
INTRODUCTION

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 future needs, providing direction for the provision of parks and recreation services city-wide.

In the past, the City has shown great vision in acquiring and developing parks that have become major community assets. As a result, Albany has a strong park system centered on neighborhood and community parks, which provide a variety of recreation experiences, such as playing on playgrounds, picnicking, and participating in sports. Natural areas and greenways provide opportunities for walking, biking, and watching wildlife. 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.

As Albany's population continues to grow and age, the City will build on this foundation of parks and facilities to provide recreation opportunities for the entire community. However, two things are clear: 1) Albany will need more recreation facilities than the City currently offers; and 2) the City will find it increasingly difficult to meet all community needs alone, particularly for sports fields and indoor activity space. The City is well-aware of these challenges and has already begun setting a plan in motion to address them.

The City's future is changing. The new vision for parks and recreation is one of community collaboration and partnerships. Coordinated planning will be needed to create a sustainable community system for the provision of recreation services and facilities in to the future. This innovative process will include collaborative visioning, communication, planning, and in some instances, even joint funding. The City is poised to lead this change.

Albany has several successful recreation service providers, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, and various jurisdictions, including Greater Albany Public Schools (GAPS), Linn County, and Benton County, who can help meet increasing needs for high-quality, community-scale recreation facilities. By working together, these groups can create a safe and easily accessible park and recreation system to serve all ages, all abilities, all interests, and everyone in Albany who seeks healthy, fun, social opportunities for recreation and leisure.



1.1 PLANNING PROCESS

The goal of the Park and Recreation Master Plan is to provide recommendations, strategies, and a financing plan for renovating, acquiring, and developing City parks and facilities to meet community-wide recreation needs. Figure 1.1 introduces the three-part planning process that was established to meet this goal.

- **Phase I: Needs Assessment:** Public opinion, recreation patterns, and perceived community needs were measured through several public involvement activities, including a city-wide recreation survey, community fair, sport group questionnaire, focus group meetings, and advisory committee meetings. In Phase I, key findings from these public involvement opportunities were supplemented by a technical analysis of park and recreation resources to determine community needs for parkland, open space, and recreation facilities.
- **Phase II: Vision Formulation:** Based on findings of the needs assessment, members of the Technical Advisory Committee and key staff identified a vision for parks and recreation services in Albany. Phase II involved identifying and refining a list of priorities for parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities based on this vision.
- **Phase III: Plan Development:** In Phase III, recommendations were developed for improving existing parks, implementing projects and programs, and acquiring and developing new parks, trails, and recreational facilities. In addition, a financial strategy was recommended to implement these projects. Phase III involved creating a draft Master Plan for committee, staff, and community review. The final Plan incorporated comments from these groups.

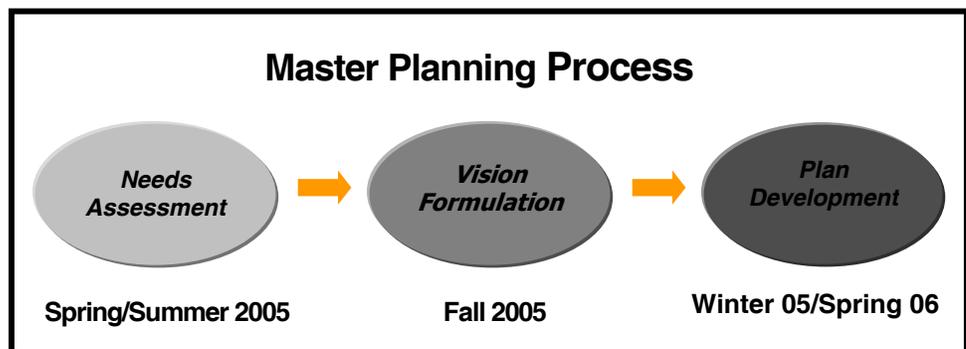


Figure 1.1: Planning Process

1.2 PLANNING AREA

The planning area for the Park and Recreation Master Plan extends beyond City limits to include all land within the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). In addition, it includes Takena Landing and Simpson Park, which are located along the Willamette River partially outside the UGB. Figure 1.2 illustrates the planning area.



