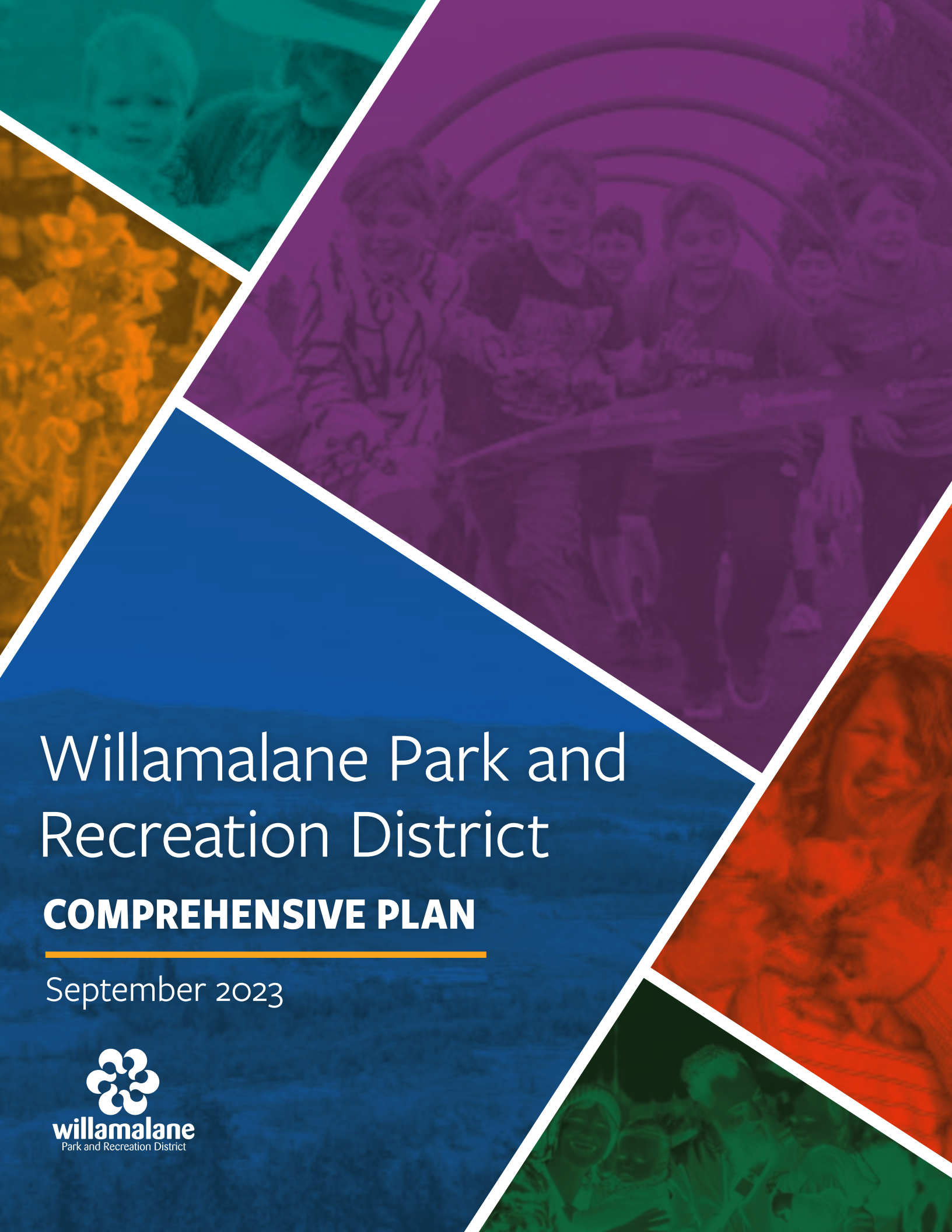




Willamalane Park and Recreation District

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

September 2023



RESOLUTION

**TO ADOPT THE WILLAMALANE PARK AND RECREATION
20 YEAR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the Willamalane Park and Recreation District (Willamalane) has updated its 20-year Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan to guide future parks, natural areas, recreation facilities, programs and services for Springfield and its urbanizable area; and

WHEREAS, Willamalane has concluded the planning process for the 20-year Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan including, but not limited to, an extensive public input process from the general public as well as from partner governing agencies;

WHEREAS, all Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plans previously adopted by Willamalane Park and Recreation District are replaced and superseded by the Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan dated September 13, 2023;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it known that the Willamalane Park and Recreation District Board of Directors hereby adopts the Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan dated September 13, 2023.

WILLAMALANE PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

By: 
Chris Wig, Board President

ATTEST

By: 
Michael Wargo, Executive Director/Secretary

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Thank you to the thousands of people in the community who contributed ideas, considerations, and time throughout the planning process.

We dedicate this plan to you!

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1



Executive Summary

The Executive Summary for the Willamalane 2023 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan is intended to introduce and summarize key portions of the plan. To gain a full understanding of the plan, methodology, and data, each section and noted appendices should be reviewed.

WILLAMALANE PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

Background

The Willamalane Park and Recreation District operates as an autonomous special district in the city of Springfield, Oregon and owns and operates parks and facilities under the guidance of an elected Board of Directors. The operation of the district is overseen by an Executive Director who, along with senior leadership, delivers an award-winning and nationally accredited parks and recreation program. Willamalane has provided a high level of service since 1944 and is proud to be the first special district providing parks and recreation services in the state of Oregon. Willamalane is a two time recipient of the National Recreation and Park Association Gold Medal (1986 and 2016), identifying it as the best park and recreation agency in the country serving a population between 30,001 and 75,000. The district also achieved national accreditation (CAPRA) from the National Recreation and Parks Association in 2022.

