

CHAPTER 2



EXISTING PARK SYSTEM

A successful park plan is developed with a thorough understanding of the planning area and existing City resources. This chapter describes the planning area, demographics that affect the provision of parks and recreation in Gresham, the refined park classification system, and an updated inventory of the City's existing parks and facilities.

PLANNING AREA



The City of Gresham is located in Multnomah County, Oregon, approximately 11 miles east of downtown Portland. The city is bordered by the communities of Troutdale, Wood Village, Fairview, and the Columbia River to the north, unincorporated areas to the east, the City of Damascus and Clackamas County to the south, and the City of Portland to the west. Altogether, the city covers a land area of approximately 22 square miles.

The City of Gresham has its origins in the 1800s as a stopover for pioneers on westbound routes. Settlers routinely camped in Gresham on their way towards Portland, where they established more permanent settlements. By the early 1900s, rail lines had been laid from points east from Portland through Gresham and beyond. As of July 2008, the population is 100,665 per the Population Research Center at Portland State University. Today, the City of Gresham is Oregon's fourth largest city.

The landscape of Gresham is varied topographically and environmentally. The city contains wetlands, riparian zones, forested uplands, and buttes, many of which have been protected as public open space. In its northern section, Gresham is relatively flat, with land that slopes gradually into the Columbia River. To the south, the city's terrain becomes more varied, with a series of buttes and hills in the area around Johnson Creek.

Several major transportation corridors run east-west through the community. Interstate 84 crosses Gresham in its very northern section, one of Portland's MAX lines crosses through the city's center, and Route 26, which provides access from the Portland metropolitan region to points in the Cascade Mountains, runs through the city's south. The Springwater Trail, one of the Portland region's premier multi-use trails and a major bike commuter corridor, also runs through Gresham. The trail parallels Johnson Creek in the city's south.

The City of Gresham includes 16 formally recognized neighborhoods. Each of these has its own character, from the industrial to the historic, rural, and suburban. Historic Downtown Gresham is located between Burnside Street and the Springwater Trail. The lively downtown area includes shops, restaurants, the planned Center for the Arts, Main City Park, and some new multi-family residential development as well.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

The City of Gresham is the fourth largest city in Oregon. Gresham has grown at an average annual rate of 2.69% since 1990, reaching 100,655 residents as of July 1, 2008. Gresham's growth has been fueled by both migration and births. For example, approximately 16,000 more persons moved into Gresham than out of it between 1990 and 2000, adding almost a quarter to the city's population. Since 2000, however, growth due to migration has slowed. In the period since 1990, the number of births in Gresham has grown. The city's population is projected to reach approximately 112,100 by 2020.

Age

Growth from 1990 to 2005 has been pronounced among children (0 to 19 years old), young adults (20 to 29 years old), and mature adults (45 to 64 years old). Children have made up



over 30% of Gresham's population since the 90s, more than the percentage in both Multnomah County and the Portland-Metro area. Among children, the fastest growing group will be teens age 15 to 19, which is projected to grow by 19% between 2005 and 2020. Children age 10 to 14 will grow nearly as fast, by 18.9%. In addition, the share of persons 65 years and above in Gresham is expected to rise by 12% by 2020.

Ethnicity

Gresham has grown more racially and ethnically diverse since 1990, as people of color increased from 8% of the population to more than 25% in 2005. The number of black residents in Gresham has grown significantly since the 90s, and the City's Latino population has more than quadrupled. It is likely that populations of color will continue to grow due to both migration and births. Latino births have grown steadily, from 3.3% of all births in 1990, to 20.3% in 2007, to 42% in 2004. Births to white non-Hispanic mothers, by contrast, have steadily fallen.

Household Type

Families are the biggest segment of Gresham's households. According to Census information, a family consists of a householder and one or more other people living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. All people in a household who are related to the householder are regarded as members of his or her family. In 2003-2005, families represented two-thirds of all households. It appears that the percentage of family households is declining in Gresham, as has the share of households with children. Simultaneously, the average size of family households has actually increased.

Income

The 2007 median household income in Gresham was \$48,446. Gresham's median income has generally been slightly above county and state levels. The Multnomah County

median income in 2007 was \$46,811, and the state median income was \$47,385 (U.S. Census Bureau).

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Park classifications are designed to facilitate future planning, reduce conflicts between user groups, and help define appropriate maintenance levels of service. For the master planning process, Gresham's parks were divided into three major park classifications:

- Neighborhood parks;
- City-wide parks; and
- Natural areas, greenways, and trails.

