

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 have been calculated.

This chapter presents the key findings from the following public involvement activities, which were instrumental in identifying park and facility needs:

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

The chapter also summarizes the results of the needs assessment. The complete *Community Needs Assessment* report is available under separate cover from the Park and Recreation Department.

3.1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The purpose of the needs assessment survey is to identify the recreation interests, preferences, and participation levels of Albany residents. In Spring 2004, a questionnaire was mailed to 1600 randomly selected households within the City of Albany. The survey was designed to achieve statistical reliability for the Albany Planning Area. One adult (age 18 and over) from each household was asked to fill out the questionnaire, which contained a variety of questions on recreation preferences, park and facility needs, and recreation participation. Each additional person in the household age 10 and over was asked to complete an insert, which included the two questions on recreation participation. Two inserts were included with the brochure mailed to each household. For households with more than three people over age 10, additional recreation participation inserts were available from the Park and Recreation Department.



For the total sample, the 305 responses provided a 95% confidence level with a margin of error no greater than plus or minus 5.6%. In other words, one can be 95% confident that these results would vary no more than 5.6% from the results if everyone in the City had been surveyed.

Sub-sample Results

For the Albany survey, a strong response (47.7%) was seen from seniors and adults ages 55 and over. All survey data were analyzed by the age group of the respondent to see if significant variations occurred in recreation participation and leisure behavior for this age group. Sub-sample results are noted in key findings where a different pattern of use is clearly indicated for respondents ages 55 and over. However, these results do not meet the same standards for reliability as the recreation survey as a whole.

Key Findings

Key findings from the survey included:

- Over 73% of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are **important** or **very important**.
- The top benefits offered by parks and recreation are: **provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors** (26.9%), **connect people together** (14.8%), and **promote youth development** (14.4%). Respondents ages 55+ indicated that **helping seniors remain active** is also a significant benefit.
- Approximately one-third of all respondents (33.7%) had **participated in a City-sponsored program last year**. This participation level is higher than in many Northwest communities that MIG has surveyed, where the average participation ranges from 23-25%.
- For those people who have not participated in a City-sponsored program, the top reasons were: **not aware of programs offered** (23.0%), **don't have activities I'm interested in** (20.4%), and **activities held at inconvenient times** (17.5%).
- Nearly half of respondents who did not participate (49.2%) were **likely to take advantage of services** if improvements were made. In comparison, only 37% of adults ages 55+ indicated that program improvements would affect their level of participation in City-sponsored programs.

- Respondents indicated that the City should offer additional recreation activities in the following areas: **after-school activities for youth** (16.8%), **education and special interest classes** (14.8%), and **aquatic programs** (14.2%). **Park programs** and **senior activities** were noted frequently in write-in responses.
- The top three groups in need of better recreation services include **high school youth, families, and elementary school youth**. According to respondents ages 55+, **seniors** also need better services.
- Nearly 44% of respondents receive program information via the **City's Activity Guide**. In other communities MIG has surveyed, approximately 30% of the respondents consulted their city's recreation guide. Local newspaper advertisements and special flyers are also effective for advertising programs and events in Albany.
- **Small parks in my neighborhood** are the most frequently used parks in the City of Albany. Overall, 20.9% of the total respondents indicated that they visit a neighborhood park once a week or more.
- **Monteith Riverpark** is the most frequently visited park of the individual parks listed in Question 10 in the survey. Nearly 50% of respondents indicated that they visit Monteith at least once a month or more.
- **Monteith Riverpark** is clearly the most popular park visited by residents with out-of-town visitors, followed distantly by Timber Linn Park and Bryant Park.
- The four primary reasons that people use parks in Albany include: **attend special events/concerts** (21.2%), **enjoy the outdoors or nature** (20.3%), **picnic/general leisure** (17.7%), and **walk or bike for exercise** (17.3%).
- Besides the fact that many residents are just too busy, some do not use Albany parks due to safety concerns or a lack of desired facilities and activities.
- Overall, the top facilities used in the last 12 months by respondents are **the Dave Clark Riverfront Path, the Albany Senior Center, and other trails**. Two of the top three are trail-related. School facilities, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Albany Community Pool also have significant use.



