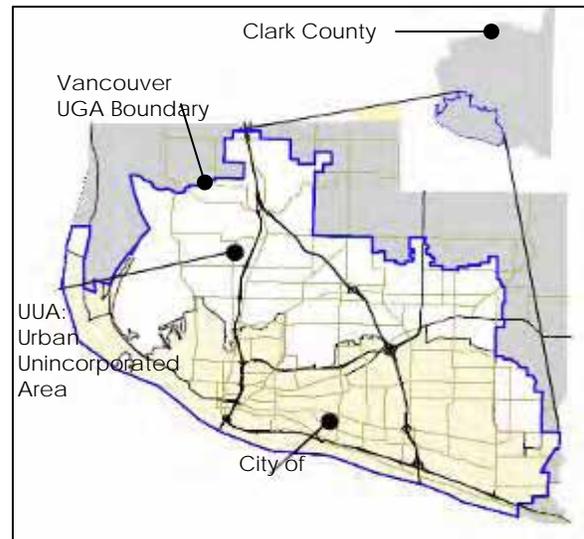


Figure 1: VCPRD Planning Area

while the upland produces substantial tree stands of 20 to 30 acres or more. These abundant forests, composed primarily of Douglas Fir, red cedar, hemlock, maple, and alder, grow on top of the volcanic rock, glacial drift, and the shallow soils of the Cascade foothills.

Clark County is characterized by a climate typical of the Pacific Northwest, with wet, mild winters and dry, warm summers. The Coastal and Cascade Mountain ranges help to create Clark County's 38 inches of annual rainfall. While most of the County's precipitation comes in the form of rain, the area does receive an average of 6 inches of snow annually on the western plains and over 22 inches in the northeastern part of the County.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The 2006 population of the VCPRD planning area is 409,292, almost double that of 20 years ago. Historically, Clark County has grown approximately 3% annually. In the period since the last U.S. Census (2000), it has grown by over 13%. Although evidence

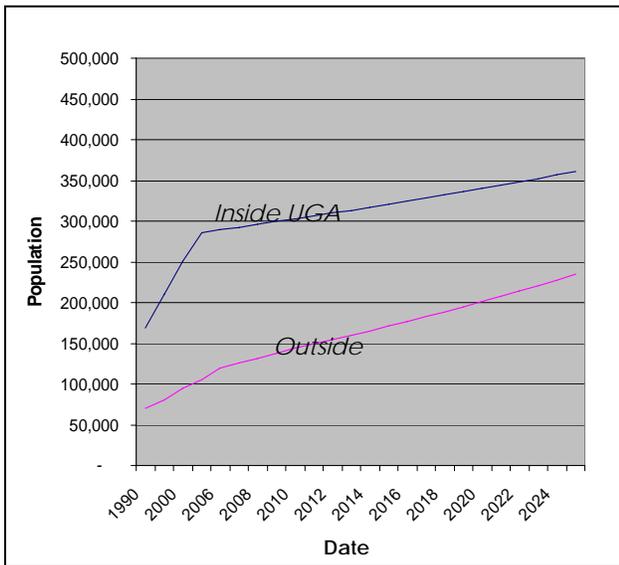


Figure 2: Clark County Population (2005-2025)

of rapid growth can be found throughout the planning area, the greatest increases are occurring in and around the County's most urban areas: Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, and Battle Ground. Over the next 20 years, the community will likely continue grow (Figure 2). According to population projections for the County, the 2025 population is estimated at 595,603 residents, a 52% increase over the current population. Much of this growth will spill into areas beyond the current Vancouver Urban Growth Area (UGA).

Ethnicity

For the past several decades, Clark County's steady growth has been coupled with an increase in cultural diversity. While the 2000 U.S. Census indicated that the majority (88.8%) of Clark County residents were white, the percentages of African-American, Asian-American, and Hispanic residents were also significant. In 2000, almost 5% of the Vancouver-Clark population reported Hispanic origin, and another 3.6% reported Asian or Pacific Island heritage. This is a

significant change from 1970, when no non-white group comprised over 0.4% of the community's total population.

Clark County's increasing diversity is partly the product of immigration. In 2000, approximately 8% of Clark County residents were foreign-born. Of these, 39% were of European origin, 30.5% were Asian, and 20.0% were from Latin America.

Language

Due to the number of foreign-born residents, a variety of languages are spoken in Clark County. In 2000, a higher percentage of Vancouver residents than in the state as a whole were non-native English speakers. Both Clark County and the City of Vancouver exceeded the state overall in terms of the percentage of residents speaking Indo-European languages other than Spanish.

Age and Gender

Age statistics in Clark County suggest that a high proportion of families with children reside in the community. In 2005, the greatest proportions of Clark County residents were between the ages of 10 – 14 and 40 – 49, and together these age groups comprised approximately 24% of the community's total population. The median age for the County in 2005 was 34.86.

Employment

With excellent access to both the Columbia River and I-5 corridor, Clark County attracts employers from a variety of manufacturing industries, ranging from pulp and paper products to food production. In addition, health care, government, and professional and technical services were key employers in the planning area in 2002. In 2003, the County's largest employers included the Vancouver School District, Evergreen School District,

Hewlett-Packard, the Southwest Washington Medical Center, and Clark County. Each of these institutions employed over 1,500 people at that time.

Income

The County's median income reflects a mix of high and low income workers within the region. In 1999, the median income for the County as a whole was \$48,376. By 2004, that median had risen to \$51,752. In both years, the Clark County median was just above that of the State of Washington. However, poverty rates for the planning area are also significant. In 2000, 9% of County residents lived in poverty.

AREA HISTORY

Native American settlements existed along the Columbia River in the vicinity of present day Vancouver as early as 10,000 to 15,000 years ago. By the early 19th century, Native Americans had been joined by explorers from the east, most notably Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark. Lewis and Clark, who led the famous exploration of the American West, spent nine days camping in what is now Clark County in the spring of 1806.

In 1825, the Hudson's Bay Company established a trading post and their regional headquarters at Fort Vancouver. The Fort offered a variety of supplies, and throughout subsequent decades it supported thousands of settlers traveling the Oregon Trail. Many of these travelers ended their journey there, and in short time, the City of Vancouver was born.

While laying out the City of Vancouver in 1853, Amos Short included a town square. Later known as Esther Short Park, it became the center of social activities, including Fourth



of July celebrations and community gatherings. Vancouver was eventually incorporated on January 23, 1857.

In the latter half of the 19th century, Vancouver sawmills produced thousands of railroad ties, contributing to the completion of the Spokane, Portland, and Seattle Railway in 1908. The railroad drew both residents and businesses and quickly brought prosperity to Vancouver. This prosperity continued into the early 20th century as the County's timber and farming industries expanded.

In response to this rapid growth, the Greater Vancouver Recreation Commission was formed in 1942. At the same time, the Vancouver Housing Authority was successful in securing funds to build and operate recreation facilities. In a short time, seven recreation centers were operating 24 hours a day.

World War II brought a period of unprecedented development to Clark County, as thousands of laborers moved to the area to work at the Kaiser Shipyards. In the three years between 1941 and 1944, Clark County's population quintupled in size. The construction of Interstate 5 helped to foster continued growth.

Following World War II, population declined and federal funding for programs and facilities decreased. Many of the Vancouver Housing Authority's recreation facilities were deeded to the City and the Vancouver School District, which continued to offer recreation programs at a reduced scale.

In 1951, the City of Vancouver chartered the Parks and Recreation Commission as the official advisory body for parks and recreation services. Following a study initiated in 1953, the Commission recommended that a department of parks and recreation be formed. The Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department was subsequently created by ordinance on March 22, 1955. A budget was allocated and the first director appointed in 1956 to oversee a park system that had grown to about 100 acres.

Separately, in 1960, Clark County formalized its parks program by appointing the Clark County Parks and Recreation Board. This board oversaw the County's regional park system, which dates back to 1936/37 when Lewisville Park and Camp Julianna were acquired. Later, in 1972, an administrative director was hired to manage the County's park system.

In the early 1960s a number of neighborhood parks and greenways were created and donated to the City by the Vancouver Housing Authority. David Douglas Park and Marine Park were also purchased, more than doubling the acreage of Vancouver's recreation areas. In 1965, the citizens of Vancouver passed a bond issue to replace the aging Memorial Center pool. The Marshall Recreation Center and indoor swimming pool was completed in 1966, welcoming over 200,000 users its first year.

The County's parks system also grew during the 1960s, primarily through land trades and donations. Most were community- or regional-sized parks, including Hazel Dell, Wintler, Siouxon, Daybreak, Whipple Creek, and a portion of Moulton Falls parks.

A significant addition to the Vancouver's recreation system came in the mid-1970s with the construction of a City tennis and racquetball facility. In 1979 the City of Vancouver and Clark County joined to fund the addition of the Luepke Senior Center to Marshall Community Center.

For the County, the 1970s marked a period of significant regional park acquisition and development, fueled by state and federal grants. In the Vancouver urban area, the Builder's Program secured sites for future neighborhood parks. In 1985, a Conservation Futures program was adopted for open space acquisition. Urban park impact fees for neighborhood and community park acquisition were adopted in 1990.

A boost to City park funding came in 1980 in the form of a citizen-approved \$490,000 bond for park development. With the addition of grant funds, over \$1 million in park improvements were completed at Leverich, Waterfront, Marine, Central and Esther Short parks. Other park projects completed during the 1980s included Old Fort Vancouver Apple Tree Park and Waterworks Park.

During the 1990s, Vancouver embarked on an ambitious effort to create recreational access along a 12-mile stretch of the Columbia River. Known as the Columbia River Renaissance Project, this effort has already established a four and three-quarter mile pedestrian and bicycle trail along the waterfront in

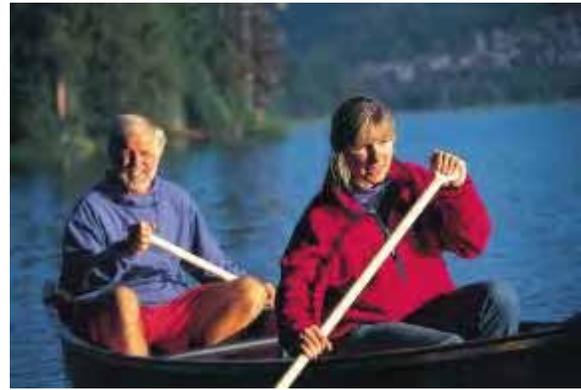
Vancouver, between downtown and Wintler Park.

In 1995-96, the City of Vancouver and Clark County, with the support of the Clark County Home Builders Association, Association of Realtors, and Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce, adopted a joint parks plan for the Vancouver urban area. Park impact fees were adopted for acquisition and development of community and neighborhood parks, and for the acquisition of urban open space, both inside the City and in the unincorporated urban area. For those park development deficits that could not be addressed by impact fees, the County and City adopted and dedicated a one-quarter percent real estate excise tax to urban parks for six years. Under these funding programs, over 65 park sites have been acquired and 16 community and neighborhood parks have been developed.

In 2004, the residents of the urban-unincorporated area of Clark County approved the creation of the Greater Clark Parks District, a metropolitan park district that will fund maintenance of 35 soon-to-be-developed neighborhood and community parks and five trails.

PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process for the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan considered the unique historical, demographic, and physical characteristics of Vancouver and Clark County, along with the recreation needs of the residents who live in the area. The planning process included four phases:



PHASE I: RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION

Phase I documented current conditions within the planning area. An inventory of existing parks, recreation facilities, and open space comprised a significant component of Phase I. Phase I also included an analysis of the Department's inventory, the mapping of resources, and introductory meetings with the staff and Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission to identify key issues for the plan.

PHASE II: COMMUNITY NEEDS

ASSESSMENT

Phase II involved significant outreach to the community through a series of public involvement efforts, including a community survey, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and community meetings. Key findings from this outreach and a copy of the Community Survey appear in Appendix A. Appendix B includes examples of publicly-distributed materials. Through these forums, community members identified park and recreation issues, priorities, and future needs. Along with an analysis of parks, open space, and recreation facilities, key public involvement findings were incorporated into the Community Needs Assessment. A future vision and set of goals were defined for the Department based on

this understanding of community needs and priorities.

PHASE III: STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Based on the findings of the Community Needs Assessment, a set of strategies and objectives were developed to help realize the community's vision for parks, open space, and recreation. This blueprint for park and recreation improvements was accompanied by a capital facilities and financing plan, which identified costs and potential funding sources for proposed park and recreation projects.

PHASE IV: PLAN ADOPTION

In Phase IV, all products from the plan development activities were compiled into a draft *Vancouver-Clark Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*, which will be presented to and reviewed by the public, VCPRD staff, and Advisory Commission members. When implemented, the final document will guide parks and recreation service delivery in the planning area for the next 20 years.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report is organized into six chapters and eleven appendices:

- *Chapter One: Introduction* describes the plan approach, provides a description of the planning area's physical, historical, and demographic characteristics, and details the planning process and the organization of this report.
 - *Chapter Two: Planning Framework* explains the core values of the *Vancouver-Clark Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* as well as the guiding vision and mission.
 - *Chapter Three: Classifications & Standards* details the park and facility classifications and standards recommended by the plan.
 - *Chapter Four: Parks and Recreation Facility Needs Analysis* evaluates the current inventory and identifies present and future needs for additional parks, open space, and recreation facilities within the VCPRD planning area.
 - *Chapter Five: Goals & Objectives* presents specific steps that the Department will take to achieve its vision for 2025.
 - *Chapter Six: Implementation* describes capital and non-capital projects that will be initiated within the first six years of plan implementation. Financing sources, potential partnerships, and projected maintenance and staffing implications are identified.
- Appendices include:
- *Appendix A: Public Involvement and Survey Results* includes results from all of the public involvement activities completed as part of the planning process, including the community survey, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and community meetings.
 - *Appendix B: Supporting Materials* includes the informational materials used for the public involvement activities conducted as part of the plan.
 - *Appendix C: Park, Recreation Facility, and Open Space Inventory* contains a complete inventory of parks, open space, and recreation facilities within the VCPRD planning area.
 - *Appendix D: Existing Park, Recreation Facility, and Open Space Maps* includes maps showing the locations of existing park and

recreation resources in the VCPRD planning area.

- *Appendix E: Open Space and Habitat* contains lists of priority habitats and species in the VCPRD planning area. It also includes priority habitat maps and guidelines for providing recreation in critical habitat areas.
- *Appendix F: Relevant Policies* includes a list of potential Department policies that relate to the comprehensive plan objectives.
- *Appendix G: Capital Facilities Plan* includes a detailed list of projects, along with their estimated costs, to be implemented in the next 20 years.
- *Appendix H: Proposed Park, Recreation Facility, and Open Space Maps* contains maps showing proposed park, recreation, and

open space projects as listed on the 6-year and 20-year CFPs.

- *Appendix I: Funding Programs* includes a list of potential grant funding sources.
- *Appendix J: Park Impact Fee Program & Rate Calculation* includes a preliminary Park Impact Fee (PIF) update.
- *Appendix K: Existing Partnerships* details a number of existing relationships between VCPRD and public and private partners.
- *Appendix L: Evidence of Adoption* includes the County and City ordinances passed to adopt the *Vancouver-Clark Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*.



2. Planning Framework



2. PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Department's values and the community's aspirations are the guiding forces for the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Through a series of meetings with the Parks Advisory Commission and Department staff, these values and aspirations were integrated into a comprehensive plan framework. The framework includes the Department's core values, vision, mission, and goals, which are described in detail in this chapter.

The four key elements of the framework are interrelated (Figure 3). Core values are the fundamental principles of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. These core values provide the basis for the Department's vision. The values and vision

also set the direction for the Department mission and goals, which express how the VCPRD will provide parks, open space, and recreation facilities for the next 20 years.

BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

One way to express the importance of local park and recreation services is to highlight the individual and community benefits they provide. Rather than measuring the number of parks and facilities or calculating their service capacity, this approach identifies the benefits of providing or participating in recreation opportunities on four levels: personal, social, economic, environmental. Known as the benefits movement, this strategy has gained popularity as a method for evaluating, measuring, promoting, and marketing park and recreation services since its inception in 1991. Clark County first used the benefits concept in its 1994 comprehensive parks plan.

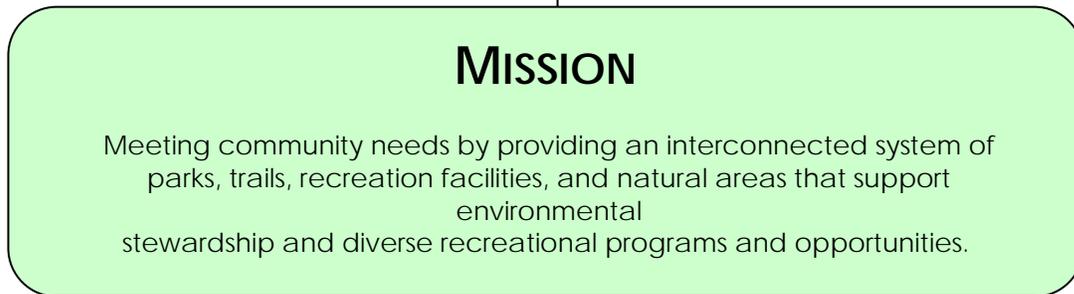
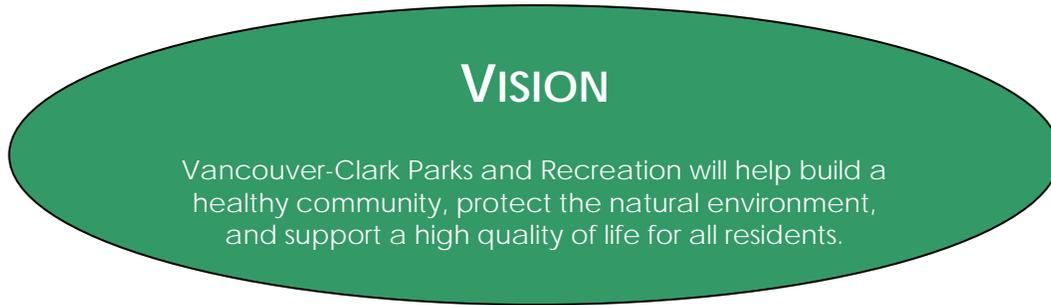
PERSONAL BENEFITS

A park, recreation, and open space system provides the basis for cultivating personal benefits such as physical fitness and health, stress reduction, positive self-image, opportunities for personal growth, and a better quality of life.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

A park, recreation, and open space system provides opportunities for social benefits such as leadership development, community involvement and pride, ethnic and cultural harmony, stronger families, and opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged individuals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



GOALS

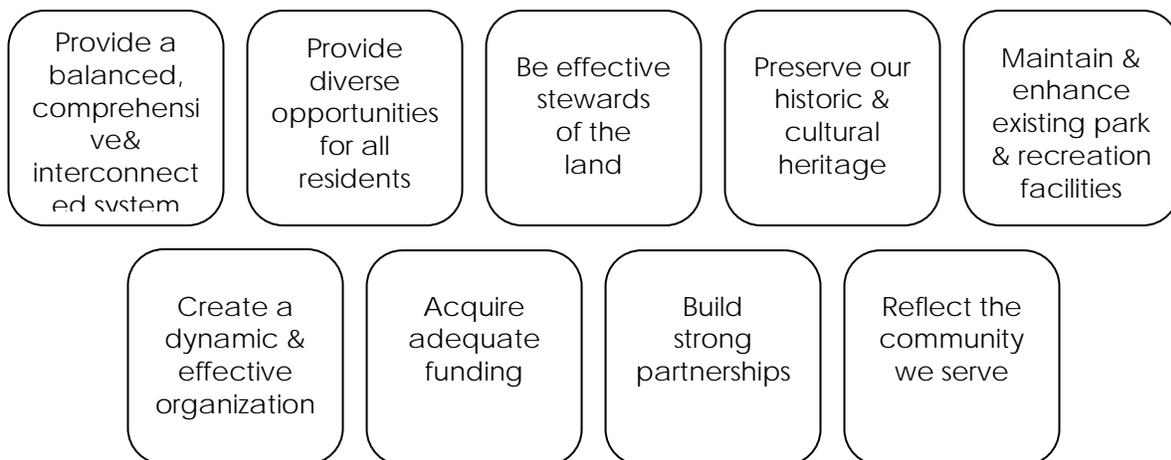


Figure 3: VCPRD Planning Framework

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Park, recreation, and open space opportunities provide economic benefits such as preventative health care, productive workforce, business relocation and expansion, reduced vandalism and crime, tourism, and investment in environmental protection.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Park, recreation, and open space opportunities provide environmental benefits such as greater environmental health, wildlife and resource protection and rehabilitation, and insurance for an improved environmental future.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are the overarching ideals that guide service delivery for the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. These principles are the foundation for the vision, goals, and objectives included in the comprehensive plan. The Department's guiding principles include the following:

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The VCPRD strives to provide the highest quality parks, open space, and recreation facilities and aims to make all parks, facilities, and programs geographically, physically, socially, and economically accessible. The VCPRD will work to hire exceptional staff, exceed standards, and serve as a leader in parks and recreation on local, state, and national levels.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

The VCPRD will build and maintain a more environmentally sustainable parks, recreation, and open space ecosystem infrastructure. The concept of green infrastructure elevates air,

land, and water to an equal footing with built infrastructure and transforms open space from a nicety to a necessity. Green infrastructure provides important ecological and social functions that translate into direct cost savings to local government and indirect stimulation of the local economy. With an eye to the future, the Department will foster community stewardship; implement environmentally sensitive design, construction, and maintenance practices; and create a system of parks, open space, and important wildlife habitat that will enrich the community for years to come. The Department acknowledges future generations have a right to a healthy ecosystem and that the present generation has an ethical responsibility to be stewards of the community's resources for the future.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

The VCPRD will help build a livable community that includes diverse opportunities for improving health and wellness. The Department will support active lifestyles by providing safe, accessible parks, facilities, and programs that foster physical activity, mental challenges, and social engagement.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Department recognizes the potential of parks, trails, recreation services, open space, and the tree canopy to improve the community's attractiveness as a place to live and work. VCPRD will continue to work with the City of Vancouver and Clark County to utilize parks and recreation as a component of a vibrant and economically sustainable community. The VCPRD will also make fiscal responsibility, accountability, and long-term financial stability a high priority. The Department will maximize existing resources and use innovative funding mechanisms to provide and maintain high quality parks,

facilities, and programs at affordable costs to residents.

