

PLANNING FOR SOUTHWEST PARKS

A Process for Planning Parks in Southwest Portland using Limited Resources

A Collaborative Project of:
Southwest Parks Planning Committee
(A Subcommittee of the Southwest Neighborhoods Incorporated
Parks and Community Center Committee)

Portland Parks and Recreation

Office of Commissioner Jim Francesconi

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PLANNING FOR SOUTHWEST PARKS

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INTRODUCTION

The planning process described in this document was developed specifically for parks located in Southwest Portland. It has accomplished two interlocking goals: to create a model for parks planning in Southwest Portland, and to develop a specific blueprint for a specific Southwest park, Woods Memorial Park, entitled A Functional Plan for Woods Park. When approved, this planning process can be applied to many other parks in Southwest Portland.

This document describes the history and steps of the process from inception to final product, so that citizens from all areas of Portland can apply this, or a modified version of this process, to their own park planning, under the guidance, and with the assistance, of Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R). PP&R and the southwest community will use Planning for Southwest Parks to plan and implement park plans or improvements in southwest parks.

Planning for Southwest Parks is intended to be both a foundation and pilot for the Parks 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan. (See below for information on the 2020 Plan.) After the Draft 2020 Plan is complete, the planning processes and definitions in it will be compared and contrasted to those in Planning for Southwest Parks and a report prepared. The SWNI Parks Committee will review that report and determine if those differences are significant to the Planning for Southwest Parks. If needed, the SWNI Parks Committee will recommend language to create consistency in the Parks 2020 Plan. The 2020 Citizen Vision Team will consider the SWNI Parks Committee recommendations for its final plan. If there are unresolved issues, City Council will consider and decide them.

Context

The Portland metropolitan area has been experiencing an unprecedented rate of growth and development. A direct effect of this growth has been an increasing value on the preservation of open space as well as recreational opportunities close to home. This need is felt throughout the city as well as in Southwest Portland.

The purpose statement of the Open Space Zone from Title 33 of the Zoning Code guided this work: "The Open Space zone is intended to preserve and enhance public and private open natural, and improved park and recreational areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

These areas serve many functions including:

- Providing opportunities for outdoor recreation;
- Providing contrasts to the built environment;
- Preserving scenic qualities;
- Protecting sensitive or fragile environmental areas; and
- Preserving the capacity and water quality of the stormwater drainage system."

PARKS 2020 VISION PLAN

Because of growth and the resulting pressures, an overall strategic planning process for Portland parks called the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan has been initiated. This forward looking planning process will focus on the “big picture” as PP&R heads into the next millennium. It is aimed at projecting what the community will need from its park system over the next 20 years and will set out policy direction for all parks.

The main issue areas to be covered in the Parks 2020 Vision Plan include:

- **LEVEL OF SERVICE:** This refers to finding a way to achieve equitable distribution of park land and recreation facilities throughout the City. This work will define guidelines that will determine an appropriate amount of park acreage, reasonable distribution of recreation facilities such as soccer fields, and an equitable amount of functional parklands. It will take many factors into account, including access to the sites, their distribution, location and size, the condition of the built facilities, the population and development densities and other considerations. These guidelines will be used to anticipate improvements and land acquisitions that will be needed as the population of the City grows.
- **ACTIVE & PASSIVE RECREATION:** PP&R serves many functions for many people. With a shrinking amount of park acreage available per person, user conflicts between active and passive uses have escalated. The plan will address how to balance these uses to meet community needs.
- **PARTNERSHIPS:** The mission statement of PP&R states that PP&R is to “ensure leisure access opportunities to everyone”. PP&R operates as the central coordinator for many recreational leisure services by working with key partners such as volunteer groups, schools, and other recreation providers to see that recreation opportunities are available to all citizens. PP&R also nurtures partnerships within parks by entering into stewardship agreements with local citizen groups who assist with additional maintenance and projects. These efforts will be examined and expanded.
- **ROLE OF PARKS:** PP&R plays many roles in the livability of the City. The plan will address how decision-makers, elected officials, and the public support that role.

Background

The Southwest Parks planning process was started because of the following widespread community concerns:

The controversy over the Gabriel Park Community Center siting and the lack of clear policy on siting in open spaces.

Questions over the management of GOBI projects (General Obligation Bond Initiative - a 1994 \$58.8 million bond measure to renovate and develop park facilities).

Fears that the many undeveloped and lesser known parks in Southwest might be at risk of being sold and privately developed.

Questions about whether land adjacent to school property would be used for public benefit or sold for private use.

Observations that the labor of many volunteers involved in park stewardship was being wasted since action was not coordinated or approved by Portland Parks and Recreation.

Due to the lack of master plans or current master plans for many parks, members of the Southwest Neighborhood Incorporated (SWNI) Parks and Community Centers Committee wanted a planning process to address these questions. The SWNI committee wanted to know "How can we have an economical, publicly supported process to make sure that park stewardship and development proceed in a coherent fashion?"

These issues inspired calls to Commissioner Jim Francesconi's office and to PP&R to encourage rethinking the master planning process in order to improve communication with the community and guide PP&R's efforts. Meetings in July and October of 1997 with Commissioner Francesconi, his staff assistant Kathy Turner and Steve Pixley (volunteer coordinator for PP&R) provided impetus for the formation of the Southwest Parks Working Group.

Formation of Southwest Planning Committee & the Working Group

The SWNI Parks and Community Centers committee appointed an ad hoc subcommittee on Southwest Parks planning in October of 1997. Members of this Southwest Parks Planning Committee included: Jere Retzer from Crestwood Neighborhood Association, Margot Barnett of the Marshall Park Neighborhood Association, and Doug Weir from Homestead Neighborhood and Friends of Terwilliger. They were joined by Kathy Turner, representing Commissioner Jim Francesconi's office and John Sewell, Chief Planner, and Jim Sjulín, Natural Resource Manager, representing Portland Parks and Recreation to form the Working Group who prepared this document.

This Working Group was formed to focus on Southwest Parks and to look at larger or "macro" issues as they related to Southwest Parks, such as the process for public involvement in parks master/management planning, generic guidelines for different types of parks, and how parks are linked together into a visionary regional system. The Working Group developed a set of tools to prepare plans for Southwest parks, including a streamlined planning process known as a Park Functional Plan, and developed criteria and guidelines for park planning in Southwest Portland.

These recommendations have been reviewed and approved by the SWNI Parks Committee and by PP&R. The process which was estimated to take six to nine months, has taken nearly two years, primarily due to difficulties in scheduling meetings.

Working Group's Objectives

The stated objectives of this working group were fourfold:

1. Improve communications between PP&R and the community on the desired and approved uses for Southwest park facilities,
2. Ensure that parks meet the public's documented and perceived needs to the maximum extent practical,
3. Ensure that each park fits well within the overall park system for Southwest Portland,
4. Facilitate volunteer efforts in support of PP&R by clearly identifying appropriate kinds of volunteer support desired for each park/park area and procedures to be followed to coordinate such volunteer efforts.