- **Pools** (16.6%), **trails** (14.3%), and **indoor recreation space** (13.9%) are the three most needed facilities in Albany, according to survey respondents. A significant number of respondents also indicated a need for **river access** (11.5%) and **gymnasiums** (11.3%).
- According to 42% of survey respondents, the most needed type of pathway is **off-street, paved paths for walking and bicycling**.
- The majority of respondents (43.6%) indicated that **current leash laws** for dogs should be enforced. There was also strong support for creating **off-leash dog parks** in several parks (35.3%).
- All categories of **park maintenance** and **facility condition** received moderate to high ratings.
- The priority for improving park and recreation services is **renovating existing parks**, selected by 23.6% of respondents. Over 11% of respondents chose the following four improvements: **improve maintenance, develop trails, add special facilities, and provide river parks/access**.
- In general, respondents indicated that the City should **subsidize recreation programs** to some degree. Most respondents did not want the City to subsidize programs for non-residents. Programs for youth, seniors, and low-income residents should be most highly subsidized.
- **Mobile food vendors** would be the most popular type of vendor in parks, according to 34.1% of survey respondents. Residents also indicated support for **equipment rentals** (20.7%) and **coffee shops** (17.1%).
- According to survey respondents, popular activities at Timber Linn Park include: **attend festivals and special events** (21.9%); **attend concerts and performances** (18.5%); and **walk, bike, or jog on trails** (13.8%). **Picnicking** for both large and small groups is a popular activity for 23.2% of respondents.
- Many improvements are desired at Timber Linn Park. The highest percentage of survey respondents indicated that **trail development** (16.7%) and **amphitheater improvements** (12.6%) were most needed.
- Nearly one-fourth (24.3%) of survey respondents indicated that they would be **willing to volunteer** to assist park and recreation services. Volunteerism is increasing in popularity as a leisure activity. Many respondents (over 40% of total respondents and 60% of those ages 55+) were willing to assist with citywide special events.

Current Recreation Participation

The survey also solicited information about how frequently residents participated in specific recreation activities within Albany. Table 3.1 shows the participation rates for both indoor and outdoor recreation activities, as reported by the survey respondents. Participation rates are measured by the number of *per capita occasions for a 30-day period*, which refers to the average number of times each person participated in the activity during 30 days when the activity was in season. The activities in the table are ranked according to their popularity, with the activities with the highest participation rates noted first. For example, the table reveals that walking is the most popular recreation activity in Albany, with people participating on average more than 8 times in a 30-day period.



Many factors influence the level of recreation participation reported by survey respondents. These factors may include:

- Demographics;
- Condition, location, or lack of facilities;
- Climate;
- Current recreation trends;
- Cost of using facilities and programs;
- Present economic conditions;
- Transportation options;
- Recreation programs and services offered;
- Days and times programs and services are offered; and
- Facilities and programs offered by other providers.

Each of these factors influences the demand for various recreation opportunities in Albany. In order to measure recreation demand within individual communities, MIG began accumulating recreation participation data from many communities throughout the Northwest. This information was used to create the MIG AVERAGE, a measure of the average participation rate for specific activities based on the last 15 communities surveyed by MIG, Inc. By comparing Albany to the MIG Average, the data reveal which recreation activities have unusually high or low participation levels.

In Table 3.1, numbers in bold show where Albany's current participation levels are higher than the MIG AVERAGE. These activities have a high recreation demand as compared to other communities.

Table 3.1
Recreation Participation
Albany Planning Area

Rank	Activity	Per Capita Occasions per 30 Days (n=369)		
		City of Albany (2005) ¹	City of Albany (1995)	MIG AVERAGE
1	Walking	8.78	6.51	4.82
2	Computers	8.16		5.77
3	TV/Video Games	5.66		4.08
4	Gardening	5.49	5.19	3.29
5	Exercise/Aerobics	4.06	4.13	3.39
6	Bicycling for Pleasure	3.83	4.09	2.49
7	Picnicking	2.96	3.01	1.84
8	Concerts (attend)	2.82	2.76	1.83
9	Playground (visit/play)	2.79	3.29	2.40
10	Wildlife Watching	2.70	2.92	2.11
11	Fairs and Festivals	2.64	3.19	2.05
12	Camping (general)	2.43	3.24	2.07
13	Swimming (indoor)	2.36	2.89	1.88
14	Tours and Travel	2.34		1.17
15	Photography	2.31	1.98	1.78
16	Fishing (freshwater)	2.12	2.28	1.53
17	Gourmet Cooking	2.10	1.77	1.59
18	Hiking/Backpacking	2.01	1.97	1.99
19	Swimming (outdoor)	1.94	2.95	2.43
20 (tie)	Arts and Crafts	1.91		1.66
20 (tie)	Wood Working	1.91		0.90
22	Boating	1.80		
23	Cultural Events (attend)	1.75		1.46
24	Table Games (playing)	1.67		1.28
25	Golf (play)	1.61	1.59	1.41
26	Basketball	1.57	2.32	1.92
27	Jogging/Running	1.54	2.05	2.25
28	Musical Instruments (playing)	1.40		1.61
29	Softball	1.20	1.66	1.34
30	Creative Writing	1.16		1.85

Table 3.1 (continued)

