

Public and Community Feedback
Open House with Public Meetings and Online Surveys

CITY OF
GRESHAM

GRESHAM PARKS 2035



PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS PLAN

COUNCIL DRAFT - AUGUST 2026





GRESHAM PARKS 2035

PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS PLAN



GRESHAMPARKS
2035



A Message to Our Community

Parks are the heart of Gresham. Over the past decade, Gresham has added new parks, trails, and sports fields, and expanded recreation opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds. Yet, many of our parks were built in an earlier era, and maintaining and improving them amid increasing demand requires renewed focus, investment, and collaboration.

Gresham Parks 2035 sets a clear direction for the next decade, one that centers accessibility, equity and safety. The Plan identifies strategies to improve existing parks, expand recreation opportunities, protect natural areas, and ensure that every resident lives within walking distance of a welcoming public space.

This Plan reflects the voices, ideas, and energy of hundreds of residents who shared their hopes for Gresham's future. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to our dedicated staff, the Parks and Recreation Community Advisory Group, and our many community partners for helping shape a vision that truly belongs to all of us.

The goals of the Parks Program are simple but powerful: to create and care for vibrant, welcoming, and sustainable public spaces that foster community well-being, connection, and resilience. We are proud stewards of clean, safe, and accessible

parks that invite activity, reflection, and gathering, shared spaces where nature, recreation, and community thrive together.

We are also committed to advancing equity and inclusion across our park system, ensuring that every visitor feels considered, welcomed, and represented in the spaces we care for. As we look toward 2035, we are excited to continue working together to care for and invest in the parks that make Gresham vibrant, connected, and resilient. I invite everyone to stay engaged as we bring this shared vision to life.

With appreciation,

Astrid Dragoy
Gresham Park Program Manager

Acknowledgements

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Community Festival at Nadaka Nature Park

THE GRESHAM COMMUNITY

We would also like to acknowledge the participation of the many individual community members that provided valuable input in creating Gresham Parks 2035.

CONSULTANT TEAM



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Nadaka Nature Park

Executive Summary

Parks, trails, and recreation spaces play a central role in fostering a vibrant, well-connected, resilient, and healthy community. These spaces will remain vitally important as Gresham continues to grow and evolve, highlighting the importance of a shared vision to maintain, enhance, and invest in these assets moving forward.

Gresham Parks 2035: Parks, Recreation and Trails Plan (Gresham Parks 2035 or the Plan) represents a multi-year effort by the City of Gresham to establish a renewed vision to guide development, improvements, and management of parks, recreation, and trails for the next 10 years and beyond. Building upon the 2009 Parks

& Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas Master Plan and aligning with recent and current City initiatives, Gresham Parks 2035 addresses shifts in community needs, demographics, planned growth, budget realities, and priorities to guide the City and the Parks Program in making sound decisions regarding the investment, management, and operations of its park and recreation system.

Rockwood Central Park



PLAN PURPOSE

Gresham Parks 2035 represents a multi-year effort by the City of Gresham to establish a renewed vision to guide development, improvements, and management of parks, recreation, and trails for the next 10 years and beyond. The Plan provides priorities to guide the City and the Parks Program in making sound decisions regarding the investment, management, and operations of its park and recreation system.

Through a robust community engagement process, Gresham Parks 2035 identifies new key directions for parks, recreation, and trails along with an investment strategy to improve existing parks and develop existing undeveloped park properties as well as new parks and facilities to serve community needs and future growth.

Gresham Parks 2035:

- » Aligns the Plan with recent and current City initiatives while building on the 2009 Parks & Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas Master Plan;
- » Addresses shifts in community needs, demographics, planned growth, and budget realities;
- » Identifies site-specific improvements to existing developed and undeveloped parks, as well as trail corridors;
- » Includes broader strategies to meet park and recreation needs in underserved areas and future growth areas;
- » Highlights priority actions to address short-term (three to five-year) initiatives;
- » Recommends a practical and achievable approach to funding park improvements; and
- » Provides the Parks Program with the flexibility needed to achieve City goals and priorities.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Much has been accomplished since adoption of the 2009 Parks & Recreation, Trails and Natural Areas Master Plan, paving the way for Gresham Parks 2035:

- » **Developed new parks**, including Nadaka Nature Park and Hogan Butte Nature Park (renamed to Shane T. Bemis Nature Park);
- » **Added a range of new amenities**, such as the Children's Fountain at Arts Plaza and new amenities associated with the Spur Trail project at Main City Park;
- » **Completed enhancements at key cultural sites**, including Gresham's Japanese Garden with Ebetsu Plaza, Kyoudou Center, and the addition of accessibility and cultural enhancements to Tsuru Island;
- » **Added or expanded several parks and properties**, including acquisition of the Shaul property which expanded Southwest Community Park by 24% and final development of Gradin Community Sports Park;
- » **Increased park offerings** with development of new futsal courts, pickleball courts, community gardens, as well as a new playground and sensory play at Kirk Park;
- » **Completed plans or designs** for Gresham's six undeveloped park sites, two new community parks, and Gabbert Butte Nature Park;
- » **Expanded recreation programming and City events** such as Gresham's Lilac Run and Movies in the Park; and
- » **Established the Gresham Parks and Recreation Community Advisory Group** that developed the core values of Equity, Safety and Accessibility for the park system.

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

The Gresham Parks 2035 planning process was driven by a robust and inclusive community engagement process to understand unique and evolving community priorities. Ranging from in-person meetings facilitated in multiple languages to online questionnaires, as well as meetings with a Parks Task Force and pop-up activities at numerous community events, the engagement approach strived to gather and reflect the diverse voices, needs, and aspirations of the Gresham community.

Community members affirmed the core values of this Plan – safety, accessibility, and equity. They also voiced a number of other priorities for Gresham Parks 2035:

- » The need to improve the maintenance and condition of existing parks, including addressing routine maintenance, park cleanliness, broken amenities and facilities, and worn or outdated equipment.
- » Access to and stewardship of nature parks and natural areas, including the importance of nature parks in promoting climate resilience and environmental sustainability.
- » Development of more trails and better connectivity and wayfinding for recreation, improved park access, and active transportation to reach other destinations.
- » Additional recreational programming for youth and teens (e.g. summer camps, afterschool programs, teen club, etc.) and older adults, as well a greater variety of recreation activities.
- » Development of Gresham's existing undeveloped park properties.

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT



CORE VALUES

Gresham Parks 2035 is centered around three core values that will guide Gresham’s provision of parks, recreation, and trails for the next 10 years and beyond. The City formed a diverse group of community members and institutional representatives (The Parks & Recreation Community Advisory Group) that evaluated the City’s recreation services and recommended strategies to improve community outcomes in preparation for the Gresham Parks 2035 process. They identified accessibility, equity, and safety as core values that should serve as the foundation for considering park and recreation investments and the prioritization of programs and projects.



Nadaka Nature Park

CORE VALUE DEFINITIONS

Accessibility

Capable of being used or accessed. Often in parks and recreation, accessibility means at its basic level, legally accessible to people as determined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. Accessible is not the same as inclusive.

Equity

As a function of fairness, equity implies ensuring that people have what they need to participate. Equity ensures that essential programs, services, activities, and technologies are accessible to all. Equity treatment involves eliminating barriers that prevent the full participation of all individuals.

Safety

Parks contribute to safer and more resilient neighborhoods by providing well-maintained public spaces for communities to gather. Physical characteristics that contribute to safety include lighting, clear pathways, a thoughtful layout of amenities, maximizing visibility, ongoing maintenance and positive use.

SOURCE: City of Gresham Parks & Recreation Community Advisory Group

KEY DIRECTIONS

In addition to directly informing recommendations for specific improvements, the Core Values also support seven Key Directions as shown on the next page that will further guide how the Gresham Parks Program manages, develops, and enhances parks, recreation facilities, and trails over the next 10 years and beyond. These Key Directions reflect the recommended focus areas for the strategic use of Gresham's resources. The list is not in order of priority.



Provide safe, welcoming, and well-maintained parks and trails.



Develop undeveloped neighborhood and community parks.



Ensure equitable park access and distribution.



