



CITY OF KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON
PARKS, RECREATION AND
OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

**A 20 YEAR PLAN FOR MEETING PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS IN
THE KLAMATH FALLS AREA**

CITY OF KLAMATH FALLS PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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PREFACE

The issues facing Klamath Falls are similar to those being dealt with by other communities in the Pacific Northwest. One issue is the pressure from a growing and changing population. Associated with this pressure is the demand for additional park and recreation services, and the need to update existing facilities that are no longer meeting the needs of the public. This document addresses how the city might meet these demands. In addition, the study is intended to answer six basic questions:

- *Is the City providing facilities that reflect the needs of a changing and growing population?*
- *What park, facility, and program needs are not being met?*
- *What role should the City take in providing recreation services?*
- *Where should future parks, trails, and open space areas be located?*
- *Are major recreational facilities, such as a youth sports fields, indoor recreation space or an aquatic facility needed? Can the City afford to develop and maintain these types of facilities?*
- *How can the City meet the financial demand for new parks and facilities?*

This is the most comprehensive planning effort the City has taken to address park and recreation issues. It represents considerable public participation and input from many different types of recreation interests. When adopted by the City Council, this plan will provide policies and guidelines that will aid staff in making decisions regarding park, recreation and open space services for the next 20 years.

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SECTION 1

SUMMARY AND USER'S GUIDE

Section 1

SUMMARY AND USER'S GUIDE

1.1 WHAT IS THIS DOCUMENT?

This document describes a strategy for meeting existing and future park and recreation needs for the City of Klamath Falls. It assesses the need for park and recreation facilities, establishes policies and guidelines for park planning and development, and identifies general locations of future parks, trails, open space areas and other recreation facilities. In addition, it describes a financing strategy for meeting the fiscal demands of the program.

1.2 WHAT DOES THIS PLAN DO?

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Plan is to (1) provide policy guidance regarding the provision of park and recreation services, (2) document the community's existing park and recreation resources, including those outside of the city's management, and (3) facilitate the evaluation of park and recreation needs during the land use decision process.

This plan does not rezone property, nor does it authorize any public access to lands described in this document currently in private ownership.

1.3 WHY WAS THIS PLAN PREPARED?

Oregon law requires each city and county to have a comprehensive plan and the zoning and land-division ordinances needed to put established statewide goals into effect. The City of Klamath Falls chose to address state goal #5, Open Spaces and Natural Resources, and #8, Recreational Needs, in the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, a document that will serve as an addendum to the Comprehensive Plan. This plan will allow Planning staff to enforce the policies through development permits, ensuring logical park acquisition and development within the community.

1.4 HOW WAS THIS DOCUMENT PREPARED?

The planning process consisted of three steps. The first step was to collect relevant background information on the community as it related to recreation activity and need. This phase included a look at the community profile as it relates to park and recreation issues, and information on demographics, including 20-year population projections for use in the planning process. Finally, this step included the inventory and evaluation of the existing park system.

The second step was to assess the recreational needs in the Klamath Falls area. This was accomplished by measuring public opinion, recreation patterns, and perceived needs through a household recreation survey and with a community workshop meeting. In addition, contact was made with individual sports groups. From this information, along with input by the Parks, Recreation, and Cemeteries Advisory Board, needs were determined for parkland, open space and other recreational facilities.

The final step in the planning process was to develop the plan of action. This included recommendations for improving existing parks as well as for acquiring and developing new parks, open space areas and trails. In addition, recommendations were made regarding the development of major indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, such as a youth sports complex, and an indoor pool. The final part of this step was to develop a financing strategy for funding all of the recommended improvements.

1.5 WHAT IS IN THIS PLAN?

- Section 1: Prepared to give the reader a basic understanding about why the document exists and how it should be used. Outlines all of the policies in the document.
- Sections 2 & 3: Provide background information on the community, outline the area covered by this document, and address parks and recreation issues in a broad manner.
- Section 4: Identifies existing and proposed park, recreation and open space facilities.
- Section 5: Provides implementation measures and strategies for the proposals identified in the previous section.

