

Park Safety Improvement Project

Improving lighting, access, and activation of Gresham's most heavily used parks



FUNDING REQUEST | \$800,000 – Commerce, Justice, & Science – COPS

CRITICAL INVESTMENT NEED

The City is seeking funding to install permanent lighting and safety cameras in five of Gresham's most heavily used and vulnerable parks – Red Sunset Park, Nadaka Nature Park, Pat Pfeifer Park, Main City Park, and Rockwood Central Park. This investment is critical to addressing ongoing livability concerns, reducing illegal activity, and ensuring equitable access to safe public spaces for Gresham residents.

Parks are essential gathering places for youth, families, and seniors and support nearby businesses. Limited lighting and lack of cameras has led to reduced visibility, vandalism, unauthorized camping, and safety concerns that discourage public use, especially in fall and winter months when daylight hours are limited.

Adding lights and cameras to these parks – at an estimated \$160,000 per park – will reactivate these facilities, enhance safety, and allow residents and families to enjoy these community spaces for longer hours. This investment directly supports safety, livability, and equity, for Gresham's residents and visitors.

HOW THIS INVESTMENT SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY

- Roughly 15% of Gresham residents live below the poverty line, making parks a critical place for community gathering, recreation, & solace.
- Gresham has a permanent property tax rate (\$3.61) far lower than similarly sized cities, such as Eugene (\$6.85), Salem (\$5.83), Medford (\$5.30), & Beaverton (\$4.23). This has prevented Gresham from making critical infrastructure upgrades to its parks.
- This investment will:
 - Improve public safety & reduce demand on emergency services.
 - Advance equity by ensuring safe access to parks in underserved neighborhoods.
 - Restore parks as welcoming, family-friendly community spaces.
 - Prevent long-term costs associated with vandalism, fire response, & enforcement.

With federal support, Gresham will expand proven park safety improvements, ensuring safe, well-lit spaces for all residents.

FUNDING USES

- Installation of 50-60 lights, cameras and necessary electrical systems at 5 different park locations.
- The City of Gresham does not have funding to complete this project.

THE IMPACT

In 2025, Gresham implemented the Vance Park Safety Project to address escalating livability concerns, including gang activity, vandalism, camping, and a nearby homicide. Gresham's Police, Homeless Services, Parks, and Recreation teams partnered with Multnomah County to reclaim the park, adding cameras and lighting, improving visibility and positive park use. Results were immediate and measurable:

- Near elimination of gang activity and loitering.
- Significant reductions in camping, trash, and emergency calls.
- Increased use by families, youth, and the community.
- Neighbors reporting children can safely play.

This success demonstrates that park lighting and cameras are a critical investment that can increase activity and use. The five parks proposed for funding share similar risk factors, including high use, proximity to dense residential neighborhoods, and limited lighting.

