CHAPTER 7
IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

Implementation and Funding

The chapter presents the short-term actions needed for maintaining, enhancing, and investing in Gresham's parks, recreation spaces, and trails. As part of these short-term actions, this chapter also presents funding strategies and sources for both new capital projects and the upkeep of existing facilities to support long-term success and financial sustainability of the system. Given limitations in available funding and resources, the City can implement priority projects by focusing on the actionable steps and funding strategies as described in this chapter.

SHORT-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

There are 10 priority actions needed to implement the key elements of Gresham Parks 2035 in addition to the priority capital projects identified in Chapter 6 and the CIP (Appendix F). These priority actions advance the Plan's core values and key directions identified in Chapter 4 (and in the callout on this page) and a number of capital projects that will require additional planning and coordination.

GRESHAM PARKS 2035 KEY DIRECTIONS

Each priority action includes references to the key directions summarized in Chapter 4 and outlined below.

1. **Provide safe, welcoming, and well-maintained parks and facilities.**
2. **Develop undeveloped neighborhood and community parks.**
3. **Ensure equitable park access and distribution.**
4. **Improve existing parks and trails.**
5. **Strengthen programming, engagement, communication, and coordination efforts with partners, volunteers, and community groups.**
6. **Identify sustainable funding sources.**
7. **Promote a sustainable and resilient system.**

The actions are intended to be implemented in the short term, ideally over the next three to five years. Each action identifies proposed supporting partners and related key directions and is also accompanied by more specific implementation strategies to guide the Parks Program's immediate next steps. The priority actions are organized into the following four general categories:

- Funding and Implementation;
- Existing Park Maintenance and Improvements;
- Park Access and Development; and
- Administration and Communications.

FUNDING AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Expand the types and levels of available funding for park maintenance and operations.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Budget and Finance Department, current park user groups, neighboring local jurisdictions

Related Key Directions: 1, 4, 6

Implementation Strategies:

- » Conduct a comprehensive fee structure update to analyze existing revenues and update fees to support revenue generation, cost recovery, and fund asset management, facility costs, and events.
- » Pursue funding strategies identified in this chapter, particularly operation and maintenance funding strategies, including those associated with the PFP utility fee, sports field and facility rental fee and cost recovery adjustments, and a local option levy.

Mayor Charles Becker Park

2. Develop land dedication requirements and fees to support new park development.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Budget and Finance Department, current park user groups, neighboring local jurisdictions

Related Key Directions: 3, 6

Implementation Strategies:

- » Update the City's land dedication requirements to ensure they are sufficient to support the development of quality parks and recreation amenities in residential growth areas and new developments.
- » Update the City's Park System Development Charges (SDC) methodology to reflect Gresham Parks 2035 recommendations as described in this chapter and Appendix G.
- » Conduct a more detailed evalaution of park distribution and level of service needs in the Pleasant Valley Plan Area, including park access, potential parkland acquisition needs, and any required revisions to the System Development Charge Capital Improvements Project List. Revisit the recommendations for the Pleasant Valley Plan Area in Chapter 5 and the Gresham Parks 2035 CIP as needed to further align this new approach with the City's current System Development Charge Improvements Project List, and the Pleasant Valley Plan.

PARK MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

3. Develop a Park Safety Improvement Strategy and implement park improvements to enhance community safety at City parks.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Police Department, Gresham Urban Design and Planning Department, current park user groups

Related Key Directions: 1, 4

Implementation Strategies:

- Continue to coordinate with public safety agencies to identify priority locations and ongoing strategies to address safety issues and concerns. Strategies could include installing more cameras, call boxes, or other facilities to report unsafe situations or behavior; increase on-site monitoring by rangers or public safety personnel at selected locations; and/or enhance the frequency and scope of trash removal, particularly of potentially hazardous materials. Consider scheduling quarterly or bi-annual meetings to encourage regular and ongoing collaboration.
- Implement safety improvement projects as other updates are made to sites, consistent with the CIP projects identified in this Plan.