The Purpose of This Plan

This park and recreation comprehensive plan is an update to Willamalane's 2012 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan.

In the past 10 years, Willamalane staff worked diligently to implement the 2012 plan's strategies and actions. Highlights of these efforts include:

- Improvements to 16 parks and facilities
- Built four new neighborhood parks and made renovations at eight parks
- Constructed over 14 miles of trails
- Provided access to over 700 additional acres of natural area
- Conducted upgrades at three facilities
- Constructed seven new restroom facilities
- Expanded recreation and programming across the district

This plan, along with other local and regional planning documents, provides a roadmap for the district to operate over the next 10 years and beyond.

Since 2012, the Springfield community has changed significantly. In January 2022, the district hired



BerryDunn, a nationally known management consulting firm specializing in parks, recreation, and libraries, to work with the community to update the plan. The consultant team immediately began to determine how the district and the community it serves has changed since its last planning effort.

Changes in District Residents' Profile

- The population grew from 67,738 in 2010 to 70,337 in 2020.
- The age of community members is getting older. The median age increased from 34.6 years in 2010 to 38.4 years in 2020.
- The people living within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) have become more diverse. In 2010, the Latinx community made up 11.32% of the population in Springfield's UGB. Currently, 14.84% of the Springfield's UGB population is Latinx and it is projected to increase to 16.95% by 2026.

Changes in Park Inventory

- The district has doubled its available park space since 2012, adding 851 acres. Much of this growth took place at the Thurston Hills Natural Area, increasing available natural areas to 920 acres. As a result, the district expanded its operations by creating a natural resources department which is currently staffed by two employees.

- The district increased the overall inventory of parks from 37 to 45.

Changes in Staffing and Leadership

Willamalane has seen significant change in staff and leadership since 2012. Staffing levels also decreased from 186 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions in 2020 to 171 FTE in 2023.

Planning Process Summary

The process to create and update this plan included oversight by a project team that met periodically during the 18-month planning process to advise the consultants on direction and content for the plan. The project team included Willamalane staff, leadership, and project managers from BerryDunn. The project team guidance was informed through regular meetings with a district-wide staff advisory committee, monthly progress reviews provided to Willamalane’s Board of Directors, and regular meetings with project partners including the City of Springfield and Lane County.

The consultant team working on the project included RRC Associates, a national survey research firm, and SERA Architects, a landscape architecture firm. Willamalane also contracted with local community partners to help facilitate community conversations during the community outreach process. This collaborative approach helped to create a plan that blends the local knowledge of staff, community members, and consultant expertise.



Development of this plan included the following tasks:



Document collection and review



Demographics and trends analysis



Community engagement



Organizational, financial, and recreation program analysis



Maintenance and operations analysis



Park and facility inventory



Level of service analysis



Potential funding opportunities assessment



Recommendations-goals, strategies, and actions

Figure 1: The Key Elements of the Planning Process

Engaging the Community

The foundation for the planning process was the extensive community engagement led and facilitated by both the consultants and Willamalane staff.

In total, the community engagement process incorporated the opinions, needs, and desires of approximately 3,800 community members. The focus of the process was outlined in an engagement plan at the outset of the project. Five areas of input were emphasized, including stakeholder interviews and focus groups, a needs assessment survey, digital outreach, pop-up surveys at community events, and staff engagement. Findings from these engagement opportunities were posted on a dedicated project landing page hosted on Willamalane's website and presented to the community at two town hall events. A series of updates were also provided to the district's Board of Directors, the Springfield Planning Commission and City Council, and the Lane County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners.

Eight focused discussions were held specifically for individuals from historically underrepresented groups, such as individuals with disabilities and members of the Latinx and American Indian/Alaska Native communities. An emphasis was also placed on including youth and teens in the planning process. Most notably, this process included focus groups that took place at local middle and high schools. In addition to in-person activations, Willamalane executed a series of digital marketing strategies which reached a broader audience in the region. We were able to understand older adult communities' interests by engaging with them at focused events, and cross-tabulation of survey results. We also focused some of



the engagement events (tabling, a town hall meeting, signage, and posting printed material) at the Willamalane Adult Activity Center, which serves a primarily older adult population.

Outcomes from the engagement efforts helped to create recommendations and action items for the comprehensive plan. A detailed summary of the engagement received is available in Appendix 1.

