

Chapter 9: OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND HISTORIC SITES

The conservation of land, water, and historic resources, and the related provision of recreation opportunities, is one of the most important factors in maintaining the quality of life which has made Clackamas County an attractive place to live. Recently, however, the urban area in particular has experienced a sharp jump in population, with substantial changes in the physical environment. Population growth is inevitable, at least for the foreseeable future, but the degradation of our communities is not.

Numerous natural, historic and recreation resources will continue to be available for everyone's enjoyment if the commitment is made to preserve them. The streams and river corridors, the steep wooded hillsides, marshes and wetlands, the rich farmlands, and the vast, magnificent mountains form a natural network of significant benefit. A distinctive building or section of the Barlow Trail provide us with an historical context which can be an important part of our identity. They give us a feeling of continuity, a connection with the past and with the future. Recreation resources are also important but, unlike the others, these need to be built up, changed, and improved as the demands of the people who use them change. This must be done within the limits of the natural resource systems. For instance, the natural characteristics of a stream must not be sacrificed to satisfy the demands of the people who use it for recreation. Rather, more recreation opportunities must be developed elsewhere to satisfy the demand.

This example illustrates the need for a resource conservation and recreation development strategy for Clackamas County. In the past there was ample open space and a wide selection of recreation activities available to virtually everyone. With little urban development pressure, there was little need to preserve either natural or man-made resources. Now the pressures on these resources are increasing, and will continue to mount in the future. Population density and recreation needs are rising, once cherished local open spaces are disappearing, and more people are demanding more places for a variety of recreation activities. It is increasingly clear that our options and opportunities, especially within the urban area, are becoming fewer every day. The County must take the lead to preserve the resources and develop facilities which will assure that a high quality of life is available to all County residents.

OPEN SPACE, PARKS, AND HISTORIC SITES GOALS

- **Goal 1:** Protect the open space resources of Clackamas County.
- **Goal 2:** Improve the environmental quality of the northwest urban area.
- **Goal 3:** Provide land, facilities, and programs which meet the recreation needs of County residents and visitors.
- **Goal 4:** Establish an equitable means of financing parks and recreation facilities and programs.
- **Goal 5:** Preserve the historical, archaeological, and cultural resources of the County.

ISSUES

- The effective protection of an adequate amount of open space, especially within the urban area
- The provision of adequate local recreation land, facilities and programs to meet the needs of residents and visitors
- The type of financial strategy needed to acquire, develop, and maintain recreation facilities
- The preservation of historically or culturally significant sites and structures

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Although approximately one-third of the urban area is open land at the present time, only about 5 percent is effectively preserved, and most of the balance could disappear over the next 20 years.
- Many of the areas which are a natural part of the open space network also are areas subject to natural hazards (over 11 percent of the land in the urban area), are valuable as natural resource areas, and provide natural buffers between urban communities. The two primary components of the network are stream and river corridors and forested hillsides.
- An effective land use regulation process will have to be established over the area designated as open space. Without this process, no effective preservation is possible in areas which are not acquired.
- The north urban area of the County (Census Tracts 208 through 226) is significantly deficient in public park land--approximately 2.8 acres per 1,000 population as compared to the standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population. Well over half of the total park acreage is undeveloped.
- The most deficient categories are neighborhood and community parks, particularly east of the Willamette River where there are fewer than two park acres per 1,000 population. The unincorporated part of this area is especially deficient. The north urban area also has less than average play field acreage at some schools. Serious deficiencies exist in other recreation facilities as well, especially public swimming pools and beaches, tennis and multipurpose courts, ball fields, and various types of trail systems.
- As the urbanizing area is filled in, the need for parks and other recreation facilities will intensify since the informal play areas and open spaces will no longer be there. There is a need to develop local facilities and site them for access by foot and transit. However the amount of vacant land suitable for park development in the east urban area is very limited. It is imperative that suitable acreage be acquired quickly in this area before it has been irreversibly committed to development.
- In order to meet minimum standards for the expected north urban area

population, the amount of park acreage will have to be increased. Local governments are responsible for the provision of most urban area recreation facilities and cannot necessarily expect assistance from the state or federal governments in meeting urban area park needs.