Improve existing parks and trails.



Strengthen programming, engagement, communication and coordination efforts with partners, volunteers, and community groups.



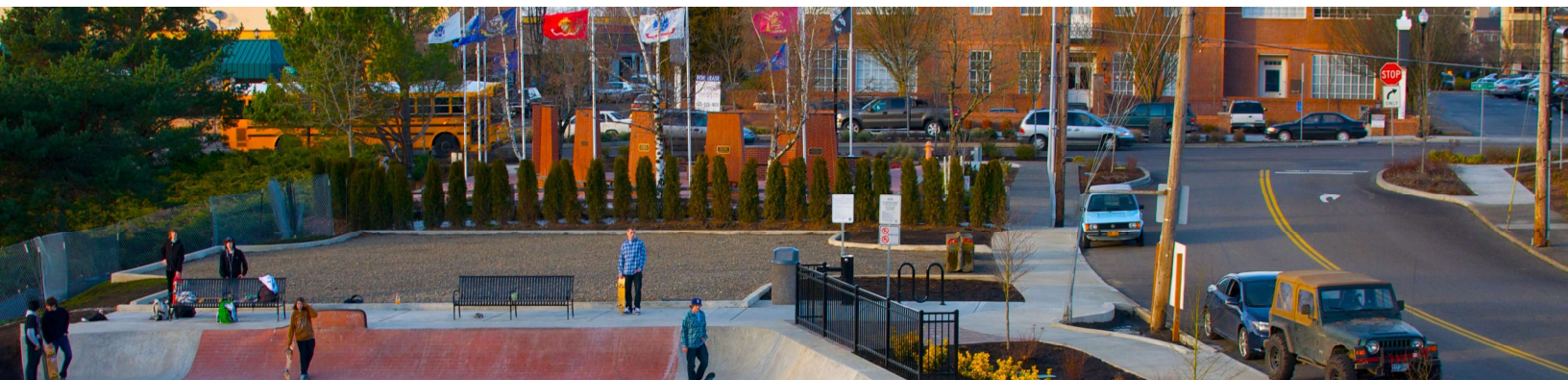
Identify sustainable funding sources.



Promote a sustainable and resilient system.

**Key Direction numbering does not reflect priority.*

- 1 It is essential that the City prioritizes adequate maintenance resources and safety initiatives, and that when building or renovating sites, that the City focuses on selecting materials that require minimal maintenance and promote longevity.
- 2 Development of these parks is a highly cost-effective way to leverage existing properties to expand community access to park and recreation experiences. At the same time, development of these parks should only be undertaken if the City expects to have adequate resources to effectively maintain and operate these new facilities without compromising operation and maintenance of existing facilities. Development of two community parks is assumed within the Plan's planning horizon.
- 3 Equitable access both to and within parks and facilities are equally important to ensure that all Gresham residents can experience the many economic, social, and health benefits that parks provide.
- 4 Improving old and worn park features and providing diverse and varied amenities and experiences at Gresham's existing parks and facilities was identified as a top community priority throughout Gresham Parks 2035 engagement efforts.
- 5 Community partnerships are crucial to the current and ongoing success of the Gresham park and recreation system, offering numerous benefits beyond increasing resources. They enhance program offerings and create opportunities to leverage shared interests and resources.
- 6 Implementation of the Gresham Parks 2035 vision and recommendations will depend on the availability of funding sources to improve and maintain the existing system as well as support future investments.
- 7 Gresham's parks can play a central role in achieving a sustainable and resilient future. This includes opportunities to use parks to adapt to current and future climate conditions; enhance user comfort, promote systemwide ecological health; and increase resilience to hazards such as wildfires and extreme heat.



INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Gresham Parks 2035 provides a clear and prioritized action plan for investments in the park system over the long-term future, with projects that range from capital maintenance projects to needed improvements to aging amenities or equipment to new ideas generated during the planning process. Gresham Parks 2035 includes a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that provides a comprehensive list of capital projects that support future community needs based on results of the planning and engagement process.

HOW ARE WE TAKING CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE?