Public Input Into the Comprehensive Plan



1,598
Needs Assessment Survey



28,481
Digital Outreach



1,766
Pop-up and Intercept Events



207
Internal Engagement (Staff Input)



235
Stakeholders and Focus Groups

Figure 2: Public Input Into the Comprehensive Plan

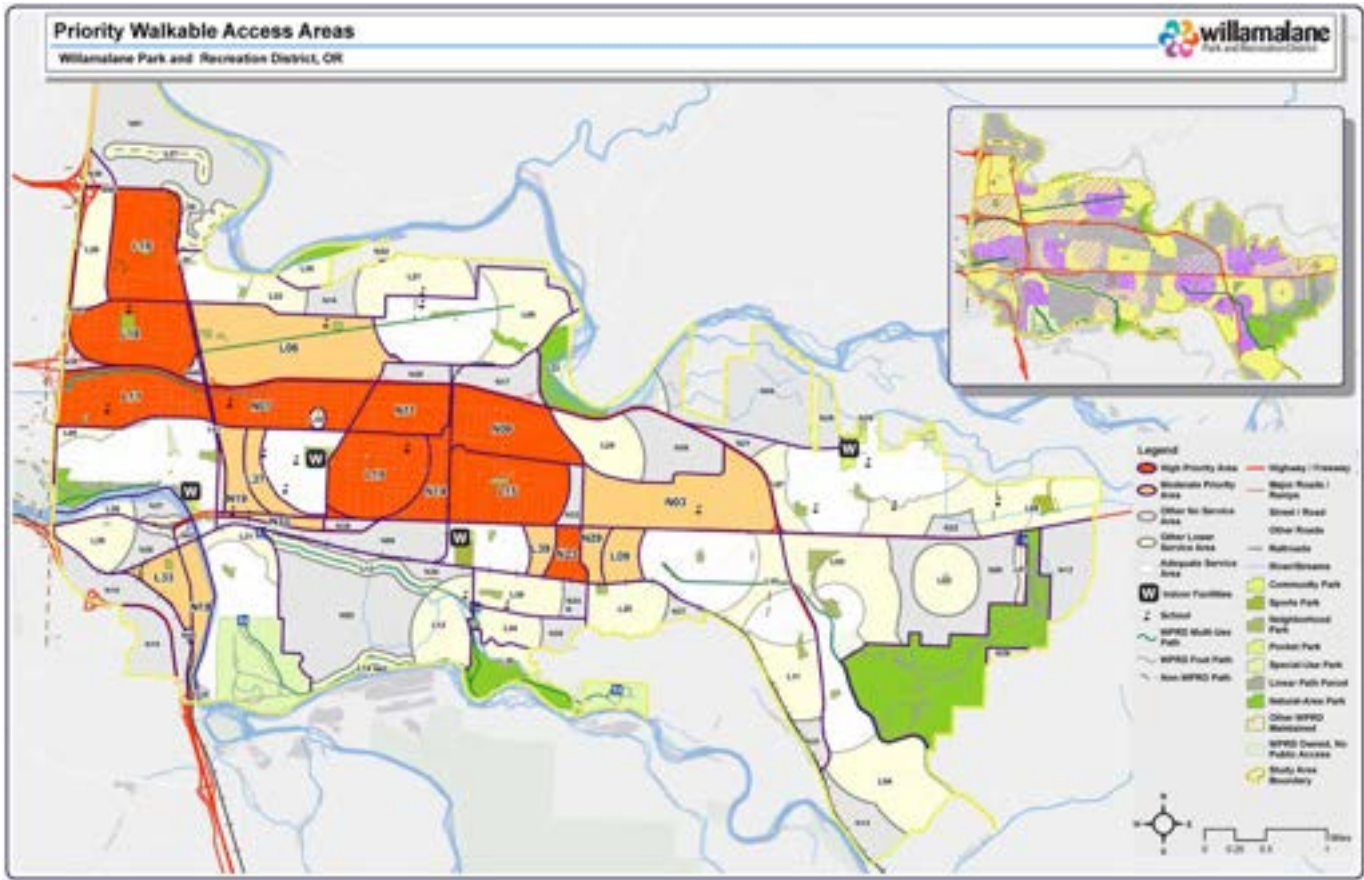


Figure 3: Walkable (¼ - ½ mile) Park Access Equity

A majority of residents have access to parks, see Figure 4 and 5 below. It is also important to consider walkable access to trails. In the district, a majority of residents lack walkable access to trails. The trails assessment and findings are discussed in [Section 7](#).



Goals and Strategies

The results of the engagement process, the needs assessment survey, and other qualitative and quantitative research identified many key issues and findings that were considered when developing goals, strategies, and actions for this plan. The key issues are provided with greater detail in [Section 9](#). Seven goals were identified during the planning process, each with multiple strategies:

Goal 1: Continue to operate the district at a nationally accredited (CAPRA) standard.

STRATEGIES

1.1	Review and update plans, policies, and procedures to align with the changing needs of the community.
1.2	Strive for effective and transparent communication.
1.3	Prioritize Willamalane resources to best serve community members of all abilities.
1.4	Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) in every facet of district services.
1.5	Prioritize workplace culture.
1.6	Strengthen employee recruitment and retention.

Goal 2: Provide a safe and equitable system of parks and natural areas.

STRATEGIES

2.1	Improve existing parks to enhance the district's current level of service.
2.2	Expand acreage and recreation offerings to accommodate population growth and provide parks and recreation opportunities in underserved areas.
2.3	Improve and enhance the district's sustainability initiatives.

Goal 3: Provide an easily accessed and connected system of paths and trails.