4. Develop an asset management plan and replacement schedule with clear guidelines and timelines for facility lifecycles, repair, and replacement.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Environmental Services Department

Related Key Directions: 1, 4

Implementation Strategies:

- Assign a project lead and develop the asset management plan and replacement schedule, using this information to forecast how much funding will be needed each year for reinvestment
- Integrate and coordinate implementation of projects and strategies identified in this Plan with natural resource restoration projects. This will help ensure that all needed site improvements (assets, landscaping, and natural resources) can be tracked and budgeted in a coordinated manner.
- Develop a timeline for the development, review, and adoption of the asset management plan and replacement schedule, as well as protocols for the ongoing re-assessment of sites or incorporation of updated information to keep the deferred maintenance and asset management plan up to date.
- Create an asset management fund to collect and set aside monies for the repair and replacement of assets as per this plan.

5. Develop a maintenance management plan with clear guidelines and timelines for routine maintenance activities, preventative inspections, and corrective interventions.
Supporting Partners: Gresham Environmental Services Department

Related Key Directions: 1, 4

Implementation Strategies:

- Assign a project lead and develop the maintenance management plan identifying routine and preventative maintenance tasks and frequencies in alignment with maintenance resources (staffing, equipment, and funding).
- Incorporate natural resource maintenance and stewardship tasks into this plan so that all maintenance tasks can be coordinated and tracked.
- Develop a timeline for the development, review, and adoption of the maintenance management plan.

Gresham Japanese Garden at Main City Park

PARK ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

6. Begin implementation of the priority projects identified in Chapter 6.
Supporting Partners: Gresham Environmental Services Department, Gresham Urban Design and Planning Department, current park user groups, local Neighborhood Associations, neighboring residents and businesses (if applicable)

Related Key Directions: 1, 2, 3, 4

Implementation Strategies:

- Assign a project lead to develop an implementation timeline for priority projects that identifies funding sources and considers opportunities to implement projects concurrently with other site improvements.
- Develop a detailed timeline for project design, bidding, and construction.
- Incorporate results of the above activities in annual departmental workplans and budgets and in the current capital improvement projects list.
- Schedule meetings with applicable City departments and partners to identify next steps for priority projects that will require additional coordination or partnerships.

PARK ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT (CONTINUED)

7. Develop Southeast Community Park and Southwest Community Park to improve park equity and access in underserved areas.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Environmental Services Department, Gresham Urban Design and Planning Department, current park user groups, local Neighborhood Associations, neighboring residents and businesses (if applicable)

Related Key Directions: 2, 3, 4

Implementation Strategies:

- Continue to move forward with master planning for each site and develop a timeline for implementation of imp rovements identified in the CIP.
- Continue to communicate the status and timeline for implementing these improvements with surrounding residents, Neighborhood Associations, and other community members through the City's website, direct communication with nearby residents, and events or signage at the parks.

Southwest Community Park (Undeveloped)

8. Coordinate with other City Departments and community partners to identify and implement projects that will support multiple community benefits within City parks such as climate resilience, stormwater management, ecological health, access, and regional trail connectivity.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Environmental Services Department, Gresham Urban Design and Planning Department, current park user groups, neighboring jurisdictions, local Neighborhood Associations, community partners

Related Key Directions: 3, 4, 5, 7

Implementation Strategies:

- Identify an approach for incorporating the strategies included within the Natural Areas Master Plan into the maintenance and stewardship of the City's nature parks, identifying priorities and responsibilities.
- Identify priority connectivity and sidewalk improvements needed to improve safe pedestrian access to existing parks and facilities in coordination with the Gresham Environmental Services Department.
- Identify an approach for site-specific projects that promote climate resilience and disaster recovery within City parks such as development of the irrigation well at Gradin Community Sports Park, including potential community partnerships, building on previous related planning efforts.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

9. Enhance existing partnerships and identify new partnership opportunities to expand park access and recreation programming, particularly in underserved areas.

Supporting Partners: Current park user groups, current recreation partners, current volunteer groups, local Neighborhood Associations, School Districts, other community groups

Related Key Directions: 3, 5

Implementation Strategies:

- Schedule an annual goal-setting meeting with the Centennial, Gresham-Barlow, and Reynolds School Districts to review joint-use agreements and coordinate opportunities to leverage access to school recreation and athletic facilities during non-school hours. Consider scheduling quarterly or bi-annual meetings to enhance collaboration in providing recreation opportunities.
- Identify other local schools to enhance collaboration with and identify opportunities to expand recreation access, particularly in existing underserved neighborhoods.
- Conduct an audit of existing partnership and joint-use agreements to strengthen relationships, identify areas for improvement, verify partners that provide programming for older adults and those with disabilities, and ensure a joint commitment to equity. Review to avoid any exclusive use partnerships.