The outcome of this effort is a guide to the planning of Southwest Parks that includes:

1. A streamlined park planning process, called the Park Functional Plan.
2. A framework for park planning in Southwest.
3. Widespread public knowledge in Southwest about this work and its product.
4. A Functional Plan for Woods Park – a separate document.
5. A model for Stewardship Agreements for Southwest parks – an appendix to the Woods Park Functional Plan.
6. A “cookbook” called Preparing A Park Functional Plan. Both the cookbook and this document will be superceded by the documents of the 2020 Vision Plan when it is adopted.

PLANNING TOOLS FOR THIS PROCESS

Inventory of Southwest Parks

The Working Group developed a Southwest Parks Quick Reference Guide, a large notebook that describes the many acres of treasured park land in Southwest Portland. This Guide is available for public use at the SWNI office in the Multnomah Arts Center or at the Portland Parks and Recreation office in the Portland Building.

From Ankeny Plaza to Woods Memorial Park, the guide summarizes 37 parks found in the Southwest. It includes explanations of park categories, features, reference numbers and regional significance. It also includes an asset summary, park classification system, several comprehensive maps of Southwest Parks and a Portland quarter section map. *Note: The guide was current in 1998, but more land has been added to the park system since then.*

Existing Information

The Working Group listed and analyzed the existing Southwest planning policies and park types in order to determine the need for a new type of park plan. The following information is the result of that exercise.

Existing Policies for Park Planning

The Southwest Parks Planning process fits into a larger framework of existing policies within and beyond the City of Portland. The following listed policies constitute the overarching policies that apply for all planning, not just Southwest Portland.

Portland Parks and Recreation Policies

- Park Futures – 1991
- Non-Park Use of Park Land
- Memorials Policy
- Integrated Pest Management Policy
- Urban Forestry Management Plan

Other Policies that Apply to the Park Planning Process (This list may not be complete.)

Federal Policies

- Clean Water Act
- Endangered Species Protection Act – local concerns

State Policies

- Statewide Planning Goals
- Oregon State Parks (SCORP grants)

Regional Policies

- Metro Greenspaces

City Policies

- Portland Comprehensive Plan
- Scenic Resources Protection Plan

Definitions

When the initial discussions about park master planning began, it was evident that master planning meant different things to different people. As the Working Group began to develop an approach to park planning, they compiled existing definitions for park master plans and city management plans. These definitions seemed too narrow and more resource intensive than the Working Group felt was appropriate for a base level of planning. They revised the park type terms and developed a new type of plan – the Park Functional Plan, as explained below.

PARK TYPES

The definitions described below were revised from Park Futures as part of the Working Group efforts. New definitions were developed based on desired outcomes and accomplishments. The new definitions abandon the idea that a park fit only one particular type of definition, and they include the concept that parks can have multiple elements and functions, including habitat and corridors.

(Note: These Park Types are being further refined and consolidated as part of the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan.)

The Working Group revised the Park Futures definitions to read as follows:

MINI-NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Small parks less than 2.5 acres in size designed to serve the population in a .25 mile radius. Emphasis for this park type is on children's activities and facilities. Features predominating in these parks are lawn areas and play equipment. Design of landscape and equipment should

minimize maintenance needs. Minimum recommended size is .50 acre. Mini parks may be located adjacent to schools. Siting should avoid location near major roads or other uses that may deter use of the park.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

These parks are 2.5-10 acres in size and serve an area with a 0.50-mile radius, or a 10-minute walk. The minimum recommended size is 5.00 acres. Facilities provided usually include play equipment, tennis courts, ball fields and wading pools. Restrooms are usually part of basic facilities for neighborhood parks larger than 5 acres if organized sports activities or substantial picnic facilities are available. These parks usually include picnic tables for individuals and families, and paved and soft-surface paths. Unlighted athletic fields for children's activities are also found in the larger parks of this type. Neighborhood parks may be located near schools, and ideally should be sited so a majority of residents in the service area do not need to cross major streets to get to them. When possible these parks should be situated close to the physical or population center of the service area.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks serve 2-3 neighborhoods and have more extensive recreation facilities. These parks are optimally 10 or more acres and serve residents within a 2-mile radius. These parks have a broader range of play equipment and athletic facilities that may include lighted athletic fields, courts for children's and adult's programs, and parking lots and restrooms. When meeting appropriate siting policies, community centers, swimming pools and stadiums may be placed in these parks. These parks are centrally located near major roads.

METROPOLITAN PARKS

Residents from throughout the Portland Metropolitan Area use metropolitan parks. Examples include parks with waterfront, beach or water features such as Willamette, Laurelhurst and Waterfront Parks. These parks vary in size and facilities provided. Facilities typically include parking, restrooms, paved and soft surface paths, group picnic areas, and natural areas. These parks may include special features such as interpretive centers and concessions.

REGIONAL PARKS

These parks draw users from a wide geographic area, including tourists from out-of-state. These parks include features and opportunities unique to the Willamette Valley. They serve an area that is within 30-60 minutes driving time. Features include both natural and developed areas with parking lots, and may include play equipment and courts.

URBAN PARKS

These parks are typically located in the central business district, but may also be associated with neighborhood business districts or other community facilities. They are often small and quite often have more hard surface area than other parks. Urban Parks serve large numbers of people drawn from the entire metropolitan area, as well as serving residents and employees in the immediate service area. Facilities can include seating areas, restrooms, ornamental

planting beds, sculpture gardens, statues, fountains, gathering or performance areas, and plazas.

HABITAT PARKS

Habitat parks are valuable for the plant and wildlife resources they provide. These parks are often large, ranging in size from a few to several thousand acres. There are none of the usual active recreation amenities within these parks but they provide educational opportunities and passive recreation for metropolitan area residents. Facilities in these parks may include hard and soft surface trails, restrooms, picnic sites for individuals or families, interpretive centers and exhibits, restrooms, and parking lots. These parks may include small areas of lawn and landscaping. Marquam Nature Park in Southwest Portland is an example.

PARK CONNECTORS

Park connectors are those elements that transform a series of isolated parks into an integrated park system. This concept was stressed in Park Futures and is so important that the 1903 Olmsted Bros. plan for Portland Parks was titled Outlining a System of Parkways, Boulevards and Parks for the City of Portland. One passage in the 1903 report highlights this sentiment, "A connected system of parks and parkways is manifestly far more complete and useful than a series of isolated parks."

Because of their connecting function, Park Connectors tend to be linear. They include parkways, landscaped boulevards, stream and waterway corridors, greenways, undeveloped properties, undeveloped right of ways, and trails. Examples in Southwest Portland include the Terwilliger Parkway, Willamette Greenway, Tryon Creek Corridor, portions of the 40 Mile Loop, and the proposed Urban Trail System. Park connectors do not always directly connect parks. A tree-lined boulevard may have a park only at one side or may not directly connect to a park at all. Still, it promotes a sense of connectivity between neighborhoods and parks and between two neighborhoods. If appropriate, people may use it for recreation by walking, running or bicycling along it. There may be places where people can sit and relax. These linkages may also provide visual and aural benefits to individuals who may not visit the site but enjoy and appreciate the view of it from a distance. Privately and/or publicly owned stream corridors are a kind of connector that can provide a critical wildlife corridor for native plant and animal species.

Since many of these park connectors may not actually be parks, their development and maintenance requires the coordination of city bureaus, county agencies, private landowners, businesses, neighborhood organizations and other stakeholders.