CONNECTIVITY

The VCPRD will develop an interconnected system of parks, trails, open space, tree canopies, and habitat areas, acquiring missing links and contiguous parcels to provide maximum wildlife, recreation, and transportation benefits.

VISION

The core values embraced by the Department provide the foundation for a vision of the community's future. Through the public involvement process, the staff and Parks Advisory Commission developed the following vision for the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan:

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation will help build a healthy community, protect the natural environment, and support a high quality of life for all residents.

MISSION

A mission statement, congruent with the community's vision for parks and recreation, describes the approach that Department staff will use to develop and operate parks, open space, and recreation facilities. The Department's mission is:

Meeting community needs by providing an interconnected system of parks, trails, recreation facilities, and natural areas that support environmental stewardship and diverse recreational programs and opportunities.



GOALS

Goals are the desired outcomes of the comprehensive plan. Nine goals emerged during the planning process, which reflect the Department's core values and vision. These goals include:

- *Provide a balanced, comprehensive, and interconnected park, trail, and open space system.* The VCPRD strives to create a network of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that are connected via trails, bikeways, streets, bus routes, and wildlife corridors. This system will link all parts of the VCPRD planning area into one diverse and integrated system, and provide a variety of recreation opportunities to all Clark County residents.
- *Provide diverse recreational opportunities for all residents.* The VCPRD will provide a variety of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that engage a broad cross-section of the community, including residents of all ages, abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds. The Department will strive to make all parks, facilities, and open spaces geographically, physically, socially, and economically

- accessible to all members of the community.
- *Be effective stewards of the land.* The Department will promote an ethic of preservation, conservation, and sustainability through outdoor recreation opportunities, environmental education, and planning, acquisition, design, and maintenance. The Department will strive to protect, conserve, and enhance important wildlife habitat and populations.
 - *Preserve our historic and cultural heritage.* Vancouver has a significant historical legacy and a wealth of cultural and historical resources. The VCPRD will provide opportunities to enhance appreciation of this heritage, promote community stewardship and historical preservation, and provide high-quality cultural and historical experiences.
 - *Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation facilities.* The VCPRD will maintain and revitalize parks and facilities to support recreation activities, protect existing investments, maximize maintenance efficiencies, and improve user safety and accessibility.
 - *Create a dynamic and effective organization.* The VCPRD will respond efficiently and effectively to the community's evolving priorities and needs. The Department will be accessible and responsive to the community it serves, creating new policies, procedures, and technologies in response to changing needs over time.
 - *Acquire adequate funding to meet community needs.* The VCPRD will use a variety of long- and short-term funding strategies to provide dependable funding for parks, facilities, and open space acquisition, development, and maintenance. New revenue generating ideas, such as entrepreneurial projects, sponsorships, and joint ventures, will be explored and considered as adequate funding is sought to support our community's historical, cultural, and natural recreation resources.
 - *Build strong partnerships.* Strong community collaboration brings additional resources to parks and recreation and enhances community ownership of parks, facilities, and programs. The VCPRD will continue to cultivate strong, positive partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations in order to unite community efforts to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, recreation facilities, and open space.
 - *Reflect the community we serve.* By involving community members in planning, designing, and implementing park and recreation opportunities, the VCPRD can be more responsive, accountable, and creative in meeting community needs, thereby reflecting the desires of residents and sharing community priorities.



3. Classifications & Standards



3. CLASSIFICATIONS & STANDARDS

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department owns and operates six different types of parks: neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, natural areas and open space, trails and greenways, and special use areas. For neighborhood, community, and regional parks, the Department has adopted acquisition and development standards, which were derived through an evaluation of local needs and conditions. For other park types, need is based on the characteristics of the physical resource, rather than on a population-based standard. This chapter includes a discussion of proposed acquisition and development standards for all park types in the VCPRD system.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Six park classifications were used to categorize park and recreation facilities. These include:

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

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, these parks are generally three to five acres in size and primarily serve residents within a half-mile radius. Neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playgrounds, turf areas, pathways and trails, picnic tables, sports courts, and benches. Elementary school sites have been included under the neighborhood parkland classification, since they often have neighborhood park elements and serve some of the neighborhood park needs. At the present time, the VCPRD provides neighborhood parks within the City of Vancouver and its Urban Growth Area (UGA).

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks provide a focal point and gathering place for broad groups of users. Usually 20 to 100 acres in size, community parks are used by all segments of the population and generally serve residents from a one- to three-mile service area. Community parks often include recreation facilities for organized activities, such as sports fields, skate parks, and play courts. Community parks may also incorporate passive recreation space and community facilities, such as community or senior centers. Because of their large service area, community parks require more support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. Some middle and high school sites are

included in the community parkland inventory, since these facilities can serve some of the community park needs. At the present time, the VCPRD only provides community parks in the Vancouver urban growth area.

REGIONAL PARKS

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 recreational activities. Facilities may include sports fields, extensive trail systems, or large picnic areas. In addition, regional parks often include passive recreation space and unique features, such as significant natural areas or access to lakes or rivers. Because of their large size and broad service area, regional parks typically require more support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. These parks are usually designed to accommodate large numbers of people.

NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE

Natural areas and open space are primarily undeveloped spaces, which are managed for both their natural, ecological value and for light-impact recreational use. These areas can range in size from one to thousands of acres, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitats, or stream corridors. Natural areas and open space provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as bird-watching and environmental education. Natural areas also provide opportunities for active recreation such as walking and running, bicycle riding, and hiking. These parks can provide relief from urban density and may also preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as endangered animal habitat and native plant communities. Natural areas often include:

- Wetlands

- Floodplains
- Streams, lakes, and ponds
- Forests
- Prairies and meadows
- Pastures and agricultural lands
- Timber lands

Within the Vancouver Urban Growth Area (UGA), natural areas are typically referred to as urban open space. Within the VCPRD planning area but outside the UGA, these spaces are referred to as natural areas or conservation areas.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The City and County have completed a comprehensive *Regional Trails and Bikeways System Plan* which defines trails as any “path, route, way, right-of-way, or corridor posted, signed, or designated as open for non-motorized travel or passage by the general public.” Five trail types are identified in the plan:

- Regional, multi-use trails, which provide the major access networks across the County;
- Local trails, which provide access from neighborhoods to regional multi-use trails;
- Rustic trails, which are smaller in scale than the local trails and are intended to provide access to natural features and loop trail opportunities;
- Semi-primitive trails, which are intended for rural or forest settings; and
- Bike lanes and pedestrian walkways, which are located on City, County, and State road right-of-ways.

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.

SPECIAL USE AREAS AND FACILITIES

Special use areas are stand-alone facilities such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, or skate parks that provide space for a specialized activity. Since special use areas vary widely in function, there is no minimum size, but special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities, such as parking and restrooms, are often included.

ACQUISITION STANDARDS

The plan recommends maintaining the current adopted acquisition standards for neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, and urban open space. Additional guidelines are also proposed for all park types and facilities.

URBAN PARKS

Urban parks include neighborhood parks, community parks, and natural areas and open space within the Vancouver Urban Growth Area. The plan identifies an urban parkland acquisition standard of 6 acres/1,000 population. This standard is designed to include 5 acres/1,000 of neighborhood and community parks and one acre/1,000 of urban natural areas and open space.

Neighborhood and Community Parks

Within the combined five-acre standard, the preferred distribution is two acres for neighborhood parks and three acres for community parks. However, the combined standard allows for modifications where existing and proposed development limits the availability of parcels large enough to accommodate community parks.

Acquisition Standards
Neighborhood/Community Parks: 5 acres/1,000
Urban Open Space: 1 acre/1,000
Urban Parks: 6 acres/1,000 population

The recommended NRPA guideline for neighborhood and community park acquisition is 6 to 10 acres/1,000 population. While the City and County have adopted a standard of five acres, their goal is to achieve the higher level of service, particularly in densely-developed areas within the UGA.

Additional guidelines for the provision of neighborhood and community parkland include:

- *Neighborhood Parks:* These parks primarily serve an area within a 1/2-mile radius from each park site, allowing safe and reasonable access. Parks shall be 1 to 5 acres in size.
- *Community Parks:* These parks primarily serve an area with a 3-mile radius from each park site, allowing safe and reasonable access. Parks shall be 20 to 100 acres in size.
- *Site Characteristics:* Selected sites should be suitable for the desired range of improvements, consistent with

community needs and park and recreation trends. An ideal site should accommodate a mix of natural spaces, traditional park amenities, and active recreation opportunities. Recognizing that not all sites can accommodate this range of amenities, each park district should contain an overall balance of active and passive recreational amenities and natural areas.

Urban Natural Areas and Open Space

Although there is no NRPA guideline for urban natural areas and open space, Clark County adopted a standard of 2.5 acres/1,000 population in 1990. Subsequently, this standard was reduced as the Parks Department consolidated and the urban system was standardized. This plan suggests that the City and the County maintain this revised standard of one acre of open space /1,000 population. However, the goal should be to achieve the higher, initial standard.

REGIONAL PARKS

This plan recommends that the VCPRD maintain its regional park acquisition standard of 10 acres/1,000 population, with a goal of 20 acres/1,000 population. Guidelines for the provision of regional parks include a desirable size of 200 acres or more, although no minimum is recommended. This plan recommends that regional parkland be distributed throughout the County based on the availability of unique sites or destinations.

Acquisition Standard
Regional Parks: 10 acres/1,000 population

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

Neither the City nor the County has acquisition or development standards for trails and greenways. Since trails and greenways are based on multi-modal transportation routes, recreational opportunities, and natural features, this plan does not recommend a population-based standard. Instead, VCPRD should pursue an acquisition and development program consistent with the *Regional Trails and Bikeways System Plan*, in conjunction with transportation, public works, and other departments, which promotes an interconnected system of trails and greenways throughout the County.

NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE

No standard is recommended for natural and conservation areas in the rural portions of Clark County, since these areas are usually acquired based on the significance of their environment and habitat. The plan recommends pursuing a conservation program that complements outside efforts to protect high-priority and critical lands throughout the County. Acquisition should occur along major riparian and habitat areas, urban growth buffers, and in areas with unique site qualities. The goal for acquiring these areas is to create a connected, cohesive system that spans the entire County. This effort should focus on areas as identified in this and the *Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan*.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

No standard is recommended for special use areas, since these areas are often acquired based on specific facility needs. The plan recommends acquiring special use areas as needed to meet the facility guidelines proposed in this plan.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Parkland can be classified by intensity and extent of development. Development standards for various park types include both numerical standards (acres/1,000 or percentage of a site) and development levels.

NUMERICAL STANDARDS

Development standards are proposed for the following park types:

- *Neighborhood and Community Parks:* This plan recommends maintaining the current development standards for neighborhood and community parks. In the City of Vancouver, the standard is 4.25 acres/1,000 population of developed urban parkland. In the Urban-Unincorporated area, the standard is for all core parks (neighborhood and community) to be developed to a Level 2 standard, as defined below.
- *Urban Open Space/Natural Areas:* No development standard is proposed for urban open space, which should remain in a relatively natural condition.
- *Regional Parks:* This plan recommends maintaining the current regional park development standard of 18% of the site. This standard allows for active and passive recreation opportunities as well as open space preservation.

DEVELOPMENT LEVELS

The level of development standards listed below represent a modification of previous standards, designed to clarify the intention of the standard while increasing flexibility to allow for changing community needs.

Neighborhood Parks

Level 1 is intended to secure the site, reduce liability and unsightliness, preserve existing natural resources, and permit pedestrian access to the site. Improvements are dependent on initial site inventory and generally include fencing, fire hazard mowing only, rule signage, hazard removal, rough grading, and noxious/invasive plant removal. Master planning of the site is also completed to guide future improvements.

Level 2 is intended to provide a range of recreational opportunities and protect and enhance a site's natural features as determined in the site master plan. Recreational opportunities and amenities may include walking paths, play options, seating, natural areas, park identification and interpretative signage, and gathering spaces.

Level 3 is intended to provide a greater level of recreational amenities and natural area enhancement, and may be possible if additional capital and maintenance funds are available. Improvements may include additional landscaping, play equipment, signage, paths, irrigation, and structures not provided during Level 2 development.

Community Parks

Level 1 is intended to secure the site, reduce liability and unsightliness, preserve existing natural resources, and permit pedestrian access to the site. Improvements are dependent on initial site inventory and may include fencing, fire hazard mowing, rough grading, and invasive plant removal. Master planning of the site is also completed to guide future improvements.

Level 2 is intended to provide a range of recreational opportunities and protect and enhance a site's natural features as determined in the comprehensive plan. Recreational opportunities and amenities may include parking, play options, restrooms, walking paths, natural areas, park identification and interpretative signage, gathering spaces, and seating.

Level 3 is intended to provide a greater level of natural area enhancement and recreational amenities. Improvements may include sports/ tennis courts and play options able to accommodate larger groups, picnic shelters, and additional landscaping, walking paths, and signage.

Application

The application of the neighborhood and community park development standards differs across the incorporated and unincorporated areas. In the incorporated area, neighborhood and community parks are acquired and developed to Level 2. Within the unincorporated area, priority is given to acquiring, reserving, and making available sites for future neighborhood and community park development. Development priority is given to improving all park sites to a Level 1 standard, followed by developing community parks to a Level 2 standard. Level 2 development of neighborhood parks occurs only after maintenance funds are secured.



4. Parks and Recreation Facility Needs Analysis



4. PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department is the largest provider of park and recreation facilities in Clark County, Washington. This chapter identifies trends, existing park and recreation resources within the VCPRD planning area, and current and future need for additional parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

METHODOLOGY

A variety of tools were used to assess current and future need for parks and recreation facilities:

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY

Department staff compiled an inventory of parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities owned and operated by VCPRD. In addition, the staff developed an inventory of private, other public, and school-affiliated park and recreation facilities. This inventory is summarized in this chapter. The complete inventories of both the VCPRD's and other providers' parkland resources are presented in Appendix C. Maps 1-9 in Appendix D show existing parkland within the planning area.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

All results of comprehensive plan public involvement were used in the development the needs analysis. These results are summarized in Appendix A and include:

- *Community Survey:* The comprehensive plan survey collected data on current park, recreation, and open space use by residents of Clark County. The survey also gathered input on park and recreation needs, preferences, and priorities.
- *Regional Meetings:* Regional meetings held throughout the City of Vancouver and Clark County elicited feedback on park and recreation needs and priorities from the general public.
- *Focus Groups:* Focus group discussions were held with Vancouver and Clark County youth, maintenance staff, and VCPRD recreation providers. These focus groups were designed to gather input on needs and potential improvements specific to each of these populations.
- *Stakeholder Interviews:* Interviews with key community stakeholders provided data regarding current park, recreation, and

open space priorities, needs, and opportunities.

REVIEW OF TRENDS

The following sources were consulted in order to identify local, state, and national trends in sports and recreation.

- *National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA)*: The NSGA is the national association for sporting goods retailers and conducts an annual nationwide study in order to determine trends in recreation participation.
- *Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)*: The SCORP is a five-year statewide recreation plan published by the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation. The SCORP is designed to determine outdoor recreation issues and opportunities and to explore state and local response strategies. It includes valuable data on current trends in recreation participation and demand in Washington.
- *Emerging Trends in Recreation: A Report to the Vancouver-Clark County Parks and Recreation District*: This report, completed in 2005, summarizes major trends in participation in a variety of recreation activities based on national, state, and local trends, local survey information, and discussions with local and regional parks and recreation personnel.
- *Vancouver-Clark Recreation Staff*: Recreation staff met in a work session to discuss major trends in recreation participation and emerging activities.

GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

In addition, a geographic analysis was conducted to determine the need for parks and recreation facilities within the planning area. Standards and guidelines were developed based on preferred park and facility distributions, and existing and projected level of service was compared with these adjusted standards.

DEMAND ANALYSIS

Community demand, as indicated by program participation and public involvement activities, was also used to inform the analysis of need for parks and recreation facilities. For example, in the cases of some recreation facilities, sports participation numbers were used to develop facility guidelines and compared directly to facility supply.

STANDARDS ANALYSIS

To help determine the need for park and recreation facilities within the planning area, the Department's current level of service was compared to established parkland standards, which are expressed in acres/1,000 (see Chapter 3). In addition, existing and projected level of service for each park type was compared with the Department's proposed standard, where applicable. This analysis resulted in a standards-based assessment of need.

EMERGING TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Several trends in sports and recreation have emerged in recent years at the local, state, and national levels which informed the needs analysis. Major trends are listed below.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- *Projected Growth:* The planning area population is anticipated to grow rapidly, with the greatest increases occurring in and around the County's most urban areas: Vancouver, Camas, Washougal, and Battle Ground. Additional parks, facilities, and recreation services will be required to meet the needs of this growing population.
- *Higher Density/Infill Development:* While some of the area's anticipated population growth will spill into areas beyond the Vancouver Urban Growth Area (UGA), the cities in Clark County will also see an increase in infill development and high density housing. Preservation of urban parkland, including open space, will become more important and challenging.
- *Age:* The senior population within the planning area continues to grow. Aging baby boomers tend to remain active, both in physical and intellectual activities, and are likely to participate in recreation programs. Also, demographic trends reveal a continued rise in the number of school-aged children, as the children of the baby-boom generation become parents. VCPRD will experience an increased demand for active older citizens, youth activities, after-school programs, and teen activities.
- *Families:* Clark County statistics suggest that a high proportion of families with children reside in the community. Trends show that more families, including grandparents, desire opportunities to recreate together. VCPRD will see this trend as an increasing need for multi-generational recreation.

- *Diversity:* The City of Vancouver and Clark County have steadily growing percentages of African-American, Asian- American, and Hispanic residents. This ethnic diversity has been coupled with an increase in the numbers of non-native English speakers. VCPRD will need to explore strategies for serving all residents and for marketing programs and services to diverse populations.

RECREATION TRENDS

- *Close-to-Home Recreation:* Increasing energy costs have contributed to public demand for nearby recreation opportunities that are accessible by foot, bike, car, and transit.
- *Non-Traditional Scheduling:* Adults increasingly prefer informal, self-directed activities over structured, directed programs. Drop-in, short format, and non-peak hour activities are a better fit for busy lifestyles.
- *Women's Participation:* Women and girls have been participating in sports and recreation in larger numbers since Title IX brought greater equality to scholastic sports programs.
- *Changing Recreation Preferences:* Although recreation preferences are constantly evolving, certain activities have shown especially strong growth over the past several decades. Trail-related recreation is becoming increasingly important, locally, regionally and statewide. Sports continue to be popular, and outdoor activities/nature programming is also among the most popular activities in Washington.
- *Obesity:* Obesity is recognized as a health and social issue nationwide. A sedentary

lifestyle and the lack of even moderate physical activity are having health repercussions for both adults and children. Recreation service providers need to promote active living for all ages and provide opportunities for formal and informal physical activity.