- Consideration must be given to various methods of financing the provision of adequate park and recreation facilities and programs in the urban area. A park and recreation district would probably be the best solution. It could either cover the entire urban area, or just the unincorporated area and any interested cities. Local improvement districts (LIDs) are another method. A system development charge or real estate transfer tax also should be considered to provide new facilities for the developing areas. A capital improvements program (CIP) should be instituted to make better use of all available funds.
- Many historic sites and structures in Clackamas County are in disrepair and may be expensive to restore and maintain. While many can be adapted to contemporary use, care must be taken not to harm the features which made the structure or site significant.
- Many historical features in the County are located in areas where land is quite valuable and subject to redevelopment pressure. They are often overwhelmed by surrounding developments or destroyed because their value is not recognized.
- Archaeological sites are often difficult to locate due to the lack of a written historical record. This frequently means that they have been unknowingly destroyed. These sites, even when known, cannot be specifically identified in the inventory because of their sensitivity to exploration.

OPEN SPACE

The preservation of open space is a necessity if the quality of life, particularly in the northwest urban area, is to be maintained and enhanced. The following goals and policies supplement those found in the Land Use Chapter.

Open Space Goal 1: Protect the open space resources of Clackamas County.

Open Space Goal 2: Improve the environmental quality of the northwest urban area.

9.A Open Space Policies

- 9.A.1 Initiate an environmental management program to ensure the retention and enhancement of environmental quality and open space values, particularly in the urban area.
 - 9.A.1.1 The program will resolve conflicts between a proposed land use activity (e.g., housing, timber harvesting) and the open space, scenic, historic, and natural resources of the County. The social, economic, environmental, and energy consequences of the proposed action will be identified. Changes may then be required in the proposal in order to minimize any adverse impact upon these resources. Policies from other sections of this chapter may be relevant.
 - 9.A.1.2 Detail the nature and character of visually sensitive areas (see Natural Resources and Energy Chapter). This information will be used in the site analysis outlined in Policy 4.GG.5 of the Open Space section of the Land Use Chapter.
 - 9.A.1.3 Provide site management assistance for lands which are maintained as open space, including utilization of the County's professional expertise to advise property owners on methods of land management.
 - 9.A.1.4 Initiate an urban tree conservation and planting program in cooperation with business and community groups. This program should include street tree plantings, with an emphasis on major arterials, and regulation of the removal of trees and other significant vegetation which may have value as a feature of the urban area open space (see Forestry section of Natural Resources and Energy Chapter).
- 9.A.2 Use the Open Space Network Map, which has identified desirable open space within the urban area, natural areas identified through the Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan and natural areas within Metro's Urban Reserve Area, as the guide for public acquisition of open space (willing seller, willing buyer basis only) and open space dedication during the development process (see map 9-1).

- 9.A.2.1 Refine the open space network to more specifically focus on local neighborhood and community needs. This refinement should consider the relationship between lot and ownership patterns and the natural systems and features of the open space network. The map should also indicate suitable areas for clustering development, and appropriate combinations of adjoining properties which would achieve the best balance of urban development and open space within each community.
 - 9.A.2.2 Major adjustments to this map shall be incorporated onto the Land Use Map as they occur, in accordance with the amendment process outlined in the Planning Process Chapter. Minor adjustments will be considered compatible with the existing map.
 - 9.A.2.3 Open Space Management zoning may be applied to natural areas identified through the Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan and natural areas within Metro's Urban Reserve Area, when under public or common ownership.
- 9.A.3 Protect open space resources outside the urban area through the policies of the Land Use and the Natural Resources and Energy chapters of the Plan, specifically the policies for agriculture, forestry, water resources, wildlife habitats, and distinctive resource areas.
- 9.A.4 Use all available methods of acquiring or protecting open space for the enjoyment of all County residents including the following.
- 9.A.4.1 Finance the purchase of open space land either in combination with an urban area parks and recreation district acquisition program (see Parks and Recreation Policy 9.B.7) or through a special funding measure based on all taxable property in the urban area. Full-fee acquisitions, development-rights purchase and scenic easements, among other methods, may be used to implement this program. The County will maximize the use of local money through the aggressive pursuit of federal and state funds.
 - 9.A.4.2 Set standards for accepting land dedications as part of subdivision or PUD approval. If the site contains land designated as Open Space, that land should have the highest priority for open space dedication.
 - 9.A.4.3 Publish and distribute information indicating desirable areas for land donations, what procedure to follow, and how the donor will benefit.
 - 9.A.4.4 Support the state's existing property tax reduction program for all property in designated Open Space areas as long as they are maintained as open space.

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- 9.A.5 Establish responsibility through an existing or new commission to advise the County on the preservation of open space, natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources, and the provision of adequate recreation sites. The existing Parks Advisory Board could be expanded to assume this role; however, given the extent of responsibility, formation of a new commission may be necessary.

