



# THE VISION

## THE VISIONING PROCESS

Only informed residents can make informed decisions about the future of parks and recreation. While it is wonderful to live in a city with an international reputation for its livability, we must not become complacent about its condition or the needs of future generations.

A dedicated Vision Team and dozens of staff prepared this **Parks 2020 Vision** to guide the future work needed to maintain and build our parks. Thousands of concerned residents made suggestions and recommendations — showing their desire to renew our parks and recreation system, build new facilities and protect our natural resources.

This vision is built on, and incorporates, a broad range of residents interests, values, and input that will ensure sufficient parkland, facilities, and recreation programs for all residents now and in the future. Together we can realize that vision.

## PARKS 2020 VISION

***Portland's parks, public places, natural areas and recreational opportunities give life and beauty to our city. These essential assets connect people to place, self and others. Portland's residents will treasure and care for this legacy, building on the past to provide for future generations.***

## 2020 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### ENSURE PORTLAND'S PARK AND RECREATION LEGACY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

- Develop fully programmed, fully operational, and well-maintained parks, facilities and programs that meet both current and future park and recreation needs.
- Increase to 90% the proportion of the public who feel parks' overall quality is good or very good (from 84% reported in 1999-00 City of Portland Service Efforts and Accomplishments report).
- Educate the public and local leaders about the value, benefits, conditions, and needs of Portland's park system.
- Coordinate planning, management, development, and funding of parks, natural resources, trails, and recreation needs and concerns with city and regional planning efforts.
- Engage residents as stewards of Portland's parks and recreation system to help preserve the legacy for future generations. Increase the ratio of volunteer hours to paid staff hours to at least 30% (from 25% reported in 1999-00 SEA report).
- Increase the proportion of residents who feel PP&R does a good job "securing additional parks and open spaces to keep up with growth" by 50% (from 54% reported in 2001 PP&R poll to 81%).
- Increase the proportion of funding that comes from gifts, grants, and donations from 0.5% of the 2001 budget to 10% of the 2020 budget.
- Increase allocated funding for building maintenance from the current 1% to the industry standard of 2% of the replacement value of PP&R's buildings per the budget guidelines established by the Natural Research Council.



- Increase the proportion of residents who participate in recreation programs and facilities. Offer affordable programs and facilities. Reduce reliance on recreation fees from the current 50% to 25% of the PP&R's Recreation Division budget and backfill with general fund revenues or private funding.

**PROVIDE A WIDE VARIETY OF HIGH QUALITY RECREATION SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL RESIDENTS**

- Pursue all opportunities to provide park and recreation services — in new urban centers, along the rivers, in our communities.
- Provide a basic, developed Neighborhood Park facility within a half mile (approximately 10 to 15 minute walk) of every Portland resident, and a Community Park within a mile (approximately 20 to 30 minute walk) of every resident. Currently 80% of the system meets this goal.
- Maintain the current ratio of parkland to population — 20 acres per thousand. Currently there are 10,070 acres<sup>15</sup> for 503, 900 residents; increase that to 11,940 acres for 597,050 residents — an increase of 1,870 acres.
- Develop a full-service community center — that is, a center with a pool, arts facilities, classrooms and active recreation facilities — within three miles of every resident. Currently the only facility that meets this description is the Southwest Community Center serving 13% of the city.
- Provide 100 new sports fields for active recreation (from the current 220 sports fields to 320).
- Provide a full range of cultural arts facilities and programs.

<sup>15</sup> Note: Half of this acreage is in Forest Park.

“We need to blur the boundaries between Park and City. Let's start thinking of Portland itself as a garden. If we invest our city with the same care, love, attention and patience we extend to our private gardens, Portlanders will be rewarded with stunning beauty, ecological health, and gentle spirit of place.”

Tess Beistel,  
SE Portland resident



- Increase the proportion of residents who feel PP&R is doing a good job of providing recreational opportunities for young people through community schools and community center programs from 62% reported in 2001 PP&R poll to 90% by 2020.
- Offer meaningful recreation programs and services. Increase the proportion of residents who rate the number and variety of recreation programs as “good or very good” from 61-67% reported in the 1999-00 SEA performance report to 90% for both by 2020.
- Increase the proportion of residents who rate the overall recreation quality of Parks programs as “good or very good” from 75% reported in the 1999-00 SEA performance report to 90% by 2020.