- *Service Opportunities:* In recent years, the idea of public participation has shifted from informing the public about political and community choices to involving them in decision-making and service. Public involvement and volunteerism develop a sense of public ownership, pride, and community support.
- *Winter Recreation Opportunities:* The year-round mild weather in Clark County offers many opportunities for outdoor recreation activities, which can be supported during the winter and spring with amenities, such as lighting and covered facilities (playgrounds, skate parks, etc.) Indoor activities are highly popular in the winter, as well as programs for winter excursions, such as snowboarding, downhill and cross-country skiing.
- *Urban Forestry:* The tree canopy in urban areas in Clark County is both aesthetically pleasing and an essential component of the green infrastructure, contributing to environmental health. Urban forestry efforts are being expanding in many communities, ranging from citywide and volunteer tree planting programs to Arbor Day festivals.
- *Emerging Sports and Activities:* Trends show increasing interests in walking/hiking, BMX biking, mountain biking, lacrosse, disc golf, Ultimate Frisbee, outdoor

- adventure and extreme sports, spray parks and water play opportunities, canoeing and kayaking, community gardening, and skiing/snowboarding/snowshoeing.

EXISTING PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY INVENTORY

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The Vancouver-Clark Park and Recreation Department manages a variety of parks within each of its six park classifications. In total, the VCPRD system includes over 7,400 acres of parkland at 239 sites. VCPRD currently provides regional parks, special facilities, trails and greenways, and natural areas throughout Clark County, and neighborhood and community parks, and sports fields within the Vancouver urban area. Recreation services are offered solely within the City of Vancouver, though they are available to all area residents. Other cities within the County are responsible for urban park and recreation provision within their boundaries. Table 1 summarizes VCPRD park acreage by classification, and Table 2 summarizes park acreage by type for each park district. Tables 3 and 4 detail changes in park acreage over time, while Table 5 illustrates changes in level of service over time.

Note: Changes in inventory methodology have resulted in variation in acreage and park totals shown in some tables. For example, previous regional plans included park and open space lands owned and operated by other agencies in the inventory. In general, this update includes only VCPRD-owned and applicable school district properties.

Analysis

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF EXISTING VCPRD PARKLAND BY CLASSIFICATION

Park Type	Number	Undeveloped Acreage	Developed Acreage	Total VCPRD Acreage	Other Providers' Acreage	Total with Other Providers
Neighborhood Parks	132	190.52	392.94	583.46	--	583.46
Community Parks	35	471.60	393.28	864.88	--	864.88
Natural Areas/Open Space	36	1,103.26	0.00	1,103.26	10,728.62	11,831.88
Regional Parks	13	2,048.07	286.00	2,334.07	74.74	2,408.81
Trails and Greenways	11	1,756.96	69.05	1,826.01	243.56	2,069.57
Special Use Areas	12	662.09	59.00	721.09	1,136.52	1,857.61
<i>Total</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>6,232.50</i>	<i>1,200.27</i>	<i>7,432.77</i>	<i>12,183.44</i>	<i>19,616.21</i>

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF EXISTING VCPRD PARKLAND BY PIF DISTRICT

PIF District	Total Acreage	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Natural Areas/Open Space
District 1	212.70	67.49	138.12	7.09
District 2	232.93	53.47	106.24	70.77
District 3	187.59	53.58	86.70	47.31
District 4	70.34	37.82	30.00	2.52
District 5	409.30	115.31	191.80	102.19
District 6	111.84	32.81	76.45	2.58
District 7	204.90	90.18	30.44	84.28
District 8	116.33	37.83	60.44	18.06
District 9	169.12	59.02	68.88	41.22
District 10	119.65	33.50	76.24	9.91
<i>Total</i>	<i>2,552.03</i>	<i>583.46</i>	<i>864.88</i>	<i>385.93</i>

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF EXISTING PARK ACREAGE IN VANCOUVER CITY LIMITS, 1994-2006

Park Type	1994		2001		2006	
	Quantity	Acres	Quantity	Acres	Quantity	Acres
Neighborhood Parks	39	163	72	288	81	324
Community Parks	14	282	20	361	21	367
Urban Open Space	13	113	21	199	24	214
Regional Parks	2	99	2	99	2	412
Conservation and Greenway Systems	10	630	10	630	6	939
Special Use Areas	25	226	26	236	5	90
<i>Total</i>	<i>103</i>	<i>1,503</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>1,813</i>	<i>139</i>	<i>2,347</i>

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF EXISTING PARK ACREAGE IN CLARK COUNTY, 1994-2006

Park Type	1994		2000/2004*		2006	
	Quantity	Acres	Quantity	Acres	Quantity	Acres
Neighborhood Parks	23	116	47	267	51	260
Community Parks	5	234	13	340	15	498
Urban Open Space	2	32	10	82	9	172
Regional Parks	10	1,797	12	2,300	11	1,922
Conservation and Greenway Systems	9	1,390	13	2,900	8	1,695
Special Use Areas	3	162	7	416	8	634
<i>Total</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>3,731</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>6,305</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>5,181</i>

* 2000-2004 represents regional data from the 2000 Regional Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and urban data from the 2004 Vancouver Urban Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

TABLE 5: LEVEL OF SERVICE BY YEAR, CITY OF VANCOUVER AND CLARK COUNTY

Park Type	Standard	Vancouver			Clark County		
		1994	2002	2005	1994	2002	2005
Neighborhood Parks (including schools)	2.0	2.5	2.4	2.1	2.5	N/A	2.0
Community Parks (including schools)	3.0	4.1	2.4	2.4	4.1	N/A	3.8
Urban Open Space	1.0	N/A	1.1	1.4	N/A	N/A	1.3
Combined Urban Park Acquisitions	6.0	N/A	5.9	5.9	N/A	N/A	7.2
Combined Urban Park Development	4.25	N/A	2.3	3.5	N/A	N/A	1.9
Regional Parks	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

RECREATION FACILITIES

In addition to providing parkland, the Vancouver Clark Parks and Recreation Department owns and manages a variety of recreation facilities for use by Clark County residents. These facilities include sports fields, pools, gyms, community centers, a tennis center, skate parks, and off leash areas. Several private, for-profit, and public providers also meet recreation needs in Clark County. Table 6 includes a summary of recreation facilities in the VCPRD planning areas.

TABLE 6: EXISTING RECREATION FACILITIES

Facility	VCPRD	Other Agencies	Total
Baseball/Softball Fields	36	129	165
Urban	35	71	106
Rural	1	58	59
Community Centers	3	1	4
Gymnasiums	3	119	122
Off Leash Areas	1	1	2
Pools	3	3	6
Skate Parks	2	0	2
Soccer Fields	17	211	228
Urban	17	122	139
Rural	0	89	89

PARKLAND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The parkland needs assessment discusses the need for each of the community’s six major park types, including neighborhood parks, community parks, natural areas and open space, regional parks, trails and greenways, and special use areas. Tables 7 and 8 summarize the anticipated need for each park type. These needs are based on input gathered through the Community Survey and other public outreach, and technical analysis of geographic distribution and proposed parkland standards. Details on the

methodology and results of the Community Survey can be found in Appendix A. Parkland standards can be found in Chapter 3. According to the Community Survey, residents of the City of Vancouver and Clark County frequently use parks and open spaces. In fact, almost 40% of Community Survey respondents reported visiting a park more than 20 times in the past year, and the average number of visits per year reported by respondents was even higher, 50.2. While the VCPRD’s existing parks are clearly both well-used and well-liked, Community Survey respondents also noted a number of park and

Note: All parkland and recreation facility needs presented in this analysis are based on the population figures shown in Table G-2 and are cumulative over the planning period.

TABLE 7: PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS – VANCOUVER UGA

Park Type	Historic NRPA Guidelines	VCPRD Existing Standard ^A	VCPRD Existing Facilities	VCPRD/ School District Acres ^B	Other Local Agency Acres ^C	Total Acres	VCPRD Existing Level of Service ^{D, E}	Existing Level of Service Inc. Other Local Agencies ^{D, E}	Proposed Standard ^F	Acres Needed to Meet Acquisition Standard	
										Current Population inside UGA (2006)	Projected Population inside UGA (2025)
										286,226	384,505
Neighborhood Parks	2.0	2.0	132	583.46	N/A	583.46	2.03	2.03	2.0	19.52	195.30
Community Parks	8.0	3.0	35	864.88	N/A	864.88	3.02	3.02	3.0	138.67	292.26
Urban Open Space	N/A	1.0	33 ^F	385.93	N/A	385.93	1.35	1.36	1.0	61.13	115.09
<i>Total</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>1,834.27</i>	<i>NA</i>	<i>1,834.27</i>	<i>6.40</i>	<i>6.41</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>219.32</i>	<i>592.90</i>

TABLE 8: PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS – VCPRD PLANNING AREA

Park Type	Historic NRPA Guidelines	VCPRD Existing Standard ^A	VCPRD Existing Facilities	VCPRD Acres	Other Local Agency Acres ^C	Total Acres	VCPRD Existing Level of Service ^E	Existing Level of Service Including Other Local Agencies ^E	Proposed Guide-line ^E	Acres Needed to Meet Acquisition Guideline	
										Current Population Clark County (2006)	Projected Population Clark County (2025)
										409,292	595,603
Regional Parks	N/A	10.0	13	2,334.07	74.74	2,408.81	5.70	5.89	10.0	1,684.11	3,547.22
Regional Open Space		N/A	3	717.33	10,728.62	11,445.95	1.75	27.97	N/A	N/A	N/A
Trails and Greenways		N/A	11	1,826.01	243.56	2,069.57	4.46	5.06	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special Use Areas		N/A	12	721.09	1,136.52	1,857.61	1.76	4.54	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>Total</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>5,598.5</i>	<i>12,183.44</i>	<i>17,781.94</i>	<i>13.67</i>	<i>43.46</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>1,684.11</i>	<i>3,547.22</i>

^A Existing standards as defined in *Clark County Regional Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan*(2000) and the *Vancouver Urban Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* (2002).

^B Includes elementary, middle, and high school sites. A complete inventory appears in Appendix C.

^C Includes public and private providers. A complete inventory appears in Appendix C.

^D Reflects total level of service for all PIF districts and does not reflect breakdown by district.

^E Level of service, standards, and guidelines are expressed in acres/1,000 population.

^F Includes only those open spaces inside the Vancouver UGA. A complete inventory appears in Appendix C.

open space needs within Vancouver and Clark County. This section highlights some of these parkland needs.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

There are 132 neighborhood parks in the VCPRD planning area - more than any other park type. All of these neighborhood parks lie inside the Vancouver UGA. VCPRD neighborhood parks range in size from 0.25 to 13 acres, and when combined total over 583 acres. This acreage includes selected school grounds of sufficient size and with necessary facilities to serve as neighborhood parks.

Public Involvement Findings

- On a scale of 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority), Community Survey respondents gave neighborhood and community parks a mean score of 7.6, ranking these parks fourth on a list of 11 potential park and recreation priorities.
- A large percentage of Community Survey respondents, 90%, either strongly or somewhat supported expanding neighborhood and community parks.
- At regional meetings, community members repeatedly mentioned the need for small, neighborhood gathering spaces.

Level of Service Analysis

The existing level of service for neighborhood parks was calculated using population figures for the Vancouver Urban Growth Area and not the entire County, since the Department provides neighborhood parks only within this area. Given these population figures, the Department's total current level of service for neighborhood parks is 2.03 acres/1,000 persons. This level of service is slightly higher than the preferred standard of 2.0 acres/1,000 standard and the historic NRPA guideline of



2.0 acres/1,000. Table 7 includes a summary of this analysis.

However, Table 9 shows that the Department is not meeting its standard in several of the ten PIF districts inside the UGA. Currently, the Department has a surplus of 11 acres of neighborhood parkland when the urban area is viewed as a whole. However, 19.5 acres of neighborhood parkland are needed to meet the parkland standard in all park districts. Over 70 acres will be needed to meet the needs of the projected population in 2012 and approximately 195 acres will be needed by 2025. Most of this need is concentrated in PIF districts in the eastern and northern portions of the UGA, although there is a large need in the downtown Vancouver area as well.

In choosing acquisitions for future neighborhood parks, the VCPRD should target residential areas inside the UGA that are not located within a 1/2 mile of an existing neighborhood or community park site. In cases where major, high volume streets fall within a 1/2 mile radius, roads should be treated as service barriers, as they are difficult for pedestrians to cross.

TABLE 9: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS BY PIF DISTRICT - ACQUISITION

PIF District	VCPRD Existing Standard	VCPRD/ School Acres	Existing Level of Service (acres per 1,000 population)	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standard		
				2005 Population	2012 Projected	2025 Projected
PIF District #1	2.00	67.49	2.21	-6.47	11.52	34.66
PIF District #2		55.92	1.98	0.45	7.31	16.12
PIF District #3		53.58	1.60	13.37	17.42	22.63
PIF District #4		37.82	2.28	-4.68	0.54	7.61
PIF District #5		115.31	2.03	-1.89	8.60	25.53
PIF District #6		32.81	2.00	-0.05	5.37	16.85
PIF District #7		90.18	2.25	-9.97	0.10	13.12
PIF District #8		37.83	1.74	5.70	12.01	25.05
PIF District #9		59.02	2.23	-6.09	-1.57	7.09
PIF District #10		33.50	2.09	-1.37	9.83	26.64
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>583.46</i>	<i>2.03</i>	<i>-11.00</i>	<i>71.13</i>	<i>195.30</i>
<i>Total Needed to Meet Standard in All Districts</i>				<i>19.52</i>	<i>72.70</i>	<i>195.30</i>

Level of Development Analysis

There is also a significant deficit in the development of neighborhood parks within the system. According to the standard, 4.25 acres of urban parkland is to be developed per 1,000 residents. Ideally, this should be implemented as 2 acres of developed neighborhood parkland and 2.25 acres of community parkland. This development standard translates into a current need for 180 acres of developed neighborhood parkland within the Vancouver urban area (Table 10). Over 261 acres will be needed by 2012, and 376 acres by 2025.

The deficit is greatest in the urban-unincorporated area, though completion of park development planned for the Greater Clark Parks District meet the majority of the development need in this area. Deficits also exist in eastern and downtown Vancouver, where relatively high levels of growth are anticipated.

COMMUNITY PARKS

At this time, the VCPRD manages 865 acres of community parks at 35 sites within the planning area. These parks range in size from 5 to over 70 acres. Lands owned by other public agencies, including schools, of sufficient size and with necessary facilities to serve as community parks, have been included in the VCPRD inventory and comprise 148 of these community park acres.

Public Involvement Findings

- According to the Community Survey, community parks were among the most used facilities in Vancouver and Clark County. Over 50% of all respondents reported using community parks at least once or twice a month in the prior year.
- Participation in community park-oriented activities including walking, gardening, skateboarding, and team sports also ranked high in the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*.

TABLE 10: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS BY PIF DISTRICT - DEVELOPMENT

PIF District	VCPRD Existing Standard	Developed VCPRD/ School Acres	Existing Level of Service (acres per 1,000 population)	Additional Developed Acres Needed		
				2005 Population	2012 Projected	2025 Projected
PIF District #1	2.00	52.12	1.71	8.90	26.89	50.03
PIF District #2		53.47	1.90	2.90	9.76	18.57
PIF District #3		51.30	1.53	15.65	19.70	24.91
PIF District #4		21.98	1.33	11.16	16.38	23.45
PIF District #5		49.74	0.88	63.68	74.17	91.10
PIF District #6		28.57	1.74	4.19	9.61	21.09
PIF District #7		58.66	1.46	21.55	30.64	44.64
PIF District #8		25.13	1.15	18.40	24.71	37.75
PIF District #9		36.97	1.40	15.96	20.48	29.14
PIF District #10		15.00	0.93	17.13	29.39	35.10
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>392.94</i>	<i>1.37</i>	<i>179.52</i>	<i>261.73</i>	<i>375.78</i>
<i>Total Needed to Meet Standard in All Districts</i>				<i>179.52</i>	<i>261.73</i>	<i>375.78</i>

- On a scale of 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority), Community Survey respondents gave neighborhood and community parks a mean score of 7.6, ranking these parks fourth on a list of 11 potential park and recreation priorities.
- A large majority of Community Survey respondents, 90%, either strongly or somewhat supported expanding neighborhood and community parks.
- Attendees at both regional meetings and focus groups expressed a strong need for additional community gathering spaces.
- On an open-ended Community Survey question, over 15% of respondents indicated a perceived need for more parks, which ranked as the second most desired improvement.

Level of Service Analysis

Level of service for community parks was calculated based on population figures for the Urban Growth Area, since the Department currently provides community parks only within the Vancouver UGA. Given this area's current population, the Department's existing

level of service for community parks is 3.02 acres/1,000 persons. This level of service meets the VCPRD's community park standard of 3.0 acres/1,000. Table 7 includes a summary of this analysis.

Table 11 shows the Department's existing level of service for community parks by PIF district. While the Department has been able to secure sufficient parkland in five park districts to meet short-term future need, community parkland is still needed in the other five districts. District #7, in particular, falls significantly short of the existing community park standard. In fact, 139 additional acres are needed to meet the acquisition standard for the current population in each of the ten PIF districts, 182 acres will be needed to meet the projected population by 2013, and 292 acres will be needed in 2025.

Level of Development Analysis

According to the standard, 4.25 acres of urban parkland should be developed for each 1,000 residents. The preferred breakdown is 2 acres

TABLE 11: COMMUNITY PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS BY PIF DISTRICT - ACQUISITION

PIF District	VCPRD Existing Standard	VCPRD/ School Acres	Existing Level of Service (acres per 1,000 population)	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standard		
				2005 Population	2012 Projected	2025 Projected
PIF District #1	3.00	138.12	4.53	-46.60	-21.92	15.10
PIF District #2		105.81	3.75	-21.26	-10.97	2.26
PIF District #3		86.70	2.59	13.72	19.28	27.61
PIF District #4		30.00	1.81	19.71	28.15	40.81
PIF District #5		191.80	3.38	-21.66	-7.40	14.01
PIF District #6		76.45	4.67	-27.31	-19.14	-6.90
PIF District #7		30.44	0.76	89.88	104.96	127.59
PIF District #8		60.44	2.78	4.85	13.45	26.35
PIF District #9		68.88	2.60	10.51	16.13	24.56
PIF District #10		76.24	4.75	-28.05	-11.24	13.97
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>3.0</i>	<i>864.88</i>	<i>3.02</i>	<i>-6.21</i>	<i>111.30</i>	<i>285.36</i>
<i>Total Needed to Meet Standard in All Districts</i>				<i>138.67</i>	<i>181.97</i>	<i>292.26</i>

TABLE 12: COMMUNITY PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS BY PIF DISTRICT - DEVELOPMENT

PIF District	VCPRD Existing Standard	Developed VCPRD/ School Acres	Existing Level of Service (acres per 1,000 population)	Additional Developed Acres Needed		
				2005 Population	2012 Projected	2025 Projected
PIF District #1	2.25	89.82	2.94	-21.18	-0.93	25.09
PIF District #2		80.81	2.87	-17.39	-9.68	0.24
PIF District #3		63.70	1.90	11.62	16.17	22.03
PIF District #4		12.83	0.77	24.45	30.32	38.27
PIF District #5		8.80	0.16	118.80	130.60	149.64
PIF District #6		38.00	2.32	-1.15	4.96	17.86
PIF District #7		30.44	0.76	59.80	70.03	85.77
PIF District #8		20.00	0.92	28.97	36.07	50.74
PIF District #9		48.88	1.85	10.66	15.75	25.50
PIF District #10		0.00	0.00	36.15	49.93	56.70
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>393.28</i>	<i>1.37</i>	<i>250.73</i>	<i>343.22</i>	<i>471.84</i>
<i>Total Needed to Meet Standard in All Districts</i>				<i>290.45</i>	<i>353.83</i>	<i>471.84</i>

of developed neighborhood parkland and 2.25 acres of community parkland, as community park sites are generally larger and better able to accommodate open space. This development standard translates into a current need for 290 acres of developed community

parkland within the Vancouver urban area (Table 12). Approximately 354 acres will be

needed by 2013, and 472 acres by 2025.

The deficit is greatest in the urban-unincorporated area, though park development planned for the Greater Clark Parks District will help meet the standard.



NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE

The VCPRD currently owns and manages 33 urban and three regional natural areas totaling 1,103 acres. Other providers, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Washington State Parks, and the Columbia Land Trust, provide approximately 10,729 additional natural area acres. For the purposes of this analysis, Yacolt Multiple Use Area, a 60,000-acre site owned by the Washington Department of Natural Resources, has not been included in the natural area inventory as continued recreational use cannot be guaranteed.

Public Involvement Findings

- Over 50% percent of Community Survey respondents reported participating in wildlife observation, an activity supported

by natural areas, during the last year. Other popular natural area-based recreation activities included: camping, 50%; mountain biking, 24%; boating/jet skiing, 23%; and canoeing, kayaking, or row boating, 21%.

- The 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State* shows significant participation in activities offered in natural areas. Over 50% of Washington residents reported walking and hiking for recreation, 43% reported participation in nature activities, and 21% reported biking.
- Community survey respondents show strong support for purchasing open space and natural areas, ranking these efforts second on the priority list for expanded VCPRD services and facilities.
- According to the Community Survey, planning area residents think natural areas are important even in smaller neighborhood parks. Natural areas were ranked second out of 6 amenity preferences for neighborhood parks.
- When asked about priorities, Community Survey respondents expressed support for natural areas, ranking them fifth of 11 choices.
- When asked to choose the highest priority for expansion, Survey respondents ranked purchasing open space and natural areas second at 22%.

Level of Service Analysis: UGA

This plan sets an acquisition standard for urban open space of 1 acre/1,000 persons inside the Vancouver UGA. An analysis of urban open space with respect to the UGA population yields a total level of service of 1.35 acre/1,000 persons, meeting the existing standard. Table 13 includes a summary of the

standards analysis for natural areas within the Vancouver UGA by PIF district.

At the present time, the VCPRD is meeting this standard in only five of its ten PIF Districts. Given shortages in the remaining five districts, over 61 acres of additional urban open space are currently needed to serve the population of the Vancouver UGA, and over 115 acres will be needed for the projected population in 2025.

While the needs within the UGA are relatively modest, the community’s level of interest in natural area preservation and habitat enhancement merits an examination of the potential for more substantial natural area acquisition. Specific opportunities can be identified through an analysis of vacant and critical habitat lands in the planning area, as shown in Table 14. Currently, vacant non-critical lands within the Vancouver UGA total 4,491 acres. In addition, certain properties within the UGA containing riparian or habitat areas have been designated as critical habitat areas. These critical habitat areas add over

2,430 acres to the vacant land inventory. Within this vacant land total, a small percentage, 540 acres, are designated wetlands, leaving a total of 6,380 acres of non-wetland vacant lands within the UGA. See Appendix E for a map of priority habitat areas and critical lands, priority species and habitat lists, and guidelines for developing

appropriate public access in these areas.

Acquisition of any of the vacant lands and critical habitat areas noted in Table 14 may come at a high cost, since these lands are subject to market rates. Lower purchase prices may be available for properties with steep slopes or other features, which limit development.

Table 14 suggests that two more aggressive levels of acquisition could be investigated by the VCPRD. One goal could be to attempt to acquire or preserve most of the 2,400 acres identified as critical habitat area within the UGA, in conjunction with other public and private groups. A more aggressive goal could

TABLE 13: NATURAL AREA AND OPEN SPACE LEVEL OF SERVICE AND STANDARDS BY PIF DISTRICT

PIF District	VCPRD Existing Standard	VCPRD Acres	Existing Level of Service (acres per 1,000 population)	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Standard		
				2005 Population	2012 Projected	2025 Projected
PIF District #1	1.00	7.09	0.23	23.42	32.42	43.98
PIF District #2		70.77	2.51	-42.59	-39.16	-34.75
PIF District #3		47.31	1.41	-13.84	-11.81	-9.21
PIF District #4		2.52	0.15	14.05	16.66	20.19
PIF District #5		102.19	1.80	-45.48	-40.23	-31.77
PIF District #6		2.58	0.16	13.80	16.51	22.25
PIF District #7		84.28	2.10	-44.17	-39.63	-32.63
PIF District #8		18.06	0.83	3.70	6.86	13.38
PIF District #9		41.22	1.56	-14.76	-12.50	-8.16
PIF District #10		9.91	0.62	6.16	12.28	15.29
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>385.93</i>	<i>1.35</i>	<i>-99.71</i>	<i>-58.60</i>	<i>-1.43</i>
<i>Total Needed to Meet Standard in All Districts</i>				<i>61.13</i>	<i>84.73</i>	<i>115.09</i>

TABLE 14: VACANT LAND ANALYSIS

PIF District	Vacant Land acres	Critical Habitat acres	Total Vacant Land acres	Wetland Atlas Overlap acres	Non-Wetland Vacant Land acres
PIF District #1	269.3	274.6	543.9	98.2	445.7
PIF District #2	164.2	81.7	245.9	43.4	202.5
PIF District #3	335.7	34.0	369.7	11.3	358.4
PIF District #4	554.7	221.5	776.2	91.6	684.6
PIF District #5	836.4	459.0	1,295.4	36.4	1,259.0
PIF District #6	572.9	275.6	848.5	48.2	800.3
PIF District #7	503.7	244.7	748.4	53.7	694.7
PIF District #8	371.0	234.7	605.7	41.3	564.4
PIF District #9	425.7	170.5	596.2	91.2	505.0
PIF District #10	457.8	436.2	894.0	24.1	869.9
TOTAL	4,491.4	2,432.5	6,923.9	539.4	6,384.5

be to acquire or preserve the 4,100 acres identified countywide as the minimum goal in the adopted 2003 *Conservation Areas Acquisition Plan*. Regardless of the ultimate goal, natural area acquisitions should be made based on the value of the resource and the contribution to the conservation and greenway system of the greater VCPRD region and resources become available.

Level of Service Analysis: Planning Area

It is also helpful consider natural areas and open space as a regional resource, and one that the Department should provide on a Countywide level. The current urban and regional levels of service for natural areas exceed the urban open space standard and, like the public involvement findings and the *Conservation Areas Draft Acquisition Plan*, suggest that a higher regional standard for natural area acquisition might be a viable tool for the Department to consider. However, no standard is proposed at this time. Instead, it is recommended that the Department pursue the acquisition of natural areas to preserve significant resources outside the UGA as the opportunities arise.

REGIONAL PARKS

A sizable portion of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department’s inventory is in regional park acreage. The VCPRD currently manages 2,334 acres of regional parkland at 13 sites. The Port of Camas-Washougal adds 75 acres to the area’s inventory with Captain William Clark Park, bringing the total regional park acreage to 2,409.

Public Involvement Findings

- In an open-ended question on the Community Survey, Lewisville and Vancouver Lake, both regional parks, were mentioned as two of the four most well known parks in the City of Vancouver and Clark County.
- Large percentages of Community Survey respondents reported participation in activities that might take place in regional parks. Over 50% of Community Survey respondents reported observing wildlife and 50% camping in the prior year.
- According to the Community Survey, approximately 70% of residents visit regional parks annually, though only 33% used regional parks more than a few times in the previous year.

- On a list of 11 potential parks and recreation priorities, Community Survey respondents ranked regional parks seventh.
- Over 85% of Community Survey respondents indicated that they would somewhat or strongly support VCPRD “expanding” regional park services within the community.

Level of Service Analysis

The level of service for existing VCPRD regional parks is 5.70 acres/1,000 persons. When other agencies’ regional parks are added to the inventory, this level of service improves to 5.89 acres/1,000. Both of these levels of service fall below the 10 acre/1,000 residents standard. Table 8 includes a summary of this analysis.

In order to meet the existing acquisition standard, the Department needs 1,684 additional acres of regional parkland at the present time. By 2013, 2,538 acres of regional parkland will be required to meet the needs of the projected population and 3,547 acres will be needed by 2025.

If the Department moves forward with the purchase of the Camp Bonneville property in southeastern Clark County, a large portion of the present need could be met. As defined in current plans, 1,000 acres of this property could be developed as a regional park and the remaining 2,000 could be retained as natural area. The Department could also pursue opportunities to expand existing regional parks, such as those along the Lewis River and the East Fork of the Lewis River. Additionally, the Department has set a goal of achieving better geographic distribution of regional parks, as allowed by availability and suitability of sites.

Level of Development Analysis

The VCPRD has a development standard of 18% for regional parks, to allow for a mix of active and passive recreational amenities and natural areas. In general, currently developed parks meet this development standard (15-20% development). However, because of the number of undeveloped regional park sites in the system, the County currently faces a



regional park development deficit of approximately 419 acres to meet current needs. Approximately 591 acres will need to be developed by 2013 and 814 acres by 2025 to meet this standard.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The VCPRD currently manages 1,826 acres of trails and greenways within the planning area at 11 different sites. These greenways span the entire County. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources contribute an additional 243.56 acres to the greenway inventory and bring the region’s total to nearly 2,070 acres.

The VCPRD operates approximately 60 miles of existing trails in a series of greenways across the County. The recently adopted *County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan* proposes an additional 180 miles of trails within the planning area, expanding the small existing network to connect to more destinations and serve as a more legitimate transportation alternative. When the trails plan is implemented in its entirety, Clark County will have over 300 miles of trails. There is currently no adopted standard for trail acquisition or development.

Public Involvement Findings

- Trails and natural areas were among the most popular amenities as exhibited by respondents to the Community Survey. Almost 50% of residents responding to the survey had used these types of facilities at least once a month during the prior year.
- The 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State* found that 53% of all Washingtonians participated in walking and hiking activities. Running, biking, and equestrian use also ranked high.
- Community Survey respondents ranked trails and walking paths third on a list of potential parks and recreation priorities, giving it a mean score of 7.7 on a scale from 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority). Natural Areas ranked fifth.
- Exactly 90% of respondents to the Community Survey reported that they would either somewhat or strongly support the expansion of trails and walking paths by the VCPRD.
- Trails were repeatedly mentioned in public meetings as a major facility need in the community. Trails and trail-related activities were also repeatedly mentioned in both stakeholder interviews and by Regional Meeting attendees. Community

Survey respondents considered trails along rivers as the most important trail type within Vancouver and Clark County.

- Just over 60% of Community Survey respondents indicated that they would either somewhat or strongly support the development of equestrian trails and facilities by the VCPRD.

Level of Service Analysis

Neither the VCPRD nor the NRPA has a standard for trails and greenways at this time. However, given the popularity of trail-related activities within the VCPRD planning area, the *County Trails and Bikeway System Plan* has proposed to make significant additions to the existing trail network. When the trails plan is realized, there will eventually be 240 miles of trail within the VCPRD planning area.

To allow the Department maximum flexibility in responding to unforeseen opportunities and community demand, no specific standard for trails and greenways acquisitions is proposed. However, the *Clark County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan* can be used to determine an approximate goal for trail and greenway acquisitions. The plan proposes to develop almost 180 additional miles of trail within the VCPRD planning area. The plan also identifies a series of cost estimates which assume a 25 ft. width for trail rights-of-way. Given this right-of-way assumption, the total greenway acquisitions to be made for proposed trails within the VCPRD planning area is approximately 900 acres.

SPECIAL USE AREAS

The Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department currently owns 12 special use areas on 721 acres. These areas include a variety of facilities, such as an environmental education center, a shooting range, and a sports complex. Other providers, including

the Columbia Land Trust, National Park Service, Pacific Power, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, add more than 1,136 acres of special use areas to the planning area, bringing the inventory total to 1,858 acres.

Public Involvement Findings

- In the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, residents of Washington reported high levels of



participation in activities that take place in special use areas. Just fewer than 50% of Washington residents participated in team sports and 13% participated in fishing and camping.

- According to the Community Survey, 80% of respondents reported that they would either somewhat or strongly support the development of outdoor sports complexes for competitive teams including soccer, baseball, and softball.
- Recreation providers in the community noted the potential for large sports complexes during focus groups.
- The possibility of large sports complexes as an economic generator was also echoed by key stakeholders during interviews.

- Community Survey respondents ranked community centers, a facility often found in special use areas, first in terms of five potential services and facilities to expand.

Level of Service Analysis

There is currently no standard for special use areas, and in order to allow the Department flexibility in responding to potential acquisition opportunities, no formal standard is proposed. Instead, the Department should pursue a policy of purchasing parcels suitable for special use areas as demand necessitates and as opportunities arise. For example, there may be potential for the acquisition of small parcels suitable for special facilities with high community demand, such as gyms, pools, community centers, and sports fields.

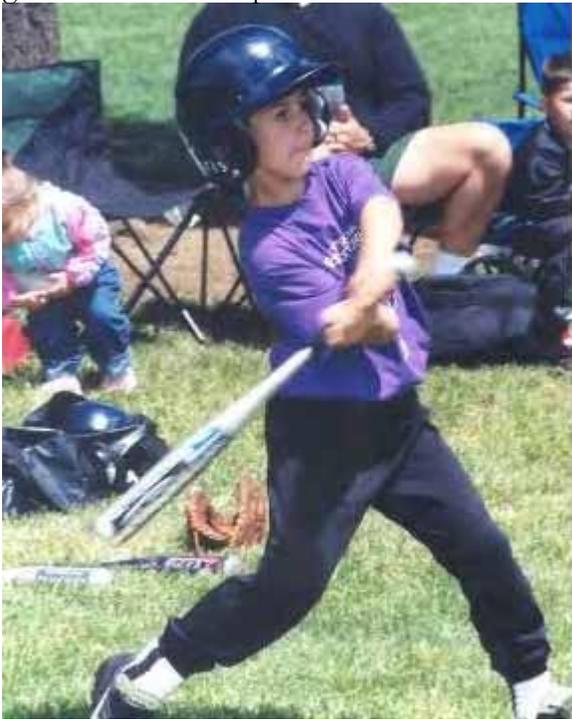
RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

According to the Community Survey, residents of Vancouver and Clark County also recognize the need for more recreation facilities within the VCPRD planning area. Currently, the Department provides a variety of recreation facilities. The need for the following facilities is analyzed:

- Baseball Fields
- Community Centers
- Gymnasiums
- Off Leash Areas
- Pools
- Skate Parks
- Soccer Fields
- Softball Fields
- Other Recreation Amenities

The recreation facility inventory, presented in Appendix C, was used to determine the current level of service for recreation facilities. The inventory includes detailed summaries of facilities provided by the VCPRD, school districts, other cities, and private groups within Clark County. These facilities are generally available to residents of Vancouver and Clark County.

Table 15 presents historic NRPA guidelines and existing levels of service for recreation facilities in the VCPRD planning area. In addition, Table 15 includes proposed facility guidelines and anticipated need. To establish



these guidelines, current level of service for facilities was compared with historic NRPA guidelines, where applicable. In cases where current recreation participation data was available, demand was used to develop proposed facility guidelines. In other instances, a geographic distribution analysis was used to establish new guidelines. Community demand, as noted in the

Comprehensive Plan community involvement process, was considered when recommending new guidelines as well. No formal standards for recreation facilities are proposed.

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FIELDS

Baseball fields may vary in size according to age group and league. However, all baseball fields must have a backstop and dugouts or player benches, and may have a grass infield. An outfield fence, although desirable, is not required. Fields must be level with good playing surface conditions.

As with baseball fields, softball fields can be developed with different dimensions to accommodate different sports and varying age groups, but the minimum outfield dimension is 275 feet. Softball fields must have a backstop, skinned infield, and a dugout or player benches. An outfield fence is not required, but all fields must meet minimum standards for playing surfaces.

Overview

At the present time, various recreation providers including the VCPRD, school districts, and private entities supply a total of 106 baseball and softball fields for dedicated league use within the urban areas of Vancouver. The VCPRD and school districts own and operate the greatest portion of these fields, with private providers supplying the majority of the remaining fields in the inventory.

A number of providers also work to supply baseball, softball, and soccer fields for league use in the more rural areas of Clark County. These providers include the VCPRD, local school districts, private agencies, and the cities of Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Washougal, Yacolt, and Woodland. Altogether, these agencies supply a total of 59 baseball and softball fields for

league use in the areas of Clark County outside the UGA.

Public Involvement Findings

- Just over 30% of Community Survey respondents reported household use of sports and athletic fields more than once a month during the prior year.
- According to the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, baseball ranked eleventh out of 17 team sports in terms of participation in 2002. Softball ranked twelfth.
- According to the Community Survey, sports and athletic fields ranked eighth on a list of 11 potential park and recreation priorities with a mean score of 7.2 on a scale from 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority).
- However, 88% of Community Survey respondents also reported that they would somewhat or strongly support expansion of sports and athletic fields within the VCPRD planning area, ranking it fourth on a list of 11 possible services to expand

Level of Service Analysis: Urban

The current level of service for Department baseball and softball fields dedicated to league use inside the Vancouver UGA is 1 field/8,178 persons. This level of service improves to 1/2,700 persons when the baseball and softball fields of other local providers are added to the inventory. The historic NRPA guideline for baseball and softball fields is 1/5,000. The VCPRD has no existing standards for baseball or softball fields. Table 15 includes a summary of this analysis.

A 2004 analysis of sports field supply and demand conducted by E. D. Hovee & Company examined the need for baseball

game fields within the Vancouver UGA. This analysis used the following assumptions:

- Existing baseball teams average 12 players per team;
- Each of these teams demands two baseball games per week;
- Game fields in the planning area are used for one game a day on Mondays through Thursdays and on Saturdays for four games, generating a net supply of eight games per field; and
- Game fields are used solely for games and practice fields solely for practices.

Current data indicates that there are approximately 4,000 baseball and softball league players within the urban area. Given the above assumptions, this total player participation translates into 330 teams, which generate enough game field demand (at two games a week and 330 games) to occupy 41 baseball and softball game facilities. Based on the E. D. Hovee report, which projected urban sports field needs, a total of 56 urban baseball fields will be needed by 2013. Although there are currently enough fields in the urban area to meet this demand, additional fields may be needed to replace loss of capacity, improve geographic distribution of fields, or provide artificial turf fields for year-round play. The Hovee report projected a demand for a total of 66 baseball and softball fields in the urban area by 2025.

Because of the complexities of sports field demand and need inside the Vancouver UGA, a comprehensive needs analysis for the urban area has not been performed at this time. Instead, it is recommended that the Department undertake a separate detailed study of baseball/softball field need. In the meantime, short term efforts should concentrate on maintaining the current number of fields within the Vancouver UGA.

Level of Service Analysis: Rural

The current level of service for Department baseball and softball fields dedicated to league use in the rural areas of Clark County is 1 field/123,066 persons. This level of service improves to 1/2,086 persons when the baseball and softball fields of other local providers are counted in the inventory, exceeding the historic NRPA guideline of 1/5,000. Again, the VCPRD has no existing standards for baseball or softball fields. Table 15 includes a summary of this analysis.

TABLE 15: RECREATION FACILITY LEVEL OF SERVICE AND GUIDELINES

Facility	Historic NRPA Guidelines	VCPRD Existing Standard	Existing Facilities		Unit of Measure	Total	VCPRD Existing Level of Service	Existing Level of Service Including Other Public Agencies	Facilities Needed to Accommodate Projected Population Clark County (2025) 595,603
			VCPRD ^A	Other Agencies ^B					
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 / 5,000	N/A	36	129	each	165	1/11,369	1/2,481	37
Urban ^C	N/A	N/A	35	71	each	106	1/8,178	1/2,700	N/A
Rural ^D	N/A	N/A	1	58	each	59	1/123,066	1/2,086	37
Community Centers ^C	N/A	N/A	3	1	each	4	1/95,409	1/71,557	2
Gymnasiums	N/A	N/A	3	119	each	122	1/136,431	1/3,355	2
Off Leash Areas ^C	N/A	N/A	1	1	each	2	1/143,113	1/143,113	6
Pools ^C	1 / 20,000	N/A	3	3	each	6	1/95,409	1/47,704	2
Skate Parks ^C	N/A	N/A	2	0	each	2	1/143,113	1/143,113	2
Soccer Fields	1 / 10,000	N/A	17	211	each	228	1/24,076	1/1,795	42
Urban ^C	N/A	N/A	17	122	each	139	1/16,837	1/2,059	N/A
Rural ^D	N/A	N/A	0	89	each	89	N/A	1/1,383	42

^A Includes planned facilities.

^B Includes local school districts, private providers, and other municipalities in Clark County; see Appendix C for relevant inventories.

^C Level of service and needed facilities for community centers, off leash areas, pools, skate parks, and urban fields has been calculated based on population data for the area inside the UGA: 286,226 (2006) and 384,505 (2025).

^D Level of service and needed facilities for rural fields has been calculated based on population data for the area outside the UGA: 123,066 (2006) and 211,908 (2025).