- 9.A.6 Cooperate with ODOT in addressing specific location and completion of the Goal 5 process for the Sandy River and Indian Ridge trails after general trail alignment is determined by ODOT.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Clackamas County, like all rapidly urbanizing areas, needs to set aside land and develop facilities for the recreation and enjoyment of its residents and visitors. Various types of parks, urban recreation trails, and a number of outdoor and indoor recreational facilities will be needed over the next 20 years. Recognizing the limitations of existing facilities, priorities and standards have been set for the acquisition and development of land for recreation purposes, with a strong emphasis on the urban area.

The initial step is a commitment to provide an adequate park and recreation system to meet the needs of the people. This commitment must be met, however, within an overall strategy that considers the other legitimate needs of County residents. Different types of budgetary and funding mechanisms will need to be used and many segments of the community involved, including all governmental jurisdictions and the private sector.

Parks and Recreation Goal 3: Provide land, facilities, and programs which meet the recreation needs of County residents and visitors.

Parks and Recreation Goal 4: Establish an equitable means of financing parks and recreation facilities and programs.

9.B Parks and Recreation Policies

9.B.1 Utilize the park classifications and standards identified in Table 9-1 to guide the provision of parks and other recreation facilities throughout the County.

9.B.1.1 The County will seek to establish a park and recreation system which maximizes access for walkers, hikers, bicyclists and transit riders.

9.B.1.2 The County will seek to provide improved access and conveniences for disabled people in its park and recreation facilities.

9.B.2 Acquire and develop park sites in the urban area in order to bring that part of the County up to adopted standards. Due to the significant lack of parks and open space, the north urban area should be given special emphasis, particularly the Oak Lodge and Overland/Kendall neighborhoods.

9.B.2.1 The following park land will be acquired by the County or other appropriate agency as soon as possible (see map 9-2 for subarea boundaries):

- Subarea A not in County parks planning area
- Subarea B neighborhood parks: 150 acres
community parks: 150 acres
metropolitan parks: 250 acres

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- Subarea C neighborhood parks: 40 acres
community parks: 20 acres
metropolitan parks: 80 acres
- Subarea D not in County parks planning area

Following is the projected total parks acreage needed over the next 20 years:

- Subarea A not in County parks planning area
- Subarea B neighborhood parks: 225 acres
community parks: 225 acres
metropolitan parks: 450 acres
- Subarea C neighborhood parks: 75 acres
community parks: 75 acres
metropolitan parks: 150 acres
- Subarea D not in County parks planning area

(The above acreage requirements are based on the standards outlined in Table 9-1, Metro 1987 population figures, and 2010 population forecasts.)

9.B.2.2 Parks and other recreation sites will be developed with facilities to meet the short-term recreation needs of residents (see the Parks, Open Space, Historic Sites Background Report for information on determining recreation needs). The following is a partial list of desirable facilities for Subareas B and C:

- 5-6 swimming pools
- 3,000 feet of swimming beach
- 300-400 miles of pedestrian ways (including sidewalks)
- 100-150 miles of bike trails
- 30 ball fields
- 35 tennis courts
- 2 community centers

Many other facilities will also be needed to meet the expected demand over the next 20 years.

9.B.3 Coordinate the provision of recreational opportunities in rural areas with other local, regional, state, and federal agencies (e.g., school districts, Willamette Greenway Program).

9.B.4 Consider the need to protect environmentally sensitive areas from overuse as well as satisfy the needs of County residents and visitors in developing area park and recreation facilities.

9.B.5 Pursue the following priorities for recreation land acquisition and development, subject to review and update at regular intervals. As a general strategy, acquisition will have priority over development, due to the rate of urban development on good park sites.

9.B.5.1 Acquisition Priorities

- Priority 1: Land suitable for neighborhood or community park development in subarea B, recognizing the significant lack of both existing park facilities and available land. Action should be taken immediately to acquire as many suitable parcels as possible in the unincorporated urban area to assure an adequate amount of park land for the future.
- Priority 2: Neighborhood and community parks in subarea C. Parks should be acquired prior to or as residential areas are developed. Action should be taken immediately due to the rapid pace of development currently taking place in this area. Acquire community park sites within the open space network.
- Priority 3: A metropolitan park site for the eastern part of the urban area. This site should be centrally located and easily accessible to both Subareas B and C. Because of the requirements for this type of park, Mt. Talbert should be considered as a potential site.

9.B.5.2 Development Needs

- An urban trail system for both walking and bicycling, especially in conjunction with the development of neighborhood and community parks. Use should be made of open space linkages along creek and river banks, ridgelines, and existing rights-of-way. Open space dedication at the time of development will be used as a means of completing this trail system (see map 9-1).
- Swimming pools in community and metropolitan parks. A diversity of pool types is preferred, ranging from small, outdoor pools to a large, indoor, Olympic-sized pool.
- Neighborhood parks, which would include children's play equipment, picnic facilities, and informal open space. These parks should be strategically located so that no resident would travel more than one mile to reach the facilities.
- Ball fields as part of neighborhood and community parks, with sufficient area for several different simultaneous activities.
- Multipurpose courts in neighborhood and community parks.
- Natural areas as part of all three major urban area park types.

