

Part V: Philosophy, Goals, Policies, And Specific Action Recommendations

Nature

*It is true that if you listen closely you can hear the earth whisper.
All kinds of things make sounds in the park, like the river,
the birds in the sky, the sound of leaves falling.
Even the sound of rain pouring down on the trees.
You can only listen very closely to hear something,
because nature speaks quietly.*

***-by Amy Bucknam
Harrison Elementary School***

Philosophy, Goals, Policies, & Specific Action Recommendations

A. Introduction

The following chapter discusses the philosophy behind Cottage Grove’s current park system and then discusses our goals for its future. The goals are grouped into 2 main classifications – the future of the park system and management of the park system. The future park system analysis is divided into the following sections: park system design, acquisition, park development, facility development and accessibility. Park system management covers the following items: maintenance, public safety, environmental protection, community involvement, City resource expansion, economic development and funding. Implementation policies and recommendations for specific actions are then delineated for each identified goal.

The people of Cottage Grove contributed to the development of Parks Goals through five public surveys, two citizen advisory committees (“Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Advisory Committee” and “Comprehensive Parks Advisory Committee”) and public review of the final plan.

B. Parks Philosophy

Cottage Grove offers its citizens a safe and healthy environment in which to live, work and play. The City promotes the physical, mental and economic wellness of the community through recreational activities by developing existing and potential park and recreation facilities and resources for all ages, abilities and interests while preserving the community’s natural, cultural and historic environment.

C. Future Park System

1) Park System Design

Goals:

1. Develop a system of river-oriented parks and hill top parks with interconnecting trails linked to residential areas of the community.
2. Compliment development with land conservation by incorporating parklands, natural areas, and greenways into the urban fabric.
3. Develop active recreation facilities located within a 3-minute walk of all residences.

Policies:

1. Focus development on enhancement of key environmental or cultural features.

2. Protect unique geographical features, buttes and other natural landmarks or landscapes for their contribution to the community's identity.

Actions:

1. Identify critical environmental areas prior to development.
2. Complete Goal 5 Open Spaces, Scenic and Natural Resources Inventory of urban growth area, inventorying significant natural areas that are historically, ecologically or scientifically unique or important.
3. Investigate and utilize fee acquisition, easements, cluster development, preferential assessment, development rights acquisition and similar techniques to protect identified resources.
4. Complete Goal 7 Natural Hazards & Disasters Inventory of urban growth area.
5. Create a parks and recreation zoning district. Rezone existing city parks.
6. Work with property owners to designate hazardous or environmentally sensitive parcels as potential parks or open space.
7. Give priority to the development and maintenance of facilities on lands already in public ownership.



View of Northwest Neighborhood from Mt. David

2) Acquisition

Goal: Continue to acquire and develop parks.

Policies:

1. Establish parkland within a 3-minute walk of all residences.
2. Acquire parkland commensurate with Level of Service (LOS) standards identified in Master Plan as land parcels and money become available.

3. Concentrate acquisition efforts on the most underrepresented park types.
4. Protect desirable park sites in projected growth areas from conversion to other urban uses.
5. Encourage landowners to donate land or conservation easements for future parks.
6. Acquire parkland in configurations that (a) maximize accessibility, (b) maximize safety, (c) minimize maintenance costs and (d) minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses.
7. Develop a broad range of facilities to accommodate interests of all ages, incomes and interests.
8. Secure public recreational access via recreation and conservation easement agreements with private landowners.

Actions:

1. Pursue agreements for first right of refusal for identified properties.
2. Acquire *21 additional acres* of neighborhood parks.
3. Acquire *37 additional acres* of community parks.
4. Acquire *77 additional acres* of upland natural areas.
5. Acquire *10 additional acres* of Greenway parks and *2 additional acres* of Nodal Parks along Greenways.
6. Acquire and develop neighborhood and/or community parkland in northeast and northwest portions of Cottage Grove.
7. Acquire and develop neighborhood and/or community parkland in locations where City is growing.

3) **Development of Parks**

Goal: Acquire, develop and encourage the development of parks according to the size, number and distribution recommended in the Park Standards in Chapter III.

a. **Mini Parks**

Policies:

1. Focus mini-park development on park nodes along Greenways in order to provide resting or picnicking amenities.
2. In light of high maintenance costs, discourage the acquisition and development of new mini-parks unless neighborhood, community organization or business support is high.
3. Reduce maintenance costs for City Beautification Areas by:
 - a. Prioritizing highly visible locations;
 - b. Encouraging site adoption;
 - c. Developing low-maintenance planting schemes for remaining sites;
 - d. Eliminating underutilized, high-cost remnant parcels.