CURRENT PARK PLAN PROCESS AND TYPES

Most park planning processes are fairly standard. A Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) are formed for large projects. With or without a CAC/TAC, an inventory of the site's resources is prepared, an assessment of opportunities and constraints is developed, and goals and objectives for the park are developed. These goals and objectives are translated into plan concept alternatives, a preferred design is selected and

refined, improvements are prioritized, and cost estimates are prepared that reflect the preferred design. If funding is available, staff moves directly into the preparation of construction documents, bids the project, and oversees construction. One or more meetings is held throughout the process. The larger the project, the greater the number of meetings. This is a thorough, but time consuming process.

The Working Group did not attempt to change the established processes for park planning and those that are specified in city code. They are summarized below to provide context for the proposed new plan type – the Park Functional Plan.

(Note: These Park Plan Types are being further refined and consolidated as part of the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan.)

PARK MASTER PLAN

1. Description/Purpose: A Master Plan determines generally or specifically where and what kind of development will occur in parks. Park Master Plans include a detailed inventory of site attributes and resources, land use regulations, and community needs. Details include landscape, circulation, usage patterns, building programming, and footprints of all structures. Generally, a Master Plan narrative includes goals and policies, a priority list of improvements, and a schedule with cost estimates for capital development. A Master Plan builds upon a Park Functional Plan if one exists.

Note: Park Functional Plans are described in detail later in this document.

A Park Master Plan provides a detailed plan of the location and type of development that will occur in a park. It is triggered by:

- An improvement that changes the use of, or has a substantial and direct impact on, a use/space designation.
 - A proposed improvement that directly or indirectly impacts the entire park.
 - A series of improvements having a cumulative effect equal to or greater than the above.
2. Process for development and approval: Includes a broadly based Citizens Advisory Committee (comprised of users, neighbors, generalists and resource experts), supported by a Technical Advisory Committee. Focus groups and public meetings are held during the inventory phase, during the discussion of options for functions and uses and during the public comment phase after a final draft plan is written. The draft plan requires approval by Parks and is presented to City Council for approval.

PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN

1. Description/Purpose: A park improvement plan is a detailed plan developed for specific improvements within a park. Park Improvement Plans are developed for a wide variety of new or expanded park facilities such as playgrounds, trail systems, lighting, restrooms, swimming pools, community centers, and formal landscaping. Park Improvement Plans

must be consistent with current Park Functional Plans and Master or Management Plan, if they exist. These plans provide a detailed plan for specific improvements within a park. (Most plans developed to implement the 1994 26-10 General Obligation Bond projects are examples of this kind of plan.)

2. Process for development and approval: The following is a summary of the process used by Parks for the 26-10 bond projects. These projects vary greatly in size; the more detailed processes are used for the larger projects.

Research/Planning - Identify park users, neighbors and all known interested citizens. Establish initial project mailing list. Review public involvement strategy with neighborhood(s) and/or Coalition. Add additional key people to the mailing list.

Notifying - Mail initial informational newsletter to residents within an appropriate radius of project and those on the project mailing list. Newsletters provide background on the project, announce meeting dates, often include informal surveys, and always invite comments. Post signs in the park or facility providing a general project description, inviting participation, and announcing meeting date(s). Send press releases and newsletters to the media.

Involving - Hold a minimum of two Public Meetings for all but simple community garden projects. Often three or more meetings are necessary to fully develop a plan or establish priorities for funding. Public meetings for neighborhood park projects are often sponsored by the neighborhood association or friends group. Meetings related to larger projects are hosted directly by Portland Parks and Recreation.

Establish Citizen Advisory Committees for large scale projects involving siting and designing of new facilities. Committee meetings are advertised and open to the public and time is always provided for general comment. Establish informal committees as needed. These smaller working groups typically address specific issues, such as play equipment, or they attempt to resolve varying points of view. The results of committee work are reported at the next public meeting or in a follow-up newsletter as appropriate.

Open Houses are often held for large projects, featuring staffed stations at which all elements of the project are presented. Participants review the displays and materials, talk with staff and consultants, and complete comment cards at each station.

Park Walks and Talks are informal meetings where Project Managers visit with park users in the park at an advertised time. These are usually scheduled prior to the first public meeting.

Informing - Interim newsletters are produced for larger, more complex projects and sent to the expanded project mailing list. They give progress reports and announce upcoming meetings.

Final Fact Sheets are produced to share the final plan construction schedule. They are mailed to the expanded project mailing list and distributed through adjacent schools and other community facilities as appropriate.

CONDITIONAL USE MASTER PLAN

1. Description/Purpose: A Conditional Use Master Plan (CUMP) is a plan for the future development of improvements that are individually subject to conditional use regulations within a given park. The CUMP consolidates individual conditional uses to accurately assess the aggregate impacts on surrounding neighborhood and on public services. A Conditional Use Master Plan includes the components listed in the Portland City Code 33.820.070. It also includes proposed and possible future uses that must comply with applicable conditional use approval criteria as well as with other applicable requirements of 33.820 except where adjusted.
2. Process for development and approval: See City Code 33.820. Approval procedure is Type III (legislative), conditional use review.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Description/Purpose: The Management Plan includes an assessment of natural and built resources, and their sensitivity to recreational use and capital development. This plan identifies trends, issues, and threats to resource and park assets from inappropriate use or overuse. It establishes goals and a policy direction for the site including the rationale and general recommendations for type and degree of use and development and/or restoration of facilities. A management plan includes policies, strategies and actions recommended for the site.
2. Process for development and approval: Includes a broadly based Citizens Advisory Committee (comprised of users, neighbors, generalists and asset experts), supported by a Technical Advisory Committee. Focus groups and public meetings are held during the inventory phase, during the discussion of options for functions and uses, and during the public comment phase after a final draft plan is written. The draft plan requires approval by Parks and is presented to City Council for approval.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (NRMP)

1. Description/Purpose: A formally adopted management plan that meets the City's Title 33 requirements for NRMPs and replaces the City's environmental overlay zoning. It describes how natural resources are to be protected, and develops land use approval criteria specific to the management area defined by the plan. The City Code provision for NRMPs encourages the development of such plans for larger resource areas (e.g., Forest Park, Smith & Bybee Lakes).

2. Process for development and approval: See City Code, 33.430.310- 350.

WILLAMETTE GREENWAY PLAN

Description: The Willamette Greenway Plan is the City's response to statewide land use Goal 15, which required local jurisdictions to provide land use protection to land along the Willamette River. The City compiled an inventory of natural resources, views, and public access points along the Willamette River in 1988. Using this inventory as a basis, the City developed a series of requirements including setbacks, special landscaping, public access, and development standards. The area affected by the Willamette Greenway Plan is designated on the City's Comp Plan with "n" and "r" overlay zones.

Note: The City is currently updating the Greenway Plan.

Determining When, If, And What Type Of Plan Is Needed

Normal maintenance and replacements will not usually require a public planning process.