10. Strengthen public engagement and communications regarding available resources and funding realities to manage community expectations and increase public awareness of funding challenges and needs.

Supporting Partners: Gresham Communications Department and Community Programming Services, Gresham Budget and Finance Department, local Neighborhood Coalition, community partners

Related Key Directions: 5, 6

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop semi-annual public updates about Gresham Parks 2035 that shares key messages around implementation of the Plan, including available resources and funding realities as well as plans for the City's existing undeveloped park sites. Distribute on the Parks Program website, email lists, social media, and other City communication platforms.
- Define how progress on Gresham Parks 2035 projects and recommendations will be tracked and develop a system to communicate plan progress to City staff, decision-makers, and the public.

FUNDING SOURCES AND FORECASTS

Funding for Gresham's park and recreation system is divided between capital investment (land acquisition, new park development, and major upgrades to existing parks) and operations and maintenance (O&M) (day-to-day upkeep, repairs, and programming support). These sources and anticipated revenues from them are described further below. Appendix G provides more information about these existing funding sources and revenue assumptions.

CAPITAL FUNDING ASSESSMENT

Based on funding received during the past 10 years and projected future trends, **Gresham can expect to have approximately $27–$31.5 million (2025 $) from existing sources to fund parks capital projects over the 10-year planning period** (FY 2025/26–2034/35). This includes projected funding from SDCs, grants, and Metro Parks Bond allocations. Most of this revenue is anticipated to come from existing Parks SDCs, which may only be spent on capital projects that increase capacity to serve growth.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT CHARGES (SDCS)

SDCs are restricted to capacity-expanding projects under state law. This can include new parks and trails or improvements to existing facilities that increase their capacity. Some of the SDC revenue is further earmarked for neighborhood parks in specific areas of the City a nd may not be spent elsewhere described in Appendix G. Grants and Metro Parks Bond allocations can be applied more flexibly to other capital project needs but are inherently uncertain because they are allocated by other agencies. Table 7-1 summarizes these projections.

METRO PARKS AND NATURE BOND (LOCAL SHARE)

The City's current capital improvement plan includes $3.62 million in Metro Parks and Nature Bond "Local Share" allocations programmed through FY 2029/30, when the existing bond expires (a conservate estimate within the range shown in the two scenarios in Table 7.1). Because the renewal of the bond is uncertain, Table 7-1 provides two forecast scenarios. The low estimate assumes that Local Share funding ceases after FY 2029/30, and the high estimate assumes that the same average annual allocation for the City of Gresham continues through FY 2034/35.

TABLE 7-1: 10-YEAR (FY25/26-34/35) FORECASTED CAPITAL REVENUE (2025 $ ROUNDED)

PLANNING PERIOD REVENUE SOURCES	TOTAL (LOW ESTIMATE)	TOTAL (HIGH ESTIMATE)
Grants	$4,662,000	$6,370,000
Metro Bond Allocation	$3,345,000	$6,252,000
SDCs	$18,951,000	$18,951,000
Planning Period Total	**$26,958,000**	**$31,573,000**

SOURCE: ECOnorthwest Calculations and Analysis, Appendix G, Exhibit 2

GRANTS

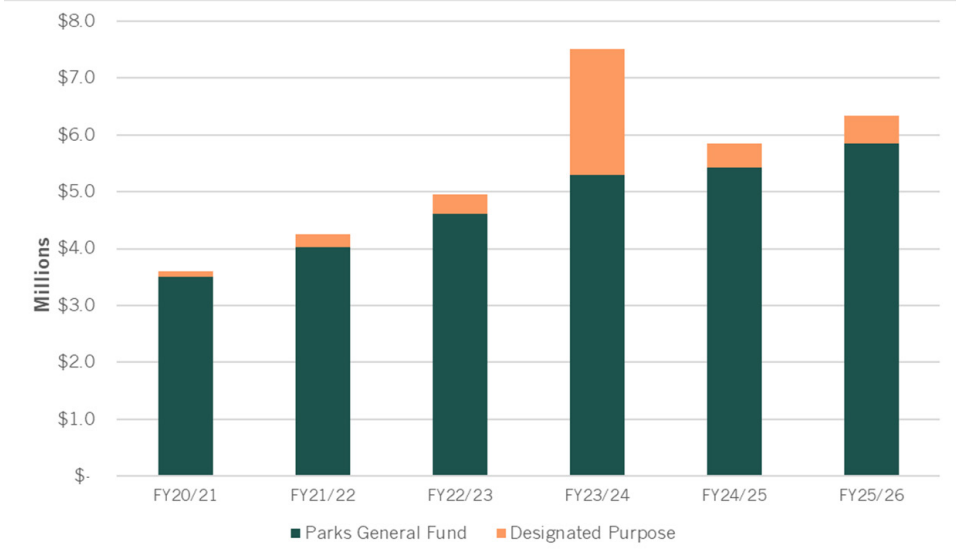
Gresham has received numerous Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Local Government Grants since 2010, approximately every other year. The revenue projection assumes the City will continue to receive a large grant from the program roughly every other year, consistent with past trends. No further increases to the allowed grant amount range are assumed in the planning period, meaning the amount is projected to remain constant over time.