As with urban fields, a needs analysis was conducted for baseball and softball leagues in the rural unincorporated area. However, the number of players and fields are less certain in the rural areas, and further analysis is recommended. The numbers presented here are intended to provide a general idea of the number of fields needed in the rural areas.

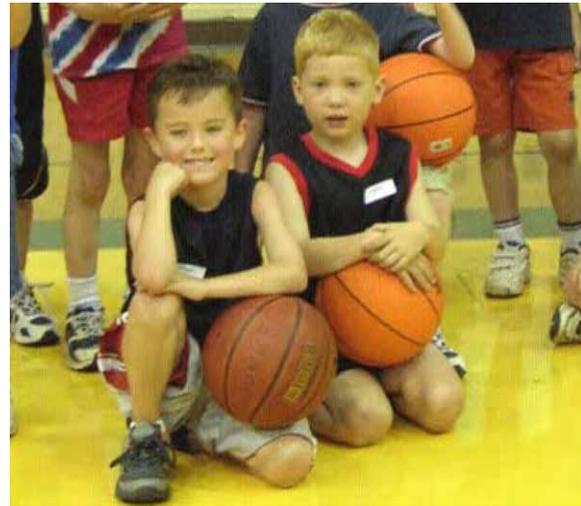
There are currently approximately 3,300 baseball and softball players outside the Vancouver Urban Growth Area. An analysis similar to that used by Hovee & Company results in a current demand for 34 fields (275 teams). If this demand is projected into the future, based on population growth, there will be a need for 14 additional baseball and softball fields in 2013, and 37 additional fields by 2023. This assumes that the participation rate in these sports remains relatively stable and that any loss of capacity is replaced. Development of the 13 planned facilities will enable VCPRD to meet the majority of projected need by 2013.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Community centers are facilities that provide a focus for recreational, social, educational, and cultural activities within a neighborhood or community.

Overview

The VCPRD currently operates three community centers: the Firstenburg Community Center, the Marshall/Luepke Community Center, and the Jim Parsley Center (through a joint agreement with the Vancouver School District). These community centers supply the region with over 120,000 square feet of recreation space. In addition, the Clark County Family YMCA operates a private community center facility of significant size, bringing the regional total to four.



Public Involvement Findings

- One of the most important benefits of recreation repeatedly mentioned at regional meetings was the ability of parks to facilitate community gatherings.
- Community members repeatedly mentioned the need more community centers throughout the area in regional meetings, on surveys, and in questionnaires.
- During focus groups, youth mentioned the need for additional community centers and indoor facilities as well.

Level of Service Analysis

The level of service for community centers was calculated based on population figures for the Vancouver urban growth area and not Clark County as a whole, since these facilities are designed for areas with higher population densities. The level of service for the VCPRD's existing community center facilities is 1 center/95,409 persons. Adding other providers' community centers to the total improves this level of service to 1 center/71,557 persons. Neither the Department nor the NRPA has an existing standard or

guideline for community centers. Table 15 includes a summary of this analysis.

The *1999 Community Center Strategic Plan* used a three mile service area radius and a geographic analysis to calculate community center need. Given the location of existing community centers in the Urban Growth Area, the same analysis conducted at the present time yields a need for two additional facilities, one in the northwest portion of the Urban Growth Area and one in the northeast. These proposed community centers would serve both developed and newly developing areas of the Vancouver urban area. Developing two additional community centers would bring the planning area total to six.

GYMNASIUMS

Gymnasiums must be of appropriate dimension for the intended use and include adequate space outside the baseline to ensure safe play. The playing surface should consist of resilient flooring materials.

Overview

Each of the VCPRD's community centers houses a gymnasium. In addition to these three gyms, the Clark County Family YMCA adds two gyms, and local school districts contribute another 117 gyms to the inventory. Combined, 122 gyms are provided within the VCPRD planning area.

Public Involvement Findings

- According to the *2002 Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, basketball was the fourth most popular team or individual sport in the state.
- In 2002, the *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State* found volleyball the tenth most popular team sport in the state.

- Almost every ideal park described by youth focus group participants included a basketball court.

Level of Service Analysis

The Department's three existing gyms result in a current level of service of 1/136,431 persons. When the large inventory of other providers is added, however, this level of service improves to 1 gym/3,355 persons. The Department has no existing standard for gymnasiums and there is no NRPA guideline for gymnasiums. Table 15 includes a summary of this analysis.

Given the large number of existing gym facilities within the planning area, a conservative approach to gym development is suggested. If one additional gymnasium was provided in each of the two community centers recommended in the plan, Clark County would host a total of 124 gyms. Given the high existing level of service for gyms in the planning area, it is assumed that these gyms, in conjunction with other providers', will be sufficient to accommodate both the current and projected populations.

OFF LEASH AREAS

Off leash areas, sometimes called dog parks, can be either stand alone facilities or dedicated portions of larger parks. In either case, these areas are designed as off leash areas for dogs and must have secure fencing. Ideally, off leash areas should include shade structures, trash receptacles, and drinking fountains.

Overview

There are currently two off leash areas in the City of Vancouver, which are owned and operated through partnerships between the City, VCPRD, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and Dog Owners for



Greater Park Access in Washington (DOGPAW). One of these sites is owned by the BPA and located at their Ross Complex. The other is the VCPRD's planned off leash area at Pacific Park. When the Pacific Park site is completed, there will be 16.5 acres of off leash area inside the Vancouver UGA.

Public Involvement Findings

- Just over 70% of Community Survey respondents indicated that they would either somewhat or strongly support the development of off leash areas by the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department.
- Public meeting attendees repeatedly voiced the need for more dedicated off leash areas within the community.
- According the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, Washington residents reported walking with a pet more often than most other outdoor activities.

Level of Service Analysis

Level of service for off leash areas was calculated based on population figures for the urban growth area and not the entire County, since the need for off leash areas is heightened in highly developed areas with smaller lot sizes. When the off leash area at

Pacific Park is completed, the Department's level of service for these areas will be 1/286,226 persons. This level of service improves to 1/143,113 persons when the BPA facility is factored into the analysis. There is currently no VCPRD standard or NRPA guideline for off leash areas. A summary of this analysis appears in Table 15.

In the past year, the VCPRD has worked with local dog advocates to develop a plan for off leash areas in the community. This plan finds a need for six additional parks within the planning area and suggests a minimum development size of five acres each. These off leash areas should be distributed throughout the urban area, where current need is highest.

POOLS

Pools vary in size, depth, and temperature according to intended age group and use. They may be located indoors or outdoors, and may be recreational or competition-oriented in nature. Recreational pools may include water features designed for use by different age groups, such as slides or spray elements.

Overview

The VCPRD has three indoor pools, one located at each of its community centers. The Vancouver School District, City of Camas, and the Clark County Family YMCA own three other indoor and outdoor pools with public access. For the purposes of this analysis, all swimming pools in private clubs have been excluded because of limited access and availability.

Public Involvement Findings

- Just over 20% of Community Survey respondents reported use of a "swimming and aquatic program" more than once a month during the prior year.

Analysis

- Community Survey respondents gave swimming pools and aquatic programs a mean score of 7.1 on a scale from 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority), ranking it ninth on a list of 11 potential priorities.
- According to the Community Survey, 6% of respondents mentioned more pools among the “most needed improvements in the park and recreation system.”
- 86% of Community Survey respondents also indicated that they would somewhat or strongly support the expansion of swimming and aquatic programs.
- Nationally, participation in swimming activities ranked below only walking and camping in terms of total recreation participation in 2004 (NSGA 2005).
- According to the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, swimming is also among the most popular team and individual sports in Washington, where it ranks second on a list of 17 sporting activities.
- During the public involvement process, the need for more pools was mentioned in both focus groups and regional meetings.

Level of Service Analysis

Considering Department facilities only, the existing level of service for pools within the urban area is 1 pool/95,409 persons. When the three pools of other providers are factored into the analysis, the level of service improves to 1 pool/47,704 persons. Both of these levels of service fall short of the historic NRPA guideline of 1 pool/20,000. The VCPRD has no existing standard. A summary of this analysis appears in Table 15.



The VCPRD currently operates an indoor pool at each of its three community centers. If one additional pool is provided in each of the two community centers needed to satisfy the distribution requirements of the *1999 Community Center Strategic Plan*, there will eventually be a total of eight pools within the urban area. These additions will allow the VCPRD to maintain the current level of service over the next twenty years.

SKATE PARKS

Skate parks must have a concrete or other hard surface, and may include half pipes, quarter pipes, and handrail elements designed for skateboard, BMX, or inline skate use. A skate park may also contain other trick features, such as ramps, stairs, trick boxes, or pyramids.

Overview

The Department operates one existing 12,000 s.f. skate park, Swift Skate Park, near downtown Vancouver. The VCPRD recently began to design skate facilities as elements of community parks, and as a result, another 10,000 s.f. skate park is planned for Pacific Park in east Vancouver.



Public Involvement Findings

- 16% of Community Survey respondents indicated that members of their household participated in skating or BMX activities in the prior year.
- When asked how important it is to include a list of five potential amenities in a neighborhood park, Community Survey respondents gave “small skateboard facilities” a mean score of 2.7 on a scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important), the lowest ranking of the five listed amenities.
- According to the Community Survey, 64% of respondents indicated that they either somewhat or strongly support the development of skate parks by the VCPRD, ranking skate facilities fourth of five potential parks and recreation projects.
- However, skate trends nationwide indicated that youth participation in skateboarding has increased 97.6% since 1994 (NSGA 2005).
- Skateboarding ranked ninth in terms of participation in the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, ahead of both baseball and softball (IAC 2002).

- According to the *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, the average Washington resident participated in skateboarding over ten times in the prior year, ranking skateboarding fifth on a list of 21 activities in terms of frequency of participation.

Level of Service Analysis

The level of service for skate parks was calculated based on population figures for the Vancouver UGA and not Clark County as a whole, since these facilities have historically been designed as community park elements. As a result of this approach, the planned facility in Battle Ground has not been factored into this analysis, since it will be located outside of the Vancouver UGA. Including the planned facility at Pacific Park, the Department’s level of service for skate parks is 1 park/143,113 persons. Neither the Department nor the NRPA has an existing standard for skate park facilities. A summary of the level of service analysis for skate parks appears in Table 15.

Given the rising popularity of skateboarding as a recreational activity, Vancouver has already elected to adopt a fairly innovative approach to skate park provision. The Department’s Skate Spot program includes policies that suggest skate features as a basic element of park design. The Skate Spot program encourages the development of major skate features within community parks and the inclusion of small-scale skate features, such as curbs and stairs, within neighborhood parks, where feasible.

At the present time, however, the vast majority of the VCPRD’s community parks do not contain skate features. In order to more adequately distribute major skate facilities throughout the community, it is

suggested that the Department assume a three mile service area radius and develop skate parks in all areas of the UGA that are currently unserved. A geographic analysis of this kind currently yields a need for two additional skate parks, one in the northeast portion of the UGA and one in the northwest. When these two skate parks are added to the current supply of existing and planned facilities, there will eventually be four skate parks inside the Vancouver UGA.

SOCCKER FIELDS

Soccer fields can be developed in a variety of different sizes and can be modified to accommodate limited space. In addition to providing space for youth and adult soccer, soccer fields can be adapted to accommodate football, Ultimate Frisbee, rugby, field hockey, and lacrosse, as well as unprogrammed play. In order to adequately support soccer activity, a field must be at least 50 yards x 80 yards for youth and 60-75 yards x 110-120 yards for adults. Portable goals may be used. Fields must be level without holes or mounds.

Overview

Currently, a number of recreation providers including the VCPRD, local school districts, and private agencies supply a total of 139 soccer fields for dedicated league use within the Vancouver urban area. The majority of these fields are the property of local schools. Private providers and the VCPRD supply a modest number of additional fields.

Various agencies also provide soccer fields for league use in the rural areas of Clark County. At the present time, these providers include local school districts and other cities. The VCPRD also plans to construct soccer fields in rural Clark County in the future. When combined, these agencies supply 89 soccer

fields for league use in the areas of Clark County outside the UGA.

Public Involvement Findings

- According to the 2002 *Assessment of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State*, soccer ranked eighth amongst team sports in the state of Washington in terms of participation.
- Just over 30% of Community Survey respondents reported household use of sports and athletic fields more than once a month during the prior year.
- According to the Community Survey, sports and athletic fields ranked eighth on a list of 10 potential park and recreation priorities with a mean score of 7.2 on a scale from 1 (very low priority) to 10 (very high priority).
- However, 88% of Community Survey respondents also reported that they would somewhat or strongly support expansion of sports and athletic fields within the VCPRD planning area, ranking it fourth on a list of 10 possible services to expand.

Level of Service Analysis: Urban

The level of service for existing and planned soccer fields operated by the Department inside the UGA is 1 field/16,837 persons. This level of service does not meet the historic NRPA guideline of 1 field/10,000. When other providers' facilities are factored into the analysis, however, the level of service for soccer fields for league use within the planning area improves to 1/2,059. This level of service far exceeds the NRPA guideline. VCPRD has no existing standard for soccer fields. A summary of this analysis appears in Table 15.



In 2004, E.D. Hovee & Company conducted a game field needs analysis for soccer leagues in the area within the Vancouver UGA. This analysis was based on several assumptions:

- There are 16 players per team on the average soccer team within the planning area
- Each of these soccer teams plays one game per week
- Game fields in the planning area are used only on Saturdays for a total of four games per field
- Game fields are used solely for games.

Current data indicates that there are approximately 5,400 league soccer players within the urban area. Given the above assumptions, this total player participation translates into 320 teams, which generate enough game field demand to occupy 40 soccer game facilities. Based on the E.D. Hovee report, which projected urban sports field needs, a total of 52 urban soccer fields will be needed by 2013, and a total of 61 by 2024. Although there are currently enough fields in the urban area to meet this demand, additional fields may be needed to replace loss

of capacity or improve geographic distribution of fields.

Because of the complexities of sports field demand and need inside the Vancouver UGA, a more detailed needs analysis for the urban area has not been performed at this time. Instead, it is recommended that a separate study of soccer fields be conducted. In the meantime, short term efforts should concentrate on maintaining the current number of fields within the Vancouver UGA.

Level of Service Analysis: Rural

The Department currently provides no soccer fields outside the UGA. When other providers' fields are factored into the analysis, the level of service for soccer fields for league use outside the planning area improves to 1/1,383. This level of service exceeds the NRPA guideline of 1 field/10,000. Again, the VCPRD has no existing standard for soccer fields. A summary of the level of service analysis for rural soccer fields appears in Table 15.

As with urban fields, a needs analysis was conducted for soccer leagues in the rural unincorporated area. However, the number of players and fields are less certain in the rural areas, and further analysis is recommended. The numbers presented here are intended to provide a general idea of the number of fields needed in the rural areas.

There are currently approximately 4,900 league soccer players outside the Vancouver Urban Growth Area. An analysis similar to that designed by Hovee results in a current demand for 33 fields (260 teams). If this demand is projected into the future based on population growth, there will be a need for an additional 20 soccer fields by 2013, and 42 fields by 2023. This assumes that the

participation rate in these sports remains relatively stable and that any loss of capacity is replaced. Development of the 12 planned facilities will enable VCPRD to meet over half of projected need by 2013.

OTHER RECREATIONAL AMENITIES

Emerging recreational activities and community input supports the consideration of other recreational facilities and amenities in this plan. These facilities include arboretums and demonstration gardens, boat launches, camping facilities, disc golf courses, and equestrian trails. The VCPRD currently has no standards for any of these facilities.

Arboretums and Demonstration Gardens

During the planning process, members of the community expressed an interest in additional arboretums in Clark County. These types of facilities offer residents opportunities to learn about, view, and experience native habitats, wildlife, and natural processes. Over half of residents participate in wildlife observation annually, according to the Community Survey. Existing arboretums/gardens include the Evergreen Arboretum, the CASEE Center's wildlife gardens, the Columbia Springs Education Center's Native Plant Garden and the Water Resource Center's Backyard Garden. Additional gardens or arboretums could be developed through donations and partnerships with community agencies.

Boat Launches

With the rising popularity of motorized and non-motorized boating, including canoeing and kayaking, there will be a need to create additional boat launch and water access points in Clark County. These access points should be distributed throughout the County along major waterways, including the Columbia River and its associated wetlands, as well as

the East and North Forks of the Lewis River. Siting of access points should consider habitat and environmental quality, distances between points, river currents and channel patterns, available amenities, and the recommendations of the *Regional Trail and Bikenways Systems Plan*. Additionally, the Department could work towards developing a water trail along the Columbia River through continued partnership with the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership.

Camping Facilities

According to the Community Survey results and regional recreation trends, camping is one of the most popular outdoor recreational activities in the County. Currently Washington State Parks operates campgrounds for both RV and tent use at Battle Ground and Paradise Point State Parks. The County is also home to a number of private campgrounds. The VCPRD currently plans to build and operate camping facilities at two regional parks – Captain William Clark Park (RV and tent) and Frenchman's Bar (yurts). The future provision of camping facilities by VCPRD should be based on continued need for close-to-home camping opportunities, the Department's ability to operate such facilities, and the ability of other providers to provide sufficient facilities, accessible to the community, to meet demand.

Community Gardens

The Community Survey demonstrated a high level of community interest in community gardens – 75% of respondents supported expanding community vegetable and flower gardens. Currently VCPRD operates a community garden at Marshall Community Park. Other gardens in the County are operated by private non-profit, church, and school groups. Community gardens offer residents a place to grow produce and flowers,

become more educated about healthy eating practices and gardening, interact with other community members, and exercise. Studies of community gardens around the country have documented a myriad of benefits to participants and surrounding neighborhoods, including improved health and wellness, environmental benefits, and reduced crime. VCPRD could work with community partners, including those in the health, education, and cultural fields to provide additional community gardens in the urban area.

Disc Golf Courses

Public involvement has indicated an interest in siting a disc golf course in Clark County, as there are currently none open to the public. Disc golf, similar to traditional golf except that the ball and club are replaced by a flying disc, has been gaining in popularity in the northwest and nationwide. The National Professional Disc Golf Association claims participation has increased 10% annually in recent years, and notes a rapid growth in the number of courses nationwide.

Disc golf courses are generally placed in wooded or combination wooded/open areas and require partially cleared understories to create fairways. The VCPRD could work with existing community groups, individuals, and businesses to construct and operate a disc golf course in the Vancouver vicinity. Such a facility could also encourage more consistent use of underutilized park areas.

Equestrian Trails

Members of the community have expressed interest in additional equestrian trails and facilities, primarily through the Clark County Equestrian Council. Currently trails exist at Whipple Creek, Salmon Creek, and Frenchman's Bar Regional parks. In general,



horses must be transported by trailer to these trailheads, so trails of sufficient length with adequate parking facilities should be provided.

To encourage use by equestrians and limit user conflicts, equestrian trails should ideally be of a soft surface and separated from walking/bicycling trails. Future equestrian trails are envisioned outside the City of Vancouver along the following trail corridors (*Clark County Trail and Bikeway System Plan*):

- Lewis & Clark Greenway Trail
- Chelatchie Prairie Railroad Trail
- Lake to Lake Trail
- Salmon Creek Greenway Trail
- I-5 Corridor Trail
- I-205 Corridor Trail
- East Fork Lewis River Greenway Trail
- Washougal River Corridor Trail
- North Fork Lewis River Trail
- Whipple Creek Greenway Trail
- North/South Powerline Trail
- East Powerline Trail
- Livingston Mountain/Dole Valley Trail
- Camp Bonneville Trail

Development of these trails, in conjunction with agency and community partners, would provide equestrian opportunities throughout the County in a variety of natural

environments. In addition, equestrian trails are envisioned at Camp Bonneville and Green Mountain Regional Parks, though development of these parks is not anticipated in the next six years.



5. Goals and Objectives



5. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan describes goals and objectives designed to enhance the parks, recreation facilities, and open space offered by the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. These goals and objectives were developed based on both public involvement findings and technical analysis. A list of accompanying policies the Department adopted in previous plans is included in Appendix F.

Goals and objectives are designed to, when implemented, help the Department achieve its vision:

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation will help build a healthy community, protect the natural environment, and support a high quality of life for all residents.

GOAL 1

PROVIDE A BALANCED, COMPREHENSIVE, AND INTERCONNECTED PARK, TRAIL, AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

The VCPRD will strive to create a network of parks and open spaces that are connected via trails, bikeways, streets, bus routes, and wildlife corridors. This system will link all parts of the VCPRD planning area into one diverse and integrated system, and provide a wider variety of recreation opportunities to all Clark County residents.

