

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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In Spring 2005, the City of Albany began updating its Park and Recreation Master Plan to address the park, recreation, and service needs of the community for the next 10 years. This plan describes a strategy for meeting current and future needs, based on a vision set forth by the community about what recreation opportunities and park experiences they wanted, needed, and preferred.

Albany has a strong park system with a neighborhood or community park in nearly every neighborhood zone, providing diverse recreation experiences with facilities such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, sports fields, and open grass areas. Trail corridors and natural areas add opportunities for walking, biking, and watching wildlife, while preserving significant natural resources. At the same time, city-wide parks, such as Monteith Park and Timber Linn Park, offer significant special events that draw people together and foster a sense of community. Riverfront parks and urban spaces further enhance the system, providing river access and green space in more densely developed areas of the city.



The City will build on this foundation of parks and facilities to provide recreation opportunities for the entire community, even as Albany's population continues to grow and age. In order to achieve this goal, community collaboration, partnerships, and coordinated planning will be needed. By working together, recreation providers within the city can create a safe and easily accessible park and recreation system designed to serve all ages, all abilities, and all residents who seek healthy, fun, and social opportunities for recreation and leisure.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

The Master Plan provides recommendations, guidelines, and a financing plan for renovating, acquiring, and developing City parks and facilities to meet community-wide recreation needs. The master planning process included three phases:

- Identifying community needs;
- Creating a vision for the future park system; and
- Developing recommendations and a detailed action plan to implement priority projects.

Public involvement was a major component of the planning process, and the key findings of the plan reflect community recreation preferences and needs.



### EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

The park system in Albany consists of a variety of parkland, recreation facilities, and natural areas. The City of Albany is the primary provider of parks within the planning area. The City owns and/or manages approximately 603 acres of parkland at 32 sites, providing diverse facilities to support a variety of recreation opportunities and activities. Parks include the following:

- 20 neighborhood parks;
- 1 community park;
- 2 citywide parks;
- 2 trail corridors/greenways;
- 2 natural areas;
- 2 riverfront parks; and
- 3 urban open spaces.

In addition, other entities such as Linn County, Benton County, the State of Oregon, and Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS) provide nearly 475 acres of park, recreation, natural areas, and open space within the Albany planning area.

The City of Albany is also a significant provider of recreation and sport facilities, but it cannot meet community needs alone. The Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, and GAPS all provide facilities that are vital to organized sports, youth and adult activities within the community. Together, these organizations support the inventory summarized in Chapter 2.

### NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to establish in quantifiable terms the community's need for parkland and recreation facilities in Albany. These needs, presented as standards for parkland and guidelines for recreation facilities, are based on public demand for recreation opportunities. From these standards and guidelines, current and future acreage and facility needs can be calculated.

Chapter 3 presents the key findings from the public involvement activities held during the planning process, which were instrumental in identifying park and facility needs. These activities provided opportunities for City residents to participate in the master planning process and encouraged feedback from as many people as possible:

- Needs Assessment Survey
- Community Fair
- Recreation Providers Focus Group
- Timber Linn Focus Group
- Technical Advisory Committee
- Organized Sports Provider Questionnaire



Chapter 3 summarizes the results of the needs assessment. The analysis reveals a need for five neighborhood parks in identified neighborhood zones that are currently unserved. The City also will need one community park to help satisfy growing needs for several types of recreation opportunities and facilities in Albany, including sports fields, picnic shelters/pavilions, a dog park, and open space for family and children’s activities. No specific needs are identified for other park types, although the City should identify and acquire critical resource areas throughout the city.

In addition, the City of Albany has a current need for the following recreation facilities: football fields, gymnasiums, outdoor basketball courts, pathways and trails, picnic shelters, play areas, a skate park, and an indoor recreation facility. By the year 2015, the need for these types of recreational facilities will have grown substantially. Of these, perhaps the most significant demand is for trails and pathways, which was noted in nearly all public involvement venues and in national, state, and local trends. According to the results of the needs assessment, Albany needs approximately 7.5 miles of trails currently and will need over 9.5 miles in the year 2015.