Actions:

1. Work with neighborhoods to revitalize existing mini-parks.

2. Acquire and maintain in partnership with interested Native American tribes culturally significant Kalapulya sites.
3. Work with the State of Oregon and the Economic and Business Improvement Districts to develop a downtown entranceway plaza at the corner of Main Street and Highway 99.

b. Neighborhood Parks

Policies:

1. Upgrade existing neighborhood parks to improve park condition, increase recreational opportunities, meet current safety requirements and provide access for people with disabilities.
2. Acquire land for additional neighborhood parks in underserved neighborhoods.
3. Acquire land for additional neighborhood parks in newly-developing residential neighborhoods.
4. Use neighborhood parks to provide a focus for social and recreational activities.

Actions:

1. Work with Fire District to create Fire Fighters Park. Discuss adoption of park by Fire District.
2. Develop Stewart Orchard Park in consultation with residents and Public Works.
3. Acquire and develop neighborhood parkland in the northeast and northwest regions of the City.
4. Work with SLSD to increase formal public access to school properties that are currently being informally used as neighborhood parks, through a joint use agreement.
5. Work with SLSD to enhance and potentially redevelop schoolyards to meet the needs of both students and neighborhood recreation needs.
6. Acquire and develop adjoining property next to Silk Creek Park.

c. Community Parks

Policies:

1. Develop new community park and renovate existing community parkland.
2. Form partnership between the City and South Lane School District to develop joint use parks.

Actions:

1. Improve park conditions by:
 - a. Adding general use ball fields;
 - b. Constructing group picnic shelters open to reservations;
 - c. Installing more picnic tables and facilities;
 - d. Upgrading restrooms;
 - e. Providing adequate parking spaces;
 - f. Including handicap accessibility.

2. Acquire and develop a new 20-50 acre Community Park, preferably with connection to the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.
3. Pursue conversion of the old high school property to a community park through development of South Lane/City Recreation District.
4. Pursue joint-use recreational agreements with South Lane School District for public use of Bohemia Elementary, Harrison Elementary, Lincoln Middle School, old Cottage Grove High School and new Cottage Grove High School grounds.

d. Natural, Historic and Cultural Areas

Policies:

1. Protect and enhance elements of the natural and historic landscape, which provide the City a “sense of place.” Important landscapes include forested hill slopes and ridges, river and waterway corridors, wetlands, vistas and other unique features.
2. Protect and manage natural areas for habitat, water quality, education, recreation, scenic and flood protection values.
3. Acquire natural areas balancing the protection of riparian, wetland, upland, forestland and prairie resources.
4. Protect cultural, natural and aesthetic resources of Mt. David area.
5. Protect, maintain and enhance places of refuge for wildlife and people.
6. Restore or enhance natural features in existing parkland to improve wildlife movement.
7. Work with public and private landowners outside of City Limits to enhance connectivity of habitat and waterways between city-owned natural areas and open space along the urban fringe.



Snapp House, Prospector Park

Actions:

1. Utilize a variety of open space protection measures, including:
 - a. Direct land acquisition to maximize public accessibility;
 - b. Conservation easements;
 - c. Public access easements;
 - d. Parks & Recreation designation and/or zoning (may require acquisition);
 - e. Private access to open space as an element of a Planned Unit Development; and
 - f. Partnerships and joint protection agreements with large landholders, especially when public access is not a priority but where other open space benefits, such as improved water quality, wildlife habitat or visual resource protection can be provided.
2. Acquire and develop a portion of Mt. David to protect cultural, natural and aesthetic resources.
3. Increase accessibility to North Regional Park (including permanent parking, bike path connectivity, bike route signage).
4. Install boardwalks over low areas at North Regional Park (assure boardwalks are designed so as not to restrict waterways or movement of wildlife).
5. Work with Watershed Council to study effects of recreation on wildlife in East and North Regional Parks. Make adjustments to trail types and alignment as necessary to protect wildlife. Study feasibility of replacing portions of the bike path with boardwalk.
6. Install educational signage regarding natural features.
7. When installing new fences, elevate fence 6" off the ground to allow for wildlife movement. Use hedges instead of fencing whenever possible.

e. Greenways

Policies:

1. Continue to acquire appropriate park sites and other publicly available access ways to the Coast Fork of the Willamette River and its tributaries. Attempt to create continuous public access and/or trails along one side of the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.
2. Emphasize connectivity of Greenways to residential neighborhoods, schools and commercial areas via bike paths and footbridges.
3. Protect water quality and wildlife associated with the Willamette River and its tributaries.
4. Pursue applying Willamette Greenway concepts to the Row River and Silk Creek.
5. Strengthen Riparian section of City of Cottage Grove Zoning Ordinance.
6. Increase public access to Coast Fork, Silk Creek and Row River through the development of boat ramp(s), fishing pier(s), and trails, while protecting the shorelines from damage and degradation.
7. Support Watershed Council efforts to preserve and enhance the quality of the Coast Fork of the Willamette River.
8. Support implementation of Row River Trail Feasibility Study.

9. Continue to develop the Row River Trail and acquire land for nodal parks along the Row River Trail.



Geese on the Coast Fork of the Willamette River

Actions:

1. Acquire wider riparian buffer along Coast Fork wherever possible to protect fish and wildlife habitat.
2. Acquire and develop nodal parks along Coast Fork and Silk Creek. Focus on connecting park nodes to schools and residential neighborhoods via pedestrian bridges.
3. Maintain and enhance riparian vegetative buffer on City-owned parkland.
4. Develop street rights-of-way to promote pedestrian access to water.
5. Acquire and restore Chambers Railroad Bridge for pedestrian access.
6. Continue upkeep of soft running trail along Willamette River Greenway.
7. Install more picnic tables and benches along greenway nodal parks.
8. Develop river access at Benny Hubbell Park.
9. Create formal boat access to Row River at East Regional Park.
10. Create a formal boat access to rivers on the northern end of Cottage Grove.
11. Connect bike paths in North and East Regional Parks, Willamette River Greenway and Row River Trail via signed bike paths along City streets.
12. Install benches, vandal-proof trash bins, dog litter signage and other trailside amenities along Row River Trail.
13. Develop a Trail Master Plan to guide the planning and design of trail facilities to meet the needs of all users.
14. Acquire and develop nodal parks along Row River Trail, as per Row River Trail Feasibility study. Such parks include Trailhead Park at Main Street, Gateway Woodland Park and Crossroads Trail Access Park. Provide safer access to East

Regional Park and BMX track and a Wayside Park between Mosby Creek Road and the water.

15. Preserve historic wigwam burner at Trailhead Park.
16. Construct soft running path along Row River Trail.

4) Development of Facilities

Goal: Plan and develop facilities used for both active and reflective recreational opportunities for all ages, abilities, incomes and interests.

Policies:

1. Develop popular park amenities in existing or new parks, including playground equipment, swimming pool and basketball courts.
2. Acquire and develop more fields for organized sports.
3. Provide or work with others who provide safe facilities for "extreme" sports (e.g., BMX track, skateboard park, rock climbing wall).
4. Develop low-impact recreational facilities such as horseshoes, bocce ball, outdoor chess, etc.
5. Recognize the historic and cultural importance of parklands.
6. Encourage inclusion of public art emphasizing the community's heritage in redevelopment or development of park facilities.



Bench at Coiner Park

Actions:

1. Construct a large, covered picnic shelter for group reservations.
2. Construct ball fields throughout the community in response to increasing demand.

3. Increase access to public restrooms by (a) moving toward a longer season of operation for restrooms at Coiner Park as vandalism issues are addressed and (b) adding restrooms to other parks in the City.
4. Develop a skate park.
5. Maintain open grass areas for pick-up sports.
6. Design small spaces with special amenities such as blueberry bushes.
7. Develop a fenced off-leash dog park.
8. Install informational signage in parks regarding their history.
9. Apply in park design the principles of A Pattern Language and other landscape architecture theories to improve quality and user friendliness.
10. Incorporate art projects into renovation or new development of parks facilities.

5) Accessibility

Goal: Provide equitable park and recreation services to all residents.

Policies:

1. Provide a balance of parks to all geographic areas of the City.
2. Wherever appropriate and possible, develop or redesign park and recreation facilities to improve accessibility for all citizens.
3. Provide more parkland in medium and high-density residential areas.
4. Centrally locate neighborhood parks to encourage access by foot or bicycle.
5. Provide parkland and facilities in residential areas isolated from other parks and facilities by natural and constructed barriers (e.g., arterial rights-of-way).
6. Encourage development of pedestrian and bicycle links between open spaces and other major public or private facilities.
7. Improve connectivity between neighborhoods by installing pedestrian bridges, street crossings, and paths connecting parks.