- 1-1. Provide a diverse system of parks and natural areas, including neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, natural areas, trails and greenways, and special use areas.
- 1-2. Distribute parks and open spaces equitably throughout the UGA and the planning area by allocating needed parkland to areas that are currently underserved, including areas of high projected growth.
- 1-3. Balance the need to provide new parks and open space with the need to protect and preserve existing public investments.
- 1-4. Balance the need to act on unanticipated opportunities and the implementation of a long term strategy for the provision of parks, trails, and open space.
- 1-5. Balance community-wide interest and the interests of neighborhoods and individuals when planning and designing the Department's park and open space system.

- 1-6. Create connections between parks, recreation, and open space and other community destinations through the development of bike and pedestrian trails, water trails, and habitat corridors.
- 1-7. Work with transit agencies to provide public transportation access to parks and open space.
- 1-8. Evaluate transportation barriers affecting the ability of existing parks to serve residents effectively, and develop strategies, such as providing sidewalks, bike paths, bike lanes, and bridges, to increase accessibility and maximize the number of residents served.
- 1-9. Purchase natural areas based on natural resource value, the significance of the resource, and the contribution to Clark County's greater open space network.
- 1-10. Implement a site inventory process, in which new park sites are assessed prior to Level 1 development, to inform future preservation and development decisions.
- 1-11. Prepare master plans for parkland prior to development, major improvement, or renovation to promote cohesive, quality design and to ensure plans are consistent with community needs.
- The VCPRD will provide a variety of recreation facilities and programs that engage a broad cross-section of the community, including residents of all ages, abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds. The Department will strive to make all recreation facilities and programs geographically, physically, socially, and economically accessible to all members of the community.
- 2-1. Provide recreation opportunities for residents of all ages, abilities, and economic and cultural backgrounds.
- 2-2. Develop a variety of recreation facilities and programs to meet the needs of a broad range of community members.
- 2-3. Involve diverse community members in park and recreation planning.
- 2-4. Consider physical, economic, cultural, and social accessibility when planning, designing, and operating parks and facilities.
- 2-5. Assess changing needs and priorities in the VCPRD planning area at least every six years, and adapt programs and facilities to these changes as they occur.
- 2-6. Develop an ADA transition plan to improve accessibility in parks and facilities.
- 2-7. Develop recreation facilities and programs that address the specific needs of target populations, such as older residents and low-income youth.
- 2-8. Maintain and enhance Department scholarships and other mechanisms to support recreation access for low income residents.

GOAL 2

PROVIDE DIVERSE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS

- 2-9. Conduct a detailed analysis of need for sports fields in both urban and rural areas of the County.
- 2-10. Work with partners to develop and maintain accurate inventories and evaluations of sports fields owned by the Department and other agencies.
- 2-11. Consider providing dedicated sports fields in complexes to accommodate tournament play and to achieve maintenance and programming efficiencies.
- 2-12. Develop flexible multi-use fields to accommodate existing and emerging sports during different seasons.
- 2-13. Develop a financial feasibility study for all new community and aquatic centers before construction.
- 2-14. Build multi-use community facilities with adaptable programming space whenever feasible, rather than single purpose buildings, such as senior or youth centers.
- 2-15. Include gymnasiums in all future multi-use community centers.
- 2-16. Coordinate with the *Clark County Trails and Bikeways System Plan* and transportation plan to provide a variety of trail types, including multi-use, bicycle, and pedestrian trails, in the developed trail system.

environmental education, and planning, design, and maintenance.



Natural Area Acquisition

- 3-1. Identify and acquire significant natural areas to meet outdoor recreation and habitat protection needs.
- 3-2. Develop greenbelts and other corridors that provide wildlife habitat connectivity.
- 3-3. Identify opportunities to convert underutilized active recreation areas to natural areas.

Natural Area Management

- 3-4. Incorporate natural resource enhancement into plans for park and facility development where appropriate.
- 3-5. Develop an integrated system-wide plan for the management of natural areas which includes funding sources and incorporates the Urban Forestry Program.
- 3-6. Develop and manage natural areas to protect and enhance significant natural resources, including sensitive habitats and native species.

GOAL 3

BE EFFECTIVE STEWARDS OF THE LAND

The Department will promote an ethic of preservation, conservation, and sustainability through outdoor recreation opportunities,

Objectives

- 3-7. Enhance resources to improve habitat and eliminate invasive species through partnerships, volunteer coordination, and additional funding for maintenance.
- 3-8. Develop, monitor, and update site master plans and management plans for natural areas that identify key functions, where to avoid or minimize development, and how to maintain or enhance natural functions.
- 3-9. Manage vegetation in natural areas to maintain or enhance native plant diversity, ecosystem function, and wildlife habitat; remove or control non-native invasive plant species and replace with native trees and shrubs where appropriate and feasible.
- 3-10. Retain, replace, and introduce native plants wherever appropriate.
- 3-11. Emphasize integrated pest management (IPM) techniques and encourage staff development in these techniques.
- Education & Stewardship**
- 3-12. Emphasize environmental education and foster stewardship in Department marketing materials, signage, and programming.
- 3-13. Provide signage and interpretive materials to educate the public on natural areas management needs, goals, and practices.
- 3-14. Develop and adopt a comprehensive sustainability strategy for the planning, design, and management of parks, recreation facilities, and open space that includes:
- A definition of sustainability as it relates to Department services
 - A set of sustainability standards or best management practices for Department services
 - A series of baseline sustainability indicators which can be used to inventory and assess current practices
- 3-15. Implement staff training to develop understanding of the Department's environmental goals and practices.
- 3-16. Explore opportunities to provide recycling options in parks.
- Urban Forestry**
- 3-17. Expand the urban tree canopy in conjunction with the Urban Forestry Program.
- 3-18. Recognize tree canopy as an effective means to improve water and air quality and as an essential component of green infrastructure; restore tree canopy to optimize these environmental benefits.
- 3-19. Preserve existing tree canopy within the City of Vancouver through Urban Forestry Program implementation of effective policies, planning, and code enforcement.
- 3-20. Implement projects and programs through Urban Forestry Program to achieve the goal of 28 percent total tree canopy in Vancouver.
- 3-21. Foster an ethic of environmental stewardship through natural resource education, outreach, and hands-on volunteerism, including Urban Forestry's NeighborWoods program, Tree Talk workshop series, an annual Arbor Day celebration and volunteer tree planting events.

GOAL 4

PRESERVE OUR HISTORIC AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Vancouver has a significant historical legacy and a wealth of cultural and historical resources. The VCPRD will provide opportunities to enhance appreciation of this heritage, promote community stewardship and historical preservation, and provide high-quality cultural and historical experiences.

Acquisition & Preservation

- 4-1. Identify and acquire historic sites, where possible, as part of a commitment to the area's cultural heritage.
- 4-2. Partner with other providers, including the U.S. National Park Service, to preserve and maintain sites with significant historical value.
- 4-3. Administer the Heritage Tree Program to preserve trees of natural, cultural, historical, or horticultural significance in Vancouver.

Education

- 4-4. Use interpretive signage and design features in parks and facilities to celebrate the natural and cultural history of the area.
- 4-5. Use marketing materials to promote understanding of the community's cultural and natural history.
- 4-6. Enhance opportunities for public art in parks, including performance art and temporary art installations.



GOAL 5

MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The VCPRD will maintain and revitalize parks and facilities to support recreation activities, protect existing investments, maximize maintenance efficiencies, and improve user safety and accessibility.

- 5-1. Establish and meet park maintenance standards.
- 5-2. Develop capital improvement plans, criteria for prioritization, and schedules aimed at addressing deficiencies in existing parks.
- 5-3. Develop and regularly update asset management plans to promote efficiency and stewardship system-wide.
- 5-4. Establish maintenance unit costs and annually review these for budgeting purposes for the following:
 - Park development
 - Natural areas
 - Trails

- Recreation facilities
 - Special use areas
- 5-5. Design new parks for efficient maintenance by developing maintenance management plans prior to construction, evaluating operational impacts and feasibility, and involving maintenance and program staff in the design process.
- 5-6. Incorporate labor-saving elements, such as mow strips, in park design.
- 5-7. Standardize and upgrade park site furnishings for ease of maintenance.
- 5-8. Budget and schedule for system-wide renovation programs of critical recreation components, including fields, courts, play areas, and amenities.
- 5-9. Provide a routine preventive maintenance program for all parks, facilities, equipment, vehicles, and other assets.
- 5-10. When upgrading or renovating existing parks and recreation facilities, add features that meet current needs, address ADA accessibility issues, and maximize maintenance and operations efficiencies.
- 5-11. Increase tree canopy on existing park properties within the City of Vancouver through Urban Forestry's Canopy Restoration Program; prioritize tree planting projects based on disparity between existing canopy and the target level of 62 percent tree canopy cover for neighborhood parks and 46 percent for community parks.

GOAL 6

CREATE A DYNAMIC AND EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

The VCPRD will respond efficiently and effectively to the community's evolving priorities and needs. The Department will be accessible and responsive to the community it serves, creating new policies, procedures and technologies in response to changing needs over time.

- 6-1. Continue developing a work environment that promotes trust, respect, open communication, and teamwork between all levels of staff.
- 6-2. Regularly evaluate the employment needs of the Department and hire adequate staff.
- 6-3. Implement programs to retain employees, such as regular staff development and training on a wide range of topics, including natural resource stewardship, diversity, and inclusion.
- 6-4. Consider the viability of different organizational models and make structural changes as appropriate.
- 6-5. Develop a business plan.
- 6-6. Implement new technology to improve service delivery, where applicable.
- 6-7. Consider developing a ranger program to improve park maintenance and security.
- 6-8. Create a policy manual to document existing policies and guide future decisions.

- 6-9. Provide leadership, management, and expertise for the acquisition, planning, design, and implementation of projects involving parks, open space, and recreation facility resources throughout the planning area.
 - 6-10. Develop a consistent project management system with an aim toward project implementation.
 - 6-11. Engage citizens committed to trees, the environment, and public service through Vancouver Urban Forestry Commission.
 - 6-12. Recruit and train committed volunteers to assist with outreach, education, preservation, maintenance, and planting projects.
- 7-4. Develop a matching grant program to support community groups and expand Department fiscal resources.
 - 7-5. Work with the Parks Foundation to expand their capabilities.
 - 7-6. Consider voter-approved initiatives, such as bonds and serial levies, to finance improvements.
 - 7-7. Maintain general fund support of parks, recreation programs, and maintenance.
 - 7-8. Create an “Opportunity Fund” to act on future opportunities to protect natural areas or acquire parkland as it becomes available.
 - 7-9. Develop more rental facilities, such as meeting spaces, wedding sites, and reservable group picnic areas, which can generate revenue and provide an important service to the community.
 - 7-10. Periodically update all fees and charges to reflect market rates.
 - 7-11. Maintain the partnership with Vancouver’s Department of Public Works to fund the Urban Forestry Program and tree canopy restoration activities.

GOAL 7

ACQUIRE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO MEET NEEDS

The VCPRD will use a variety of long- and short-term funding strategies to provide dependable funding for parks, facilities, and open space acquisition, development, and maintenance. New revenue generating ideas, such as entrepreneurial projects, sponsorships, and joint ventures, will be explored and considered.

- 7-1. Exercise fiscal responsibility in all acquisitions and expenditures.
- 7-2. Hire a development director to manage revenue-generating efforts and coordinate philanthropy.
- 7-3. Develop a policy for managing donations and grants, and establish a program that tracks and maximizes these resources.

GOAL 8

BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Strong community collaboration brings additional resources to parks and recreation and enhances community ownership and support of parks, facilities, and programs. The VCPRD will continue to cultivate strong, positive partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations in order to unite community efforts to acquire, develop, and

maintain parks, recreation facilities, and open space.

- 8-1. Develop a liaison position to manage the interface between the Department and community partners.
- 8-2. Pursue and maintain effective partnerships with governmental, public, private, and non-profit organizations to maintain parks and recreation facilities.
- 8-3. Coordinate planning efforts with other regional agencies and with regional planning efforts such as the *Clark County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan*, Urban Forestry Program, and Conservation Futures.
- 8-4. Work with local economic development agencies to develop plans and designs for parks, natural areas, trails, recreation facilities and programs as part of a comprehensive economic development strategy for Vancouver and Clark County.
- 8-5. Improve coordination of long-range planning efforts with local school districts to ensure the availability and accessibility of play areas, athletic fields, and indoor facilities.
- 8-6. Work with local businesses to promote employee health and wellness through the use of VCPRD parks and recreation.
- 8-7. Partner with the private sector to provide services and amenities, such as vendors in parks.
- 8-8. Build school partnerships to develop joint facilities and promote health and wellness in youth.
- 8-9. Consider partnerships for joint facility acquisition, development, and

maintenance for community centers, athletic fields, and other major facilities.

- 8-10. Work with the local health community to acquire and develop parks and facilities with a specific aim toward community health, such as running trails.
- 8-11. Partner with local hospitals, schools, and other agencies to develop and fund outreach that promotes community health through parks and recreation.
- 8-12. Formalize partnerships through written agreements that specify responsibilities, liability, financial and other terms, including provisions for how to transition or end partnerships.
- 8-13. Evaluate partnerships to review their effectiveness and to identify areas for improvement.
- 8-14. Expand capacity of the Urban Forestry Program by partnering with other agencies, school districts, business and industry organizations, non-profit groups, neighborhood associations, and others.
- 8-15. Maintain and strengthen the Urban Forestry Program partnership with Friends of Trees to conduct community-based neighborhood and natural area tree planting projects.

GOAL 9

REFLECT THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE

By involving community members in planning, designing, and implementing park and recreation opportunities, the VCPRD can

be more responsive, accountable, and creative in meeting community needs, thereby reflecting the desires of residents and sharing community priorities.

Public Information and Marketing

- 9-1. Develop a marketing team with the objective of increasing awareness and use of parks and facilities.
- 9-2. Update and implement the marketing and public relations plan to continue to inform residents about programs, parks, natural areas and facilities and to reach a broader audience, including new residents.
- 9-3. Implement a consistent park signage program for use throughout the system.
- 9-4. Implement benefits-based marketing strategies to increase awareness and participation.
- 9-5. Reference the website, www.vanclarkparks-rec.org, in all marketing efforts and update the website periodically to maximize marketing opportunities.
- 9-6. Incorporate new technologies that enhance community access to information.
- 9-7. Seek alternative methods of increasing

awareness, such as community open houses, presentations to neighborhood groups, and booths at community events.

- 9-8. Continue providing information about accessibility for people with disabilities in all marketing materials and provide outreach to inform people with disabilities about recreation opportunities.
- 9-9. Identify and implement ways to improve information dissemination to all residents.
- 9-10. Strengthen relationships with local media.
- 9-11. Develop materials that communicate the benefits of parks and recreation, programs and services offered, and their impacts to better position the Department within the community.
- 9-12. Encourage use of parks and natural areas by providing maps and information online, in the parks and recreation catalog, at trail heads and public counters, and in newspaper articles or notices.
- 9-13. Develop outreach materials to communicate evolving trends in parks and open space management to promote stewardship and public understanding.
- 9-14. Consider use of temporary on-site interpretive signage as appropriate to clearly identify public benefits of maintenance and development efforts.
- 9-15. Provide public information to educate the community about parks maintenance issues and benefits, such as invasive species, vandalism, play area safety, native plants, etc.



Objectives

- 9-16. Support community- and neighborhood-building efforts by continuing to sponsor and participate in events such as grand openings, community service projects, and volunteer recognition events.
- 9-17. Track and measure the effectiveness of the public information program on a regular, ongoing basis.

Public Involvement

- 9-18. Develop a Department-wide public involvement policy.
- 9-19. Continue involving citizens in planning and development for capital projects, as well as in program development.
- 9-20. Develop innovative strategies to improve citizen involvement in parks and open space planning efforts, such as teleconferences, electronic on-line chat rooms, child care at meetings, and partnerships with schools.
- 9-21. Develop and administer methods to measure performance of public involvement efforts over time on a regular basis.
- 9-22. Identify segments of the community that are under-represented in community discussions and develop new tools to increase their involvement.

- 9-23. Develop and maintain stakeholder lists and provide targeted outreach relating to key program and service areas, addressing uses such as biking, walking, hiking, and natural resource protection.
- 9-24. Assess community needs and update the *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan* every six years to respond to changing trends.

Volunteerism

- 9-25. Hire a coordinator to recruit volunteers for all programs, including youth and senior community service volunteers.
- 9-26. Develop a coordinated volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition program.
- 9-27. Engage volunteers in park and facility maintenance efforts.
- 9-28. Emphasize community involvement and volunteerism to involve individuals, groups, and businesses in the planning, design, maintenance, operation, and programming of parks and recreation facilities.
- 9-29. Develop adoption program to promote the maintenance of all significant parks, trails, recreation, and open space facilities.
- 9-30. Market volunteerism as a recreation activity.



6. Implementation



6. IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan identifies an implementation strategy for specific proposed improvements. It outlines the process used to select and prioritize projects. It identifies existing funding sources and projects potential revenues for the next six years. It summarizes estimated costs for high priority projects identified in the Department Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), and identifies the projected difference between revenues and needed improvements. Finally, it describes a number of funding sources which might be used to offset additional projected revenue needs. It also identifies anticipated estimated maintenance and operations costs associated with the CFP.

PROJECT PRIORITIES

The development of the Comprehensive Plan involved a detailed analysis of the park system and an assessment of park, recreation, and open space needs. As might be expected, the cost of meeting those recreation needs far exceeds the VCPRD's existing financial capabilities. In response to this anticipated shortfall, Department staff and the Parks Advisory Commission prioritized planned projects using the following criteria:

- *Acquisition:* Projects were prioritized based on their ability to meet community needs as defined by proposed acquisition standards. Priority was also given to projects in underserved areas or areas of significant anticipated population growth. In addition, sites that contain unique characteristics, help create a connected system, or enhance partnerships with other agencies were given high priority.
- *Development:* As with acquisition, priority was given to projects that help the Department meet its development standards, provide for areas that are currently underserved, or anticipate projected population growth. In addition, older undeveloped sites and sites in established neighborhoods were given high priority, as were sites that help create operating efficiencies.
- *Major Maintenance, Repairs, and Site Improvements:* For maintenance projects, priority was determined based on their ability to help meet maintenance standards, create cost efficiencies, preserve existing assets, improve public safety and accessibility, and reduce environmental impacts.

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- *Trails*: Priority was given to trail projects that are included in the *Clark County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan*, help complete trails, improve pedestrian and bike safety, or enhance transportation alternatives.

Based on these criteria, projects were assigned either high priority (to be completed in the next 6 years) or low priority (to be completed in the next 20 years) (Appendix G). High priority projects are summarized by category in Table 16. Appendix H includes maps showing the locations for these projects.

TABLE 16: HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS BY CATEGORY

Project Type		# Projects
Vancouver	Urban Park Acquisition	17
	Urban Park Development	24
	Park Improvements & Repair	43
	Facility Dev. & Improvements	7
	Trail Dev. & Improvements	21
	Urban Forestry	19
Total		131
Urban Unincorp. Area	Urban Park Acquisition	15
	Urban Park Development	40
	Park Improvements & Repair	8
	GCPD Trail Acquisition & Development	6
	Trail Dev. & Improvements	5
	Facility Dev. & Improvement	8
	Planning	7
	Conservation Area Acquisition	4
Total		93
Clark County Regional	Regional Park Development	7
	Reg. Park Improvements & Repair	11
	Trail Dev. & Improvements	7
	Facility Dev. & Improvements	8
	Open Space Preservation & Planning	7
	Planning	6
	Conservation Area Acquisitions	8
	Regional Park Acquisition	3
Total		57
Total All Projects		281

FINANCING STRATEGY

The financing strategy is designed to meet five goals:

- *Retain* existing revenue sources;
- *Update* existing revenue sources to keep pace with rising costs and market conditions;
- *Maximize* revenue potential through cost efficiencies and partnerships;
- *Seek* outside funding sources such as grants and donations; and
- *Explore* new funding sources to meet current deficits and needs.

EXISTING FUNDING SOURCES

In order to forecast future revenues, assumptions were made for each existing revenue source. These assumptions, described below, were used to forecast total revenue over a six year period from 2006 to 2012. Table 17 provides a summary of projected revenues for this six-year period.

The three primary revenue sources for parkland acquisition and development are a real estate excise tax (REET), the Conservation Futures program, and Park Impact Fees (PIFs), each of which is described in more detail below. REET and PIFs are primarily used for park acquisition and development inside the Vancouver UGA, while Conservation Futures money is used to acquire natural areas in the rural portions of the County. There is a current lack of funding for trail development and regional park facilities in the VCPRD planning area.