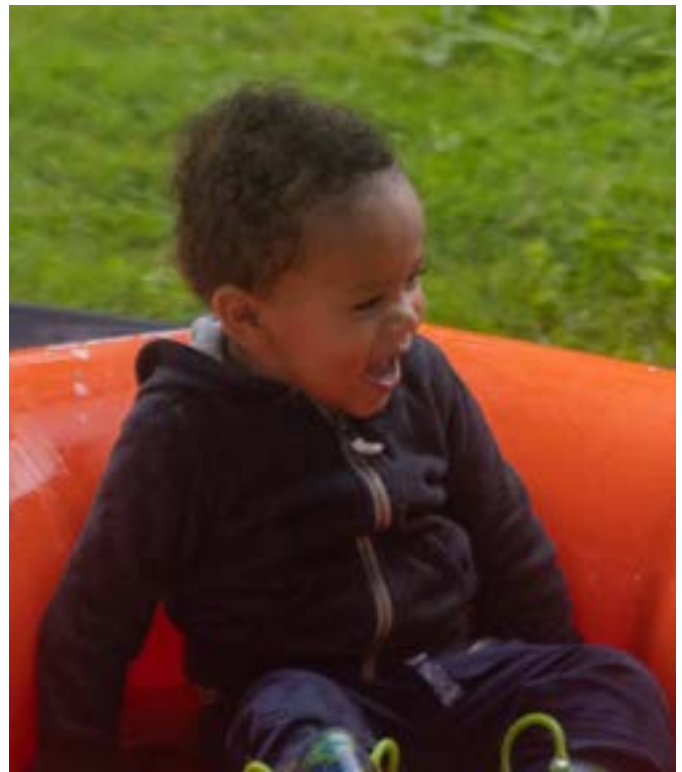
STRATEGIES

3.1	Improve connectivity and access to existing paths and trails.
3.2	Provide a desirable experience for trail users.

Goal 4: Provide access to high-quality and affordable recreation facilities.

STRATEGIES

4.1	Add or expand facilities to best meet user demand in the district.
-----	--



Goal 5: Strive for a high standard of care for the maintenance of parks, natural areas, trails, and facilities across the district.

STRATEGIES

5.1	Maintain a high standard of care for parks and open spaces.
5.2	Proactively manage existing natural areas.
5.3	Proactively manage and update trails and pathways in the district.
5.4	Manage facilities to create a safe and enjoyable user experience.

Goal 6: Offer recreation programs and services that respond to the community's needs and encourage healthy lifestyles.

STRATEGIES

6.1	Maximize participation in recreation activities across the district.
6.2	Expand and adapt programs in response to the changing needs and desires of the community.

Goal 7: Be a responsible steward of district resources and partnerships.

STRATEGIES

7.1	Develop a long-term funding strategy for capital improvements for new facilities and upgrades.
-----	--

District Accomplishments Since 2012

Since 2012, the district has accomplished many of the recommendations in the previous plan.

These include expansions to the parks, trails, and natural areas in the district as well as:

- Passing and fulfilling the obligations of a bond, which provided great opportunities to increase the parks level of service and recreational opportunities (2012)
- Winning the National Park and Recreation Association's National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in the Field of Park & Recreation Management (2016)
- Celebrating its 75th Anniversary with the community (2019)
- Achieving national accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) (2022)
- Doubling its available park space since 2012, adding 851 acres
- Increasing available natural areas to 920 acres
- Increasing the overall inventory of parks from 37 to 45

2



Developing the Comprehensive Plan

The creation of the 2023 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan was supported by a team of Willamalane staff, partners, community members, and consultants

The team of consultants supporting this project applied the local knowledge and input from staff, appointed and elected district leadership, City of Springfield and Lane County officials, and many stakeholders and community members. Consultant expertise and national best practices were considered throughout the planning process.

THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS ARE ILLUSTRATED IN FIGURE 6 AND INCLUDE:

- Document collection and review
- Demographics and trends analysis
- Community engagement
- Organizational, financial, and recreation program analysis
- Maintenance and operations analysis
- Park and facility inventory
- Level of service analysis
- Potential funding opportunities assessment
- Recommendations – goals, strategies, actions, and a capital improvement plan



Planning Process



Information Gathering

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- Staff
- Stakeholders
- Public Meetings
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Surveys
- Online Engagement

INVENTORY

- All Assets
- All Program Locations
- Other Providers

LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

- GIS Component-Based Mapping
- Quality, Quantity, Functionality

COMMUNITY PROFILE

- Historical & Planning Context
- Demographics

TRENDS



Findings and Visioning

PRESENTATION/FEEDBACK SESSIONS

- Staff
- Stakeholders
- Decision Makers
- What We Have Discovered
- Key Issues Matrix
- Key Ideas and Themes

ANALYSIS

- Programming
- Operations
- Maintenance
- Marketing & Communications
- Financial Resources



Draft Recommendations

SUMMARY FINDINGS STRATEGIES

- Long-Term Vision
- Short-Term Action

IMPLICATIONS

- Financial
- Operational
- Maintenance

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

- Tasks
- Timing
- Costs

REVIEW & REVISIONS



Final Plan

REVIEW

- Staff
- Public
- Decision Makers
- Partners

DISTRIBUTE/POST

Figure 6: Key Elements of the Planning Process

Planning With a Team Approach – One Project, One Team

Throughout the project, the consultants and the district’s project team worked closely together to achieve the best results. This allowed backgrounds, shared ideas, collaboration, and local knowledge to contribute to the best possible outcomes.

Effective communication was key to the planning effort and included weekly project management check-in meetings, monthly district comprehensive plan project advisory committee meetings, and regular updates to the district’s Board of Directors. The project was overseen by a project team consisting of project staff and Willamalane leadership.

Critical Success Factors

To guide the planning effort, and to objectively evaluate the success of the process, district leadership identified eight critical success factors at the outset of the planning effort:

1. Adopt a 20-year comprehensive plan that builds on existing planning documents, including: the 2012 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, the 2021 DEI Strategic Action Plan, the Community Engagement Strategy, Strategic Priorities, and other relevant planning documents.
2. Comply with Oregon statewide land use planning goals 1, 5, 8, 12, and 15.
3. Complete a comprehensive needs assessment of the community.
4. Identify current conditions in Willamalane parks, recreation programs, and services.
5. Determine a phased and prioritized capital improvement program and best management practices for operations.
6. Develop a funding strategy for capital and operational needs.
7. Plan with a focus on understanding and striving to meet the needs of marginalized communities within the district.
8. Prepare a clear, concise final document ready for adoption by the Willamalane Board of Directors, Springfield City Council, and Lane County Board of Commissioners.