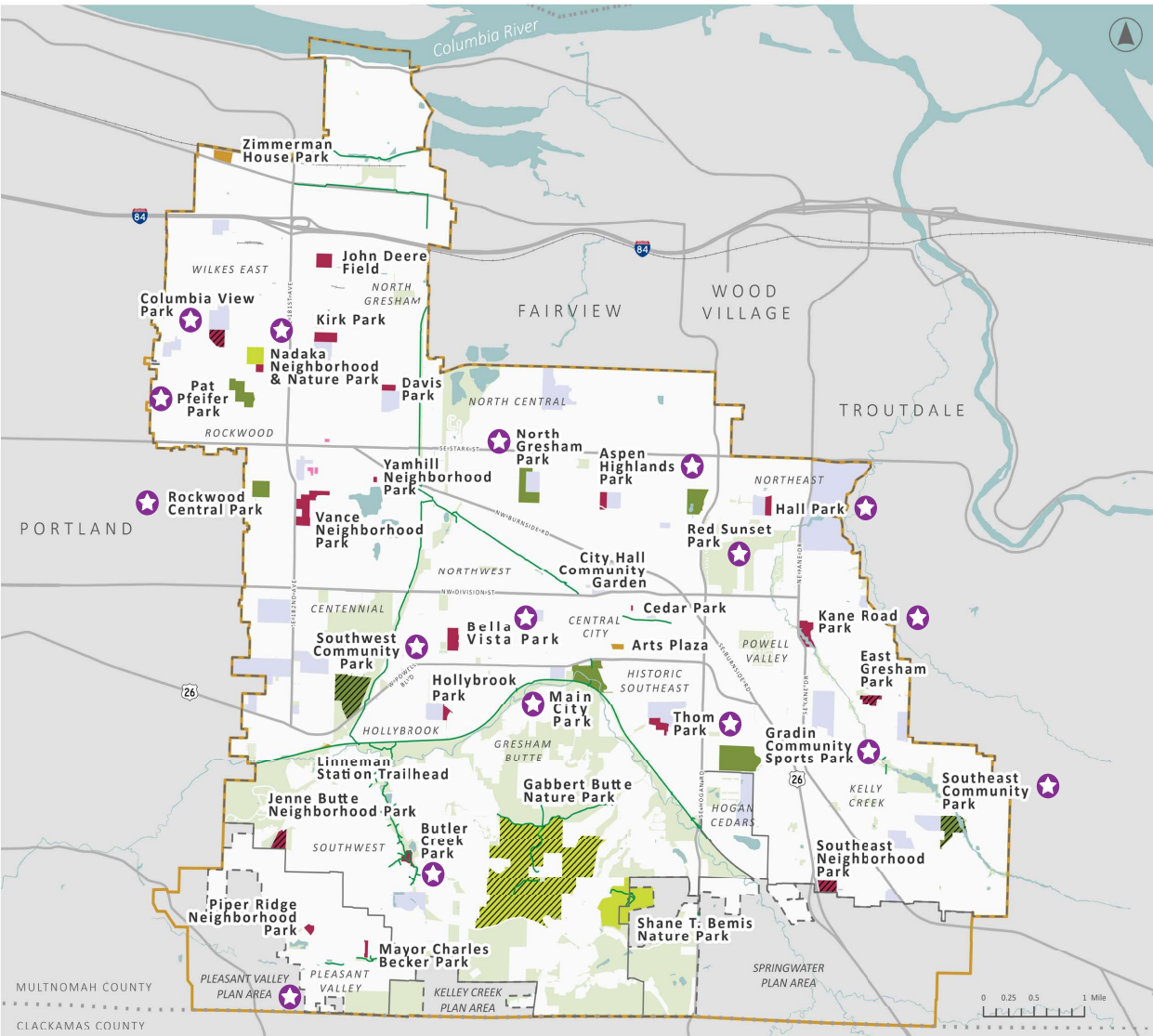
Improving old and worn park features and providing diverse and varied amenities and experiences at Gresham’s existing parks and facilities was identified as a top community priority. Below is a snapshot of some of the ways that the CIP recommends investment in the existing system, including but not limited to:

- 6 Playground Replacements or Upgrades
- 15 Pedestrian Bridge Replacements
- 2 Grass Soccer Field Grass Replacements with Artificial Turf
- 3 Grass Ball Field Replacements with Artificial Turf
- ADA Improvements at 8 Sites (including trail and path upgrades)
- 6 New Restrooms in Existing Parks

Given the extent of projects recommended in the Plan, not all of the CIP projects will be completed over the Plan’s 10-year period, given limited funding available or reasonably projected during this period. As a result, the Plan also includes a prioritized list of projects anticipated to be achievable in the 10-year planning period. Priorities are based on community engagement priorities, discussions with City staff, current CIP priorities, and the core values identified through conversations with the City’s Parks & Recreation Community Advisory Group.

PRIORITY PROJECT SUMMARY

Park Classification	Total Projects	Total Planning-Level Costs
Existing Parks and Facilities		
Community Parks	21	9,433,020
Neighborhood Parks	15	7,023,920
Special Use Areas	0	-
Nature Parks	0	-
Trail Corridors	0	-
Undeveloped Parks	4	\$6,750,000
Proposed New Parks and Facilities		
New Park & Facility Development	3	\$5,710,000
TOTAL	43	\$28,916,940



GRESHAM PARKS 2035 PRIORITY PROJECTS

Priority Project Site*

- ★ Priority Project(s)

Gresham Parks and Facilities

- Community Park
- Nature Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Special Use Area
- Undeveloped Park
- Trail Corridor

Base Map Features

- City Boundary
- County Boundary
- Urban Services Boundary
- Non-City Owned Park
- Other Green Space
- School
- Water Body
- Major Arterial

*Identifies sites that have projects prioritized for implementation over the 10-year planning horizon. Some sites may have multiple priority projects.

FUNDING TOOLBOX

Paying for Gresham's park and recreation system requires both 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).

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 a variety of potential expanded or additional funding strategies for capital improvements 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, including the following.

- » Refine the approach for assessing SDCs through a subsequent SDC update
- » Continue to strategically pursue grants
- » Explore the use of tax increment financing for parks projects
- » Establish and/or strengthen partnerships with other public agencies and parks providers
- » Solicit donations and establish a donor recognition program
- » Consider a general obligation bond (bond measure)

The City faces a similar issue with funding operation and maintenance (O&M) of its system. 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 operational costs, inflation in utilities and materials, and competing public safety needs will mean that other City needs will continue to compete with funding for parks. As a result, additional sources of funding will be needed to adequately maintain the system. Potential funding sources and strategies include the following.

- » Expansion or restructure of the City's Police, Fire, Parks (PFP) Utility Fee
- » Better alignment of sports field and utility rental fees
- » Establishment of a parks maintenance utility fee
- » Expanded use of vendor permits
- » Changes to allocations from the City's Transient Lodging Tax
- » Use of a local option levy
- » Creation of a new dedicated parks and recreation district

PLAN PRIORITIES

Gresham Parks 2035 identifies 10 priority actions needed to implement the key elements of the Plan. These priority actions advance the Plan's core values and key directions as well as many capital projects that will require additional planning and coordination. The actions are intended to be implemented in the short term, ideally over the next three to five years. These actions include:

- » Expand the types and levels of available funding for park maintenance and operations.
 - » Develop land dedication requirements and fees to support new park development.
 - » Develop a Park Safety Improvement Strategy and implement park improvements to enhance community safety at City parks.
 - » Develop an asset management plan and replacement schedule with clear guidelines and timelines for facility lifecycles, repair, and replacement.
 - » Develop a maintenance management plan with clear guidelines and timelines for routine maintenance activities, preventative inspections, and corrective interventions.
 - » Begin implementation of the priority projects identified in the Plan's CIP.
 - » Further the development process for Southeast Community Park and Southwest Community Park to improve park equity and access in underserved areas.
- » 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.
 - » Enhance existing partnerships and identify new partnership opportunities to expand park access and recreation programming, particularly in underserved areas.
 - » Strengthen public engagement and communications regarding available resources and funding realities to manage community expectations and increase public awareness of funding challenges and needs.



Southwest Community Park (Undeveloped)

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.