CONDITIONS REQUIRING A PARK PLAN

- Improving an unimproved site. For example, Dickinson Park is undeveloped. Before improvements are made to this site, a planning process needs to be undertaken to identify a program and plan for the park.
- Dramatic changes occurring or proposed around a park. A plan should be prepared either to lessen impacts on the park, or to modify the changes occurring outside the park, before improvements are made to the park.
- Proposals that change the park master plan or the wider area vision.
- Improvements that significantly impact the character and use of a park. The type of plan needed depends on the scope of the change and the ability of the park to absorb it. A proposal for a community-aquatics center would trigger the need for a new or revised master plan while installing new play equipment in an existing playground in an active zone or modifying zones within a park might only need an improvement plan.
- Changes to the park that make the current plan no longer useful, such as erosion, or if the park no longer meets community needs. Under these circumstances, the community or PP&R can request or schedule a new park plan.

After determining the type of plan that is needed, the work can be scheduled depending on available resources. A planning request form will be developed and made available to neighborhoods and stakeholders in the Southwest Neighborhood after this draft planning process is finalized and approved.

CRITERIA

After the plan types were reviewed and redefined, the Working Group looked at the criteria that triggered the different plan types. They developed criteria for the maintenance and/or

development activities that occur in parks, if no planning has been done. Table 1 indicates how these conditions are linked to the different plan types and processes.

PROPOSAL FOR A PARK FUNCTIONAL PLAN

One of the reasons that the Working Group was formed was to ensure that every park had a vision reached by community and staff consensus and a plan that described appropriate use, development and care. While this is achieved for parks that have master or management plans, that level of planning is a time consuming process, both for PP&R staff and for the community.

The Working Group analyzed the current process and recommended a new kind of plan that could be done more quickly, utilizing community resources, values and vision, in conjunction with, and under the guidance of, Portland Parks & Recreation. This new plan type is a basic plan that provides direction in the short term, and acts as the basis for future planning. It describes activities that are allowed and those that are not allowed. That plan type is called the Park Functional Plan and is described in detail below.

The Park Functional Plan is based on a collaborative, public input process that utilizes the available resources and expertise in the community and in PP&R, depending on the level of detail needed for a particular park. This plan type was tested on a pilot basis as the Functional Plan for Woods Park. Copies of the plan are available from SWNI or Portland Parks and Recreation. Park Functional Plans should be done for all unplanned parks as time, funds and need allow, unless a more detailed plan process is required.

PARK FUNCTIONS

Park planning often focuses on the physical elements that are needed in a park or in a particular section of the city and on the ability of particular parcel of land to accommodate or provide for that need. For example, is there a need for a soccer field and is there room for a soccer field; are there enough swimming pools in the city and where could we put them?

A different way to approach park planning is to consider the overall recreational services that PP&R provides to the public. This requires describing and quantifying those services in *functional* terms, that is, what kind of services should PP&R provide and how can those services be met with PP&R's physical resources?

Doing this connects PP&R's overall goals and mission with specific parks, park facilities, and park programs. By articulating parks services as functions performed by parks, PP&R can consider how to best fulfill its mission and to achieve its goals before it determines what type of park, park facility, or park program it offers. By looking at park services in terms of functions, PP&R is able to deal with facilities and programs on equivalent terms, is able to relate to broad community-wide goals, and can respond to a variety of urban design types.

This allows PP&R to consider the full complement of tangible and intangible parks services such as open space, youth programs, passive recreation, regional connections, natural resources and habitat. The following are examples of broad functions that PP&R provides:

Sports-based recreation
Aquatic-based recreation
Children's play opportunities
Natural resource protection and enhancement
Natural resource-based recreation and education
Recreational walking, hiking, running, & bicycling
Gardening opportunities
Urban forestry
Horticultural and botanical display and education
Non-programmed open space recreation
Access to usable space for community meetings and events
Arts, crafts & cultural based recreation and education
Historic preservation
Linkage of neighborhoods, parks and/or wildlife habitat.

These functions are then translated into specific kinds of park landscapes, parks facilities, and parks programs such as programmed sports fields, non-programmed open space, swimming pools, trails, habitat areas, community centers, an outdoor recreation program or an urban forestry program. By measuring services along functional lines, the full array of parks and recreation services can be accounted for, including multiple functions at one park location.

Approaching planning in this way emphasizes that each individual park is part of a larger system of parks and recreation services. Therefore, as the Functional Plan process considers how park spaces are allocated for use, it must also fit into system-wide needs. The Functional Plan process must resolve local versus system needs by weighing local desires against system-wide needs that have been developed from system-wide goals.

PARK FUNCTIONAL PLAN

1. Description/Purpose: A Park Functional Plan is the most basic plan for a park. It includes an overall vision for the park, general policies, park space designations for desired park uses, appropriate management practices, and on-going community involvement. The park functional plan also looks outside the park and takes into account how the park relates to other parks, to trail and bicycle systems, and to natural resources.

A Functional Plan is developed when:

- No plan exists and a plan is requested to guide park use or park stewardship.
- The park resource is degraded or overused.
- A new or different use or significant improvement is proposed.
- Park sufficiency or deficiency issues need to be addressed.
- There are significant changes in the surrounding neighborhood.
- An outside mandate is given.

2. Process for development and approval: Uses the workshop process as the primary means of developing the plan. This is described in detail in this document. Following the

development of a Draft Functional Plan there is an opportunity for public comments, then approval by PP&R and SWNI and a Report to Council is given to the City Council.

PARK SPACES

A critical element of the Park Functional Plan is to determine what areas are appropriate for certain kinds of use. Some park lands can easily handle intensive active use such as sports fields while other lands are fragile and must be protected.

The Working Group determined that there are four basic park spaces – Active, Passive, Natural Areas and Transition. These space distinctions are based on the need to protect resources and the need to provide recreation to the community. They are described below.

ACTIVE SPACE

1. Description: Areas in parks that are suitable for and often used for intensive recreation. Active spaces are often open, with trees or shrubs along the perimeters, providing areas for sports fields, large built facilities such as swim centers and sports complexes and areas for large celebrations and events.
2. Purpose: Active spaces provide for uses that have potentially high impacts on the resource for organized, sometimes intensive, sports, spectator sports, celebrations, and instruction.
3. Examples: All appropriate recreation activities are allowed and major alterations to the land may be appropriate. Waterfront Park is an excellent example of a park with many active spaces. The meadows, although unstructured, host many of Portland's festivals, ranging from Rose Festival to a Blues Festival. Other examples of active spaces are sports fields and stadiums located throughout the city in neighborhood, community and special parks. Group picnic areas are included in active areas, as are community centers, aquatic centers, and such special uses as the Portland International Raceway.

Specific uses include, but are not limited to:

Tennis courts	Stadiums
Basketball courts	Volleyball courts
Playgrounds	Skateboard facilities
Off-leash areas for dogs	Group picnic areas
Amphitheaters	Aquatic, community, and art centers
Multi-use sports fields: soccer, football, softball and baseball	

PASSIVE SPACE

1. Description: Areas in parks that are suitable for unstructured uses and low intensity recreation. Passive spaces are planned landscapes that may vary from open meadows to areas with shrub beds, ornamental plantings, trees, benches, tables and pathways. These areas are often irrigated. Minor development and alteration to the landscape may be appropriate depending on the particular site and use.