**PRESERVE, PROTECT AND RESTORE PORTLAND’S NATURAL RESOURCES TO PROVIDE “NATURE IN THE CITY”**

- Acquire sufficient lands to protect existing resources (e. g., land along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers), to complete natural resource areas (e. g., Forest Park, Kelly Butte), and to protect locally significant natural areas (e. g., Rosemont Bluff).
- Protect, expand and restore interconnected ecosystems and wildlife corridors.
- Increase the amount of protected habitat land by 620 acres, from current 1,440 acres<sup>16</sup> to 2,060 acres.
- Increase the proportion of residents who think PP&R is doing a good job of preserving natural areas in the City from 74% reported in the 2001 Davis & Hibbitts survey, to 90% by 2020.
- Expand urban forest on city streets from 60% to 80% and within parks from 80% to 90%.

**CREATE AN INTERCONNECTED REGIONAL AND LOCAL SYSTEM OF PATHS AND WALKS TO MAKE PORTLAND “THE WALKING CITY OF THE WEST”**

- Provide safe and convenient access between parks, natural areas and recreation facilities and connect them with residential areas, civic institutions and businesses.
- Develop convenient appropriate access to major natural resource areas (e. g., the Willamette River, Forest Park, Oaks Bottom).
- Finish building the 40-Mile Loop Trail system, including the Columbia Slough, Willamette Greenway, Springwater Corridor and Fanno Creek Greenway sections (currently 60% of the 40-Mile Loop is complete).
- Double the amount of PP&R’s most heavily used resource — paved and soft-surface trails (from the current 150 miles to 300 miles of trails).

**DEVELOP PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE “COMMUNITY IN THE CITY”**

- Build public plazas and “green connections” in the regional and town centers and along the main streets.
- Integrate the parks, community centers and trails into our neighborhoods.
- Partner with schools and others to provide maximum public benefit.

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<sup>16</sup> These figures do not include Forest Park.

## 2020 STRATEGIES

### GOVERNANCE STRATEGY: DEVELOP ADDITIONAL METHODS TO ADVANCE PARK AND RECREATION ISSUES.

- **Parks Foundation.** Establish a Parks Foundation to assist with fund raising, land acquisition and special projects.
- **Park and Recreation Board.** Establish a park Board to advise PP&R on a broad range of issues, including implementation of the 2020 Vision, advocacy for park issues, and continuity for park and recreation concerns.

### PLANNING STRATEGY: DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE AND INNOVATIVE PLANNING METHODS AND PROCESSES.

- **Collaboration.** Work to implement the *Parks 2020 Vision*, its sub-area recommendations, and park development standards through city and regional planning efforts such as River Renaissance, urban renewal areas and Endangered Species Act requirements.
- **Integration.** Adopt policies and develop plans that protect the biological integrity of habitat areas and integrate resource protection with appropriate access, use and development, on a regional and local basis.
- **Civic Involvement.** Apply and refine the public involvement processes outlined in *Planning for Southwest Parks* and in Planning & Development Division *Policies & Procedures* when planning, developing and programming city parks, natural resources and recreation programs.
- **Flexibility.** Develop plans that are flexible and responsive to changing demographics (e. g., new urban forms such as town and regional centers) and emerging trends (e. g., skateboards, BMX bikes and dogs).

“Portland could be the Walking City of the West – known for its pedestrian-friendly system of urban trails, paths and walkways that link parks, plazas, community centers and natural resource areas.”

Barb Scharff,  
NE Portland resident &  
Vision Team member



**PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN EFFECTIVE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.**

- **Joint Use.** Develop agreements that ensure that school grounds and other public land currently used as ‘de facto’ park sites, remain available for public use.
- **Coordination.** Collaborate with other public agencies, especially school districts, and private organizations, to maximize park and recreation opportunities, facilities and programs. Construct large recreation facilities (e. g., sports complexes or wave pools) with neighboring jurisdictions, if feasible.
- **Consistent.** Manage partnerships in a consistent fashion, using effective communications. Measure effectiveness, benefits and results, through annual reviews and evaluation. Establish a task force to assist in developing dynamic partnerships with both small and large public and private entities.

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: DESIGN AND BUILD EXCELLENT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES.**

- **Appropriate.** Develop each park, natural area, or open space according to its own characteristics and according to its role in the overall park and recreation system.
- **Unique.** Utilize and build on the special features of each sub-area.
- **Balanced.** Provide an appropriate balance of active recreation and passive open space within each sub-area and, to the extent possible, within each park.
- **Accessible.** Develop parks and facilities that are readily available to residents. Meet, and where possible exceed, requirements for Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility to facilities and programs.
- **Maximize benefits.** Locate high-use facilities to maximize availability and to minimize impacts on local neighborhoods. Locate fields for local youth,

pick-up games, and practice fields in neighborhood parks.

