

## 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.

This chapter presents general design policies that will guide park planning, along with design and development guidelines specific to the following park types in Albany:

- Neighborhood parks;
- Community parks;
- Citywide parks;
- Trail corridors/greenways;
- Natural areas;
- Riverfront parks; and
- Urban open space.

These guidelines include information about the recommended size and layout of the site, preferred amenities and facilities, and other planning and development issues for each park type.

### 4.1 GENERAL PLANNING AND DESIGN POLICIES

The following policies are intended to provide guidance on the planning and design of all parks and recreation facilities in Albany:

- Incorporate public input into park master planning and design to ensure that community needs and issues are addressed. Public outreach should include nearby neighbors, likely park users, community members, and partner agencies in the park design process.
- Involve maintenance and recreation program staff in the design process so that maintenance and programming requirements are considered during site selection, design, and development.



- Consider the layout of the surrounding neighborhood when placing park amenities. Situate lighting and noise-producing amenities away from neighboring homes to minimize conflicts.
- Locate amenities, such as playground equipment, picnic shelters, and basketball courts, to provide visibility from adjoining streets, which will promote safety, minimize vandalism, and encourage use.
- Connect parks to surrounding neighborhoods by sidewalks, bicycle lanes, or off-street trails to provide multiple ways of accessing parks.
- Incorporate ADA guidelines for accessible design (*Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*) into all new parks to facilitate site access, circulation, and facility use for people of all ages and abilities.
- Incorporate new technologies, sustainable design, and conservation-smart elements into all park and recreation facility designs to facilitate operational efficiency. This commitment may be demonstrated through the use of green building technologies, alternative power, low water-use fixtures, automated sport field lighting, and storm water treatment techniques.
- Incorporate public art and interpretive elements into parks to contribute to park identity and character. Interpretative elements can be incorporated into parks of all types to raise community awareness about the local environment and history. Art elements are well-suited for community parks, citywide parks, urban open space, or other community-serving areas.
- Evaluate potential partnerships and opportunities to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, open space, and facilities by how well the project supports the goals and guidelines identified in this Plan. Properties or projects that offer a unique function or feature should be considered for acquisition and development according to the needs of the community.
- Conduct a cost impact analysis prior to design and development of all new major recreation facilities.

## 4.2 PARK DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Park design and development guidelines are provided for each park classification. These guidelines include:

- **Description:** A definition is presented to describe each park type. This section also describes the typical length of use and means of travel to each type of park.
- **Site Selection and Development Guidelines:** These criteria include recommendations for site size, site access, street frontage, parking, etc.
- **Features and Amenities to Consider:** These elements should be considered during the master planning and design process for inclusion in all new parks of this classification.
- **Features and Amenities to Avoid:** These elements are not compatible with the park classification and should not be included in the design and development of these types of parks.

### Neighborhood Parks

#### *Description*

- Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home recreation opportunities primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. Facilities found in neighborhood parks may include children's playgrounds, picnic areas, trails, tennis or basketball courts, and sports practice fields. Neighborhood parks are often located next to elementary schools.
- The typical neighborhood park user:
  - Comes from within one-half mile of the park;
  - Arrives on foot or by bicycle; and
  - Visits the park on a short time basis.



#### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- The optimum size is 3 to 7 acres, but these parks may be larger if significant natural resource land is incorporated.
- At least 50% of site should be relatively level and usable, providing space for both active and passive uses.
- The site should have at least 200 feet of street frontage.
- Access to the site should be provided via a local street with sidewalks. Neighborhood parks fronting on arterial streets should be discouraged.

- On-street parking should be provided. Larger sites may include off-street parking, with the amount depending on the facilities provided at the site.
- Active and noise producing facilities, such as basketball courts, should be located at least 100 feet from nearby homes or property zoned for residential use.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Children's playground
- Open turf area for unstructured play
- Basketball (full or half) court
- Volleyball court
- Multi-use fields for practice
- Picnic tables
- Small picnic shelter
- Pathway connecting park elements
- Interpretive signage
- Natural area (if present at site)
- Portable or permanent restrooms (only in larger parks or parks that contain community-wide facilities)
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)

### *Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Horticultural or annual plantings, unless sponsored and maintained by a neighborhood or community group
- Indoor recreation center
- Wading pools and similar types of amenities that require staff supervision or highly specialized maintenance
- Sports fields for league play

## Community Parks

### *Description*

- Community parks provide primarily active and structured recreation opportunities on sites designed to serve several neighborhoods, but these parks do not have the capacity to accommodate the entire jurisdiction. Typical development may include sports fields, trail systems, group picnic areas, and many elements associated with neighborhood parks. While a community park may be proximate to a neighborhood, it is designed primarily as a “drive-to” park rather than a “walk-to” park.
- Typical community park users:
  - Come from within one to two miles of the park;
  - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot; and
  - Visit the park for 1 to 3 hours.



### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- These parks may range from 20 to 75 acres in size, depending on the spatial requirements of the facilities provided and the amount of land dedicated to natural resource protection.
- At least two-thirds of the site should be available for active recreation use. Adequate buffers or natural open space areas should separate active recreation areas from nearby homes.
- The site should be visible from adjoining streets and have a minimum of 400 feet of street frontage.
- Parking requirements should be based upon the facilities provided at the site. Generally, 50 off-street spaces per ball field are required, plus 5 spaces per acre of active use areas.
- Access to the site should be provided via a collector or arterial street with sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Children’s playground (tot and youth)
- Designated sports fields for baseball, softball, and soccer. Fields may be in a complex within the park
- Open turf area for unstructured play
- Looped pathway system
- Large picnic shelters
- Permanent restrooms
- Volleyball courts
- Tennis courts

- Basketball courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Other sporting facilities (lawn bowling, croquet, bocce court)
- Field lighting
- Skate park
- Water playground/spray feature
- Off-leash dog area
- Community gardens
- Concessions or vendor space
- Interpretive signage
- Public art
- Natural area (if present on site)
- Indoor recreation center
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)
- Storage or maintenance buildings: If visible, these should be architecturally compatible with other park elements. Any exterior work areas should be screened from view
- Parking

### *Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Regional-scale facilities

## Citywide Parks

### *Description*

- Citywide parks offer the most diverse and/or unique recreation opportunities in the Albany park system. These parks are designed to serve the entire jurisdiction with features that are also intended to attract visitors to the city, generating substantial economic benefit. Citywide parks also are typically supported by nearby food services, lodging and other services necessary to accommodate extended use of the park by out-of-town guests. Because of the diverse and unique offerings, citywide parks typically contain more open space and support facilities.
- Typical citywide park users:
  - Come from throughout the city;
  - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot; and
  - Visit the park for 2 to 4 hours or more.



### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- The site size will generally exceed 50 acres and should be sufficient to accommodate the park's unique features or amenities.
- At least 75% of the site should be developable.
- Access to the site should be provided via a collector or arterial street.
- Parking requirements should be based upon the facilities provided at the site. Generally, 50 off-street spaces per ball field are required, plus 5 spaces per acre of active use areas.
- The site should follow the general guidelines listed in community parks.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Children's play environment (unique or custom-designed)
- Open turf area for unstructured play
- Event space/festival grounds for large group gatherings
- Expanded utility and electric service to support community events
- Large picnic shelters, including one capable of accommodating groups of 50-100 people
- Permanent restrooms
- Extensive pathway system

- Designated sports fields for baseball, softball, and soccer. Fields may be located in multi-sports or tournament-level, single sport complexes and should include lighting. Adjacent practice fields may be provided
- Volleyball courts
- Basketball courts
- Tennis courts
- Horseshoe pits
- Water playground
- Disc golf course
- Regional-scale skate park
- Other sporting facilities (lawn bowling, croquet, bocce courts)
- Off-leash dog area
- Concessions, vendor space, or commercial lease space
- Performance space, such as outdoor amphitheater, stage area, or bandshell
- Large, indoor community recreation center or swimming pool
- Water playground or spray features
- Entry plaza
- Public art
- Interpretive signage
- Natural area (if present on site)
- Environmental education facilities
- Storage or maintenance buildings. If visible, these should be architecturally compatible with other park elements and any exterior work areas should be screened from view
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)
- Parking

### *Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Depends on the site

## Trail Corridors/Greenways

### *Description*

- This category includes developed, landscaped corridors and more natural, less-developed greenways that follow linear features such as abandoned railroad rights-of-way, canals, power lines, creeks and streams, and other elongated features.
- Typical trail and greenway users:
  - May come from throughout the city (depends on site);
  - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle, or foot; and
  - May visit the park for one or more hours.

### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- Trail corridors should generally follow continuous special feature strips, with a minimum corridor width of 50-75 feet.
- Due to the shape, configuration, and potential for user noise in these parks, user impacts on adjoining neighbors should be considered. Fences, walls, or landscaping may be used to provide some privacy for neighbors, but the provision of these features also should consider user safety.
- Paved pathways should be designed to accommodate maintenance and patrol vehicles.
- The amount and type (on-street or off-street) of parking provided at trailheads will depend on facilities at the site and anticipated trail use.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Paved pathways
- Viewpoints
- Seating areas
- Picnic tables
- Orientation and information signage
- Trailhead or entry/ kiosk
- Landscaped areas, ornamental plantings, turf areas
- Maintained natural vegetation
- Fences, landscaping, or other features to control access near adjoining residential areas
- Parking (at major trailheads)

### *Facilities and Amenities to Avoid*

- Active use facilities (sport fields, paved courts, etc.)