District Mission, Vision, and Values

Much of the comprehensive park and recreation plan is based upon Willamalane’s mission and vision. In spring of 2023, the Willamalane Board of Directors reviewed and affirmed the following mission statement and vision statement, informed by its core values:





MISSION

To deliver exceptional parks and recreation to enrich the lives of everyone we serve.



VISION

A healthy, active community where everyone belongs.

VALUES



BELONGING

We create a community where everyone connects, grows together, and works towards common goals.



HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

We deliver inclusive and accessible programs, facilities, and parks that promote healthy living.



STEWARDSHIP

We preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources for future generations to enjoy.



ACCESSIBILITY

We provide equitable access to recreational opportunities, regardless of ability, income, or background.



ACCOUNTABILITY

We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards and build trust and respect in all interactions.



INNOVATION

We strive to continuously improve our offerings with innovative and sustainable practices.

Willamalane District Profile and History

Willamalane is located in Lane County, in the Springfield/Eugene metropolitan area, the third largest metropolitan area in the state of Oregon with 387,000 community members. The district provides parks and community recreation spaces and activities in the area currently known as Springfield, Oregon (population of over 70,000). The city is nestled between the McKenzie River (to the north), Willamette River (to the south) and was settled in 1848 on Kalapuya Ilihi (the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people). Formed in 1944, the district was Oregon's first special district and celebrated 75 years of exceptional service to its residents in 2019. The district is 69 miles east of Florence, 45 miles south of Albany, 19 miles north of Cottage Grove, and 124 miles west of Bend.

Willamalane was originally created from a need for Springfield area families to have supervised playgrounds for their children and is now a bustling park and

recreation district that serves more than 1.8 million people annually. With 45 parks, four major facilities, and approximately 1,600 acres of parks and natural areas, Willamalane is poised for future growth while serving the residents of Springfield at an award-winning level.¹ Willamalane has been the recipient of the National Recreation and Park Association's gold medal award, recognizing the district as the finest park and recreation agency of its size in the country. In 2022, Willamalane received national accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and is currently among approximately 200 accredited parks and recreation agencies across the country.

Figure 7 shows the Willamalane Park and Recreation District service area. The planning area for this project encompasses the outer edge of the district boundary (shaded area) and the urban growth boundary combined.