PARK IMPACT FEES (PIFs)

Park Impact Fees are paid by residential developers to offset the cost of additional neighborhood and community park needs created by their developments. Park Impact Fees are composed of acquisition and development components. The acquisition component reflects the cost of acquiring new parkland necessary to meet parkland standards. The development component reflects the cost of developing parkland to a basic level.

At the present time, PIF fees average about \$2,100 per single family home in the City of Vancouver and about \$2,000 per household in the unincorporated areas inside the Vancouver UGA. Given these rates, it is assumed that projected income from park impact fees over the next six years will total approximately \$25.7 million for acquisition and \$9.2 million for development. There are also existing PIF balances totaling approximately \$13.3 million for acquisition and \$6 million for development. This results in a total of \$39 million for PIF acquisition and \$15.2 million for PIF development.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX (REET)

The real estate excise tax (REET) is imposed at the time of a real estate sale. This tax does not require the vote of the people but the amount cannot exceed one quarter of one percent of the sale. Three REETs are currently imposed; one covering the City of Vancouver (REET-C), one covering the Urban-Unincorporated area (REET-U), and one covering the remaining unincorporated areas of the County (REET-R). All three REETs are currently imposed at their maximum rate. A portion of City REET is dedicated to debt service on the Firstenburg and Marshall Community Center projects.

TABLE 17: PROJECTED REVENUES (2006-2012)

Funding Source	Projected Revenue
PIF Acquisition	39,016,000
PIF Development	15,209,000
City of Vancouver REET	16,403,000
Urban Unincorporated REET	21,025,000
Regional REET	11,157,000
Conservation Futures	12,541,000
Greater Clark County Park District	4,000,000
Grants	13,840,000
Total	\$133,191,000

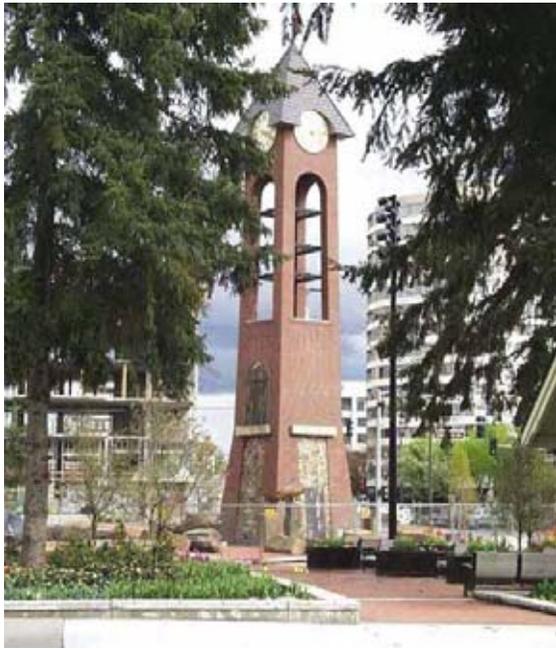
Projected revenues from REET total approximately \$16.4 million for City REET, \$21 million for Urban REET, and \$11 million for Regional REET.

CONSERVATION FUTURES

The Board of County Commissioners adopted the Conservation Futures Levy in 1985. This 6.25 cent/\$1,000 assessed value property tax is levied for the purpose of acquiring open space, critical habitat, farm, and timber lands. Conservation Futures revenue has historically been used for the acquisition and preservation of natural areas, open space, and greenways. However, some sites have been purchased for regional park and trail use as well. Since its enactment, the program has helped to preserve over 3,800 acres of open space in Clark County at a cost of approximately \$38.4 million. Conservation Futures is anticipated to generate approximately \$12.5 million over the next six years. This figure includes the current balance of approximately \$5.8 million.

GREATER CLARK COUNTY PARK DISTRICT (GCPD)

The Greater Clark Parks District, a metropolitan parks district formed by voters in 2005, provides revenue for the maintenance and operation of 35 parks and the



development of five trail segments in the Vancouver unincorporated area. The GCPD is anticipated to generate a total of approximately \$4 million for capital projects over the next 6 years. Of this capital revenue, \$3 million is dedicated to trail development. The remaining \$1 million is dedicated to irrigation and landscaping improvements in the new parks.

GRANTS

State and federal grants have been a major source of revenue for the VCPRD. Over the last eight years, the VCPRD has received over \$14 million in grant money. Because of the Department's successful grant history, it is assumed that the Department will receive additional funds totaling \$13.8 million over the next six years.

DONATIONS

Clark County has a history of receiving donations from individuals, private organizations, service clubs, and other non-profit groups, many of which are channeled

through the local Parks Foundation. Donations include cash and in-kind services, and often large donations are made for specific projects, such as the Firstenburg Community Center. Because the Department's donation history has varied widely by year, no revenue projection has been forecasted. In order to accurately estimate donation income in future planning efforts, the Department should institute a system for effectively tracking both cash and in-kind donations.

PARKLAND DEDICATION

Parkland dedication allows developers to dedicate land or capital infrastructure in exchange for a park impact fee credit. The developer is entitled to a credit for the fair market value of any dedication of land and reasonable documented construction costs associated with the improvement to, or new construction of, facilities that are/were identified in the capital facilities plan. Parkland dedication could be pursued to a greater extent in the future, particularly in redeveloping urban areas or proposed large subdivisions where acquiring adequate parkland to serve new residents may be difficult. Parkland dedication in lieu of fee is allowed under Section 20.915.090 of the City of Vancouver Municipal Code and under Section 40.630.060 of Clark County Code.

PROJECT COSTS

Based on public input and the results of the technical analysis, a list of recommended capital and non-capital projects was developed. These projects were organized geographically and then further divided by project type. Projects were then prioritized based on the criteria presented earlier in this chapter. Given the high total cost of all CFP

projects, only high priority projects were included in the revenue and expenditure analysis. Total costs for high priority projects are shown by jurisdiction in Figure 5 and appear in detail in Table 18.

By comparing Table 17, which forecasts revenue from existing sources, with Table 18, which summarizes costs for high priority projects, it becomes clear that a funding shortfall of approximately \$97 million exists. Table 18 and Figure 6 show where the greatest deficits are projected. Additional revenue sources should be considered to offset this projected shortfall.

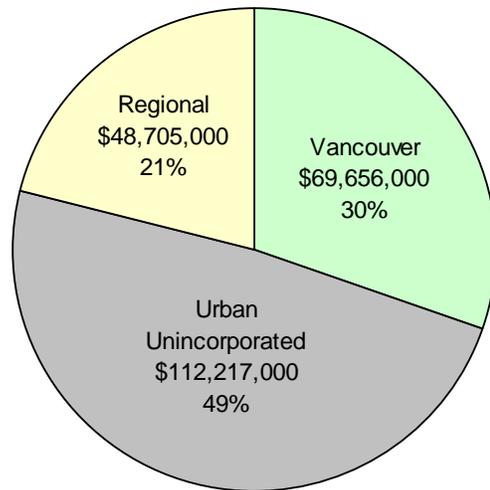
OPTIONAL FUNDING SOURCES TO MEET PROJECTED SHORTFALL

A variety of options exist for meeting the projected funding shortfall. These options include expanding or updating existing revenue sources, such as grants, donations, or impact fees; maximizing available revenues by taking greater advantage of public and private partnerships; and exploring new additional revenue sources. This section explores a few funding options; further detail and additional sources can be found in Appendix I.

DONATIONS

Although no revenue projection has been forecasted for donations, donated cash and in-kind services often can help fund specific projects. By working with the local Parks Foundation, VCPRD should seek to maintain and increase donations.

FIGURE 4: TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS OF HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS BY JURISDICTION



GRANTS

Since state and federal grants have been a major source of revenue for the VCPRD in the past, VCPRD should explore expanding the potential grant sources listed in Appendix I.

JOINT INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships between agencies are useful both in terms of providing facilities and programs. For example, VCPRD has partnered with Vancouver School District in the past to develop facilities like the Jim Parsley Center. These partnerships could be pursued in the future as a mechanism for acquiring land or developing necessary facilities.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

The state legislature provides for special capital allocations to support projects of special concern and interest. These projects could be a part of Vancouver-Clark's legislative agenda.

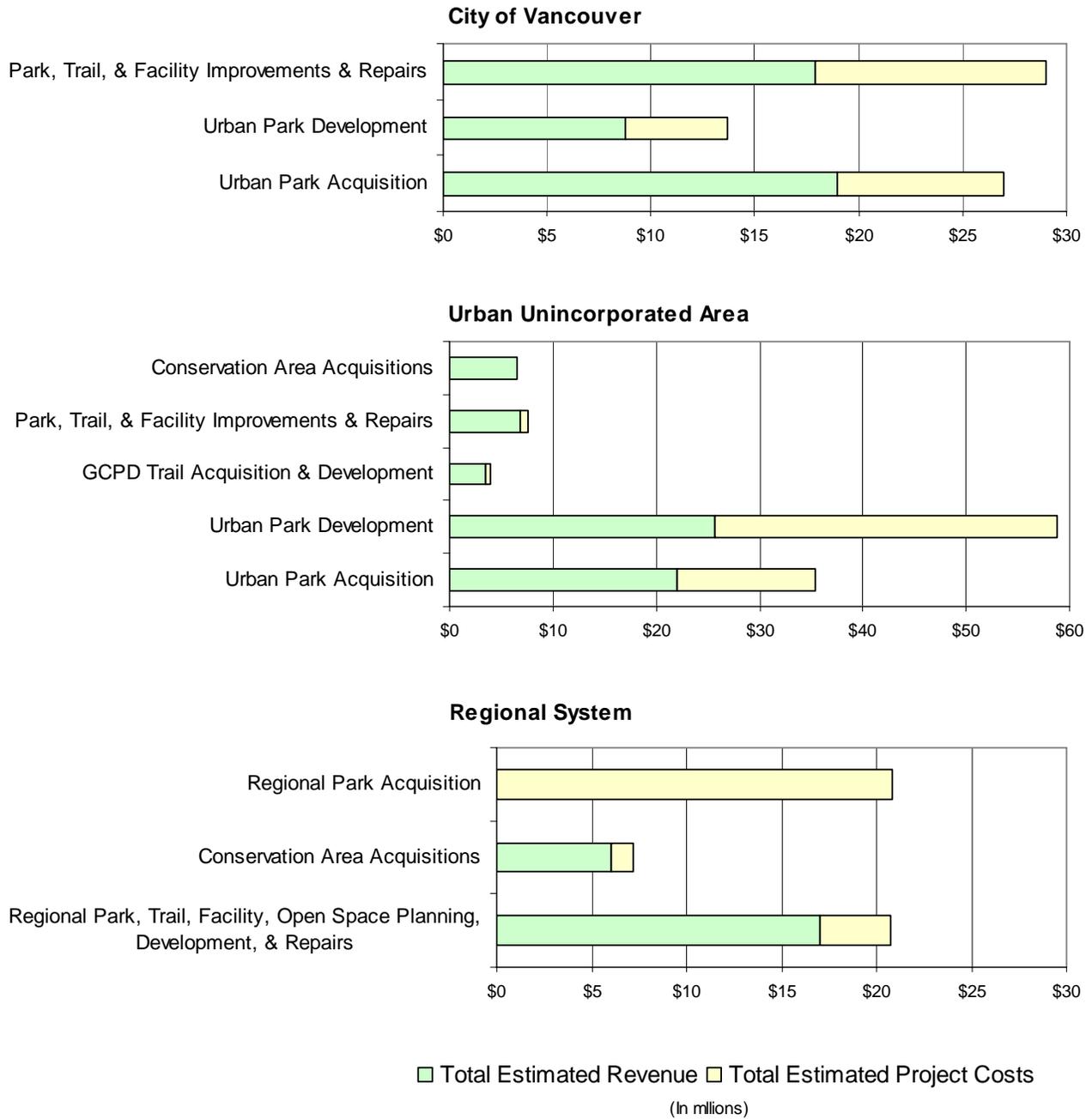
TABLE 18: TOTAL HIGH PRIORITY PROJECT ESTIMATED COSTS AND REVENUES BY CATEGORY

Project		Total Estimated Cost	Total Estimated Revenue	Estimated Shortfall	Primary Local Funding Source
City of Vancouver	Urban Park Acquisition	\$26,983,000	\$18,960,000	-\$8,023,000	PIF-Acquisition, Grants
	Urban Park Development	\$13,673,000	\$8,733,000	-\$4,940,000	PIF – Development, Grants
	Park Repairs & Improvements	\$3,886,000	\$17,903,000	-\$11,097,000	City REET, Grants
	Sports Fields and Other Special Facility Development & Improvements	\$18,222,000			
	Trail Development & Improvements	\$6,892,000			
Total		\$69,656,000	\$45,596,000	-\$24,060,000	
Urban Unincorporated Area	Urban Park Acquisition	\$35,330,000	\$22,056,000	-\$13,274,000	PIF-Acquisition, Grants
	Urban Park Development	\$58,785,000	\$25,611,000	-\$34,675,000	PIF-Dev, GCPD, Urban REET, Grants
	GCPD Trail Acquisition & Development	\$3,904,000	\$3,500,000	-\$404,000	Greater Clark Parks, Grants
	Park Repairs & Improvements	\$1,403,000	\$6,890,000	-\$736,000	Urban REET ^B , Grants
	Trail Development & Improvements	\$3,700,000			
	Sports Fields and Other Special Facility Development & Improvements	\$2,092,000			
	Planning	\$431,000			
	Conservation Area Acquisition	\$6,560,000	\$6,520,000	-\$40,000	Cons. Futures, Grants
Total		\$112,217,000	\$64,577,000	-\$47,640,000	
Clark County Regional System	Regional Park Development	\$5,456,000	\$16,997,000	-\$3,739,000	Regional REET, Grants
	Reg. Park Repairs & Improvements	\$3,263,000			
	Trail Development & Improvements	\$2,950,000			
	Sports Fields and Other Special Facility Development & Improvements	\$6,908,000			
	Open Space Preservation & Planning	\$1,433,000			
	Planning	\$726,000	\$6,021,000	-\$1,147,000	Cons. Futures, Grants
	Conservation Area Acquisitions	\$7,168,000			
	Regional Park Acquisition	\$20,800,000	\$0	-\$20,800,000	None
Total		\$48,705,000	\$23,018,000	-\$25,687,000	
Total All Projects		\$230,578,000	\$133,191,000^A	-\$97,386,000	

^A Revenue estimates include reasonably anticipated outside funding sources.

^B It is assumed that all Urban REET revenues in excess of estimated project costs and minimum contribution will be used to supplement the urban park development budget – any surplus revenues have been included in this way for this analysis.

FIGURE 5: COMPARISON OF ESTIMATED REVENUES AND COSTS BY PROJECT TYPE



LEVY LIFT

A levy lid lift is a voter-approved action that would permit Greater Clark Parks District to increase its operating levy to the full \$0.75 per \$1,000 of assessed value. In subsequent years, the regular property tax levy would be subject to the 1% growth limitation. A levy lid lift proposition must be placed on the ballot in the year preceding the effective date of the newly authorized levy. If the purpose of the levy lid lift is to pay debt service costs associated with a limited tax general obligation bond issue, the maximum period of the levy lid lift is 9 years.

MATCHING FUND PROGRAMS

With a matching fund program, the VCPRD would extend its financing by matching revenue raised by community groups for capital projects. The Department is currently exploring a matching fund program in a limited capacity for sports field development. These programs could be expanded to produce revenue for other capital projects as well.

PARK IMPACT FEE UPDATE

Park Impact Fee rates are generally reviewed during the comprehensive planning process. Previous updates occurred in 2002-2003 for Clark County and 2004 for the City of Vancouver. Updating PIF rates based on current land values and park development costs will help Vancouver and Clark County better reflect the actual costs of acquiring and developing neighborhood and community parks.

PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The concept of public/private partnerships has become increasingly popular for park and recreation agencies. The basic approach is to enter into a working agreement with a private

corporation, non-profit organization, or other agency to help fund, build, and/or operate a public facility. Generally, the three primary incentives that a public agency can offer are a free site, tax advantages, and facility access. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of providing public facilities at lower cost. Both Vancouver and Clark County have strong histories of partnering, especially around sports field development, and there are certainly possibilities for expanding these partnerships in the future. Public and private partnerships are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

REGIONAL PARK IMPACT FEE

Currently Park Impact Fees are only collected for new residential development in the Vancouver Urban Area. However, growth both inside and outside the Vancouver UGA affects the need for regional parks and special facilities. Additional revenue could be collected for regional facilities by charging a regional PIF (a) only for development that occurs in the unincorporated areas of the County or (b) for all development in the County, including areas within the incorporated cities. The adoption of a regional PIF would also require the adoption of standards for regional parks and facilities included in the fee and contribution of other local revenue to fund the resolution of any existing deficit. Full proposal of a regional PIF would require further analysis, public involvement, and approval of government officials.

REVENUE BONDS

These are bonds sold and paid for with revenue produced from the facility. If the facility does not produce enough revenue to pay for debt service, the agency must then subsidize the payment from the General

Fund. Revenue bonds do not require a public vote, but interest rates are generally higher than those of G.O. bonds.

SPONSORSHIP OR NAMING RIGHTS

A practice that is becoming more popular is generating additional revenue by offering sponsorship and naming rights to private entities. The VCPRD could use this mechanism to fund a variety of capital projects.

TRAILS IMPACT FEE

Similar to the regional park impact fee discussed above, a regional impact fee for trail acquisition and development could be assessed to fund development of the regional trail system. This option could be proposed if it appears more feasible and better supported than a regional PIF for parks, trails, and facilities. The adoption of a trail impact fee would also require the adoption of trail standard and contribution of other local revenue to fund the resolution of any existing deficit, as new development can only be responsible for any additional need created. Full proposal of a regional trail impact fee would require further analysis, public involvement, and government approval.

VOTER-APPROVED, COUNTY-WIDE GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

These are voter-approved bonds with the assessment placed on real property for a specified period of time (usually 15-20 years). Passage of a General Obligation bond requires a 60% voter majority. The money can only be used for capital improvements, not maintenance. There is further bond capacity in the City for capital projects, meaning that additional general obligation bonds could be sold to fund future acquisition or development projects. Major

disadvantages of this funding mechanism are the high approval requirement and the high interest rate.

While G.O. bonds are sometimes difficult to pass in Washington, a countywide G.O. bond could be considered. The bond could include all Clark County cities, assuming that the cities would be partners in development and share in the revenue. Revenues could be distributed to the cities on a per capita basis.

MAINTENANCE COSTS

While renovating outdated, deteriorating, or unsafe facilities may reduce maintenance costs for older infrastructure, adding new amenities and facilities to the VCPRD park system will also increase maintenance and operations costs substantially. This section of the comprehensive plan estimates the cost of maintaining the park, recreation, and open space system as proposed in the six-year CFP. This section assumes that the Department is able to implement all high priority capital projects. In addition, anticipated maintenance staffing needs are presented.

CURRENT COSTS PER ACRE

The VCPRD currently employs three maintenance levels of service. These levels of service are designed to correspond with the Department's existing park development standards. Since comparable agencies typically calculate maintenance costs simply for developed and undeveloped parkland, the VCPRD's Level 2 and Level 3 costs were averaged to arrive at estimated annual maintenance costs per developed acre. Table 19 shows these averages for each park type in the VCPRD system.

TABLE 19: ESTIMATED ANNUAL PER ACRE MAINTENANCE COSTS, 2006¹

Park Type	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Average Cost per Developed Acre
Neighborhood Park	\$768	\$3,340	\$6,627	\$4,984
Community Park	\$615	\$4,033	\$4,727	\$4,380
Regional Park	\$87	--	--	\$559
Urban Open Space	\$87	n/a	n/a	n/a
Trails, Greenways, Regional Open Space	--	--	--	\$2,500
Special Use Areas	--	--	--	\$2,190
<i>Average</i>	<i>\$389²</i>			<i>\$2,925³</i>

¹Numbers provided by VCPRD based on 2003 actual costs with a 5% annual increase. The total average for regional parks is based on 2005 actual costs with a 5% annual increase. Specific numbers for some levels were not available.

²These costs apply to all undeveloped parkland, including open space, natural areas, conservation areas, and Level 1 maintenance for all park types.

³Represents average cost per developed acre, not including open space.

For the VCPRD, the average maintenance cost for parks is \$2,925 per developed acre and \$389 per undeveloped acre. In comparison, other agencies in Washington spend approximately the following:

- Camas: \$7,890 per developed acre
- Ridgefield: \$5,190 per developed acre
- Washougal: \$3,440 per developed and undeveloped acre (averaged)
- Metro Parks Tacoma: \$5,000-\$8,000 per developed acre (neighborhood, community, signature community, and urban parks); \$4,600-\$15,000 per acre for regional parks with mixed developed and undeveloped areas; and \$500-\$2500 per acre for greenspaces.