Rank	Activity ¹	Per Capita Occasions per 30 Days (n=369)		
		City of Albany (2005)	City of Albany (1995)	MIG AVERAGE
31	Water Skiing	1.07		
32	Football	1.04	1.61	1.58
33 (tie)	Baseball	0.98		
33 (tie)	Tennis	0.98	0.95	1.11
35	Soccer	0.91	1.23	1.56
36	Canoeing/Kayaking	0.69	0.64	0.95
37	Dancing (ballet, tap, etc.)	0.63		0.81
38	Model Airplanes/Cars	0.58		
39	Horseback Riding	0.51		0.63
40	Skiing	0.50		
41	Bicycling (BMX)	0.46		.96
42	Orienteering/Geocaching	0.42		
43	Disc Golf	0.41		
44	Judo/Karate	0.40		0.81
45	Skateboarding	0.36	0.66	0.96
46	Rock Climbing	0.35		0.86
47 (tie)	Drama (participate)	0.34	0.64	0.77
47 (tie)	Rugby	0.34		
49	Gymnastics	0.15		0.71
50	Other (please list)	2.52		

¹ Some activities do not have direct comparisons to the 1995 survey or the MIG Average.

Significant findings include:

- The **top ten recreation activities** for all respondents are noted below. Activities are noted with their per capita participation level:
 - Walking 8.78
 - Computers 8.16
 - TV/Video Games 5.66
 - Gardening 5.49
 - Exercise/Aerobics 4.06
 - Bicycling for Pleasure 3.83
 - Picnicking 2.96
 - Concerts (attend) 2.82
 - Playground (visit/play) 2.79
 - Wildlife Watching 2.70

- Albany has a **high level of recreation participation**. Nineteen of the top 20 activities have higher rates of participation than comparable communities throughout the Northwest (MIG AVERAGE).
- Three of the ten most popular activities in Albany are typically trail-related: **walking, bicycling for pleasure, and wildlife watching**.
- **Basketball** is the first traditional organized sport to appear on the list (# 26). Generally, the first organized sports appear in the 15-20 range. Participation in all **traditional organized sports** (basketball, softball, football, baseball, soccer) in Albany **is lower** than the MIG Average.
- The **top ten activities for respondents ages 55+** include the following in ranked order:
 - Walking 9.15
 - Computers 6.09
 - Gardening 5.72
 - Exercise/Aerobics 3.83
 - TV/Video Games 3.10
 - Bicycling for Pleasure 2.51
 - Picnicking 2.50
 - Concerts (attend) 2.45
 - Wildlife Watching 2.35
 - Tours and Travel 2.24

At number 10, tours and travel is the only activity that does not appear in the top 10 list for the general Albany population.

Preferred Recreation Activities



The MIG survey also gauges community preferences for activities, so that this information can be compared with current choices for recreation participation. Respondents were asked to rank their top ten preferred activities—those activities they would most like to do if programs and facilities were available.

The activity rankings were scored with a weighted value by giving a first choice a value of ten, a second choice a value of nine, etc. In this manner, the total weighted score was calculated for each activity. Table 3.2 shows the 20 highest-ranking activities. The weighted score is shown only for ranking purposes.

In Table 3.2, the second column ranks the activities that the respondent would most like to do if facilities were available. The last column lists the current participation ranking from Table 3.1. The difference in ranking between what residents are currently doing (column 4) and what they would like to be doing (column 1) is called the latent demand. The more the two numbers vary from each other, the greater the latent demand. Activities with a high latent demand

(6 or greater) are highlighted in gray. A high latent demand indicates areas where programming and facility improvements would be most likely to increase community participation.

Table 3.2
Preferred Activities and Latent Demand
Albany Planning Area

Preferred Ranking	Activity	Weighted Score	Participation Ranking
1	Walking	1160	1
2	Concerts (attend)	1036	8
3	Fairs and Festivals	888	11
4	Bicycling for Pleasure	669	6
5	Gardening	607	4
6	Arts and Crafts	603	20
7	Camping (general)	570	12
8	Swimming (indoor)	560	13
9	Fishing (freshwater)	536	16
10	Picnicking	515	7
11	Cultural Events (attend)	489	23
12	Tours and Travel	461	14
13	Boating	439	22
14	Hiking/backpacking	426	18
15	Photography	419	15
16	Swimming (outdoor)	403	19
17	Exercise/Aerobics	393	5
17 (tie)	Wildlife Watching	393	10
19	Computers	378	2
20	Golf (play)	329	25

Significant findings include:

- Although Albany residents are generally very active, there is **high latent demand** for many of the most-preferred activities. Activities with the highest latent demand include:
 - Concerts (attend)
 - Fairs and Festivals
 - Arts and Crafts
 - Fishing (freshwater)
 - Cultural events (attend)
 - Boating

- Activities with a significant, but lower latent demand (2-5) include:
 - Bicycling for Pleasure
 - Camping (general)
 - Swimming (indoor)
 - Tours and Travel
 - Hiking/backpacking
 - Swimming (outdoor)
 - Golf (play)

For these activities, programming and facility improvements may also increase community participation.