1.6 HOW IS THIS PLAN ADOPTED AND UPDATED?

After the draft plan was created it went through the public review and adoption process. The draft plan was available for public review and comment and was then brought before the Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Advisory Board, the Planning Commission and City Council for review and adoption. The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan is an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This allows Planning Staff to enforce the plan, ensuring logical park acquisition and development within the community through development permits.

The planning process does not end with the adoption of the plan. Many factors make it necessary to re-evaluate the plan and the decisions made earlier. Also, changes in the city, such as increased population growth, acquisition of property, and changes to private facilities all will directly affect the plan and its recommendations. Thus to maintain the currency of this plan, two necessary steps are recommended:

1. **Annual review:** An annual review should be made of the plan to reflect changes in existing conditions, new facilities added, or population changes in the community. This is also a good time to evaluate how well the community is meeting the goals set out in this document. Is park acquisition and development keeping up with development? Are parks being maintained at the proper level? This process should occur every year, with an annual report and goals for the following year as products. These documents can be added as appendices to the current plan until it is updated.
2. **Five Year Plan Update:** Every five years, an update of the plan should occur. This is essentially a compilation of the annual reports into the planning document, reflecting changes to the City and its park system. This report can determine if planning goals are being met, and determine new goals and objectives for the next five years.

For the plan to be successful, it must be followed. This will require constant evaluation by the Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Advisory Board, Parks and Planning Department Staff, and City Officials. Making it a goal to keep the plan as up-to-date as possible will make it easier to determine the success of implementation, and determine if some facets of the park system are lacking and need to be addressed more vigorously.

1.7 WHERE ARE SITE SPECIFIC PLANS ADDRESSED?

This plan was created to serve as a broad overview of existing park and recreation facilities and as a means by which the City can better meet the needs of the community. The specific designs for each facility are addressed separate from this broad plan. Neighborhood meetings will be held after the adoption of the Master Plan to determine the individual needs of park facilities (i.e. tot lots, tennis courts, walking paths, etc.).

1.8 WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC POLICIES IN THIS PLAN?

Objective: Develop needed park facilities.

Policy 1. The development of existing parks and the acquisition of new sites in and adjacent to rapidly growing areas and areas which are deficient in park facilities should be given priority.

Policy 2. When feasible, the City should acquire land for parks and preserves in advance of urban growth and development. Land may be acquired and left undeveloped until funding becomes available for development.

Policy 3. Park acquisition, development and rehabilitation efforts should be concentrated on sites larger than one acre, except where significant resources merit protection or where a mini-park would provide the only available park site in a neighborhood. Mini-parks should be acquired only if no other option exists for larger park sites, and development of existing mini-parks can satisfy the demand for play or picnic areas.

Policy 4. The City should ensure all new park and recreation proposals are thoroughly evaluated for impacts on routine operation and maintenance costs as well as for park and recreation purposes.

Policy 5. Acquisition of special use areas should not take priority over other important recreation opportunities such as land acquisition, or upgrading/development of new and existing park sites.

Objective: Promote maximum cooperation between the City and private individuals and organization with regard to parks, recreation and open space development.

Policy 6. The city should encourage development of park and recreational opportunities by the private sector.

Objective: Closely coordinate with other public and private agencies involved in providing park and recreation opportunities.

Policy 7. The City should encourage expansion of park, recreation and open space opportunities on government lands and consider siting new park facilities on or adjacent to these lands where appropriate.

Policy 8. Unless a willing landowner has been identified, locations proposed for future parks should be considered schematic only and may be located on any suitable lands in the general vicinity.

Policy 9. The City should cooperate with other government entities and private non-profit organizations to provide park, recreation and open space opportunities for existing and future residents.

Policy 10. The City should encourage park development adjacent to elementary, junior and senior high schools to benefit from shared use of land and facilities. A joint-use program with local school districts or private schools should be pursued, where feasible, to develop necessary agreements for cost sharing arrangements for parks near schools.

Objective: *Provide various mechanisms for funding park and recreation facilities.*

Policy 11. Parklands should be acquired by the City through a variety of means including, but not limited to, purchase, gifts, conservation easements, fees and conditions of approval, provided that the scope of such conditions are in rough proportion to the nature and extent of the proposed development.

Policy 12. The City should, where applicable, encourage cooperative park development and management programs which include appropriate cost-sharing mechanisms with special districts that provide park services. Joint powers agreements between agencies may be developed to provide for acquisition, development and/or operation of parks in this context.