In general, the cost for park maintenance in Oregon and Washington averages approximately \$5,000-\$7,000 per developed acre. VCPRD spends an average of \$2,925 per developed acre, significantly less than many other communities.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED COSTS

This plan uses the VCPRD's existing averages in Table 19 to develop projected maintenance costs for the VCPRD park system in 2013.

Since these existing averages are relatively low, further study of the Department's maintenance allocations is also recommended. Pending the results of this study, maintenance projections should be updated to more accurately reflect community expectations and regional maintenance standards.

For example, regional parks, which have traditionally borne the brunt of funding shortfalls, should receive a much higher level of maintenance for developed acreage, which usually includes amenities that serve as regional attractors. Maintenance costs for undeveloped acreage may vary depending on the resource value and maintenance strategy for individual areas. However, the regional and national trend for open space management is to move beyond the basic removal of hazards and to begin to restore critical habitat. Maintenance tasks in these areas may include:

- Natural resource maintenance, including invasive species removal, natural area restoration, and habitat preservation;
- Monitoring and reporting for wetlands and other sensitive areas as required by regulatory mandates;

TABLE 20: EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS, CITY OF VANCOUVER

Parks and Facilities	Cost		Existing System (2006)			Proposed System (2013)			
	Per Developed Acre	Per Undeveloped Acre	Acres		Total Annual Cost ¹	Acres		Total Annual Cost ²	Additional Annual Cost
			Developed	Undeveloped		Developed	Undeveloped		
Neighborhood Parks	\$4,984	\$389	200.36	63.44	\$1,023,272	301.83	3.49	\$2,017,753	\$994,481
Community Parks	\$4,380		237.70	10.00	\$1,045,016	297.70	0.00	\$1,747,386	\$702,370
Urban Open Space	--		0.00	204.04	\$79,372	0.00	231.58	\$120,721	\$41,349
Regional Parks	\$559		0.00	0.00	\$0	0.00	0.00	\$0	\$0
Greenways and Regional Open Space	\$2,500		15.25	294.50	\$152,686	60.25	299.50	\$357,980	\$205,295
Special Use Areas	\$2,190		10.00	51.50	\$41,934	10.00	61.50	\$61,408	\$19,474
Total				463.31	623.48	\$2,342,279	669.78	596.07	\$4,305,248

¹ Actual 2006 City grounds maintenance budget appropriation was \$2,040,000.

² Inflated by 5% annually.

TABLE 21: EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS, CLARK COUNTY

Parks and Facilities	Cost		Existing System (2006)			Proposed System (2013)			
	Per Developed Acre	Per Undeveloped Acre	Acres		Total Annual Cost	Acres		Total Annual Cost ¹	Additional Annual Cost
			Developed	Undeveloped		Developed	Undeveloped		
Neighborhood Parks	\$4,984	\$389	74.05	119.62	\$415,597	219.13	6.44	\$1,466,921	\$1,051,324
Community Parks	\$4,380		118.08	351.13	\$653,780	447.58	161.63	\$2,711,381	\$2,057,601
Urban Open Space	--		0.00	181.89	\$70,755	0.00	184.51	\$96,186	\$25,430
Regional Parks	\$559		286.00	2,048.07	\$956,573	486.00	3,368.07	\$2,119,835	\$1,163,261
Greenways and Regional Open Space	\$2,500		53.80	2,179.79	\$982,438	108.80	5,953.79	\$3,468,200	\$2,485,762
Special Use Areas	\$2,190		31.00	610.59	\$305,410	56.00	665.59	\$511,320	\$205,910
Total				562.93	5,491.09	\$3,384,554	1,317.51	10,340.03	\$10,373,842

¹ Inflated by 5% annually.

- Removal of health and safety hazards caused by illegal dumping, auto abandonment, and hazardous wastes;
- Water quality enhancement, drainage improvements, and flood damage assessment; and
- Upkeep of natural areas damaged by off-trail mountain bikes, motor bikes, ATV use, and hiking through non-designated areas.

A greater allocation per acre for all undeveloped parkland will help address park safety, health, resource quality, and recreational issues in natural open space areas.

Tables 20 and 21 show the anticipated total annual cost for maintaining the VCPRD system as proposed in the six-year Capital Facilities Plan. The additional annual cost at plan implementation for the City of Vancouver will total almost \$2 million (Table 20). For Clark County, the additional annual maintenance cost will approach \$7 million (Table 21).

As with projected costs for high priority capital and non-capital projects, these estimated maintenance expenses exceed available funding. Although the actual maintenance budget will depend on the final

TABLE 21: EXISTING AND ANTICIPATED ANNUAL MAINTENANCE COSTS, CLARK COUNTY

Parks and Facilities	Cost		Existing System (2006)			Proposed System (2013)			
	Per Developed Acre	Per Undeveloped Acre	Acres		Total Annual Cost	Acres		Total Annual Cost ¹	Additional Annual Cost
			Developed	Undeveloped		Developed	Undeveloped		
Neighborhood Parks	\$4,984	\$389	74.05	119.62	\$415,597	219.13	6.44	\$1,466,921	\$1,051,324
Community Parks	\$4,380		118.08	351.13	\$653,780	447.58	161.63	\$2,711,381	\$2,057,601
Urban Open Space	--		0.00	181.89	\$70,755	0.00	184.51	\$96,186	\$25,430
Regional Parks	\$559		286.00	2,048.07	\$956,573	486.00	3,368.07	\$2,119,835	\$1,163,261
Greenways and Regional Open Space	\$2,500		53.80	2179.79	\$982,438	108.80	5,953.79	\$3,468,200	\$2,485,762
Special Use Areas	\$2,190		31.00	610.59	\$305,410	56.00	665.59	\$511,320	\$205,910
Total				562.93	5491.09	\$3,384,554	1,317.51	10,340.03	\$10,373,842

¹ Inflated by 5% annually.

TABLE 23: ANTICIPATED ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT STAFF NEEDS

Park Type	Staff Allocation per Park		Additional Parks Planned	Years	Total Additional FTEs	
	Total Annual Maintenance Cost (2006)	Average Acreage			Un-inflated Additional Cost (2013)	Average Salary
Neighborhood Parks	1.93		57		8.84	
Community Parks	1.13				1.13	
Total	3.99		66	6	11.10	
Clark County	\$3,384,554	6,448	\$4,356,567	\$2,178,284	\$67,500	32
Total	\$5,726,833	6,627	\$5,226,930	\$2,613,465	\$67,500	39

phasing of planned improvements, the projected maintenance shortfall for Vancouver and Clark County will near \$9 million annually at plan implementation. When per acre expenditures are updated as recommended in the plan, this shortfall will likely increase.

ANTICIPATED STAFFING

Maintaining the additional parkland as proposed in the six-year Capital Facilities Plan will require both additional materials and additional staffing. At the current time, approximately 50% of the VCPRD’s total maintenance budget is spent on staff. Given that the average salary for maintenance workers in the Vancouver and Clark County is \$67,500, those agencies should plan on adding approximately 39 maintenance staff to support the proposed park system in 2013. Table 22 shows anticipated maintenance staff allocations.

section of the chapter discusses projected staff needs associated with facility operations, acquisition and development, as well as other Department operations.

FACILITY OPERATIONS

There are two projects in the proposed six-year Capital Facilities Plan, the Marshall Center improvements, that involve the expansion of existing facilities and an associated increase in staffing needs. Since the VCPRD typically covers the operations of its recreation buildings through user fees and programming revenue, it is assumed that these projects will not significantly affect staff budgets.

The 20-year list of capital projects, presented in Appendix G, proposes the construction of several sizeable recreation facilities: two new community centers, an outdoor pool, and an outdoor education center. In the long term, VCPRD should anticipate greater operations and staffing costs for these facilities.

OTHER STAFFING NEEDS

In addition to heightening the maintenance responsibilities of the City of Vancouver and Clark County, the parks and recreation facilities proposed in this plan will require an increase in staffing from the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. This

ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT

Pursuing the additional park acquisition, development, and improvement projects included in the six-year Capital Facilities Plan will require additional planning, design, construction management, and administrative staffing. At the present time, the Department

uses the ratios in Table 23 to estimate design and development staff needs. Given that the six-year CFP includes planning for 66 new parks, a minimum of 11 additional design and development staff will be necessary. These needs should be considered when pursuing capital funding. Depending on the number and types of projects, the use of consultants to complete some or all of these project tasks may be a more cost effective alternative.

OTHER

As VCPRD expands its parks planning, recreation services, and programming, it will need to reevaluate other staffing requirements for the Department as well. For example, the Department may need additional staff for resource development and marketing. Adding staff in positions like these will help to improve the long-term sustainability of the Department.

MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUNDING SOURCES

Currently, funding for VCPRD park and facility maintenance is provided by the City of Vancouver and Clark County general funds. As discussed in the previous sections, however, additional funds will be necessary to subsidize maintenance and operations for high priority capital projects, when implemented. There are a number of resources which should be explored as potential mechanisms for offsetting the projected shortfalls. Some of these are described below.

CHARGES FOR SERVICES

Another method for increasing revenues for maintenance and operations is through fees

and charges. VCPRD should explore ways to increase revenue from the following:

- *Parking Fees, Boat Launch Fees, Park User Fees:* Revenue from daily fees or seasonal passes can support maintenance and operations at various sites.
- *Facility Rentals:* The Department can increase revenue for park services by expanding rental facilities (picnic shelters, amphitheater, meeting rooms, swimming pools, etc.) or by increasing rental fees and other facility-use charges.
- *Property Rental/Leases:* A Property Management Program manages eleven agricultural and seven residential rental properties throughout Clark County. These properties are owned by either Clark County or the City of Vancouver and managed by the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department. VCPRD may be able to identify additional opportunities for short or long term leases for property by clubs and other concessionaires.
- *Retail Sales of Merchandise and Food:* Program locations can include gift shops or food and beverage operations run by VCPRD or external vendors, which generate revenue for the District.
- *Membership Dues:* VCPRD facilities can offer memberships for visitation or use of the fitness activities and other programs.
- *Event Admissions, Program, and Class Fees:* This category includes revenue earned through admissions to facilities and program and class registration fees. Charges in this category are set by the Board of Park Commissioners through the fee and charges schedule.

DONATIONS

Donations revenue may be received from individual or corporate contributors or non-profit foundations. The Parks Foundation, which was formed to provide a stable source of funding for parks, oversees fundraising efforts and the allocation of donations to the parks departments within Clark County for both general purposes and specific projects.

GENERAL FUND

The general fund is VCPRD's primary source of operating revenue. In 2002, the City of Vancouver allocated 8.4% of its general fund budget for parks and recreation, and another 1.5% specifically for park grounds maintenance. These funds represent almost 65% of the VCPRD parks and recreation budget. Clark County's general fund contributions represent another 15% of the entire parks and recreation budget. VCPRD could request additional general fund support for park maintenance, or at a minimum, that General Fund support continues and reflects inflation increases.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVENUE

Intergovernmental contracts for services can be arranged whereby VCPRD maintains a portion of facilities for other jurisdictions in exchange for annual payments. Other intergovernmental revenue may include federal, state, county and city grants for specific programs and services.

LEVY LIFT

As discussed previously in this chapter, a levy lift could be used to increase revenues for park and recreation operations.

PARKS DISTRICTS

The Greater Clark Parks District currently provides maintenance funding through a property tax levy for 35 neighborhood and

community parks in the Urban-unincorporated area. This District could be expanded to accommodate additional parks, or additional districts could be formed.

TAX-BASED REVENUE

- *Property Tax:* The Greater Clark Parks District is an example of a property tax-based special district that provides funding to maintain parks within the planning area.
- *Sales Tax:* Some park districts have used a sales tax for parks and recreation as a result of a voter-approved ballot proposition that levies sales tax for maintenance and operations.
- *Leasehold Excise Tax:* This is a tax levied by the state on long-term rental of public property.

VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

Volunteers from community groups have participated in a wide range of different VCPRD projects, including tree planting, invasive species removal, trail maintenance, and environmental education. Through labor and the provision of resources, volunteers can make a definite and lasting contribution to maintaining parks, green spaces, and natural areas. VCPRD can explore various ways to increase volunteer contributions, such as setting up field use agreements that put sports organizations in charge of seasonal field maintenance and pre-game field preparation.

MISCELLANEOUS REVENUES

Other potential sources may include investment interest income, or interest earned from cash not needed for current operations.

PARTNERSHIPS

The VCPRD should continue to pursue partnerships with private, public, and other agencies for the acquisition, development, and operation of park and recreation facilities. Existing partnerships have contributed significantly to the success of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation system. This section discusses partnership opportunities in greater detail. A list of current partners is provided in Appendix K.

NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS

The VCPRD and local school districts are the most significant providers of neighborhood and community parkland within the UGA. Currently, the Department partners with school districts and individual schools to co-locate some neighborhood park facilities. This strategy should be continued to close service gaps in the future.

Other municipalities within the planning area also provide neighborhood and community parks within their boundaries, although these parks are not counted in the VCPRD inventory. These parks help serve park need within the incorporated cities of Clark County. Developing partnerships with these municipalities could help to ensure that future community parks are developed according to a plan that adequately responds to community demand.

NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE

There are a number of potential partners in the private, public, and non-profit sectors that could help in the effort to preserve and

manage expensive and diminishing open space in the planning area, helping to defray costs and meet acquisition goals. Other entities such as the City of Vancouver, Clark County Public Works, and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife may be interested in joint acquisition or joint management of properties that include critical areas, floodplains, or Columbia River lowlands as well.

REGIONAL PARKS

The Department is currently working with the Port of Camas-Washougal and the cities of Camas and Washougal to develop a major regional park facility, Captain William Clark Park at Cottonwood Beach. Additional partnerships with other agencies and jurisdictions within the planning area may help VCPRD capitalize on opportunities to acquire and develop regional parkland within Clark County.

TRAILS AND GREENWAYS

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife owns a majority of the non-VCPRD greenways in the County. Others are operated by municipalities within the planning area. Partnerships with these entities will become more important as the *Clark County Trail and Bikeway Systems Plan* is implemented. The plan proposes to link greenway systems throughout the entire County into one large, unified trail system, and partnerships are a crucial piece of realizing this vision.

SPECIAL AREAS AND FACILITIES

Given that the majority of special use area parkland within the planning area is owned by other providers, there are a number of opportunities for partnerships. In many cases, these partners are environmentally- or historically-oriented, providing swimming

holes, fish hatcheries, or historic sites for public use. These agencies provide an opportunity for the further development of special use areas of this type. Schools and private providers also present opportunities for partnerships, as these providers often need to develop special facilities like sports complexes or community buildings to accommodate their user groups.

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS

Clearly, other providers in Vancouver and Clark County do a large part to boost the region's total supply of baseball fields. Continued partnerships with schools, other municipalities, and private groups will be a major component of any future strategy to meet the needs of planning area baseball and little leagues. In addition, planning future baseball fields in conjunction with these organizations could help to ensure the development of sufficient fields to accommodate future adult and youth play. Schools serve as the major provider of softball fields within the VCPRD planning area. Partnerships with local school districts and private providers, who also generate a significant portion of the region's supply, could help to ensure that the Department can meet any increased demand.

COMMUNITY CENTERS

Partnerships with other providers including cities, and public and private organizations could help to meet future community center need. For example, partnerships with schools could allow the construction of community schools, or schools which serve as both public, community gathering and educational facilities.

GYMNASIUMS

Schools are the most obvious potential partner for gymnasiums. Partnerships with

local schools could allow the development of joint use agreements to provide space for Department programming. Future planning efforts should also take school gyms into account.

OFF LEASH AREAS

There is clear potential for VCPRD-community partnerships in terms of off leash areas. Community members with a strong interest in off leash areas and dog issues could be engaged in efforts to develop and maintain dog parks in the future, as could organized advocacy groups like DOGPAW.

POOLS

Joint use agreements with other providers in the planning area could allow the Department to use other providers' facilities for overflow programming. Likewise, these facilities could be used to accommodate temporary pool needs.

SKATE PARKS

The private sector provides a natural opportunity for partnership around skate park facilities. Local skate shops could be involved in skate park design, funding, and construction. Schools could also serve as valuable partners.

SOCCER FIELDS

Other providers, and especially schools, provide a large percentage of the area's total inventory of soccer fields. Continuing to partner for the use of school fields in particular will help the Department to meet soccer field demand. In addition, planning future soccer fields in conjunction with these organizations could help to ensure the development of sufficient fields to accommodate future adult- and youth-sized demand in the future.

TRAILS

In terms of building a countywide trail network, a number of other providers become critical partners. Working with other municipalities in Clark County to link major community facilities via trails will constitute a major part of implementing the trails plan, as will working with private and non-profit trails organizations in the community.

URBAN FORESTRY

Within the City of Vancouver, in terms of maximizing the benefits of trees within the Parks system, Urban Forestry is a critical partner in restoring older parks and expanding the tree canopy to a healthy cohesive forest community. Canopy restoration is achieved by replanting where trees have been removed, planting trees in replace underutilized or hard to mow turf areas, and restoring native vegetation for water quality and habitat protection. Though the Urban Forestry Program currently serves only the City of Vancouver, it is housed within VCPRD and, as identified in the Community Survey, has the potential to operate within the urban unincorporated area of Clark County in the future. Cities throughout the region are realizing that the urban forest is a vital component of a “livable” and economically sound community. A cohesive tree canopy is the ecological link connecting the park system.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following strategies represent key actions the VCPRD should pursue in the next two years to work towards identified goals.

Planning

- 1 Improve coordination with planning departments to plan for parks in future developments.
- 2 Improve planning coordination with school districts to ensure availability of parks, fields, and facilities.

Acquisitions

- 3 Pursue urban parkland acquisitions in underserved districts where park impact fee funds are available.
- 4 Expand pursuit of dedication opportunities to acquire parkland in newly developing areas.

Park Planning & Development

- 5 Implement a site inventory process prior to master planning and development to inform future site uses.
- 6 Develop an Interim Use Policy that examines the ability of underutilized parks to support interim community use.
- 7 Continue construction of the Greater Clark Parks District parks and parks in underserved districts where park impact fee funds are available.

Special Facilities

- 8 Conduct a detailed analysis of urban and rural sports field needs.
- 9 Begin to develop facility specific plans that examine the need and guide provision of special facilities.

Trails

- 10 Increase coordination with transportation departments to provide trails and bikeways.

Partnerships & Volunteers

- 11 Work with the Parks Foundation to expand their capabilities.
- 12 Develop a coordinated volunteer recruitment, training, and recognition program.
- 13 Develop an adoption program to promote maintenance of significant parks, trails, recreation, and open space.
- 14 Develop and maintain stakeholder lists and provide targeted outreach.
- 15 Develop a matching grant program to support community groups and expand fiscal resources.

Fund Development

- 16 Update park impact fees to reflect current land and construction costs.
- 17 Update park and recreation program, reservation, and use fees to reflect market rates and cost of service.
- 18 Explore and pursue funding sources for regional park acquisition & development.
- 19 Explore and pursue funding sources for regional trail acquisition and development.
- 20 Explore and pursue funding sources for urban park maintenance in the City of Vancouver.
- 21 Improve fund balance tracking mechanisms.
- 22 Develop a program for managing, tracking, and maximizing donations, grants, volunteer hours, and partnerships.

Maintenance & Operations

- 23 Develop an integrated system-wide plan for the management of natural areas.
- 24 Establish park maintenance standards.
- 25 Develop a site condition assessment program to identify, assess, and monitor maintenance needs.
- 26 Develop an asset management strategy to guide future maintenance and repair of parks & facilities.
- 27 Examine the feasibility of a ranger program to improve regional park maintenance and security.

Accessibility

- 28 Develop an ADA transition plan to improve accessibility in parks and facilities.
- 29 Enhance the scholarship program and other mechanisms to improve access for low income residents.

Communications & Marketing

- 30 Provide an updated park, trail, and recreation system map to encourage use.
- 31 Develop new tools to increase public involvement.
- 32 Develop a marketing and communications team.
- 33 Implement the marketing and public relations plan.
- 34 Implement a consistent park signage program for use throughout the system.

Organizational

- 35 Develop a business plan.
- 36 Develop department-wide standards, policies, and procedures.
- 37 Evaluate the staffing needs of the Department and hire adequate staff.
- 38 Implement programs and actions to retain employees.



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