

**SECTION 3**

**PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES**



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#### **3.1 DON'T WE HAVE ENOUGH PARKS?**

At first glance it may not seem that there are many issues regarding the provision of parks and recreation facilities. After all, Klamath Falls residents have relatively convenient access to a large national forest, many lakes, the Klamath Wildlife Refuge, great hiking opportunities and developed parks. The City is responsible for over 625 acres of parkland, but only 87 acres contain the ball-fields, tennis courts and other facilities that make a park available for active recreation. The remainder of the parkland acreage consists of open space areas (504 acres), special use areas (27 acres) and landscaped areas (7 acres). A list of these facilities (Table 3) can be found on page II-6.

#### **3.2 PARK AND FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

This section of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan discusses the demand and need for parks and facilities within the City of Klamath Falls. Unless otherwise indicated, it does not address the need within the planning area or urban growth boundary (UGB). Included in Appendix B are the results of the public input process (recreation survey and public workshop) as well as an analysis of park and facility needs. Appendix A contains the inventory of existing park and recreation facilities. Appendix C contains information and calculations from the park and facility needs assessments.

One of the most important elements of the Parks Master Plan is the assessment of park and facility needs. Quantifying these needs is difficult because many different variables influence needs. Personal values, participation patterns, and willingness to pay for services vary widely from community to community. Consequently, what seems right for one community may not be appropriate for another. One of the problems associated with determining the needs is that overstating the demand can result in the development of facilities that are underutilized. Conversely, underestimating the needs can result in overused facilities and a lack of available park land.

This document discusses the park and recreation facility needs for the Klamath Falls Planning Area. This encompasses the area within the current city limits as well as the land within the City's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Although the Wiard Park District lies within the Klamath Falls (UGB) boundary, it has been excluded from the land analysis because the district is a separate agency responsible for providing its own park and recreation areas and maintains a separate Master Plan. However, the area within the Park District has been included as part of the analysis for regional recreation facilities because of the overlap in service areas.

The process for identifying needs was:

1. A personal random household opinion survey of Klamath Falls residents;
2. Individual contacts with local user groups;
3. Determination of the existing supply of park and recreation facilities;
4. Identification of current service levels;
5. Analysis of the survey results for information related to current participation, preferences and general opinion on recreation services offered by the city;
6. Determination of desired levels of service; and
7. Forecasting current park and recreation facility needs.

### 3.2.1 Alternative Approaches to Identifying Needs

There are several approaches to estimating needs for park and recreation facilities. They include the use of national standards (i.e. NRPA standards), measurement of participation levels, user trend analysis, input from recreation surveys and public meetings, goal setting, and participation models. A combination of these approaches were used. See Appendix C for a brief description of each.

### 3.2.2 Methodology of Assessing Park Land Needs in Klamath Falls

Developing a statement of land needs for park areas and open space is the most difficult of all types of analysis because it is dependent upon local values, availability, financial resources and desired service levels. Even the classification of park and open space is sometimes hard to define. What constitutes a park or open space area? Should school playgrounds be considered; or private golf courses, commercial landscaped areas, roof top patios or church recreation areas? To avoid this problem, we have made it a policy of only counting public land or quasi-public land used primarily for recreation or open space.

To determine specific land needs for the Klamath Falls planning area, several analytical methods were used. These included a comparison to other communities, national design standards (NRPA standards), results of the recreation survey, national trends, financial feasibility, land availability and geographical deficiencies for parks and open space areas. It should be noted that even with all the statistical information available, a certain amount of subjective analysis and professional experience must be used to quantify the standards.

On the following pages (and in Appendix C), recommended standards for specific types of park areas are given. The existing ratio is the existing amount of park land divided by the existing population. It is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 population. The recommended standard is the desired amount of park land expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 population. This information is provided to give the reader some indication of what other communities are providing but should not be used by itself to establish a standard.

### 3.2.3 Existing and Forecasted Population

The ratio of park land or recreation facilities is based on a comparison with the existing population base. By developing a desired level of service (recommended standard) and applying it to a future population forecast, one can determine future needs. For determining the existing ratio, the population within the existing Klamath Falls City Limits was used. In cases where the park or recreation facility is regional in nature, the existing population of the Klamath Falls Urban Growth Boundary was used (this included the Wiard Park District population).