2. Purpose: Passive spaces provide for informal park use, with low impact on the land, often solitary and quiet in nature. These areas are available for casual park users that come to a park for respite from the surrounding urban area to enjoy the park's beauty, its sense of spaciousness, and to recreate informally. Unlike active areas, its purpose is not to provide for organized sports or activities.
3. Examples are as diverse as the users of the space. Uses include, but are not limited to:

Walking	Individual picnics
Reading	Kite Flying
Sun bathing	Meditation
Play areas	Leashed pet exercise
Bicycling on trails or paths	

NATURAL AREAS

1. Description: Areas with important or unique natural resource values. Natural areas often conform to the City's designated 'environmental protection overlay zones'. They can be forested areas, meadows, wetland areas, and riparian areas. Natural Areas can include habitat spaces that conform to specific natural settings, such as Northwest Coast or Cascade upland forest or riparian areas, or Willamette Valley meadow or wetland areas. Development which has limited, minimal impact on the resource is allowed. Public access may be restricted to protect the resource. Development may include interpretive signs, benches and other minor elements, except at trailheads which may have parking areas and restroom facilities.
2. Purpose: The primary purpose is to provide beneficial fish and/or wildlife habitat for native species. It may help support stream buffers and wildlife corridors, and it can provide significant benefits to water quality and stormwater management as well as wildlife and aquatic organisms by providing shade and natural, vegetative filtering of runoff into streams. Additionally, these vegetative corridors provide significant local infiltration of runoff into the ground, which helps sustain steam flows in the early months of the summer dry season.

Another purpose of natural areas is to provide for outdoor recreation and nature study, but only to the extent that it does not infringe on the primary purpose of the natural areas.

3. Examples: Natural areas can encompass an entire park, such as Marquam Nature Park, or be a riparian, wooded, or meadow area within a traditional park. Examples include the heavily wooded northwest corner of Pier Park, or the wooded and wetland areas of Gabriel Park. Appropriate activities have minimal impact on the resource and are confined to specific areas.

Activities may include:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Walking and hiking | Restoration and maintenance |
| Education and nature study | Reading, resting, meditation |
| Wildlife viewing | |

Leashed pet exercise (pets may be excluded completely from very sensitive habitat)
Bicycling (bicycles may be excluded from very sensitive habitat spaces, or trails with high levels of pedestrian use)

TRANSITION SPACE

1. Description: Areas where uses change from active to passive or natural to active. These spaces vary widely in their character depending on the types of activities or areas that are being separated.
2. Purpose: To buffer users and resources from unwanted impacts and to provide a gradual transition from one activity or use to an adjacent one.
3. Examples: These spaces vary from a path that separates an active ball field from a quiet view point to a cultivated or vegetated area that separates a natural area from a picnic area.

CORRIDORS

1. Description: These are linear systems that may be watershed-based stream corridors or land-based trail corridors, parkways and boulevards. They may be public or private.
2. Purpose: Corridors link parks and natural areas to form important connections that enlarge the park system.
3. Examples: Many sections of the 40 Mile Loop Trail, the Willamette Greenway, and many streams in the city.

Typical activities include walking, biking, driving, nature study and scenic enjoyment.

Park Space Development Guidelines

The following guidelines were developed by the Working Group to address typical projects and activities appropriate to each type of Park Space – Active, Passive, Natural and Transition Spaces. Additional guidelines that address the park function of corridors are also included.

These are advisory in nature, and should be followed where appropriate, but may be altered depending on specific site conditions and recreation needs. These guidelines were developed to address issues in Southwest Parks, but efforts have been made to broaden the language so they can be applied to all Portland parks, if this is a desired outcome of the 2020 Vision Plan process.

GUIDELINES FOR ALL DEVELOPMENT

Protect soils and water quality in all park development. Provide adequate drainage and prevent erosion. Preserve and enhance trees and native vegetation wherever possible.

ACTIVE SPACE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Typical development will accommodate high intensity use and may significantly alter the landscape. Typical development may include athletic fields and sports facilities, play areas, group picnic areas, community centers and other buildings, pools, parking lots, dog off-leash areas, and other specific intensive uses. Maintenance requirements are frequently high.

Direct runoff to swales or infiltration basins. Preserve mature trees and native plant materials where possible. Separate active spaces from passive spaces and natural areas where practical and desirable by appropriate transition zones.

Locate regional facilities that attract high numbers of users near multi-modal transportation facilities and provide adequate off-street parking. Site athletic complexes and other regional facilities so that lights, noise and traffic do not unduly impact neighboring residential areas.

Examples of Active Recreation Activities and Resource Needed:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Resource Needed</u>
Athletic Complex	Large (10 acres), reasonably flat, away from residences.
Sports Fields	2 to 3 acres, flat/open areas, buffered from residences.
Community Center	4 to 5 acres, close to public transportation, off-street parking.
Group Picnic Area	Large shaded or open area near parking and lawn/play space.

PASSIVE SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Most parks provide some passive recreation by virtue of being green, open spaces that are different from the surrounding built environment. Passive recreation areas vary widely in appearance and in use. They may be natural, semi-natural or highly maintained but are unstructured in terms of the activities that can occur. The condition and value of the resource limit the use. Passive recreation can occur in areas that are programmed for other things, such as flying a kite on an unused ball field. The areas may have natural resource values.

Typical development of passive space is limited and has little impact on the landscape. Development may enhance the landscape but does not involve massive disruptions. Development includes few, if any, structures (restrooms) and no organized activities. Maintenance requirements may be relatively low, depending on whether the area is manicured and irrigated.

Examples of Passive/Unstructured Recreation Activities and Resource Needed:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Resource Needed</u>
Walking Paths	Soft-surface or pavement
Sitting/resting	Benches/lawn area
Dog walking (on leash)	Paths or lawn area
Visual relief	Green places, vistas, trees and plants
Kite flying/Frisbee tossing	Unobstructed open field
'Pick-up' sports games	Open field or unscheduled sports field
Picnicking (family or small group)	Tables - 1 or 2

NATURAL AREA DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

These areas have a particular functional ecological value such as wildlife habitat, water quality benefits, urban forest resources, stormwater detention or resource restoration. These areas are often some of the few remaining examples of the natural landscape. Often these environmental functions are compatible with passive recreation activities and provide passive recreation and education opportunities as a secondary benefit. In some cases, or at some times, public access is restricted to protect the resource.

Any development here enhances preservation and protection of the resource, or restores the resource. Limited facilities support the use and enjoyment of the resource and educate the public about the resource. Scientific research is encouraged. Some areas have Comprehensive Plan designations such as Environmental Protection or Environmental Conservation zones, Greenway or Scenic Resources that provide protection and allow certain uses.

Trail development should allow the public to view streams, wetlands and other interesting habitat without impacting the resource. Urban trails and pedestrian routes identified by SWNI should be considered. Well-drained, durable gravel trails or soft-surface trails are appropriate in low use areas. Paved trails may be appropriate for ADA access. Raised walkways may be preferred for sensitive wet areas. Trailheads may be developed with parking, restrooms and educational signing. Lighting is to be avoided in habitat areas.

Examples of Natural Area Activities and Resource Needed:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Resource Needed</u>
Walking/hiking	Designated trails - paved or soft-surface
Education/Interpretation	Functional habitats with significant educational values
Resting, meditating	Occasional benches or sitting areas.
Habitat restoration	Degraded or overused natural resource.

TRANSITION SPACE DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

These areas provide for a change in activities, usually from active to passive or natural areas. Different plants, slopes or habitats may be used to signal the transition from one space to another. The transition may be as simple as a path between two kinds of spaces or as great as a wide lawn area or large planted buffer.