### Natural Areas

#### *Description*



- Natural areas may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species. Public access may be limited at these sites, which often include wetlands, steep hillsides, or other similar spaces. Some natural areas may be managed secondarily to provide passive recreation opportunities.
- The typical recreation user of natural areas:
  - Comes from throughout the city;
  - Arrives by auto, bus, bicycle or foot;
  - Uses a trail within the natural area; and
  - Visits the area for an extended time.

#### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- Site size should be based on natural resource needs. Acreage should be sufficient to preserve or protect the resource.
- The City should consider alternative ways of preserving natural open space besides outright purchase, such as acquiring conservation easements, encouraging donations of land, land trades, etc.
- Emphasis for acquisition should be on lands offering unique features that have the potential to be lost to development.
- An analysis should be made to determine if unique qualities and conditions exist to warrant acquisition.
- Development and site improvements should be kept to a minimum, keeping the park's emphasis on the natural environment, interpretive features, and educational facilities.
- Natural open space areas should be managed and maintained for a sense of solitude, separation, or environmental protection.
- Site use should be limited to the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate while still retaining its natural character and the intended level of solitude.
- Where feasible, public access and use of these areas should be encouraged, but environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from overuse.
- Off-street parking should be considered for larger natural areas if a trail is located within the site. The amount will depend upon the anticipated trail use. Otherwise, on-street parking should be provided.

*Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Interpretive signage
- Small picnic shelter
- Limited picnic areas
- Trail and pathway system
- Trailhead or entry kiosk
- Viewpoints or viewing blinds
- Interpretive or educational facilities
- Portable or permanent restrooms (depending on facilities and anticipated amount of site use)
- Parking

*Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Turf areas
- Ornamental plantings
- Active use areas

**Riverfront Parks***Description*

- The primary function of this type of park is to provide public access to the Willamette and Calapooia Rivers in Albany. Such public lands include river access points for boating, swimming, or fishing. Riverfront parks vary in size, from single access points (boat ramps or docks) to larger sites. Large riverfront parks can provide a wide variety of facilities, such as large picnic areas and shelters, trails, and swimming or fishing areas. Riverfront parks may also include significant natural areas.
- Typical riverfront park users:
  - Come from throughout the City;
  - Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot; and
  - Visit the park for more than one to three hours.

*Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- Site size will vary, depending on the spatial requirements of the facilities provided and the amount of land dedicated to natural resource protection.
- The site should include river access points for boating, swimming, or fishing.

- Parking requirements should be based upon the facilities provided at the site. Boat trailers may be accommodated.
- Access to the site should be provided via a collector or arterial street with sidewalks and bicycle lanes.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Boat ramp or dock
- Fishing pier
- Designated swimming area/beach
- Children's playground
- Open turf area for unstructured play
- Large picnic areas/shelters
- Permanent restrooms
- Volleyball courts
- Basketball courts
- Concessions or vendor space
- Looped pathway system
- River viewpoints or viewing blinds
- Interpretive signage
- Natural area (if present on site)
- Indoor recreation center
- General landscape improvements (including tree planting)
- Parking

### *Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Depends on site

## Urban Open Space

### *Description*

- Urban open space may include smaller plazas that provide social gathering space, landscaped open space in high-density or commercial areas, beautification areas such as landscaped street islands or medians, downtown performance space, and public art and fountains.

### Typical users of urban open space:

- May come from the city or beyond (depends on site);
- Arrive by auto, bus, bicycle or foot; and
- Depends on site: May visit the park for one hour to more than three hours.



### *Site Selection and Development Guidelines*

- Size will depend upon the nature of the park and the types of facilities provided.
- Site should front a public street and be within or adjacent to a business district or neighborhood commercial area.
- On-street parking should be provided.

### *Features and Amenities to Consider*

- Appropriate site furnishings (picnic tables, benches, bike racks, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, etc.) for the intended scale and use of the park
- Expanded utility and electric service to support events
- Children's play area
- Other small-scale sports facilities (skate feature, bocce, etc.) compatible with an urban site
- Picnic shelter
- Water playground or water features
- Concessions or vendor space
- Commercial lease space (restaurant, coffee kiosk)
- Trees and general landscaping improvements
- Shrub beds
- Turf areas
- Public art
- Performance space (stage area or band shell)
- Hard-surfaced areas

- Special facilities or features, such as historic or interpretive structures
- Interpretive signage
- Permanent restrooms
- On-street parking

*Features and Amenities to Avoid*

- Depends on the site