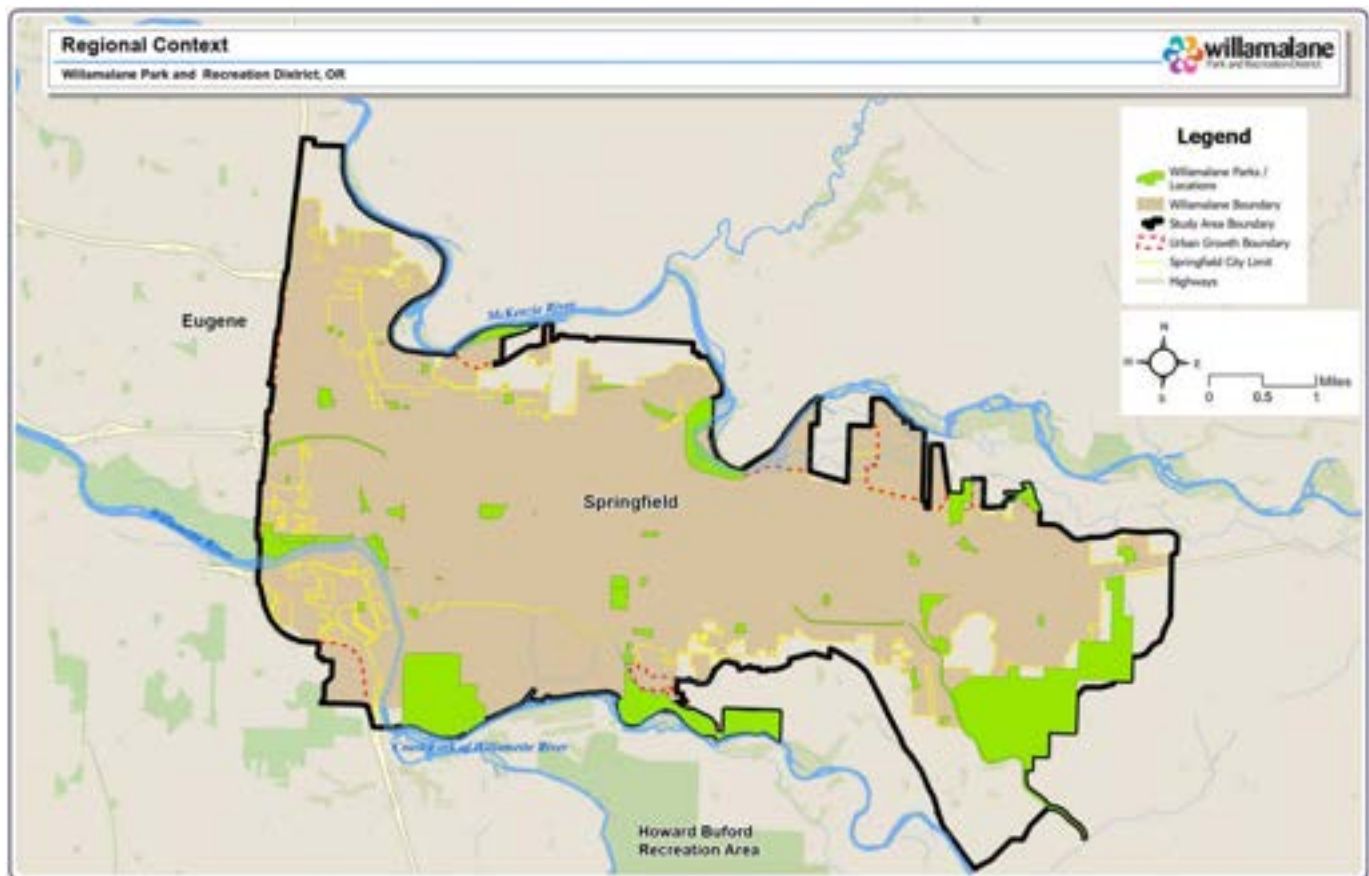


Figure 7: Willamalane Park and Recreation District Service Area

Related Planning Efforts and Integration

An integral part of the planning process was to create a plan consistent with other local planning documents and in compliance with Goal 8 of Oregon's Statewide Land Use Planning Goals. The Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan Area General Plan (Metro Plan) serves as the overarching policy document for the parks planning in the metro region. Per the Metro Plan, Willamalane identifies existing conditions, analyzes current and future needs based on these conditions, and prepares its Comprehensive Plan to address these needs separately for land within its park boundary. At a more local level, Willamalane's Comprehensive Plan is the Recreation Element of Springfield's city-wide Comprehensive Plan. The project team worked with partner jurisdictions to assure general review of and support for the plan throughout the planning process.

Many local, regional, and district planning documents and some specific plans for parks and natural areas were reviewed to provide context for this planning effort. Extensive background document review was also accomplished to support specific parts of the plan (such as the Willamalane Park and Recreation District Comprehensive Plan and materials related to the district's recent accreditation process). A full summary of these important documents is provided in Appendix 2.



The 2012 Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan

The 2012 Willamalane Comprehensive Plan focused on the district's 14 core values and 11 goals. The following six strategies were identified around the most important district needs:

- Parks and natural areas
- Community recreation and support facilities
- Rehabilitation
- Park and facility operations
- Recreation programs and services
- Department management and communication

The plan resulted in a district capital improvement plan that identified \$39 million in capital projects from 2012 – 2021 and an additional \$29 million between 2022 and 2031. An additional \$34 million in unfunded projects was also documented. Capital project funding was identified from existing fund balances, System Development Charges, grants and donations, and a general obligation bond.

Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2019 –2023

The SCORP is Oregon's five-year planning tool for outdoor recreation and guides the use of Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) monies, which are federal funds distributed to the State of Oregon. Careful attention was paid to this document to ensure that trends and priorities from that effort are accounted for in the comprehensive plan. The SCORP looks at participation across a series of state and county locations, as well as numerous age, ethnic, economic, and other demographic groups. The plan is based on a statewide survey and helps to set priorities for local, regional, and statewide funding. The report identifies the following statewide issues that should be considered by the district for prioritizing actions:

- An aging population
- An increasingly diverse population
- A lack of youth engagement in outdoor recreation
- An underserved low-income population
- The health benefits of physical activity



Below are activities and priorities that portray important participation in outdoor recreation activities in Lane County and across Oregon based on the 2019 – 2023 SCORP survey data.

- Walking on local streets, sidewalks, local trails, and paths are very important in Lane County
- Clean restrooms are a priority across Oregon
- Farmers markets, outdoor sports, and concerts are important activities across Oregon
- Families with children across the state of Oregon prioritize walking on local streets, sidewalks, local trails and paths and taking children to use playgrounds

Community Needs Assessment – 2017

The district’s most recent community needs assessment was completed in 2017. Results were compared to findings from the needs assessment conducted during the 2012 comprehensive plan update. The Community Needs Assessment from 2017 is in Appendix 2.

Willamalane Strategic Priorities, Recommendations, and Findings – 2018

The district set strategic priorities, identified value statements, created a structure, and identified teams for implementing five strategic priorities as shown in Appendix 2.

Willamalane Operational Objectives – 2022

The district identified five operational objectives to be completed by June 30, 2022. The district successfully completed work on all five objectives in 2022. These are provided in Appendix 2.

The Rivers to Ridges Metropolitan Regional Parks and Open Space Study – 2003

The Rivers to Ridges Partnership currently includes 19 regional organizations working collaboratively to advance the protection, restoration, and effective management of park and open space resources in the southern Willamette Valley. The study was being updated throughout the comprehensive planning process and the project team was actively involved in the update process to assure the findings from each plan support each other. See Appendix 2.

3



Community Profile

The community profile was developed to illustrate household and economic data in the area to help residents understand the historical and projected changes that may impact the community. This section provides insight into the potential market for parks, trails, and services by highlighting where and how the community is likely to change.

WILLAMALANE DEMOGRAPHICS AND KEY TRENDS

Demographics

The Willamalane Park and Recreation District demographic profile was developed to provide an analysis of household and economic data in the area, helping residents to understand the historical and projected changes that may impact the community. The demographics analysis provides insight into the potential market for community parks, trails, and recreation programs and services by highlighting where and how the community is likely to change. More detail on Willamalane's demographic profile can be found in Appendix 3.

Sources

The primary sources of data for the demographic assessment include the 2020 Census and forecasting was provided by the Portland State University's Population Research Center (PRC). Information for the health, wellness, and disability status section came from the American Community Survey (ACS) and Robert Wood Johnson Community Health Foundation.