- Three of the activities with high latent demand are related to large-scale special events: **concerts, fairs and festivals, and cultural events.**

3.2 COMMUNITY FAIR



The Park and Recreation Community Fair, held on Saturday, April 2nd, was a public involvement event to involve Albany residents in updating the Park and Recreation Master Plan. The event was held 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, it attracted people who otherwise may not have participated in the planning process. Over 300 participants took part in the park and recreation survey.

Key Findings

Key findings from the Community Fair included:

- Nearly 92% of respondents indicated that parks and recreation services are **important** or **very important**.
- The top benefits offered by parks and recreation are: **provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors** (29%), **promote youth development** (20%), and **improve health and wellness** (16%).
- The four top activities in terms of enjoyment are **walking, jogging, biking** (18%), **swimming** (12%), **playing organized sports** (11%), and **picnicking, playing on playgrounds, and general park activities** (10%).
- Albany should improve its park and recreation services by **renovating existing parks** (24%), **acquiring and developing new parks** (17%), and **adding special facilities, such as pools, skate parks, etc.** (12%).

- The following top three groups need more or better recreation services: **middle school youth** (20%), **elementary school youth** (18%), and **preschoolers** (16%).
- The three most needed specialized facilities in Albany include **trails and pathways** (21%), **sports fields** (16%), and **children's play areas** (15%).

3.3 RECREATION PROVIDERS FOCUS GROUP

The Recreation Providers Focus Group met on June 22, 2005, to discuss park and recreation needs in Albany. Seven providers and five City staff participated in a discussion regarding the primary service needs and gaps in the community, along with the types of facilities, programs or services that could address those needs/gaps. Further discussion included the potential for developing partnerships between service providers and the City to meet community recreation needs.



Key Findings

Key findings from the meeting included:

- In Albany, recreation programs are provided for all ages, interests, and income levels.
- Gaps in programming affect the following groups and/or service areas in Albany:
 - Teens (ages 12-16)
 - Latinos
 - People with disabilities
 - Families
 - Youth and seniors (integrated programming)
 - Intellectual development
 - Practical education for youth (e.g. budgeting, commerce skills)
 - Mentoring for at-risk youth
 - Summertime school-based programming
 - Inclusionary assistance
- The following indoor facility needs were noted:
 - Conference/meeting rooms
 - Classroom space
 - Dance floors (square dancing, tap)
 - Space for non-athletes (art classroom, stage, chorus space)
 - Boys and Girls Club and YMCA activity space
 - Space for children's programming
 - Aquatic facilities (year-round, covered)
 - Large group facilities (for 70+ people)
 - Multi-purpose facilities
 - Performing arts center (for children and adults)

- Community needs were identified for the following outdoor facilities:
 - Open space for children’s programs
 - Outdoor education space (day camp in nature)
 - Family recreation facilities (e.g., mini-golf, climbing/challenge course, go carts, fun center)
 - Natural environment areas for activities
 - Off-road vehicle area
 - Trails and pathways
 - Skate park
 - Water-trails

- Community needs were identified for the following athletic facilities:
 - Athletic fields (especially soccer)
 - Lighted fields
 - Multi-field complex for tournament play
 - Renovated fields or field improvements
 - Little League fields
 - Practice space (separate from competition)
 - Ice rink (skating, hockey)
 - Skating rink (roller)
 - Indoor arena (e.g. soccer, skate park, roller hockey)
 - Gymnasiums

- Other significant issues for park and recreation services in Albany include the availability of open space, a need for the “right kind of space” for programming, program affordability, and access to facilities, natural areas, waterways, and transportation.

- Community needs were identified in the following program areas:
 - Family activities
 - Orienteering
 - Rock climbing
 - Ropes course
 - Adventure sports
 - Healthy and positive programs after dark
 - Home-school programs
 - Technology/computer programs

The meeting concluded with a discussion on developing a community-wide plan for recreation service delivery. In general, service providers would look to the City to facilitate a system of open communication, collaboration, and innovative thinking, where services could be coordinated to meet community needs.

- Components of this new service model would include:
 - Community visioning
 - Coordinated planning
 - Collaborative grants and funding
 - Shared facilities
 - Joint marketing of activities
 - Business partnerships involving stakeholders
 - Partnerships to support tourism
 - Increased partnerships with other City agencies
 - Continuance of the Healthy Albany Partnership
 - The creation of a regional purchasing consortium
 - A partnership with health care providers
 - Coordination with other cities to develop complimentary facilities (e.g., different types of skate parks)
 - Input from other providers before constructing new facilities
 - A spirit of collaboration

3.4 TIMBER LINN FOCUS GROUP

Twenty-two members of the Timber Linn Focus Group met on June 11, 2005, to discuss the opportunities and constraints of the park site and how the City could work with sports providers to meet community recreation needs. The meeting included an overview of the Timber Linn Master Plan process and a discussion of the existing conditions of the park, based on a site analysis conducted in June 2005.