- **Connected.** Develop parks, trails and facilities that are part of a system of recreation elements.

**MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM.**

- **Collaborate.** Establish a work team of marketing professionals, commissioner and bureau staff, representatives of the 2020 Vision Team, the Parks Foundation, and the Parks Board to develop consistent strategies that reach the most residents.
- **Advocate.** Educate opinion leaders who can advocate and influence funding about the value and benefits of parks and recreation.
- **Multiple approaches.** Use a broad array of techniques to reach diverse audiences including publishing in other languages, staff outreach, and community liaisons.
- **Effective.** Evaluate the effectiveness of the marketing strategies and outreach activities annually.

**MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: DEVELOP BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES.**

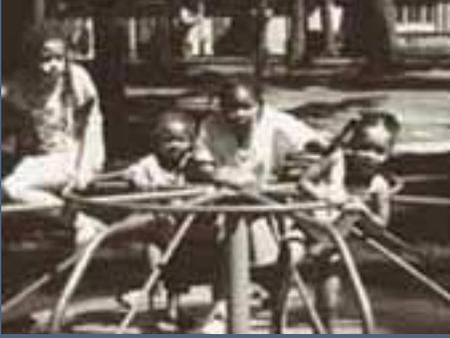
- **Sustainable.** Use environmentally friendly, sustainable methods to build and care for parks, natural resources and recreation facilities.
- **Accurate.** Develop a system of data collection and analysis to provide an accurate basis for decisions and management of parks, natural areas and facilities.
- **Effective.** Develop criteria to monitor programs for relevance and effectiveness to stated needs for particular neighborhoods or population groups.

**FUNDING STRATEGY: PROVIDE STABLE AND PREDICTABLE FUNDING TO REALIZE THE 2020 VISION.**

- **Non-monetary sources.** Increase the use of volunteer, funding partnerships, interagency cooperation, and entrepreneurial projects. Identify and initiate operating efficiencies and cost-avoidance strategies.
- **Short-term funding.** Seek voter approval to issue general obligation bonds to make needed renovations, acquisitions, and improvements. Seek voter approval for a local option tax to support park maintenance and operations.
- **Long-term funding.** Develop long-term strategies to provide dependable funding for parks and recreation needs.
- **Regional funding.** Support regional funding for regional assets and facilities (e. g., Washington Park, the botanical gardens, Delta Park).
- **Fees.** Develop fee schedules that provide cost recovery balanced against needed services. Continue to subsidize certain programs that serve populations with a demonstrated need. Provide services to city residents at lower costs than to non-residents.
- **Monitor.** Collect and analyze data annually to measure progress toward goals and determine the economic impact of parks and recreation.

“Parks 2020 Vision is worthy of an all-out effort. It will energize our communities, give opportunity for relaxation from life’s stresses, and be a shining national example of preserving our national heritage and reclaiming what is worthwhile.”

Luis Machorro,  
SE Portland resident &  
Vision Team member



## IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Our work has begun — in fact it has never stopped. This is just the most recent — and most detailed — plan to address providing park and recreation services, protecting our natural resources, and ensuring that all Portland residents enjoy the benefits of nature and nurture available in our parks and recreation facilities. But new times call for new ways to meet these needs. Implementing the following actions will help us to realize our dreams.

### ESTABLISH A PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Public involvement is vital to furthering the goals of the **Parks 2020 Vision**. An advisory Parks Board, comprised of people interested in and knowledgeable about parks, will bring an informed citizen perspective to park and recreation issues. The Board will:

- **Act as the keeper of the Vision** to ensure that the vision and recommendations of the Parks 2020 Vision are at the forefront of discussions about park and recreation issues and trends over time, and in all areas of the city.
- **Advocate for parks** on a city and regional basis to ensure that parks, natural areas, open spaces, and recreation facilities and services are advanced in city and regional planning and design.
- **Provide continuity** when transitions occur in PP&R Director and Commissioner positions.
- **Provide a forum** for public discussion and decision-making about park issues, bringing a city-wide and long-term perspective to neighborhood-based issues.

### ESTABLISH A PARKS FOUNDATION

Current public funding does not meet all of Portland's needs for park and facility improvements, parkland acquisitions, and programs and services, nor always allow the degree of excellence that residents desire. A Parks Foundation, a public-private partnership like the local Library Foundation, will bring new resources, constituencies, and expertise to PP&R's long-term stewardship of the parks' system. A Parks Foundation will help raise funds to satisfy the following park needs:

- **Provide additional funds** for new projects, long-term, vision-oriented system planning, and further innovations in park and recreation programming. Add a "margin of excellence" to the design and construction of new facilities.
- **Help acquire land** to meet future recreation needs and promote habitat restoration in parks.
- **Assist with scholarships** to increase the participation of underrepresented individuals and groups. Strengthen PP&R's relationships with the business community, special interest groups, and the public at large.