Two of these categories were sub-divided into various categories, as noted in the park type definitions below.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are designed primarily for informal, non-organized recreation. Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, these parks are generally two to eight acres in size and serve residents within a ½-mile radius. These standards have changed from the previous 1996 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. Neighborhood parks provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, enhance neighborhood identity, and preserve neighborhood open space. Neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playgrounds, turf areas, picnic tables, and benches.

City-Wide Parks

City-wide parks are those sites that serve the entire city. These parks have been divided into three subcategories: community parks, special use areas, and urban plazas.

Community Parks

Community parks accommodate larger group activities, provide a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups, offer environmental education opportunities, serve

recreational needs of families, and create opportunities for community social activities. Community parks provide opportunities for organized and informal recreation, both active and passive. Community parks attract people from the entire community, and generally include facilities such as sports fields, gardens, large play areas, pools, or recreation centers. Community parks require support facilities, such as parking and restrooms. They are located in areas with good vehicular access. These parks may also include significant natural areas and trails. The minimum size for community parks is typically 10 acres.

Special Use Areas

Special use areas are freestanding specialized use facilities such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, historic sites, or skate parks. Since special use areas vary widely in function there are no minimum sizes, but special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities such as parking and restrooms are often included.

Urban Plazas

Urban plazas are usually smaller than one acre and are typically located in higher density urban areas, along transit corridors, or in town centers. Urban plazas provide social gathering spaces and often include benches, landscaping, performance space, public art, or fountains. Urban plazas provide for the day to day recreational needs of nearby residents and employees, as well as shoppers, transit-users, and recreationalists. They provide space for community events, help balance high density development, and communicate neighborhood character.

Natural Areas, Greenways, & Trails

Since they provide similar experiences and contain similar amenities, natural areas, greenways, and trails have also been grouped into one general classification. The classification includes the following subcategories: outdoor recreation areas, conservation areas, greenways, and trails.

Outdoor Recreation Areas

Outdoor recreation areas are permanent, undeveloped green spaces which are managed for both their natural value as well as for recreational use. These areas can range in size from one to 1,000 acres, and may include wetlands, wildlife habitat, or stream corridors. Outdoor recreation areas provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as bird-watching and environmental education. These areas may preserve or protect environmentally sensitive areas, such as unique and/or endangered plant species. They serve the entire city.



Conservation Areas

Conservation areas or ESRAs (Environmentally Sensitive Resource Areas) are located in Pleasant Valley and Springwater. These areas are permanent, undeveloped green spaces that maintain or improve ecological processes or “functions” necessary for water quality, floodplain function, and fish/wildlife habitat. They also help define and sustain quality of life in areas of new development. Public access may not be permitted. Conservation areas often include resources such as reservoirs or sensitive wildlife habitat, and can vary widely in size. These areas serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

Greenways

Greenways are typically elongated corridors that follow linear features such as abandoned railroad rights-of-way, canals, power lines, or waterways. Greenways often contain trails and sometimes include viewpoints, seating areas, and interpretive displays. Greenways provide public access to linear natural features and preserve open space. These areas serve the surrounding neighborhoods.

Trail/Trail Facilities

Trails are linear corridors with hard-surfaced or soft-surfaced trails. As with greenways, trails often follow abandoned railroad rights-of-way, power lines, or waterways. Trails

usually contain seating and may have associated trailheads, parking, and interpretive signage. Trails provide public access to active recreation such as walking, biking, or running, and alternative transportation options. These areas serve the entire city.

INVENTORY SUMMARY

The City of Gresham provides a variety of parks, open space, recreation facilities and trails for its residents. These parks and facilities support both passive and active recreation and a variety of park experiences. The City's inventory of parks and facilities is summarized below. This includes a notation of recreation resources provided by others, such as schools and other local agencies. For reference, the entire park and facility inventory is summarized by provider in Appendix A.