Key Findings

In a large group discussion, participants identified the recreation opportunities and constraints of Timber Linn Park, along with areas where a balance is needed between existing opportunities and constraints. These findings are presented in Table 3.3.

Participants were then divided into two discussion groups: 1) people interested specifically in team sport facilities; and 2) participants interested in other recreation facilities. Both groups discussed needs for specific amenities and facilities at Timber Linn Park. Key findings from these discussions are presented in bullets on the following pages.



Table 3.3
 Opportunities and Constraints
 Timber Linn Park

Constraints	Balance	Opportunities
Wetland habitat [limits available land for fields]	What do we want/need? [How do we balance priorities?]	Aesthetics [park is attractive]
Poor location of amphitheater/buildings	Parking [opportunity and constraint]	Equestrian trail [opportunity created by proximity to stables]
Property rights of adjacent landowners	Habitat [opportunity and constraint]	Hiking [in habitat areas]
Safety [various issues]	Competing needs for ball fields/sports	Mitigation [frees land for active recreation]
Wildlife protection [limits land for other uses]	Community benefit vs. revenue generation	Potential YMCA partnership [chance to rethink uses]
Population growth [increases need]	Competing site uses	Bridges [would expand park]
Maintenance costs [are on-going after capital improvements]	All sports vs. other facility needs (trade-offs)	Revenue potential [of park can create funds for expanded offerings]
Location [Is this the best location to meet future demands?]		Tourism revenue [like the expo center]

Sport Facility Group Comments

The sport facility group discussed needs for following facilities:

- Soccer fields
 - There are 8 existing soccer fields with four different configurations based on use, e.g., 3 v 3 play
 - Games run from 8 AM to 3 PM on Saturday
 - More teams could be fielded if the site had more fields and volunteers (participation would double)
 - Port-a-potties are needed in addition to the existing restroom
 - Concessions not located a convenient distance from the fields
 - A storage equipment building is needed
 - Paths are needed to connect fields to other facilities
 - Irrigation is needed, although irrigation can be a hazard to players (ill constructed heads may create tripping hazards)
- Disc golf
 - The existing course is a good one for beginners and families
 - A local club hosts disc golf tournaments. A junior tournament brought in about 50 players (many more than expected)
 - Bryant Park should be considered as a possible site for disc golf for part of the year (when not flooded)
 - Bridges over the water channels would provide access to other parts of the site

- Other facilities
 - The park should serve Albany residents first
 - There is a large youth football population (300) in Albany
 - Football play damages the grass fields, especially when fields are wet
 - The available space for fields is insufficient to satisfy all needs for all sports, even if the fields are multi-purpose

Recreation Facility Group Comments

Participants interested in other recreation facilities identified the following recreation needs and issues at Timber Linn Park:

- Pathways and trails
 - Provide a multi-purpose (including equestrian) perimeter path that links park facilities
 - Provide a raised walkway through wetlands
- Park design considerations
 - Separate between incompatible park uses
 - Provide activity space for the whole family
 - Provide a band shell in new location to replace amphitheater
 - Design features to control access during events. [Temporary fences are less expensive permanent structures to limit entry]
 - Improve lighting
 - Make new features vandalism-resistant
- Facility needs
 - Provide a shelter near play area for adults
 - Improve outdoor festival space
 - Allow room for a farmer's market
 - Improve parking (paved and lined)
 - Provide neighborhood park facilities, e.g., playgrounds
 - Encourage more foot traffic to improve safety
 - Make park into an Albany icon – visible from the freeway
- Other issues
 - Remove out-of-date facilities, such as horseshoes
 - Recognize that space is sufficient for one sport, not two (soccer vs. softball)
 - Maintain site as a festival venue (the only one in the city)
 - Connect the park to the surrounding community
 - Improve the amphitheater
 - Consider various uses for the center of park
 - Consider more partnerships to generate revenue



3.5 TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) met on March 29, 2005, to discuss their vision for the park and recreation system in Albany. The vision grew from a discussion of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and challenges for the park system. Eleven committee members and five City staff attended the meeting.

Key Findings

Key findings included:

- Facility needs
 - Sport fields
 - Gymnasiums
 - Indoor program space
- Vision for the park system
 - Affordability
 - Sustainability
 - Safety
 - Health (drug/alcohol/smoke free facilities)
 - Convenience
 - Food/concessions
 - Restrooms
 - Support amenities and facilities
 - Quality-of-life improvements
 - Maintenance improvements (increased funding)
 - Support for tourism and downtown business
 - Multigenerational facilities and programming
 - Indoor/outdoor options at each park (covered areas)
 - Diverse activities for all ages
 - Inclusiveness/accessibility for all
- Needed improvements at Timber Linn Park
 - Park design that reflects citywide recreation needs
 - Coordination of uses
 - Appropriate levels of use
 - Optimized use of space
 - Natural area preservation
 - Hiking/jogging trails
 - RV pads
 - Parking improvements (more, delineated)
 - Transportation options
 - Signage for all events (changeable)
 - Sport field renovations
 - Lighting (appropriately placed) beyond sport fields
 - Consideration of local resident needs
 - Use of fields/facilities to generate funds