Area of Study

Willamalane utilized Springfield's urban growth boundary (UGB) as the geographic boundary for the demographic

The UGB population was estimated at 70,337 in 2020.



analysis. In addition, comparisons to Springfield's city limits were analyzed to provide additional context.

The boundary of the UGB encompasses approximately 24.1 square miles, and Springfield's city limits covers an estimated 15.74 square miles. See [Figure 7](#).

Population

From 62,298 in 2000, the population within the Springfield UGB has continued to grow steadily over the past two decades. In 2020, the population was estimated at 70,337. The PRC projects that the population within the UGB will increase to over 75,159 by 2035. See Figure 8.

Household Information

Analysis of the household characteristics within the Springfield UGB indicates that the area has a lower median income and a lower average home value than the state of Oregon. The following facts demonstrate the key highlights regarding household information compared to the state:

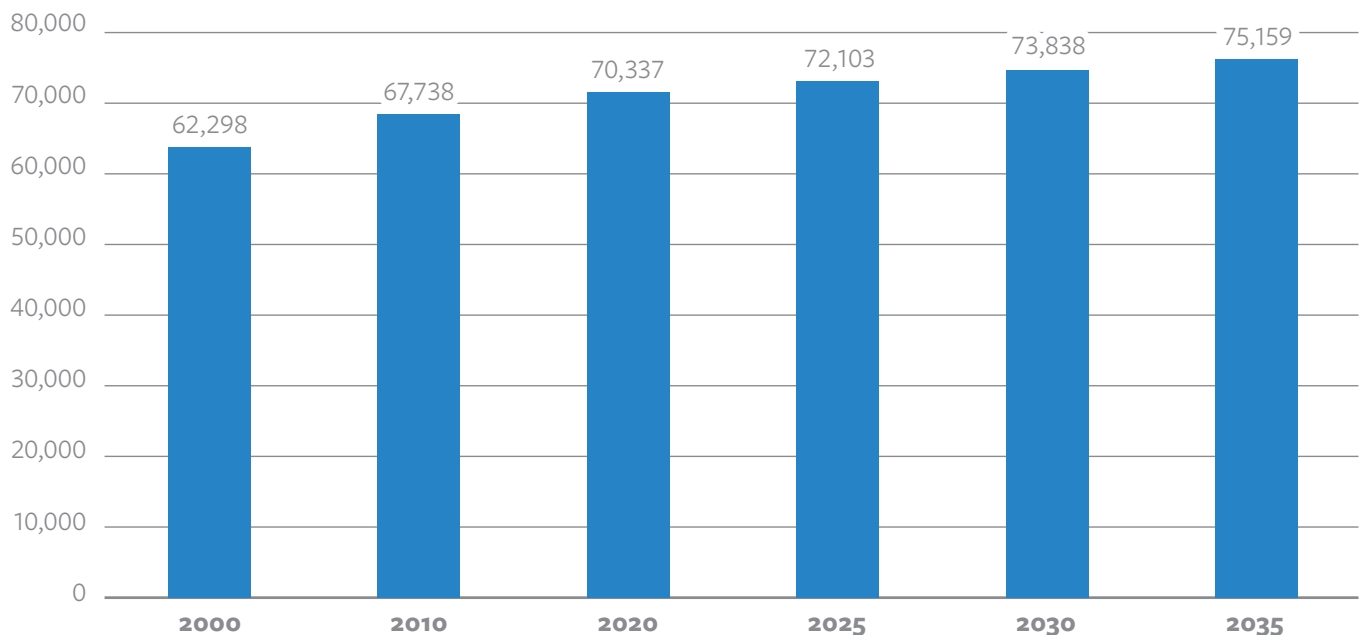


Figure 8: Historic and Projected Population Growth in the Springfield UGB

- The median household income was \$50,481, which is over \$15,000 less than the median household income of \$65,472 for the state of Oregon (Esri, 2021).
- The average home value was \$311,024, which is less than the home value average of \$441,837 in the state of Oregon (Esri, 2021).
- Over 18.3% of households of Springfield were below the poverty level in 2020 compared to 12.4% in the state of Oregon (ACS, 2020).
- The average household size in the Springfield UGB (2.48) was similar to the state of Oregon (2.47) (ACS, 2020).
- Children in the Springfield Public Schools system had a 61.5% participation rate in the free and reduced lunch program as reported in 2018, which is the third highest rate of the 12 school districts in Lane County.

The median age in 2022 was 38.4 years old.

Age

The median age in the Springfield UGB was 38.4 years old in 2021. This is slightly younger than the median ages in the state of Oregon (40.3) and the United States (38.8) (Esri, 2021). The age group projections are in Figure 9. As shown in Figure 9, Springfield’s population is getting older.