In addition to the OPRD grants, the City has received additional grant funding for capital improvements over time. While future grants and allocations from these sources are unpredictable, the revenue projection assumes an additional roughly $1-3 million in total over 10 years from these sources combined based on the available funding amounts and past trends in addition to the OPRD grant funding as shown in Table 7-1.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) REVENUE ASSESSMENT

Most of the revenue for parks O&M comes from the City's General Fund. Over the past five years, General Fund allocations to parks have increased faster than General Fund revenues overall at an annual average of roughly 5.5% (Figure 7-1). This largely reflects the impacts of inflation and one-time funding rather than expanded service capacity. Parks have generally received about five percent of the City's overall General Fund. Overall, while parks revenues have trended upward, funding remains limited relative to the City's maintenance and service needs.

FIGURE 7-1: HISTORIC 5-YEAR PARKS REVENUE (BUDGETED AMOUNTS) OVERVIEW



SOURCE: City of Gresham, Adopted Budgets FY20/21–FY25/26

Parks maintenance needs will increase as more acres are added and developed, and maintenance level of service may need to increase to address deferred maintenance and community goals. Ongoing fiscal pressures that include rising personnel and PERS costs, increased healthcare costs, in flation in utilities and materials, and competing public safety needs will mean that other City needs will continue to compete with funding for parks. Despite the recent upward trend, it is unlikely that parks will continue to see its General Fund allocations increase over the next 10 years at the same pace they have over the past five years.

POTENTIAL FUNDING STRATEGIES

Existing funding sources alone are not sufficient to fund the projects noted in the Gresham Parks 2035 CIP. For this reason, the City should consider the following funding strategies for capital improvements and maintenance and operations to maximize investment, diversify the City's funding mix, and fund the community's vision for a safe, well-maintained, and accessible parks and recreation system. These strategies build a "toolbox" for future projects and initiatives. Each "tool" or strategy should be carefully evaluated and discussed in greater detail to determine the most suitable approach for applicable projects. Appendix G provides more information about these potential funding strategies.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING STRATEGIES

PARKS SDC UPDATES

In addition to updating the existing Parks SDC to reflect the updated SDC-eligible capital project list, the City could consider other methodology updates that could increase revenue potential and/or flexibility for how revenues can be spent.

- Explore potential to add a reimbursement fee component to the SDC methodology. A reimbursement fee would allow the City to recover the value of existing park assets that provide capacity for new development. This approach is consistent with Oregon's SDC framework (ORS 223.297–223.314) and used in some other jurisdictions. The reimbursement fee component may offer somewhat more flexibility on expenditures, though it must still be spent on capital projects, including debt repayment, for the system in question.
- The City could also revisit the exclusion of commercial and industrial development from the Parks SDC, particularly if planned parks investments will be located adjacent to existing or planned commercial or industri al areas (e.g., Main City Park, John Deere Park, and potential future downtown neighborhood parks).