- 9.B.5.3 Use the preceding list of needs as a general guide for acquiring and developing recreation areas in the County. The list should be updated at least once every two years. Any funds available for general park and recreation development should be used in these priority areas. Donations of land outside the urban area should be accepted by the County. Purchase of additional land in the rural portions of the County may be considered if the land is a significant natural area that is being seriously threatened.
- 9.B.5.4 Establish a park and recreation site selection process, with location as the primary determining factor. All future acquisition and development programs should also take into account: (a) areas of substantial need; (b) how well a site meets the relative recreation needs of the service area; (c) the suitability of environmental conditions; (d) fiscal feasibility; (e) threat of loss of valuable resource; and (f) opportunity for cooperative projects.
- 9.B.5.5 Use the following criteria when considering the timing of site acquisition: (a) unusually favorable acquisition opportunities; (b) the likelihood that the site will be lost to development; (c) the appreciation rate of property in the area; and (d) the existence of advantageous opportunities to cooperate with other public agencies or private organizations.
- 9.B.6 Require all new urban residential developments to contribute to the provision of park facilities in their communities proportionate to the need generated by the development and based on the park standards established in Policy 9.B.1.
- 9.B.6.1 Develop specifications for park and open space dedications and fees in coordination with urban area and/or local park acquisition programs. Options for the developer may be:
- Dedicate land for a new park on site which meets established standards and is approved by the County;
 - Provide fees-in-lieu of park land or contribute to a systems development fund or other appropriate fund (see Process Chapter, Policy 11.B.10) in proportion to the standard; or
 - Some combination of the above.
- 9.B.6.2 Provide for a density bonus to be available for land developed with recreation facilities dedicated to public use. The bonus will be used to encourage the provision of public recreation facilities in conjunction with large development projects (see Density Bonus Section of the Housing Chapter).

- 9.B.7 Recognize the North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District as a provider of a full range of recreation facilities and programs to urban residents within the District boundaries.
 - 9.B.7.1 Provide for the district to assume ownership, planning, administration, acquisition, development and maintenance of all parks in the urban part of the County.
 - 9.B.7.2 Provide for the district to initiate a recreation program, coordinate the use of publicly operated recreation facilities, and provide access to recreation services for all County residents, focusing on the special needs of urban area residents. The recreation program will attempt to meet the recreation needs of all age groups and serve as many different interest groups as possible. Potential programs include: soccer, softball, baseball, and basketball leagues; gymnastics, martial arts, volleyball, and exercise classes; arts and crafts classes; swimming lessons; free play time in a gymnasium for children and adults; and other activities. User or participant fees will be kept as low as possible, while an attempt will be made to recoup many of the costs involved in each program.
 - 9.B.7.3 Allow the district to take over ownership and maintenance of all dedicated open space upon approval of the organization (e.g., homeowners association) or agency which holds the title.

- 9.B.8 Use all available and responsible means to reduce the cost of acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities, while working toward the provision of facilities and programs specified in Policies 9.B.1 and 9.B.6.
 - 9.B.8.1 Develop a capital improvements program for parks and recreation facilities to make efficient use of all funding sources and to plan for needed facilities and their maintenance.
 - 9.B.8.2 Seek to place idle park or open space lands into revenue producing interim uses compatible with their ultimate use and with environmentally sound land management practices (e.g., agriculture, selective timber harvest, community gardens).
 - 9.B.8.3 Prepare park development plans which easily adapt to changing conditions and the changing needs of County residents. Plans will phase development, where appropriate, in order to assess whether full development is warranted. Consideration will be given to materials and technologies that reduce development and long-term maintenance costs while maintaining environmental compatibility.