- Prominent water elements
- Community policing
- Amphitheater improvements
 - Shading/sun in eyes now
 - Broader purpose
 - Better control of access
 - Cover

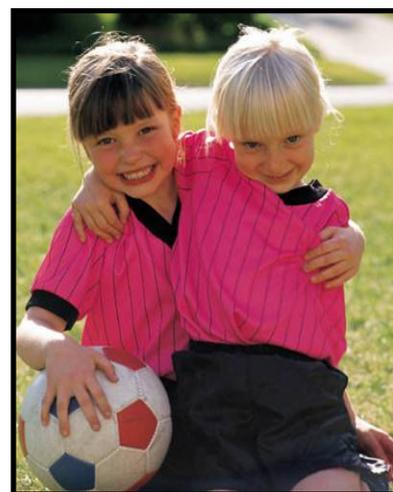
3.6 ORGANIZED SPORT PROVIDERS QUESTIONNAIRE

Responding to questionnaires in Spring 2005, several sports organizations provided data on sports teams in Albany and their facility needs. The following sports were represented: baseball, softball, soccer, football, basketball, biddyball, volleyball, cheerleading, and competitive swimming.

Key Findings

Key findings included:

- In total, there are approximately 68 teams that participate in regulation **baseball, youth baseball, and youth softball** in the area. These teams utilize 12 fields that vary in condition. While the field at Linn Benton Community College is in good condition, the YMCA field needs significant upgrades. Little League fields are also in poor condition, requiring additional maintenance (cutting grass and leveling fields) before games can be played.
- During peak season (spring and summer), there are approximately 120 teams that participate in **adult softball** in the area. These teams utilize six fields, including three fields at Timber Linn Park. The fields at Bryant and Timber Linn Parks are considered “barely adequate” for play.
- There are approximately 101 **soccer teams** during a peak season organized by three soccer clubs in Albany. These teams use the 16 fields that currently are available for scheduling, including eight soccer fields at Timber Linn Park and six fields at North Albany Middle School. Respondents indicated that many of these fields have drainage problems in the spring and need irrigation in the fall. Many fields need leveling.
- There are approximately 45 **football teams** playing in Albany each season. These teams use five football fields, one soccer field, and open space at various parks, including Timber Linn Park, for practice. Pop Warner and the Boys & Girls Club both indicated that more fields are needed for both games and practices, and teams struggle to obtain field space. Comments also indicate that many football fields are poorly maintained. Problems include inadequate mowing, no irrigation, and poor turf.



- During peak seasons, there are approximately 301 teams using indoor court space in Albany. These teams use 19 **gymnasiums**, often dividing them so that several teams can practice at the same time. Lack of available gym space throughout Albany has severely limited programming for City leagues and allows no room for expansion. The Boys & Girls Club notes that there are “barely enough gyms” for games and practices.

3.7 NEEDS ASSESSMENT TERMINOLOGY

A technical analysis of community needs for recreation facilities included key findings from the public involvement activities. The remaining portion of this chapter summarizes the results of the technical analysis. The following terms are used:



- **Existing level of service (LOS)** is a measure of the existing amount of parkland or facilities currently serving City residents. LOS is expressed as a ratio of acres or facilities per population.
- **Parkland standards:** Service standards can be adopted by the City to provide direction for the development of parkland. These standards are based on the amount of parkland that is needed to serve Albany residents in the year 2015. Proposed standards are expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents.
- **Facility guidelines:** Service guidelines can be used by the City as an indicator of the number of facilities needed to serve residents citywide. These guidelines are expressed in terms of one facility per number of people and net numbers of facilities needed. Formal standards for recreation facilities are not proposed in this plan.
- **Existing population** is the estimated population for the City of Albany as of June 2005, according to the Community Services Department.
- **Future population** reflects the city’s population for a 10-year planning horizon. Table 3.4 summarizes the population data used in the analysis:

Table 3.4
Population Data Used in the Analysis
City of Albany

Population	Year	# of People
Existing	2005	47,145
Future (10-year plan)	2015	53,493

Source: Albany Community Development Department

3.8 SUMMARY OF PARKLAND NEEDS

Developing a statement of need for park and open space areas depends on localized values, availability of land, financial resources, and desired service levels. Each of these factors was taken into account to assess parkland needs for Albany.

Methodology

To define specific park acreage needs for the Albany Planning Area, the following aspects were factored into the analysis:

- Recreation demand (measured through public involvement activities);
- National and regional trends and standards;
- Land availability; and
- Geographical deficiencies for parks and open space areas.