Existing Park Land

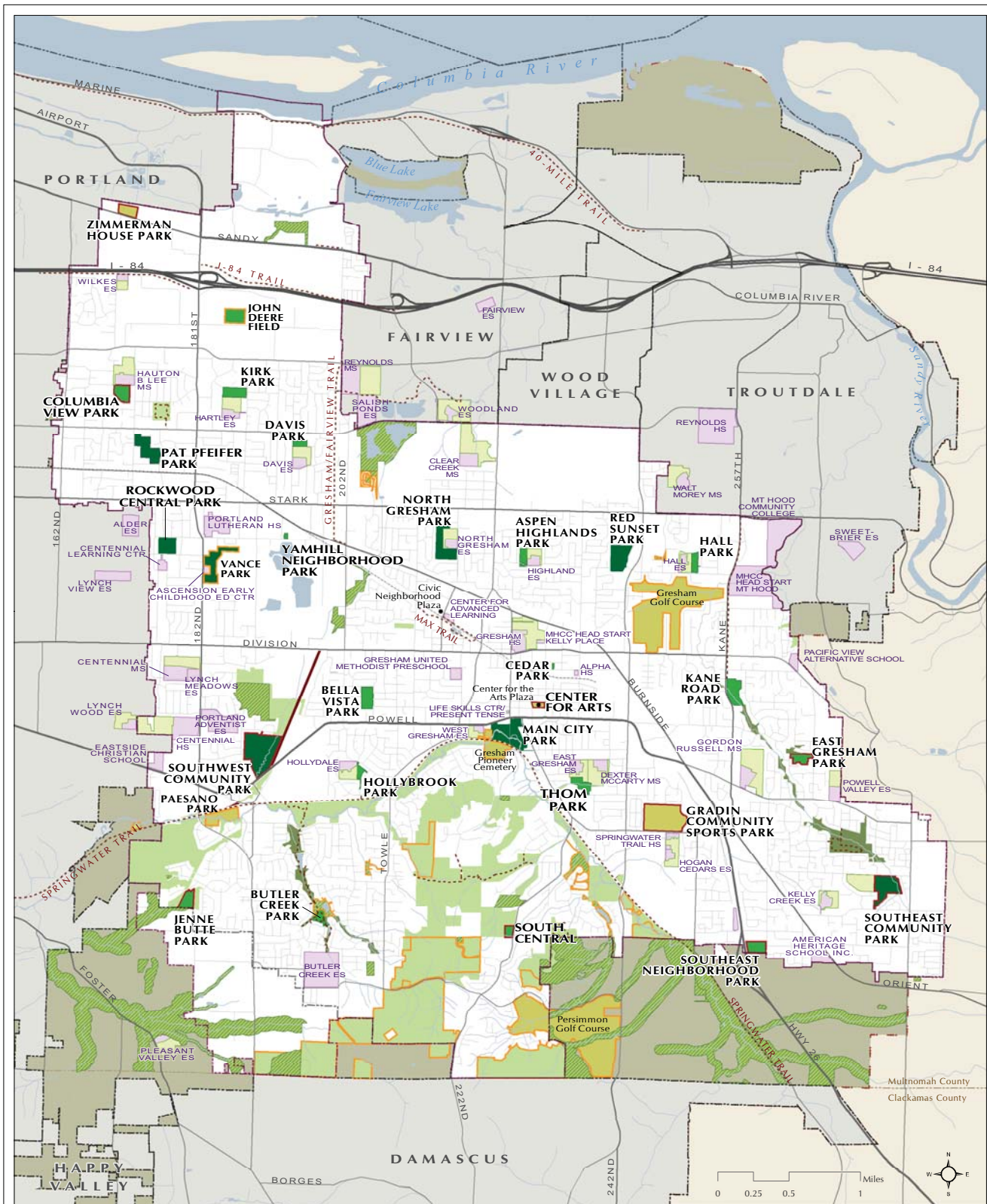
The City of Gresham Parks and Recreation Division provides nearly 1,200 acres of park land at 54 sites. This includes over 240 acres of neighborhood and citywide parks (community parks, special use, and urban plazas). While some of these park sites are developed, some are not. The City's inventory takes into account approximately 120 acres at planned park sites (which have been acquired but not developed). The City's inventory also includes more than 950 acres of natural areas, greenways, and trails. Map 1 shows the locations of these existing park resources.

Table 2-1 summarizes park acreage in Gresham by park classification. This summary includes all parks provided within the planning area.

TABLE 2-1: PARK LAND SUMMARY

PARK TYPE	# OF CITY PARKS (DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED)	CITY OF GRESHAM ACRES (DEVELOPED AND UNDEVELOPED)	ACRES PROVIDED BY OTHERS	TOTAL ACRES
Neighborhood Parks	16	77.9	8.8	86.7
Community Parks	7	122.1	14.5	136.6
Special Use Areas	3	40.4	277.1	317.4
Urban Plazas	2	0	0	0
Outdoor Recreation Areas	9	712.5	484.0	1196.5
Conservation Areas	12	138.4	31.3	169.7
Greenways	2	82.2	0	82.2
Trails	3	20.7	N/A	20.7
Total	54	1,194.1	815.7	2,009.8

As noted in the table, other agencies provide 815 acres of parks in Gresham. This includes 484 acres of outdoor recreation areas and 277 acres of special use sites, including public and private cemeteries and golf courses. Only two developed parks are provided by others. These include Vance Park, a 14.5-acre community park that is owned by the County and managed and maintained by the City. It also includes John Deere Field, an 8.8 acre neighborhood park that has two soccer fields and is otherwise undeveloped. The park is owned by John Deere and managed and maintained by the City. School sites are not counted as park land. However, schools do provide recreation facilities that can affect the provision of park land. (School facilities are noted in the next section.)