For determining population growth projections, figures were calculated based on an annual growth rate of 1%. The target year is 2018. Some demand standards were based on the entire urban area, so the projected population for the urban area was used in these cases. For this study, we will use an existing city population of 20,529 and an existing UGB population of 45,252. The projections for these numbers in 2018 is 25,049 for the city and 55,216 for the UGB.

### 3.3 SUMMARY OF PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS

Parks deficiencies are more extreme in some areas, such as the areas of Stewart-Lenox and Gatewood. Without an effective park and recreation plan in place, valuable opportunities to acquire and develop additional parkland may be lost. The City needs to make every effort to acquire, develop and improve parkland wherever appropriate.

The following tables summarize the recommendations for park and facility needs in the planning area. They include a comparison of existing facilities, as well as proposed standards and determination of need in 2018. It is important to note that the park land needs are based on City facilities and population only, while the recreation facility needs are determined by looking at facilities and population of the entire urban area.

**Table 4**  
**Summary of Needs for Park Land**  
**City of Klamath Falls**

Park & Recreation Areas	Existing Total Park Land (in acres)	Existing Ratio <sup>(1)</sup> (in acres/1,000 pop.)	Proposed Standard (in acres/1,000 pop.)	Total Need in Year 1998 (in acres)	Net Need in Year 1998 (in acres)	Total Need in Year 2018 (in acres)	Net Need in Year 2018 <sup>(2)</sup> (in acres)
Mini Parks	2.90	0.14 acres/1,000 pop.	0.14 acres/1,000 pop.	2.90	0.00	3.50	0.60
Neighborhood Parks	17.40	0.85 acres/1,000 pop.	3.09 acres/1,000 pop.	63.43	46.03	77.40	60.00
Regional Parks	435.00	21.19 acres/1,000 pop.	21.52 acres/1,000 pop.	441.78	6.78	539.00	104.00
Special Use Areas	59.66	2.91 acres/1,000 pop.	5.18 acres/1,000 pop.	106.34	46.68	129.66	70.00
Open Space Areas	104.00	5.07 acres/1,000 pop.	5.00 acres/1,000 pop.	102.65	102.65	125.25	111.25
Landscaped Areas	6.31	0.31 acres/1,000 pop.	0.50 acres/1,000 pop.	10.26	3.55	12.52	5.81
<b>TOTAL (Park Land)</b>	<b>625.27</b>	<b>30.46 acres/1,000 pop.</b>	<b>35.43 acres/1,000 pop.</b>	<b>726.93</b>	<b>101.66</b>	<b>887.49</b>	<b>247.82</b>

<sup>(1)</sup> Ratio of park land is based on an existing 1998 population of 20,529 persons

<sup>(2)</sup> Net Need is based on a 2018 population projection of 25,049 persons.

**Table 5  
Summary of Need for Recreation Facilities  
Klamath Falls Urban Area**

Type of Facility	Existing Facilities	Existing Ratio <sup>(1)</sup>	Proposed Standard	Total Need in Year 1998 <sup>(2)</sup>	Net Need in Year 1998	Total Need in Year 2018 <sup>(2)</sup>	Net Need in Year 2018
Regulation Baseball Fields	5 fields	1 field/ 9,050 pop.	1 field/ 6,500 pop.	7 fields	2 fields	9 fields	4 fields
Youth Baseball/ Softball Fields	20 fields	1 field/ 2,262 pop.	1 field/ 1,500 pop.	30 fields	10 fields	37 fields	17 fields
Adult Softball Fields	4 fields	1 field/ 11,313 pop.	1 field/ 5,000 pop.	9 fields	5 fields	11 fields	7 fields
Soccer Fields (regulation)	18 fields 3 of 18 fields	1 field/ 2,514 pop.	1 field/ 3,200 pop.	14 fields	(4) fields	17 fields	(1) fields
Tennis Courts	26 courts	1 court/ 1,740 pop.	1 court/ 1,500 pop.	30 courts	4 courts	37 courts	11 courts
Trails/Pathways	12 miles	0.27 miles/ 1,000 pop.	0.41 miles/ 1,000 pop.	18.55 miles	4.55 miles	22.64 miles	10.64 miles
Indoor/Outdoor Swimming Pool	11,675 sq. ft.	258 sq. ft./ 1,000 pop.	164.4 sq. ft./ 1,000 pop.	7,439 sq. ft.	(4,236)sq.ft.	9,078 sq. ft.	(2,597)sq.ft
Gymnasiums (Courts)	10 gyms/ (16 courts)	1 court/ 2,828 pop.	1 court/ 2,650 pop.	17 courts	1 court	21 courts	5 courts