Actions:

1. Develop a transition plan to accomplish the adaptations necessary to modify park sites and facilities to meet ADA standards.
2. As park amenities are replaced, install ADA-compliant benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains as outlined in the Recreation Regulatory Negotiation Committee Accessibility Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas or other suitable guidelines.
3. Install new trails that meet ADA standards.
4. Make sidewalk improvements along streets connecting to parkland.
5. Integrate pedestrian walkways and bike paths connecting residences to established or planned parks into subdivision plans.
6. Install pedestrian crosswalks with flashers or right-of-way signage where pedestrians and bikers cross street traffic at all parks and trails.
7. As much as possible, require land divisions and planned unit developments to provide for pedestrian access to parks and potential park sites.

8. Design, sign, and otherwise clarify a "looped tour" bike route connecting North Regional Park, East Regional Park, Row River Trail and Willamette River Greenway.
9. Create safe access, including a crosswalk across Row River Road, to East Regional Park from the Row River Trail.
10. Place a pedestrian bridge across the Coast Fork at Girard Street or other suitable location.



Benches at Veterans Park

D. Management of Park System

1) Maintenance

Goal: Ensure high standard of maintenance for all park areas and facilities.

Policies:

1. Concentrate on developing and maintaining parklands designated in the Plan.
2. Design and develop facilities to minimize operation and maintenance costs.
3. Maintain park and recreation facilities in such a way as to make them safe for the natural environment and patrons.
4. Ensure an adequate staffing level to implement recommended maintenance standards.
5. Coordinate maintenance operations with other agencies, such as the South Lane School District and non-profit recreational providers.
6. Maximize partnerships and the use of volunteers to reduce workloads, including:
 - a. Adopt-a-Park or Adopt-a-Trail programs; and
 - b. Service organizations, leagues, and clubs.

7. Work to reduce vandalism and other unsafe or undesirable behavior by installing appropriate lighting, hiring caretakers, encouraging Neighborhood Watch activities, providing visual access from street, and increasing usage.



Mowing at Riverside Park

Actions:

1. Hire additional City park staff to ensure that existing and newly developed park system elements can be adequately maintained and to manage volunteers.
2. Place park host at Coiner Park.
3. Identify and prioritize appropriate volunteer projects to enable staff to locate potential partners and volunteers.
4. Post parks with “pets welcome on leash” signs. Designate areas suitable for canine play without leashes. Post dog litter signage and provide dog litter cleanup stations.

2) Public Safety

Goal: Ensure safety for all park users.

Policies:

1. Promote positive use of parklands and recreation facilities to discourage crime.
2. Evaluate design and construction standards for their effectiveness in enhancing public safety and discouraging vandalism.
3. Develop additional programs to increase public safety, such as Adopt-A-Park, neighborhood patrols and partnering residents together for recreational activities.
4. Continue to build alliances with the Police and Fire Departments to address safety and crime issues.

5. Create safer street-crossings for Row River Trail.

Actions:

1. Maintain parks to promote visual access from streets.
2. Reduce visual obstruction within parks to promote safety and discourage crime.
3. Utilize on-site caretakers at Coiner Park.
4. Encourage Neighborhood Watch Groups to monitor parks for safety.
5. Install security or motion sensor lighting at high use park areas.
6. Install on-demand traffic light on the Row River Trail at Gateway Boulevard.

3) Environmental Protection

Goal: Protect and manage parkland for habitat, water quality, education, scenic, and flood protection values.

Policies:

1. Preserve and restore wildlife and fish habitat.
2. Protect existing riparian forest buffer and restore riparian forest buffer utilizing native tree species where it is lacking.
3. Design and construct recreation facilities that conserve energy, water and the natural environment.

Actions:

1. Help restore native spring Chinook salmon habitat.
2. Remove barriers between riparian habitat and adjacent upland habitat to establish wildlife corridors.
3. Work with Coast Fork Watershed Council to replace invasive species with native vegetation.
2. Develop environmentally responsible operating procedures for parks.
 - a. Encourage non-chemical alternatives for herbicides and pesticides;
 - b. Promote low, direct lighting to reduce light pollution;
 - c. Preserve significant natural features;
 - d. Remove invasive species and replace with native/indigenous plantings;
 - e. Control weeds by mulching;
 - f. Use non-toxic and recycled materials when constructing park amenities;
 - g. Use boardwalks and bridges for paths in wetland and floodplain areas;
 - h. Landscape with low water usage plants;
 - i. Replace existing sprinkler system with efficient irrigation system as parts age.