City of Gresham
 Department of
 Environmental Services
 Parks & Recreation Division

Map 1: Existing Park & Recreation Facilities



April 2008 | Data Source:
 City of Gresham GIS

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Community Park | Urban Plaza | Interstate |
| Neighborhood Park | Community Park (Undeveloped) | Major Road |
| Greenway | Neighborhood Park (Undeveloped) | Local Streets |
| Outdoor Recreation Area | Special Use Area (Undeveloped) | Max Rail |
| School Open Space | Other Community Park | Water Body |
| Conservation Area | Other Neighborhood Park | Stream |
| Trail Corridor | Other Outdoor Recreation Area | County Line |
| Existing Trail | Other Conservation Area | City Limits |
| School | Other Special Use Area | Other Cities |
| | | UGB |

Existing Facilities

In addition to providing and maintaining parkland, the City of Gresham is responsible for the development and maintenance of a variety of recreation facilities. The City is not the only facility provider in Gresham. School districts and other providers, such as Metro Parks and Greenspaces, also contribute a significant number of recreation facilities and sport fields.



Existing sport and recreation facilities in Gresham are summarized in Table 2-2 by provider. (A more detailed inventory is included in Appendix A.) For the City, most recreation facilities are provided in neighborhood and community parks. For other providers, most facilities are located at Vance Park or John Deere Field. For school facilities, the Gresham-Barlow School District, Centennial School District, Reynolds School District, and Mount Hood Community College are significant providers of recreation facilities city-wide. For example,

playgrounds are provided at all public elementary schools, and a variety of sports fields provided at elementary, middle, and high schools in the area. The City of Portland and ODOT own several trail corridors in Gresham, such as the Springwater Trail which is maintain by the City of Gresham.

Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) are prepared between each government agency or school district with the City of Gresham.

Park Development and Condition

As part of the planning process, a 2007 park evaluation was conducted to assess the condition of Gresham's parks. Facility condition was evaluated on a three-point scale, using standards for rating specific types of facilities. As note in Appendix B, key facilities were rated as being in good, fair, or poor condition. These designations are based on customized criteria for each facility type, such as the percentage of material deterioration; the severity of drainage issues; the presence of defects, cracks, holes, or protrusions; the chipping or discoloration of painting

or striping; the presence of weeds, depressions or bare areas in turf fields, etc.

The findings of the condition evaluation document the poor condition of many facilities, often due to a lack of investment in facilities over the past several years. On average, City parks and facilities are in fair condition. Most facilities in neighborhood parks are in fair condition, and community parks on average are in fair to poor condition. The lack of funding for maintenance, repair, and facility replacement has created this deferred maintenance backlog.

TABLE 2-2: SUMMARY OF GRESHAM RECREATION FACILITIES

FACILITY TYPE	CITY OF GRESHAM	OTHER PROVIDERS	SCHOOLS	TOTAL
Athletic Fields				
Baseball Fields	9	0	31	40
Football Fields	0	0	4	4
Soccer Fields	10	5	27	42
Softball Fields	5	1	25	31
Outdoor Athletic Facilities				
Basketball Courts	8	0	48	56
Skate Parks	1	0	0	1
Tennis Courts	0	0	18	18
Indoor Facilities				
Community Centers*	0	1	N/A	1
Gymnasiums*	0	1	17	18
Aquatic Facilities				
Pools	0	0	6	6
Trails (in miles)	8.39	6.4	N/A	14.79
Other Park Amenities				
Community Gardens	4	0	0	4
Disc Golf Courses	1	1	0	2
Dog Parks	0	0	0	0
Group Picnic Areas	3	0	0	3
Horseshoe Courts**	1	0	0	1
Playgrounds	16	1	14	31

* This facility is the PAL Center, which is owned by the City of Gresham and operated by the Police Activity League.

**The City's horseshoe courts at Main City Park are a tournament facility.