URBAN RENEWAL / TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Urban Renewal uses Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to fund public investments in capital projects (identified in an adopted plan and located within the adopted boundary) that support development and public goals. Gresham currently has two Urban Renewal Areas (URAs): the Downtown-Civic URA and the Rockwood - West Gresham URA. Both adopted plans identify park investments in their approved project lists (e.g., Civic Neighborhood Park, improvements to Gresham Arts Plaza). This allows for (but does not mandate or guarantee) use of TIF to contribute to these projects. TIF revenues are typically low in the early years of a URA, and there is often competition among the eligible projects for which will be funded earlier within the life of the URA. However, the City could leverage TIF funding to support key parks projects within the adopted URA boundaries that are identified in the adopted urban renewal plans.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL GRANTS

Grants are a cornerstone of Gresham's capital funding for parks and should be aggressively pursued over the next decade. Continuing to aggressively pursue competitive funding from regional, state, and federal grant programs for certain higher profile projects could potentially yield additional funding beyond that estimated in the revenue projections or could support amounts at the high end of the range provided.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

In addition to potential for a renewed Metro bond for regional parks investments, the City of Gresham could potentially seek to pass its own General Obligation (GO) Bond. A bond measure would raise a large sum upfront for capital projects, repaid by a dedicated property tax over several decades (e.g. 20 years). These bonds can only be used for capital projects but can fund any type of capital investment that voters are willing to pay for. Gresham's challenges with passing funding measures over the years suggest it may be very challenging to get voter approval. Packaging projects with broad geographic benefits and visible community support can improve odds of passage.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

The City should explore partnerships with Multnomah County, local school districts, and neighboring cities for joint-use or co-funded facilities. For example, a sports field complex might be co-developed with school district funding in exchange for shared use. If there are county-managed properties or programs (like SUN Community Schools or Library District) that align with parks, there is an opportunity to coordinate and leverage those resources for recreation programming or capital improvements. The City could also partner with Metro on natural area restorations or regional trail segments in Gresham (beyond just granting funds). Keeping open communication with Metro's Parks and Nature department about Gresham project readiness could attract additional support—e.g. technical assistance or matching funds for habitat projects at sites like Nadaka Nature Park or the Butler Creek Greenway.

SPONSORSHIPS AND NAMING RIGHTS

Related to the community donations and donor recognition option, there is potential to expand corporate sponsorship revenues for capital improvements (and potentially some maintenance of those improvements) through a more structured program. Local businesses or corporate donors could contribute to the cost of new facilities in exchange for recognition. For example, a company might sponsor a new turf field or splash pad, with naming rights for a period of years. Or a health care provider could contribute to building a sports court or fitness zone in a park, tying into community wellness goals. Naming rights for entire parks or major facilities (community centers, sports complexes such as Gradin Community Sports Park) could also be considered if appropriate—similar to how private donations have funded naming of sports fields in other cities. Gresham should create a clear Naming Rights/Sponsorship Policy to ensure any corporate naming aligns with community values and set pricing guidelines.

Gradin Community Sports Park

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY DONATIONS AND DONOR RECOGNITION STRATEGY

The City could seek to expand philanthropic and community-based funding through a structured Donor Recognition and Memorial Program. These programs create opportunities for individuals, families, and organizations to contribute directly to the parks system in exchange for recognition—typically through plaques, signage, or other forms of acknowledgment. Other forms include:

- Benches with plaques, Buy a Brick, and similar programs;
- Friends of Parks or Adopt a Park programs; and
- Parks Foundations or other public-philanthropic partnerships.

These programs allow for the City to leverage philanthropic donations, fundraising efforts, and volunteer time from the community. These programs can support capital investments, particularly for special projects, those with a substantial benefit to the existing community, and small items such as benches and trees. They can also help with maintenance needs.

Main City Park

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE FUNDING STRATEGIES

POLICE, FIRE, PARKS (PFP) UTILITY FEE — EXPANSION OR RESTRUCTURING

The PFP utility fee is currently a critical funding source and the City could consider options to adjust the fee to support parks more effectively. There are a few options:

- **Maintain and Index the Fee:** Consider indexing the current fee to inflation so its real value doesn't erode over time (e.g., linked to an inflation index). Even a 2–3% annual increase would generate additional tens of thousands for parks each year (since 5% of the fee flows to parks).
- **Adjust the Allocation Split:** Consider shifting a greater share of the PFP fee toward parks.
- **Fee Increase or New "Parks Utility Fee":** Consider expanding the fee or carving out a separate utility fee for parks. For example, an extra $1–$3 per month dedicated solely to park maintenance could raise $0.5–$1.0 million annually.

See Appendix G for more details about each of these options.