Development of a Transition Space is highly dependent on the nature of the differing activities, the need for safety requirements and the condition of the particular site. In some cases, there is no need to develop a particular transition space. The distance between activities may be sufficient to act as the transition space.

Important natural areas are most likely to need transition spaces, especially if they are located near an active recreation area. The transition should provide habitat protection and signal to the park user that a different kind of activity is appropriate.

CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

These are linear systems that may be watershed-based stream corridors or land-based trail corridors, parkways and boulevards. They may be public or private. Typical activities include walking, biking, driving, nature study and scenic enjoyment. Corridors that link parks and natural areas form important connections that enlarge the park system.

Development, if any, is dependent on the particular site.

STANDARDS

These are uniform construction details used throughout the City and PP&R. These are designs for specific park elements, structures and facilities throughout the city and the park system. Copies of these standards may be obtained from the City of Portland.

- City of Portland Standard Construction Specifications – for sidewalks, street improvements, utilities, etc.
- City of Portland Environmental Handbook – for work in Environmental zones.
- Park and Recreation Design Standards – for park elements such as benches, path lights, picnic tables, drinking fountains, etc.

There are no existing standards for trails in natural areas. Such a standard is needed to provide adequate guidance for community stewardship activities.

Criteria For Determining Which Parks Need Functional Plans

Even though the process for developing Functional Plans is designed to need fewer staff and less resources than other park planning processes, it still requires a lot of citizen, Park and other city bureaus staff time. The Working Group felt it would be helpful to rank the triggers for when a Functional Plan is needed and then apply this to a list of Southwest Parks based upon readily available information. This rough categorical ranking of the parks for planning priority shown in Table 2 is a general guide, and may not reflect levels of community interest in planning if those interests have not been previously voiced. This table gives a general sense of the parks in Southwest Portland that need this basic level of planning and shows where the need is most urgent.

Although all of the planning triggers are important, the three considered to be most significant by the Working Group are:

- Overused or degraded resources.
- Development.
- Public interest.

Any of these factors is considered a high priority. If a combination of two or three of these factors is present, the urgency for planning increases. Parks that are physically close together or directly linked can be planned as a unit.

The Willamette Greenway was excluded from this list because it falls under a state mandate that requires a different and more extensive planning process. For the parks on the list which

have city-wide or regional uses, the planning process will be expanded to include input from a broader geographic area, and will be more staff and resource intensive. These three triggers are explained further below.

OVERUSED OR DEGRADED RESOURCES

Since natural features are often a key aspect of a park's value, degradation of those natural features is a high priority for developing a Functional Plan for that park. This can include erosion, degradation of water quality, overuse or invasion by non-native species.

The man-made structures and facilities at a park may also become degraded through overuse, lack of maintenance or vandalism. When any park resources become seriously degraded, or in danger of serious degradation, planning is needed to restore them.

DEVELOPMENT

Park qualities of open space and natural beauty are among the key aspects of their value. Because park development can change the basic character of a park, it is a high priority criteria for developing a Functional Plan.

Typically, development requires a more complex plan than a Functional Plan. If a more complex planning process is used, it will integrate many of the elements of Functional Plan. This is especially critical if the park has no existing plan or an existing plan is outdated due to age or changes in the surrounding neighborhood.

PUBLIC INTEREST

If there is a high level of public interest to develop a plan and to do specific stewardship activities, then a Functional Plan is needed to ensure that those activities reflect the vision and plan for the park. This is especially critical if several citizen groups wish to take active stewardship roles.

Public interest may be shown by organized groups wishing to conduct building, restoration or other stewardship activities, documented concern through neighborhood surveys, an organized citizen planning group that is interested in gathering data to develop a plan, or other levels of citizen interest and concern.

PP&R will consider these concerns as they decide which parks will have Functional Plans and when staff will be available to coordinate and guide the planning process.

Table 1: SOUTHWEST PARKS PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Categories of Use	Description of Use/Activity Triggering Plan	Type of Plan	Plan Purpose	Plan Development Process	Adoption Process
Routine Maintenance & Ongoing Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Routine maintenance ➤ Routine programmed or non-programmed use that is not destructive, and is consistent with historical use of the park ➤ Replacement of existing facilities ➤ Removal of non-native plants 	No plan needed (exempt)	Not applicable	None	None
Proposed New Uses, Proposed Renovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New park land acquired ➤ No plan exists & neighborhood or stewardship group requests plan to guide park use or stewardship activities ➤ Park resources are obviously degraded or overused ➤ A new or different use is proposed ➤ Significant changes in surrounding neighborhood ➤ Park sufficiency or deficiency issues need to be addressed ➤ No plan exists and a significant improvement is proposed ➤ Outside mandate (e.g. Metro Title 3) 	Park Functional Plan	The most basic plan for a park.	Charette Public and Bureau comment	Opportunity for public comments. Review by PP&R Management. Report to City Council for approval.
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Any improvement that changes the use of or has a substantial and direct impact on a use/space designation ➤ Any proposed improvement that directly or indirectly impacts the entire park ➤ A series of improvements having a cumulative effect equal to or greater than the above 	Master Plan	Builds on Park Functional Plan. Provides a detailed plan of the location and type of development that will occur in a park.	CAC, TAC, focus groups, Public comment	Extensive public involvement process. Plan review by PP&R Report to City Council for approval.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposal triggers city code requirement 	Conditional Use Master Plan	Plan for future improvements that are individually subject to conditional use regulations.	See city code 33.820	Type III (legislative) conditional use review
Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Natural resources are substantially degraded ➤ Park provides critical habitat ➤ A significant resource restoration or enhancement ➤ Project requiring environmental review is proposed ➤ A series of resource projects that collectively have ➤ A substantial cumulative impact is proposed 	Management Plan	To provide a plan to protect, restore and enhance natural resources at a particular site.	CAC, TAC, focus groups, Public comment	Extensive public involvement process Draft plan review by PP&R Management Report to City Council for approval
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Proposal fits with city code recommendations and involves development and mitigation proposed at different times and places in a large ecosystem, may involve areas of multiple ownership. 	Natural Resources Management Plan	Provides for protection and management of natural resources within a given area.	Developed by staff. Criteria specified in City Code	Type III(legislative)
Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Any park improvement that expands or substantially changes an existing structure or facility, that adds a new permanent structure or facility that substantially alters the landscape or that introduces a new uses. 	Park Improvement Plan	To provide a detailed plan for specific improvements within a park.	See GOBI public involvement standards.	See GOBI public involvement standards.

Table 2. PRIORITIZING SW PARKS* AND GREENPACES** NEEDING FUNCTIONAL PLANS

*This listing only includes parks in the areas covered by SWNI neighborhoods.

** The list includes some Greenspaces that involve multiple owners in addition to PP&R. The Willamette Greenway was excluded from this list because it falls under a state mandate that requires a different and more extensive planning process.