<sup>(1)</sup> Assumes an existing 1998 population within the Urban Growth Boundary of 45,252 persons

<sup>(2)</sup> Assumes an existing 2018 population projection of 55,216 persons within the Urban Growth Boundary

### 3.4 PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan seeks to address the following issues:

1. Is the City providing facilities that reflect the needs of a changing and growing population?
2. What is the role of the other park providers (County, Wiard Park, etc.) in meeting the park and recreation needs of the residents and visitors of Klamath Falls?
3. What park, facility, and program needs are not being met?
4. What role should the City take in providing recreation services?
5. Where should future parks, trails, and open space areas be located?
6. Are major recreational facilities such as youth sports fields, indoor recreation space or an aquatic facility needed? Can the City afford to develop and maintain these types of facilities?
7. How can the City meet the financial demand for updating existing and acquiring and developing new parks?

8. How can the community's important natural resource areas be protected while still being used to meet some recreational needs?
9. What possibilities are available for acquiring, financing, developing, maintaining and operating parks and how should these costs be distributed between existing residents and new development?
10. How can the City promote security and safety in parks?
11. What is the extent to which the City should begin to accommodate and meet the demands of new and non-traditional recreational trends?

### **3.5 WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARKS?**

Although recreation is many different things to many different people and one individual's recreation enjoyment will not necessarily satisfy another's, there are a few generalizations that can be made about the benefits of parks:

- **Parks and trails contribute to the overall high quality of life and make our community more livable.** One aspect of quality of life is convenient access to natural settings, recreational and cultural opportunities, and open space. Experiencing nature in an undeveloped state, recreating and exercising regularly, and having these experiences close to where we live can enrich our lives.
- **City residents use the existing parks and also support the improvement of existing parks and the provision of new parks.** Surveys completed in March 1998 during preparation of this master plan show that over 90% of respondents visit Moore Park and utilize its facilities. Almost 70% feel that additional park and recreation facilities are needed in Klamath Falls and more than 80% of those surveyed felt that a multi-purpose recreation center was needed.
- **Parks make economic sense.** The income generated by recreation is of enormous importance to the area's economy. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the area and recreational opportunities attract many visitors to our area every year. By contributing to the attractiveness of communities, parks can contribute to the maintenance of property values. Studies documented by the National Park Service indicate increased property values in those instances where property is located near or adjacent to open spaces or parks.
- **Conservation of parks and trails may result in reduced costs to local governments and other public agencies.** By conserving corridors rather than permitting intensive development, local agencies may reduce costs for public services such as sewers, roads, and school facilities. Establishing a park or trail system in an areas unsuited to residential development due to such events as flooding, may decrease costs from potential property damage. Vegetation in parks can also help control water, air and noise pollution by natural means, resulting in decreased pollution control costs.

### **3.6 WHO MAINTAINS THE CITY PARKS?**

The Parks Division of the City of Klamath Falls' Public Works Department manages the parks and open space within the City. This division provides parks and outdoor recreation facilities but no recreation programs. They operate all of the City parks and maintain a variety of facilities from marinas to trails.

The Parks, Recreation and Cemeteries Advisory Board advises the City Council and works directly with the Parks Division in the policy, planning and development of the city's park system. The Board is made up of seven members (six citizens and one City Council representative) who are appointed by the Mayor. The Board reviews city-wide park and open space issues, including park development, park use, and planning. Through public meetings the Board advises the City Council on these matters. In the completion of their responsibilities, the Board endeavors to keep the public informed and aware of park activities.