### DEVELOP A 20-YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

PP&R will develop a 20-year infrastructure master plan, to be completed within 18 months of **Parks 2020 Vision's** adoption. It will:

- Identify all park system needs.
- Estimate capital costs.



- Identify the city’s existing ability to fund current and projected capital needs.
- Identify multiple and specific funding strategies to close the gap between the system’s needs and PP&R’s current ability to meet them.

Capital projects will be given priority in a first five-year increment, a second five-year increment, and a third ten-year increment. Costs will be developed for each project, although they will become more generalized in the outer years, and funding methods will be identified to implement capital improvements. The infrastructure master plan will be dynamic; it will be updated annually through the bureau’s 5-year capital plan and biennial budget.

**DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

Because the park system is so diverse, many people know only a fraction of the services available. Developing an integrated marketing and community involvement plan will help address the lack of awareness of the scope and diversity of the system as well as the challenges and opportunities within the parks system. It will illustrate the essential role of parks and recreation in our lives and generate support for it.

The plan will address ‘brand’ recognition through strategies such as signage standards, improved outreach efforts and information distribution, and improved public involvement. Marketing and communication experts in addition to PP&R staff will ensure that the plan is responsive, efficient, and communicates as intended. Results will be analyzed regularly to assess progress and problems, and to improve products and performance.

“It is one thing to plan the future, but quite another to see it carried out. A great deal of courage, perseverance, and energy will be required to see that this bold plan becomes a reality.”

Worth Caldwell,  
SW Portland resident &  
Vision Team member



### **DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE PARTNERSHIP PLAN**

PP&R cannot and should not provide all of the park and recreation facilities in Portland, but coordination is needed to maximize benefits for residents. Some partnerships work very well, others have potential but are not successful for a variety of reasons. Of particular concern is the need for consistent school district agreements. Because of the importance of the partnerships, and the number of clients and patrons involved, it is critical to have clear written agreements.

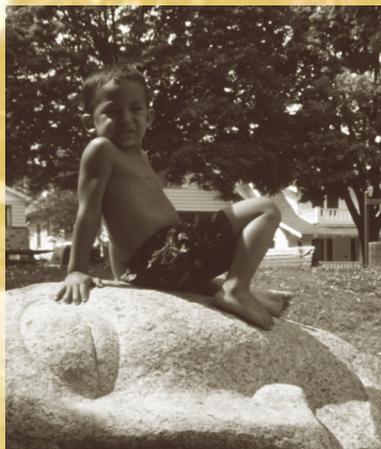
A plan will be developed to include policies and procedures to consistently and effectively manage partnerships. PP&R will respond to evolving community needs by strengthening existing partnerships and developing relationships with new partners.

### **DEVELOP LONG AND SHORT TERM FUNDING PLANS**

Seek voter approval to issue general obligation bonds to make needed renovations, acquisitions, and improvements. Develop long-term strategies to provide dependable funding for parks and recreation needs. Among the options are niche taxes (e. g., restaurant and beverage taxes or entertainment and amusement taxes) and regional funding opportunities.

“Urban parks are where vast numbers of persons [are] brought closely together, poor and rich, young and old...each individual adding by his mere presence to the pleasure of all others.”

Frederick Law Olmsted,  
father of landscape architecture, 1870



### MAKING THE VISION A REALITY

Portland is well known for innovation, for long-range planning and for creating true community. Parks play a major role in providing that community. The next few decades will test those abilities as we work to preserve and protect our park and recreation system and provide for the future. With the dedication, imagination and resources of Portlanders, we will create the park and recreation system that is essential to a livable, dynamic and vibrant city.

This report is not a finished document to be set on the shelf; it is a work in progress — the next phase in our continuing effort to build the best park and recreation system for the people of Portland. The 2020 Vision Team is dedicated to providing a vital and exceptional park and recreation system that enriches the lives of our residents and celebrates the beauty and heritage of our city. Join us in this work.

“We need peace, a place for quiet thought, something we call sacred in the profane world. In an area packed with shoulder-to-shoulder built environment, the human spirit hungers for the majesty of nature, its visible mystery. The old and young alike need its blessing, its beauty, its gift of comprehensible scale.”

Jane Glazer,  
SW Portland resident