Objective: *Increase availability of City parks, recreation and open space facilities.*

Policy 13. The City should provide barrier-free access (as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act) to all new park development. Existing parks should be upgraded to include barrier-free access, unless this would not be financially practical or the upgrade would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program or activity.

Policy 14. The City should consider the importance of security and safety in any modifications to existing parks and in the design of new parks.

Objective: *Target park use.*

Policy 15. The City should design parks and recreation facilities to serve all age groups with particular emphasis placed on facilities and organized activities for school-aged youth and seniors.

Policy 16. The city should design and develop regional park sites to meet a wide range of activities and interests but should emphasize the features that make it unique.

Objective: *Pursue suitable park and recreational opportunities.*

Policy 17. The City should update specific plans for existing parks and develop plans for parks without detailed layouts. Priority should be given to those parks without plans and those that contain undeveloped acreage.

Policy 18. The City should encourage active public participation in city parks and recreation through programs such as Adopt-A-Park, community efforts with fundraising and volunteerism, and by continually evaluating public satisfaction with park and recreation facilities in the city.

Objective: *Provide a variety of enjoyable hiking, biking and riding experiences.*

Policy 19. To route trails over public lands whenever possible. Where public lands are not available, or where significant environmental or economic impacts are identified, routing across private property may be considered only in the following instances:

- A. As funds are available, across those lands where a willing seller has been identified, provided that sufficient funds are available for on-going maintenance and the assumption of liability responsibility and insurance for as long as the public trail shall exist.
- B. As a condition of approval in conjunction with a development proposal or subdivision, provided it can be clearly shown that the easement dedication being sought is in balance with the level of development being proposed.

Policy 20. To fully indemnify, protect and hold harmless (including all costs and attorney's fees) private property owners who dedicate or grant a public trails easement from, and against, those risks and damages which arise out of the use of a trail easement by the public and which, in good conscience, should not be borne by the private property owner.

Policy 21. To assure that if, for any reason, the public trail easement is abandoned, or if the liability acceptance is discontinued, the trail easement shall revert to underlying property owner(s).

Policy 22. To assure the reasonable protection of adjacent public and private properties. Security to protect the neighboring private property may include:

- A. Trail fencing to encourage the prevention of trespass of trail users onto neighboring land and/or activities of the neighboring land uses, from infringing on the trail activities.
- B. As necessary, the imposition of enforceable limitations on the trail use; including, but not limited to, the posting of rules and regulations, patrolling to guarantee the security of both the trail users and neighboring properties, and/or the prohibition of firearms on the trails.
- C. Where feasible a system of permits to assure the user knows and understands the safe and appropriate use of City trails.

Objective: *Maximize the effectiveness of existing funding sources.*

Policy 23. A 5-year Capital Improvement Program should be used as the means of coordinating the acquisition, improvement and rehabilitation of park facilities.

Policy 24. New parks should be developed and existing parks should be expanded only after a financing plan, providing for the improvements and the on-going operating and maintenance costs, is approved.

Policy 25. There should be continued General Fund support (using 90/91FY as a base, adding inflationary supplements tied to CPI) for operation, maintenance and development of park and recreation facilities.

Policy 26. Maximize the use of any federal and/or state grants, foundation funding sources, private donations, cooperative ventures, volunteer labor, or any other innovative means for land acquisition, development and maintenance of park and recreation facilities.

Policy 27. Implement, wherever appropriate, the collection of user fees and concession payments for facility improvements.

Objective: *Maximize the use of community funding mechanisms.*

Policy 28. Continue to seek out, develop and expand partnerships with other public/private and non-profit agencies through appropriate cost sharing mechanisms.

Objective: *Identify and consider new revenue sources.*

Policy 29. Consider the establishment of a land and easement acquisition reserve fund to purchase areas of high recreation potential in parts of the community now lacking adequate park facilities.

Objective: Evaluate funding opportunities for all projects.

Policy 30. A feasibility study should be funded to explore and evaluate the use of new funding mechanisms for acquisition, development and maintenance of new park and recreation facilities that could include landowner incentives, general obligation bonds or user fees. Any such new funding mechanism should be evaluated on the basis of whether all existing regulations for implementation can be met.