The City of Albany provides the majority of parks, facilities, recreation programs and services within this planning area. However, residents also benefit from parks, facilities, and programs provided by other public agencies and private organizations in Albany. A variety of recreation facilities are contributed by these organizations:

- Linn County
- Benton County
- State of Oregon
- Linn-Benton Community College
- Greater Albany Public School District 8J
- YMCA
- Boys & Girls Club
- Simpson Timber Company
- Homeowners & Neighborhood Associations

1.3 PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Albany is located in the Central Willamette Valley at the confluence of the Willamette and Calapooia Rivers. Albany lies just 45 miles north of Eugene, 69 miles south of Portland, and 24 miles south of Salem, Oregon's state capital. The city is connected to nearby areas via Interstate 5, US Highway 99E, Highway 20, and the railroad. The city is situated within two counties: Linn County on the south side of the Willamette River and Benton County on the north side of the river. Albany is the county seat of Linn County.

Albany is surrounded by several communities whose residents also may use the City's recreation facilities. These include:

- Millersburg (4 miles from Albany, population 760)
- Lebanon (15 miles from Albany, population 13,550)
- Corvallis (11 miles from Albany, population 52,590)

Albany is a thriving community of businesses, industry, and agriculture. Industries such as wood products, food processing, and manufactured home production are located there. Albany also is known as the rare metals capitol of the world, due to the number of companies that produce zirconium, hafnium, and titanium. According to the Visitors Association, the top ten employers in Albany include:

- Allvac (formerly Wah Chang) (specialty metals) 1100 employees
- Greater Albany Public Schools 950 employees
- Weyerhaeuser (wood/paper products) 735 employees
- Linn County 700 employees
- Linn-Benton Community College 510 employees
- Albany General Hospital 500 employees
- Georgia Pacific (paper products) 437 employees
- Target Distribution Center 440 employees
- Golden West Homes 400 employees
- City of Albany 391 employees

The Hewlett-Packard Company, located in Corvallis, is also a major employer in the area, supporting as many as 4800 employees.

The terrain in Albany consists of a mixture of level flatlands and moderate hillsides. The majority of the city is located on the south side of the Willamette River and is relatively flat. On the north side of the Willamette River, the topography is characterized by rolling hills with views of the Willamette Valley. Land adjacent to both the Willamette and Calapooia Rivers is lowland that is subject to severe flooding, such as occurred in 1996. Other significant water features in the area include Oak Creek, the Albany/Santiam Canal, Periwinkle Creek, Cox Creek, Burkhart Creek, and Truax Creek.

Albany has several identified wetlands. Like floodplains, wetlands are often opportunity areas for parks and recreation. These areas can be used as a resource for recreation or as open space, interpretive areas, or scenic areas.

The climate in Albany is characterized as relatively mild with four distinct seasons. In general, the climate is wet and cool in the winters and warm and dry in the summers. Annual precipitation averages 42 inches, and monthly averages in temperature range from 33-81°F.

Insert Figure 1.2: Planning Area

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Demographically, Albany is a growing and aging community. With an estimated 2005 population of 47,145 persons within its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), Albany is the 12th largest City in Oregon. The city has grown quickly, averaging 37.9% for each of the last four decades. Currently, the City estimates that Albany is growing at an average rate of 1.4% annually and will continue to grow at this rate until the year 2020.

According to the Albany Community Development Department, the population in Albany will increase to 53,493 residents within the 10-year planning horizon for this Master Plan (the year 2015). These numbers were calculated based on the anticipated infill in Albany neighborhoods in areas within the Urban Growth Boundary through the year 2030.