In synthesizing this information, parkland standards were developed for three park classifications. These standards are based on a ratio of park acreage to population, expressed in terms of number of acres per 1,000 people. The standard indicates how many acres of parkland are needed to serve all residents in Albany.

The analysis looks at the existing ratio of parkland in comparison to the City's existing population. A proposed standard is calculated based on the anticipated needs of the estimated population at the 10-year planning horizon. This standard can be used to assess current and future community needs for specific types of parkland.

Table 3.5 summarizes existing and future parkland needs for the Albany Planning Area. These needs are based on a proposed standard listed in column nine of the table.

New standards are proposed for parks that meet basic recreation needs in the community, including neighborhood parks, community parks, and citywide parks. No formal standards are proposed for park types where acquisition is more opportunity based, including trail corridors/greenways, natural areas, riverfront parks, and urban spaces.

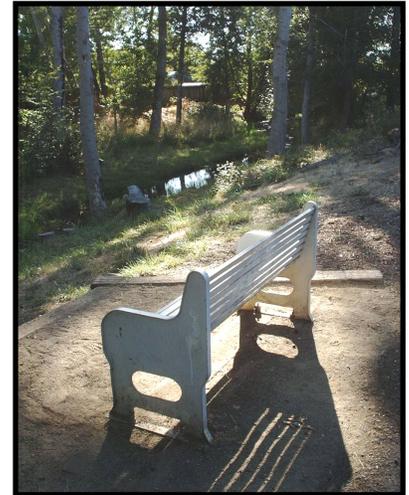


Table 3.5
Parkland Standards and Anticipated Needs
Albany Planning Area

Park Type	COMPARISON TOOLS				ALBANY DATA				NET NEED	
	Average Standards for Comparable Cities and Districts ^a	Oregon Average Standards ^b	Historic NRPA Standards ^c	2000 Plan Standards	# of Existing Parks	Existing Park Acreage	Existing LOS (Acres per 1,000 population)	Proposed Standard (Acres per 1,000 population)	Current Acres Needed	Future Acres Needed
Park Type									47,145	53,493
Neighborhood Parks	1.9	1.1	2.0	2.93	20	109.95	2.3	2.3	-1.52	13.08
Community Parks	2.0	1.7	5.0	2.07	1	71.74	1.5	2.0	22.55	35.25
Citywide Parks	4.0	n/a	n/a	2.17 ^d	2	106.41	2.3	2.0	-12.12	0.58
SUBTOTAL	7.9	2.8	7.0	7.17	23	288.10	6.1	6.3	8.91	48.91
Trail Corridors/ Greenways	n/a	0.1	n/a	n/a	2	14.09	0.3	none		
Natural Areas	n/a	14.9	n/a	14.12	2	181.29	3.8	none		
Riverfront Parks	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	97.92	2.1	none		
Urban Open Space	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	3	21.85	0.5	none		
PARKLAND TOTAL	7.9	17.9	7	21.29	32	603.25	12.8	6.3	8.91	48.91

^a Comparable cities and districts include the City of Corvallis, City of Medford, and Willamalane Park and Recreation District. Figures were not available for all categories.

^b Data include 45 Oregon cities surveyed between 1992 and present. Figures are expressed in acres/1,000 population. Figures were not available from all agencies in all categories.

^c From NRPA Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines (1983).

^d The 2000 Plan proposed standards for large urban parks and regional parks, which were averaged to get a standard comparable to the new classification of citywide parks.

Note: In the case of all parks, and especially neighborhood parks, it is important to consider distribution of parkland as well as numerical standards.

Parkland Results

Specific acreage needs have been identified for several types of parkland in Albany. The greatest need is for neighborhood parks. By the year 2015, the City will need five additional neighborhood parks (approximately 13 acres) to provide accessible and close-to-home recreation opportunities in currently unserved neighborhoods. These neighborhood areas are identified in Figure 3.1. In time, another ten acres will be needed in Area #15 to meet the needs of the growing population in that neighborhood.

Moreover, the City of Albany needs one community park to help satisfy community-wide needs for a variety of recreation facilities, including sports fields, picnic shelters/pavilions, a skate park, a dog park, and open space for family and children's activities. Currently, Timber Linn Park meets Albany's needs for a citywide park, and the park's renovation will help meet specific facility needs for the entire community.

Albany is experiencing a significant demand for trail corridors and greenways, which reflects similar trends regionally and nation-wide. Although no standard is proposed for trail corridors, the City should identify appropriate corridors to support the facility guideline proposed for trails and pathways.

Similarly, no standard is proposed for natural areas. However, it is recommended that the City undertake a natural resource study to identify and inventory significant natural areas in Albany. This inventory may point out critical areas that should be acquired for resource conservation or preservation. Natural areas may also provide passive outdoor recreation opportunities, such as wildlife watching, which are not met by other park types.