SPORTS FIELD AND FACILITY RENTAL FEES

The City should continue to explore opportunities to expand revenue-generating uses of parks, including facility rentals and special events (concerts, festivals, sports tourna ments) that can both enliven parks and bring in fees or sponsorships. For instance, hosting a regional youth sports tournament at Gradin Community Sports Park (Gradin) could attract sponsorship dollars and visitor spending.

The City should also track the specific O&M costs associated with facilities that can be rented out (including sports fields at Gradin and elsewhere) and conduct a cost recovery / fee study to determine where there is potential to increase fees while maintaining equitable access for Gresham residents. One possible example is to increase field rental fees associated with larger tournaments at Gradin given that many users may be coming from outside Gresham.

VENDOR PERMITS

The City might also consider concessions or leases in parks (such as a café in Main City Park, or food carts at popular parks) to create a modest revenue stream dedicated to park maintenance. Where there is interest from vendors in such a program, the City could potentially charge fees for permits for vendors to operate in the parks (or in parking areas) that could cover the cost of both the administrative aspect of issuing permits as well as the additional garbage collection or other maintenance costs potentially associated with such use.

TRANSIENT LODGING TAX

The City of Gresham collects a Transient Lodging Tax (TLT) of 8% on hotels, motels, and other visitor accommodations. A portion of this revenue (just over 20%) must be dedicated to tourism-related activities. The tourism-related allocation was estimated at roughly $283,750 for FY 25/26. The City's most recent budget includes plans to direct a portion of the tourism-related funding to the maintenan ce and operations of Gradin Community Sports Park (as well as capital project funding). Programming, maintenance, or improvements for other parks that serve or may attract visitors and tourists (e.g., Arts Plaza, Zimmerman House Park) and for the Parks Program's support for special events such as Gresham Festival of Arts could potentially be considered for use of TLT revenues, including the portion required to be spent on tourism-related activities.

Gresham Festival of Arts

LOCAL OPTION LEVY

A Local Option Levy is a property tax levy (up to 5-year term) that can be used to fund services including ongoing operations and maintenance. This could directly address the structural underfunding of parks operations and maintenance. A parks levy could be framed around community livability, equity, and youth (e.g. safe and clean parks, recreation opportunities for all neighborhoods). A levy requires 50% voter approval and is subject to Measure 5 rate limitations (counted within the $10/$1,000 cap for local government), so additional analysis of the potential for "compression" would be needed to determine how much a levy could raise.

Nadaka Neighborhood Park

DEDICATED PARKS DISTRICT

A Parks & Recreation District is an independent taxing authority that would fund and manage parks and recreation. The City has previously explored this idea in the past, but it remains a potential long-term strategy if City finances cannot otherwise sustain parks. A Parks District would require voter approval to establish and levy a property tax rate separate from the City's. The advantage is a stable, dedicated funding source not in competition with city police/fire services. Several Oregon communities (e.g., Tualatin Hills Park & Rec District, Bend Park District, etc.) have separate districts for parks and recreation. For Gresham, a district might encompass the city boundaries or a larger area of East Multnomah County. Gresham could initiate dialogue with adjacent cities (Troutdale, Fairview, Wood Village) and Multnomah County about an East Multnomah Parks District that would pool funding and management of parks across city boundaries. This is a long-term endeavor and would require significant political consensus, legal research, and community engagement well in advance. However, it could offer economies of scale and a more stable funding base if achieved. To succeed, it would need broad public support and credible governance plans (e.g. an elected board or City Council serving as the board). The tax rate required would depend on desired service levels.

MOVING FORWARD

Gresham Parks 2035 is the result of City staff, elected leaders, community partners, and residents coming together to shape the future of Gresham's park and recreation system. The Gresham community deeply values the parks, trails, and recreation spaces that the Parks Program provides. The Plan delivers focused and much-needed direction for the investment, management, and operations of Gresham's parks, recreation facilities, and trails over the next 10 years and beyond.

Gresham Parks 2035 is a living document, intended to be flexible and responsive as community needs, funding opportunities, and City priorities shift. Regular updates and ongoing evaluation will help ensure the Plan remains relevant and effective over time. Successful implementation of Gresham Parks 2035 will require continued leadership, investment, and collaboration among City departments, community partners, and residents. As Gresham continues to grow and evolve, this Plan will help the City ensure that the system remains a central part of community life, promoting the core values of equity, accessibility, and safety.

Shane T. Bemis Nature Park

GRESHAMPARKS

2035