- 9.B.8.4 Encourage the private sector to help meet the recreation needs of County residents and visitors. The recreation program should use private facilities on a program-by-program basis when public facilities are not available. Where appropriate, nonprofit organizations will be encouraged to operate special purpose parks and facilities (e.g., nature exhibits, historic sites).
 - 9.B.8.5 Support legislation to enable local governments to use up to 25 percent of their federal park and recreation grants for normal park operation and maintenance, rather than just for acquisition and development.
- 9.B.9 Coordinate County activities with other agencies and organizations to provide park and recreation facilities.
- 9.B.9.1 Coordinate the development of facilities and programs with the cities and school districts when mutual concerns exist.
 - 9.B.9.2 Explore joint development projects in order to provide facilities needed by residents of both incorporated and unincorporated areas.
 - 9.B.9.3 Avoid duplication of facilities through coordination with state and federal agencies and the private sector.
- 9.B.10 Ensure opportunities for citizen participation in park and recreation decisions as provided in the Citizen Involvement Chapter and Policy 9.A.5 of the Open Space Section of this chapter.
- 9.B.11 Upon application by local park providers and pursuant to OAR 660-034-0040, consider amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to adopt local park master plans for public parks proposed on lands designated Agriculture or Forest.
- 9.B.11.1 Recognize approval of a local park master plan by adopting the plan by reference in Appendix A.
 - 9.B.11.2 Apply the Special Use Overlay District to land for which a local park master plan is adopted.

HISTORIC LANDMARKS, DISTRICTS, AND TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Clackamas County has a rich and unique heritage from its founding through its development over time. Historic sites, objects, structures, and transportation corridors still remain which represent prehistory, the era of the Territorial Government, western migration along the Oregon Trail, the existence of the first and longest running electric street car line in the nation, the influence of the railroad on development and our heritage as an agricultural and lumber based economy. We are the stewards of these historic resources and charged through state law to protect and preserve them.

Cultural, economic, and social benefits can come from preservation of the County's historic resources. There is cultural value in establishing firm, visible links with the past. Economic benefits include enhanced property values, savings in structure replacement costs, tourism, and, in commercial areas, strengthened retail sales. Social and community benefits appear in the renewal of older neighborhoods and the increased pride fostered in the residents.

To effectively preserve historical resources, an evaluation must determine which structures and sites are worthy of preservation. A method of regulating the use or demolition of historic resources would then be necessary to protect them. It is essential that the County make a firm commitment to protect its historic resources.

Individual descriptions and maps of Clackamas County Historic Landmarks which are located within the urban area of the County can be found in the Clackamas County Historic Landmarks book, adopted by Clackamas County.

A detailed mapping project of the Barlow Road, the westernmost segment of the Oregon Trail, was undertaken in 1988. This document, entitled Maps of the Barlow Road, Mt. Hood to Oregon City, Clackamas County, prepared by the Planning and Economic Development Division, exhibits maps of the historic road corridor as well as associated historic sites. It also includes recommendations for a more detailed survey to assist in the preservation and management of this historic resource.

- ***Historic Landmarks, Districts, and Transportation Corridors Goal 5: Preserve the historical, archaeological, and cultural resources of the County.***

9.C Historic Landmarks, Districts, and Transportation Corridors Policies

- 9.C.1 Conduct a comprehensive inventory in the County of historic areas, sites, structures, and objects. Inventory the location, quantity and quality of these resources using state and federal criteria.

- 9.C.2 The County adopts the Barlow Road Historic Corridor as defined by the Barlow Road Survey Project and the Barlow Road Background Report and Management Plan as a Clackamas County Historic Corridor. All provisions of the Historic Landmarks, Historic Districts and Historic Corridors Ordinance shall apply to the designated sites and historic corridor of the Barlow Road.
- 9.C.3 Develop criteria to further evaluate the significance of these historic resources using state and federal criteria as models.
- 9.C.4 Zone properties Historic Landmark (HL), Historic Districts (HD), or Historic Corridor (HC) which are determined significant by the evaluation criteria.
- 9.C.5 Identify conflicts by analyzing the economic, social, environmental, and energy consequences of land use actions with regard to significant historic resources.
- 9.C.6 Develop policies and programs to protect historic resources and minimize the conflicts.
- 9.C.7 Pursue private and public sources of funding for use by property owners in the renovation and maintenance of historic properties.
- 9.C.8 Pursue options and incentives to allow productive, reasonable use, and adaptive reuse of historic properties.
- 9.C.9 Appoint an Historic Review Board whose role is to protect and preserve Historic Landmarks, Districts, and Corridors and who individually have demonstrated interest and expertise in the field of Historic Preservation. This Board shall be empowered to:
 - 9.C.9.1 Recommend zoning of Historic Landmarks, Historic Districts, and Historic Corridors.
 - 9.C.9.2 Review alterations, new construction land divisions, and proposed demolition on all Landmark, District, and Corridor properties.
 - 9.C.9.3 Provide technical assistance and conduct workshops to provide an educational forum for historic preservation to broaden community awareness and public participation.
 - 9.C.9.4 Coordinate local preservation programs, including signing, plaques or other monumentation, driving and walking tour brochures, and other informational pieces.
 - 9.C.9.5 Make recommendations for designation of sites on the National Register of Historic Places.