Park Name	Location	Existing Plans: (MP/NRMP/Improvement)
Tier One Priority – Most Urgent		
Dickinson	Alfred & Dickinson	
Willamette Moorage	Southwest Macadam, N of Sellwood Br.	
Willamette Park	Southwest Macadam & Nebraska	MP (> 10 yrs old)
Woods Memorial	45th & Baird	
Tier Two Priority		
Hillsdale	27th & Hillsdale	Improvement recent
Himes, George Park	Southwest Terwilliger & Slavin	
Kerr		
Lesser	57th & Haines	
Maricara	29th & Maricara	
Marshall	18th Place, 12 th Dr.	
Spring Garden	Spring Garden/Dolph	
Stephens Creek	Bertha	
Taylor Woods	53rd & Dickinson	
Tryon Creek	Dolph/Barbur	
Tryon Linkages – Foley\Balmer\Jensen\Henderson	Lancaster/18th & Broadleaf	
West Portland	39th & Pomona	
Tier Three Priority		
Gabriel Park	45 & Vermont	
Marquam Nature Park	Marquam & Sam	MP (> 10 yrs. Old)
Thomas & 53 rd	Southwest 53 rd & Thomas	
Tier 4 Priority		
April Hill	58th & Miles	Improvement recent
Burlingame (Falcon)	12th & Falcon	Improvement recent
Custer	21st & Capitol	Improvement recent
Dewitt	Dewitt & Sunset	
Duniway	6th & Sheridan	Improvement recent
Fulton Park\Fulton Park C.C.	2nd & Miles	
Hamilton	45 & Hamilton	Improvement recent
Kelley	Boundary	
Lair Hill	2nd & Woods	Improvement recent
Multnomah Art Center	Capitol Hwy	
Pendleton	55th & Iowa	Improvement recent
Terwilliger	6th - Sheridan/Slavin	Improvement recent - pathway
Willamette Greenway	Willamette River & Southwest Macadam	

The Park Functional Plan Design Charrette/Workshop Process

The Working Group adapted the charrette process to develop a Park Functional Plan. This process differs from other park planning processes developed to date because it relies on citizen volunteers working with city staff. It is a collaborative process which may be initiated by citizens or by PP&R and is managed collaboratively.

A Work Team is formed to which is balanced to reflect the views of all the various interests. The membership of the Work Team is approved by the Director of PP&R and by the SWNI Board, with suggestions from the appropriate Neighborhood Association. All levels of park users and approval agencies are invited to a series of meetings called charrettes held near or in the park site.

The word charrette comes from the French word meaning "little cart". At the Ecole de Beaux Art in Paris during the 19th century, proctors would go around with carts to collect the student's final drawings and the students would jump on the "charrette" to add the last finishing touches. The term is used now to refer to an intensive planning or design process involving all members of a design team to achieve consensus and get good quality in a project.

Because it is a consensus process, it relies on solutions that all participants may not agree with, but that they can live with. Where consensus cannot be reached, PP&R, as the managing agency, will decide the appropriate course of action. The charrette process provides quality and speed by serving as a forum for an uninterrupted focus, and by pooling many talents and interests to make a more creative and holistic process.

The Working Group used a charrette process to develop a prototype Functional Plan for Woods Park.

A typical Park Functional Plan process includes two public meetings, with time for public comment and draft plan development between the meetings. No more than twelve weeks should be between meetings. Prior to the first meeting, data is assembled by the Work Team using historical documents, public input and on-site review. That information is used to develop the problem statement, a park history, a park inventory, and a preliminary site analysis. Additional information is gathered on current and future uses and values.

Ideally the park inventory is developed over the period of a year to ensure that seasonal variations in site conditions are included. This information can also be developed through mechanisms other than direct observation such as data from similar sites and interviews with long time residents.

Public Outreach:

The charrettes are publicized via community newspapers, e-mail, direct mail to neighbors within an appropriate radius of the park, broader circulating newspapers, and posting of signs in the park.

The following are notified and invited:

- Neighboring residents, businesses, and institutions
- Neighborhood Association representatives
- Watershed council representatives
- SWNI Parks Committee representatives
- Organized user groups
- City bureaus and/or regional government agencies with overlapping jurisdiction.
- Portland Audubon and/or other natural resource representatives and advocates.

An optional tour of the park precedes the first charrette. The charrette starts with a presentation of known information, a limited site analysis, and a summary of the relevant issues. The site analysis presents the constraints and opportunities posed by the site and identifies the problem areas, including an assessment of the impacts and desirability of any existing facilities and uses.

Items discussed at the meeting include:

- The existing values and uses of the park.
- The current level of service for the neighborhood(s) served by this park for active and passive recreation.
- Zoning code implications for this park.
- The role of this park in terms of habitat, and watershed functions.
- How this park and its functions fit in the larger park system.

The products of the first meeting allow the Work Team to develop design and policy alternatives to present at the second meeting. The second charrette is used to achieve consensus for a favored alternative, and to clarify the roles and process that will allow citizens and PP&R to move ahead. The products of the second meeting are a site plan and a Draft Functional Plan that includes a policy statement, the park history, inventory and site analysis. A designated group develops a Stewardship Agreement to be included with the plan.

The Site Plan shows the following details, at a minimum:

- Existing facilities, including official as well as unapproved existing features such as trails, bridges, structures and play equipment.
- Park space designations.
- Environmental and other overlay zones.
- Specific development, if any is proposed.
- Vegetation management schemes.
- Connections to outside trail systems, natural resource systems, other land uses or transit.

The Policy Statement indicates:

- Appropriate and intended uses, and why.
- Limitations, if any, on use and development.
- Stewardship agreements and roles of parties involved.
- Identify additional work needed.
- Process for continued citizen participation and review.

Plan Review and Approval Process

Copies of the plan are made available through web sites and distributed in and around the park community at the Neighborhood Association office and other community institutions. Public comments are taken via electronic mail, fax or regular mail. Comments are solicited from many sources within the public, private and community sector.

Comments are solicited from the following:

- Portland Parks and Recreation: Various sections including Planning and Design Development, Public Involvement, Volunteer Coordinator, Management, Operations.
- Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
- Portland Planning Bureau and Planning Commission Staff
- Portland City Attorney Offices (Parks and Land Use)
- Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement
- Multnomah County Siting
- Metro Parks and Open Spaces
- SWNI Parks Committee, SWNI Board of Directors and Staff.
- SWNI Neighborhood Associations
- Appropriate Friends Groups
- Watershed organizations
- Portland Audubon Society

Following the comment period, the Final Draft Functional Plan is revised by the Working Group. Comments are taken and integrated into the Functional Plan as appropriate.

Approval Process

The Functional Plan is presented to the SWNI Parks Committee and then to the full SWNI Board. These steps typically take 45 to 60 days for both approvals. SWNI Parks Committee and the SWNI Board carefully review all amendments to the plan and approved the plan. PP&R staff reviews the Functional Plan and recommends it to the Director for approval. Following this dual approval process, the Director recommends approval to the Commissioner in Charge and presents a Report to Council.

WORKING GROUP CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report is the product of many meetings involving the Working Group and the public and includes many lessons learned through the preparation of the Woods Park Functional Plan. The scope of this effort was far more extensive than could be accomplished with only volunteer labor and PP&R staff completed many tasks.

This report describes a new park planning process but it is only a beginning. The Working Group expects this process to be critically evaluated and modified in order to produce an even better product in a more timely fashion.

UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Many of the issues the Working Group grappled with are not limited to Southwest Parks, but are city-wide issues. The Working Group tried to devise approaches appropriate to Southwest Portland, but many of these issues can only be satisfactorily resolved on a city-wide basis.

The three citizen members of the Working Group drafted the following recommendations addressing the topics for which they felt that additional policies or standards need to be developed. The recommendations have received review and comment by the SWNI Parks and Community Center Committee and by participants in the Southwest Parks Planning Process.

This discussion of unresolved issues is included in this report because the resolution of these issues is needed for complete implementation of this proposed planning process. The SWNI Parks Committee and SWNI can only take actions that relate to the neighborhoods within the coalition. The citizen committee members recognize that these recommendations will need additions or changes to be appropriate city-wide.

Note: The following recommendations do not necessarily represent the opinions of city staff who participated in the Working Group. Most of these concerns are currently being addressed as part of the 2020 Vision and Strategic Plan.

These issues have been grouped for action or response by the SWNI Parks Committee, Portland Parks and Recreation and PP&R's 2020 Process.

Issues for the SWNI Parks Committee

Dog Off-Leash Areas

Issue: Many people like to use parks to exercise their dogs and off-leash areas have become an especially popular park use. We recognize that this is a controversial city-wide issue that could not be addressed within the scope of the committee's work. Development of a clear policy on this issue is critical to the park planning process. Without a policy, it is difficult to avoid conflicting uses and to achieve consensus during the planning process.

Recommendation: Since the city has developed a formal committee to address this issue we recommend that the SWNI Parks and Community Center Committee request that the SWNI Board submit the following recommendation to that committee by letter.

If off-leash areas are to continue to be placed in parks, the following policies should be followed when siting off-leash areas:

- a. There need to be enough off-leash areas distributed throughout the region both to conveniently support dog owners and also to reduce facilities impacts caused by overuse of a few facilities.
- b. Off-leash areas should be conveniently located for dog owners and also to minimize conflicts with other park uses and should be designed to be pleasing to humans and to dogs.

- c. Off-leash areas should be rotated regularly to give the soil and vegetation time to recover from periods of extensive use.
- d. Storm water runoff from off-leash areas must be handled in a manner that avoids contaminating streams and other bodies of water with bacteria or silt.

Issues for Portland Parks and Recreation

Non-Park Use of Parks

Issue: The city has existing policy on the non-park use of parks that currently does not include any public input when permits for non-park use are requested.

Recommendation: Consider amending the policy to include a public involvement process for certain levels of non-park use. Non-park uses should be strictly limited, and the specific levels of activity requiring the public notification process should be developed with public input. The public notice of non-park use applications should include written notification of the Neighborhood coalitions as well as neighbors and businesses near the park.

Planning for Parks

Issue: Bond measure and budgets for parkland acquisition and development have not always included funding for park planning activities.

Recommendation: Incorporate planning in all park acquisition and improvement proposals. The lack of existing plans for Southwest Parks is evident from Table 2. Funding to develop plans must be included in all acquisition and development proposals. PP&R is also strongly encouraged to set up a timeline for developing plans for all parks, especially for Tier 1 Parks as indicated on Table 2. A variety of funding sources must be sought to ensure that parks are developed and managed with adequate planning. This is critical for the individual parks as well as the park system as a whole.

Issues for Parks 2020 Process

Memorials

Issue: Large memorials are of such a scale, and commemorate such significant events that they will attract visitors on a citywide basis.

Recommendation: These types of memorials should only be sited in regional park facilities using a clearly defined policy that will prevent fragmentation of the park by the placement of memorials. If the anticipated use is expected to be heavy enough to impact the passive values, or the nature of the memorial is less passive then it should be placed in a more active space of the park.

Community Center Placement

Issue: Increased urban in-fill has placed added value on park open space. Community centers and other buildings use large portions of land.

Recommendation: Community centers and other buildings are generally an inappropriate use of park open space in parts of Southwest Portland deficient in public open spaces.

Additionally due to the regional service provided by Community Centers they should have excellent access via public transit, auto, bicycle and walking.

Land Acquisition:

Issue: Portland Parks and Recreation has existing guidelines for land acquisition, typically developed on an ad-hoc basis to address use of particular funding sources.

Recommendations: Acquisition criteria currently in use should be reviewed during the 2020 process to encourage acquisition of properties that will provide maximum benefit, help address local and systemic park deficiencies and require the least amount of resource disturbance to convert it to park uses. Criteria should be made part of documents readily available to citizens interested in park planning.

Park Deficiency/Sufficiency - Level of Service

Issue: For many years local parks services have been quantified in terms of the amount of parkland provided for the population base served. This land-based level of service measurement is commonly expressed as the number of acres of parkland available per thousand of population. Using these terms, national and local standards for park services have been established. At times additional parameters are incorporated into the measurement, such as the proximity of the park acres provided to where the population lives or works, or park typology indicating what kind of parks are provided.

While information presented in these terms can be useful in an overall sense, these measurements reflect little about the quality or variety of parks services provided. Measuring the number of acres does not account for the variety of parks facilities and services that might be available at a park location. For example, tennis courts, softball fields, community centers, aquatic facilities, community gardens, children's playgrounds, as well as recreational and cultural programs, all important elements of parks services, are missed by the traditional level of service measurement. In addition, it's important to keep in mind that any method of measurement of parks acres, facilities, and programs, perfected or not, is merely a measurement of the *supply* side of parks services.

Level of service measures for PP&R have also referred to specific park types. An example of this is the methodology used to develop the Parks and Recreation systems development charges for residential properties. While the park types may be useful, they neglect certain important components needed for park planning. Neighborhood or community parks frequently include small areas that are valuable natural resource/habitat areas, and in rare circumstances parks which are primarily habitat may contain small areas that include recreational functions more typically found in neighborhood parks. Planning that relies on park types as a measure of level of service cannot incorporate the multiple functions that these parks play, and also makes management of mixed functions more difficult.

Recommendation: PP&R should use measures that include park functions in its calculations of level of service.

Market Analysis of Current and Future Demand

Issue: Measures used for both current and future demand for parks and park resources are very crude. A variety of tools may be used to obtain these measures.

Recommendation: PP&R should consider a mix of different techniques to gather information from the public about current and future park use and needs. These include, but are not limited to, focus groups (this is especially important for discussion of park functions), new surveys conducted from an adequate sampling frame, summarizing data from neighborhood surveys conducted in the last five years, and public meetings. Estimates of population and housing patterns should also be integrated into this evaluation. This will be an important aspect for PP&R's 2020 process to explore. Without a measure of demand, it will be difficult to develop appropriate level of service criteria and evaluate the quality of service provided by parks.

Park Saturation

Issue: While the development of standards for the placement of new facilities is encouraged, standards by themselves do not ensure an integrated preservation of parks. Although a functional plan may indicate a particular use or function, we currently have no way of determining when there is 'enough' development and a park space is saturated. For example, how many memorials, plaques and statues should be allowed in a park area designated for such facilities? When do we say that there are so many things in place that no more should be added? An example of an area where this is a concern is in the Rose Garden Area of Washington Park. There are clearly some citizens in Southwest neighborhoods who feel the same way about Gabriel Park. This remains an unresolved and controversial issue that needs more research and discussion.

Recommendation: This issue should be examined and some policies to address this issue should be developed.