No standard is proposed for riverfront parks. Acquisition of future parks along the Willamette and Calapooia Rivers will be determined by future opportunities to acquire parkland and connect existing parks along the rivers. Moreover, no standard is proposed for urban spaces. However, the City should consider additional open space in plans for neighborhood development and downtown redevelopment.



3.9 SUMMARY OF RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

Like the discussion of parkland needs, community needs for recreation facilities are described in terms of a ratio of the number of existing facilities to the City's current population. This ratio is expressed as one facility per number of people served. A guideline is proposed based on the desired level of service and the anticipated number of facilities needed in the next ten years. By applying this guideline to the current and future population forecast, facility needs are assessed.

Methodology

Recreation facility needs were determined through several approaches. The methodology included an analysis of present levels of recreation participation, public demand for specific recreation facilities as measured through the public involvement process, and play and practice time requirements for sports leagues as indicated in the sport group questionnaire.

To determine the need for sport fields, a demand model was used to compare the supply of fields/courts against the demand created by the number of teams using them. Within this model, many variables affected the eventual statement of need. These included:

- **Demand variables**, such as the number of games and practices permitted per team per week; and
- **Supply variables**, including the number of fields, number of games/practices permitted per field per week, and the existence of lighted or unlighted fields. Factors such as weather, playing season, scheduling constraints, and field condition affect the supply of fields.

The result is a guideline for the *minimum* number of sport facilities needed based on current levels of play as the City continues to grow. Table 3.6 summarizes current and future recreation facility needs for the Albany Planning Area.

It is important to note that facility needs for sports have been determined based on current participation patterns. However, current sports participation in Albany is lower than in comparable communities, even though recreation participation in general is higher. This discrepancy may be caused by a shortage of playable fields. If existing field conditions are improved and a greater number of school fields can be scheduled for play, sport participation may increase locally. In that case, the guidelines proposed in this plan will need to be adjusted to reflect the future trends.

Insert Figure 3.1: Neighborhood Park Service Area Map

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Table 3.6
Facility Guidelines and Anticipated Needs
Albany Planning Area

	COMPARISON TOOLS		ALBANY DATA			NET NEED	
	Average Standards for Comparable Cities and Districts ^a	2000 Plan Standard	Existing Facilities (# or miles)	Existing LOS (# or miles per population)	Proposed Guideline ^a (# or miles per population)	Current Need (2005)	Future Need (2015)
						47,145	53,493
SPORT FACILITIES							
Baseball Fields	2,500	1,850	23	2,050	2,050	0	3
Softball Fields	6,000	3,000	9	5,240	5,240	0	1
Soccer Fields	1,685	1,295	24	1,965	2,000	0	3
Football Fields	7,400	n/a	6	7,860	5,900	2	3
Gymnasiums	2,800	n/a	19	2,480	2,245	2	5
OUTDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES							
Basketball Courts	3,000	n/a	14	3,370	2,700	3	6
Pathways/Trails	0.40	0.30	9.05	0.19	0.35	7.45	9.67
Picnic Shelters/Pavilions	n/a	n/a	8	5,890	4,100	3	5
Play Areas	n/a	n/a	21	2,245	1,800	5	9
Skate Parks	15,000	n/a	1	47,145	20,000	1	2
Tennis Courts	5,000	n/a	4 ^b	11,785	11,800	0	1
OTHER FACILITIES							
Swimming Pools	n/a	n/a	3	23,572	20,000	0	1
Indoor Recreation Centers	30,000	n/a	0 ^c	n/a	30,000	1	2

^a Nearly all facility standards and guidelines are expressed as one facility per number population. However, pathways and trails are expressed in terms of miles of trails per 1000 population. Average standards are averages from the City of Corvallis (adopted standards), the City of Medford (proposed standards), and Willamalane Park and Recreation District (adopted standards). Not all agencies had standards for each facility type.

^b While there are 25 tennis courts in Albany with some public access, only facilities in City parks were included in the analysis of these outdoor recreation facilities.

^c While there are five specialty indoor recreation centers in Albany, none are large, multi-purpose facilities that serve all age groups and meet the definition in this plan.



Facility Needs

As indicated in Table 3.6, 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 center. In the year 2015, the need for these types of recreational facilities will have grown substantially. The City should maximize all opportunities to meet facility needs by: 1) renovating and upgrading existing facilities to create opportunities for increased use; 2) establishing and strengthening partnerships and joint-use agreements with Greater Albany Public Schools, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and others to put more fields into play; and 3) developing new facilities in planned and existing parks as a high priority to meet the *minimum* number of facilities needed.

In Albany, the need for trails and pathways is noteworthy. The community's demand for trails was noted in nearly all public involvement venues. National, state, and local indicators each suggest that trail use is increasing, and the current level of service is insufficient to meet the predicted demand. By applying the guideline for trails and pathways that is proposed in this plan, the analysis indicates that the City needs approximately 7.5 miles of trails currently and over 9.5 miles by the year 2015.