4) Community Involvement

Goal: Involve the community in parks and recreational facilities planning.

Policies:

1. Continue to involve the public in parks and recreation planning to increase community ownership of parklands and recreation services.
2. Encourage volunteer groups to take part in appropriate periodic maintenance and facilities improvements.
3. Support volunteer efforts of non-governmental recreation providers, such as the Cottage Grove Recreation Association, Cottage Grove Tennis Association and Cottage Grove BMX.

Actions:

1. Create formal “Friends of Parks and Open Spaces” committee for organizing volunteers.
2. Maximize public involvement and recruit and retain volunteers.



Opal Whitely mural and natural landscape park, 7th & Main

5) Expansion of City Resources

Goal: Promote opportunities for private entities to supplement and extend the City’s park system resources.

Policies:

1. Foster partnerships with schools and local sports and recreation groups dedicated to improving recreational opportunities.
2. Support and encourage projects initiated by other providers to broaden the community’s recreational and cultural opportunities, particularly relating to tourism and economic diversification.

3. Coordinate the provision of recreational and cultural services with the plans and programs of other public agencies and private organizations.
4. Coordinate parks and recreational planning and improvements with the construction of bicycle facilities described in the Cottage Grove Transportation System Plan.
5. Encourage joint acquisition and development of contiguous school sites.

Actions:

1. Pursue agreements with South Lane School District, Western Oregon Exhibition, Race Track, Elks Club, Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church and other organizations for play structures, fields, open space and parking.
2. Work with the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other agencies to expand mountain biking opportunities in the area.
3. Initiate an Adopt-A-Park program.
4. Utilize students (from leadership classes and the Student Council) to help with park upkeep. Place emphasis on students maintaining school parks.

6) Economic Development

Goal: Strengthen the role of recreational and cultural amenities in order to improve the community's marketability and economic base.

Policies:

1. Use improvements in parks and recreational opportunities to increase area tourism and promote local businesses.
2. Recognize the social and economic values for the city in its relationship to the several nearby county, state and national recreation areas and resources.
3. Provide recreation facilities within the planning area that are complimentary to those nearby county, state and national recreation resources.
4. Increase City general fund support for parks, recreational and cultural facilities and programs.
5. Include amenities in parks and cultural event sites that create a unique and memorable positive image.

Actions:

1. Publish a map that details city and area recreational opportunities.
2. Establish recreation-oriented events that will draw local, area and statewide participation and publicity.
3. Support local nursery industry whenever possible when landscaping parks.
4. Work with service organizations on marketing projects.



View from Veterans Park of Coast Fork of the Willamette River

7) Funding

Goal: Pursue diverse sources of funding to assure consistent availability of funds to acquire, develop and maintain parks outlined in the Master Plan.

Policies:

1. Increase City general fund support for parks, recreational, and cultural facilities and programs.
2. Raise park impact fees to reflect the actual cost impact of housing on park systems. At a minimum, Cottage Grove should raise park-related System Development Charges (SDCs) to a level on par with similar Oregon cities.
3. Use SDCs to acquire neighborhood parks.
4. Encourage residential developers to dedicate land in lieu of the park-related SDCs for neighborhood parks.
5. Encourage private investment in recreation-oriented facilities.
6. Consider a special tax levy to acquire and develop a community park.
7. Seek support from nontraditional sources such as foundations and corporations looking for unique public service projects.
8. Ensure that the costs of specialized and limited-use facilities are supported by reasonable user fees wherever feasible and equitable (e.g. Coiner Park).
9. Continue to evaluate properties originally purchased as parklands that may no longer be needed and determine their sale or exchange value for parklands needed in other areas.
10. Encourage the provision of compatible, revenue-producing concession facilities and services which will enhance visitor use and enjoyment of park and recreation facilities and which will contribute needed financial resources.

Actions:

1. Rename East Regional and North Regional Parks so that funding sources know that they function as natural areas.
2. Convert to open space or dispose of park sites serving only a minimal population, that are limited in recreational uses and whose maintenance costs are not cost effective in terms of people served.
3. Create a Parks Development Fund to use for local matches when seeking parks development grants.
4. Research ways to provide funding for time-sensitive land acquisition projects.
5. Work with the Cottage Grove Community Foundation or other non-profit entity to facilitate the development of parkland.
6. Work with health care providers to fundraise for active recreation facilities.