### **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

The strength of a successful park system is that it provides a variety of park types and recreation opportunities throughout the community to encourage recreation participation from as many residents as possible. The ideal park system will provide an array of park sites with amenities and facilities appropriate to the unique landscape of Albany. Site selection, park design, and development should support the function and purpose of each park type to ensure that diverse recreation opportunities are provided and community recreation needs are met. This will provide a more efficient park system and minimize the potential for conflicts between different interest groups.

Chapter 4 presents general design policies that will guide all park planning, along with design and development guidelines specific to the various park types in Albany.



### RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter 5 describes the recommended park system for Albany, which is based on providing recreation experiences on a variety of scales. Recommendations for park renovation, site acquisition, and development are noted for each existing and proposed park. Special attention is given to pathways and trails, sport and recreation facilities, and strategies for non-capital projects. Recommendations include:

- **Serving underserved areas:** The plan recommends developing an additional community park in south Albany in the next five years and four additional neighborhood parks to serve Neighborhood Areas 4, 5, 13, and 22. The development of new parks will ensure that all City residents have accessible recreation opportunities.
- **Renovating and revitalizing parks and facilities:** This plan recommends improvements to existing parks on a site-by-site basis. In some cases, renovated parks will include new facilities that provide additional recreation opportunities to meet growing community needs. Renovations will improve playground safety, expand opportunities for picnicking, and meet community needs for a dog park, new skate park, outdoor basketball courts, etc.
- **Connecting parks and increasing opportunities for trail-related recreation:** Six new trails are recommended in this plan for development by the year 2015. Two are considered priority trails and are proposed for development in the next five years. These trails will help connect parks to key destinations and provide increased opportunities for walking, jogging, biking, rollerblading, wildlife watching, etc.
- **Meeting community needs for sport facilities:** Albany is an active community, where sports and athletic activities are important recreational pursuits. Highlights for citywide sports include building a new soccer field complex at the proposed community park and seven new baseball/softball diamonds at Timber Linn Park. Recommendations include maximizing partnerships, strengthening facility use agreements, and considering joint facility improvements and maintenance.
- **Adding major recreation facilities:** Albany needs a large community center to draw people together and to provide indoor programming space. City residents have high participation rates in indoor swimming, which means they will outgrow the Albany Community Pool within the 10-year planning horizon. This plan recommends that the City conduct a feasibility study to see how key partnerships and coordinated planning can increase indoor recreation and swimming opportunities in Albany.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

In Chapter 6, an implementation strategy is identified for funding the improvements recommended in the Park and Recreation Plan. It includes a list of priority capital projects and a short-term, 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for implementation. This CIP provides a detailed, realistic list of proposed capital improvements that can be funded over the next five years.



The table below summarizes the estimated costs of the highest priority projects to be implemented in the next five years.

**Summary of Costs by Type of Expenditure**  
Albany Planning Area

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Estimated Cost <sup>1</sup></b>
Planning	\$150,000
Land Acquisition	\$2,480,000
New Park/Facility Development	\$4,228,954
Renovation/Restoration of Existing Sites	\$2,629,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,488,704</b>

<sup>1</sup> *Estimated costs reflect 2005 dollars. Actual amounts will be altered by inflation.*

The City’s strategy for financing priority capital improvements is a basic pay-as-you-go approach involving funds provided by System Development Charges (SDCs), grants, donations, and annual expenditures from the City’s Park and Recreation Operating Budget (which supports capital facilities).

Adding new park sites and facilities to Albany’s existing park system will increase maintenance costs. This plan presents anticipated annual maintenance costs for the proposed park system at the current level of service (\$4,500 per developed acre, with \$250 per acre for natural areas). It also suggests a maintenance level that is more in line with the maintenance needs of Albany’s park system and the service levels in other Oregon communities (\$5,500 per acre, with \$1,200 per acre for natural areas). Maintenance costs may run approximately \$2,850,000 at the higher level of service.

To supplement existing funding sources, the plan lists a number of possible resources for funding programs, non-capital projects, park and facility acquisition, development, and maintenance.