Similar to population trends nationwide, Albany's population continues to age. The median age for city residents was 34.6 in 2000. The percentage of the population age 45 and over is projected to grow from 35% in 2000 to 40% in 2010 and even to 44% in 2020. The trend will affect the level of recreation participation for many individuals in Albany, including their choices for programming and facility use.

1.4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To develop a solid foundation for the Park and Recreation Master Plan and to understand the recreation preferences and needs of all City residents, the planning process involved public input through several community involvement activities:

- **Needs Assessment Survey:** A statistically valid survey designed to elicit information about recreation interests, behavior, attitudes, and participation was conducted in Albany between April and June 2005. A total of 305 questionnaires were completed by City residents, which is sufficient to represent all City residents with a 95% confidence level and less than 5.6% variation in results.
- **Community Fair:** A Park and Recreation Community Fair was held on Saturday, April 2, 2005, at Heritage Mall in conjunction with Super Fitness Saturday, the Shape Up Across Oregon Kick-Off, and the KGAL/KSHO Family Living Expo. Because the fair was part of these popular events, over 300 residents who may not otherwise have participated in the Plan update answered questions about their recreation preferences.
- **Organized Sports Questionnaire:** Representatives from 13 sports organizations responded to questionnaires regarding teams in the Albany area and their facility needs.



- **Recreation Providers Focus Group:** Seven private providers and five City staff met on June 22, 2005, to discuss park and recreation services, service gaps, and programming and facility needs in Albany.
- **Timber Linn Focus Group:** Twenty-two focus group participants identified community needs that could be addressed through park improvements at Timber Linn Park. This meeting, held on July 11, 2005, was a follow-up to three public workshops held in Fall 2004 to discuss the re-design and development of the site.

The planning process also included input and review by two advisory groups:

- **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC):** Members of the Technical Advisory Committee met three times during the planning process to discuss their vision for the Albany park and recreation system and priorities for renovation and development. Committee members also reviewed key reports in the development of the Master Plan.
- **Key City Staff:** The director, managers, and coordinators from the Park and Recreation Department met twice during the planning process to provide direction for the development of the Master Plan. These staff represented the following service areas: park maintenance, recreation, sports, seniors, and youth and family.

In total, over 650 Albany residents were involved in the development of the Master Plan.

1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The Park and Recreation Master Plan is organized into six chapters and three appendices:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the purpose of the report, the planning process, planning area, planning context, public involvement activities, and the organization of this document.
- **Chapter 2: Existing Parks and Facilities** updates the City's classification system for parkland and summarizes the City's current inventory of parks and recreation facilities.
- **Chapter 3: Needs Assessment** presents key findings from the community needs assessment process and summarizes park and recreation facility needs in Albany.

- **Chapter 4: Design Guidelines** presents guidelines for the site selection, design, and development of City of Albany parks.
- **Chapter 5: Recommendations** identifies recommendations for improving existing parks and acquiring and developing new parks, trails, and facilities in Albany. Additional strategies are suggested for implementing non-capital projects, programs, and partnerships.
- **Chapter 6: Implementation** describes a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan along with financing strategies for priority capital projects.
- **Appendix A: Park and Recreation Facility Inventory** presents the current inventory of parkland and recreation facilities within the Albany Planning Area.
- **Appendix B: City of Albany Parks** provides a brief description of each City park, including location, size, development status, and existing facilities.
- **Appendix C: Estimated Costs for Priority Projects** provides a detailed breakdown of costs for all Priority I and II projects by park, by task, and by category (planning, acquisition, development, contingency, A/E fees).



During the Master Plan update, several reports were prepared to document critical components of the planning process. These reports were published under separate covers and are available from the Park and Recreation Department:

- *Existing Parks and Facilities*, May 2005
- *Needs Assessment Survey*, July 2005
- *Community Needs Assessment*, August 2005

The Park and Recreation Master Plan was updated concurrently with the development of the Timber Linn Park Master Plan. The following Timber Linn documents are also available from the Park and Recreation Department:

- *Timber Linn Site Analysis and Vision*, September 2005
- *Timber Linn Master Plan*, March 2006