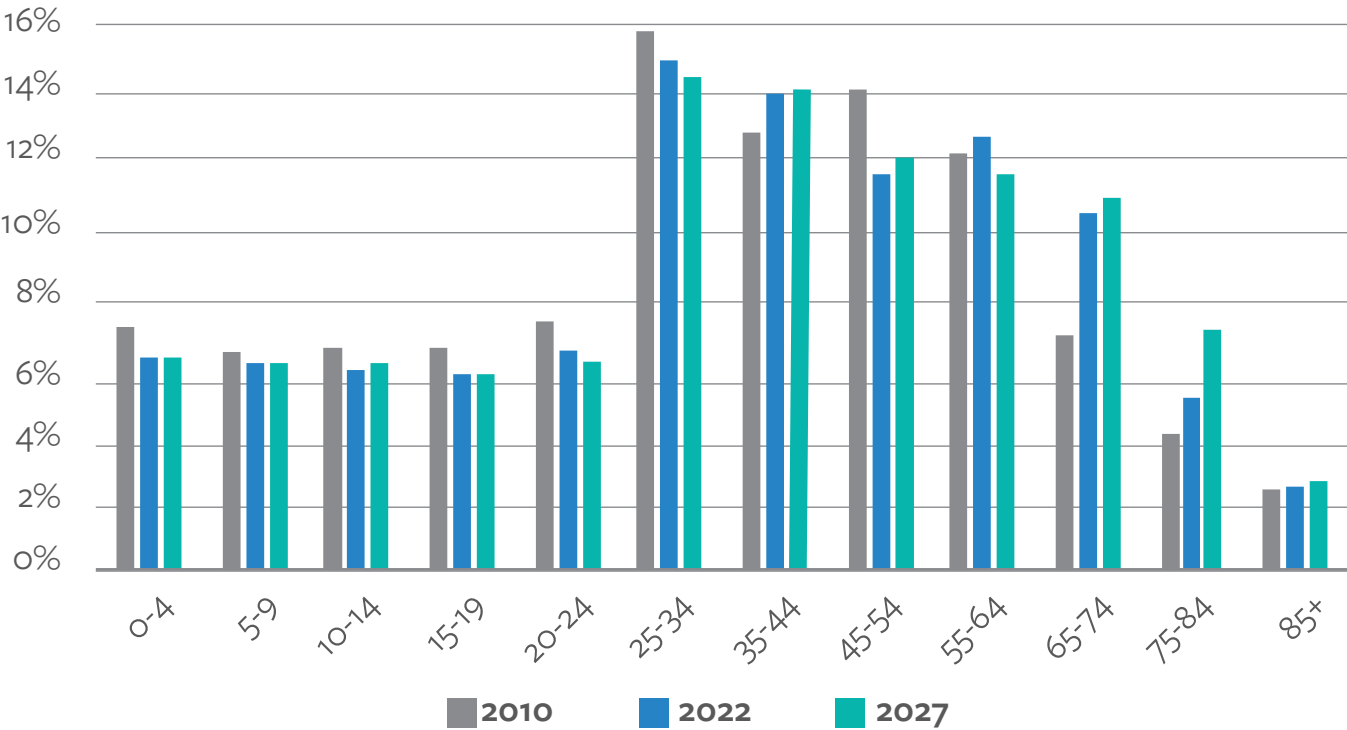


Figure 9: Age Distribution Trends 2010-2027
Source: 2021 Esri Business Analyst

Race and Diversity

The UGB population is becoming more diverse over time. While still mostly white (82.91%), the number of people of Latinx origin (irrespective of race) has increased from 11.32% in 2010 to 14.84% in 2021 and is projected to reach 16.95% by 2026. See Table 1.

Population Group	2010	2021	2026 Projection
White	86.55%	82.91%	81.04%
Hispanic	11.32%	14.84%	16.95%
Other Race	4.85%	6.36%	7.22%
Two or More Races	4.63%	5.78%	6.34%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	1.39%	1.65%	1.76%
Asian	1.26%	1.68%	1.87%
Black/African American	1.01%	1.29%	1.42%
Pacific Islander	0.31%	0.34%	0.35%

Table 1: Race and Ethnicity in the Springfield UGB
Source: Esri Business Analyst, 2021

People with Disabilities

According to the ACS, 19.1% of Springfield's UGB population experienced living with some sort of hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and/or independent living disability in 2021. This is higher than the state of Oregon at 14.3% and reaffirms the importance of inclusive programming and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plans for parks and facilities. See Table 2 below for a breakout of disability by percentage in the Springfield UGB. The highest percentage of individuals with disabilities in Lane County are American Indian/Alaska Natives (21.6%), white (17.6%), two or more races (15.6%), and Latinx (11.1%).²

Ambulatory difficulty	9.1%
Cognitive difficulty	8.9%
Independent living difficulty	8.4%
Hearing difficulty	5.7%
Vision difficulty	3.4%
Self-care difficulty	3.3%

Table 2: Types of Disabilities in the City of Springfield UGB



² Lane County Health Equity Report, 2020.

Health and Wellness

Understanding the status of a community’s health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps provide annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations. Lane County, home to the city of Springfield, ranked in the higher-middle range of counties in Oregon (higher 50%–75%) in 2021. Figure 10 below provides additional information regarding the county’s health data as it may relate to parks, recreation, and community services (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2021).



Trends Analysis

Introduction

This analysis details the recreational trends and interests that were identified in both regional and national research. The following sections summarize an overview of participation in recreational activities within Springfield’s UGB.

Estimated Recreation Participation

This section showcases participation in fitness activities and outdoor recreation for adults 25 and older in the Springfield UGB compared to the state of Oregon. Activity participation and consumer behavior are based on a specific methodology and survey data to make up what Esri terms “Market Potential Index.” See Appendix 5 for additional trends data in the areas of:

- Outdoor Recreation
- Outdoor Fitness Trails
- Trails and Health
- Dog Parks
- Generational Changes
- Pickleball
- Disc Golf

Regarding fitness activities, walking for exercise was the most popular, with over 26.5% of Springfield adults participating. Swimming followed as the second most popular, with almost 18% of adults participating. Finally, weightlifting was another popular activity, with 12.3% participation. Participation trends are shown for fitness and outdoor recreation in *Figures 11 and 12*.

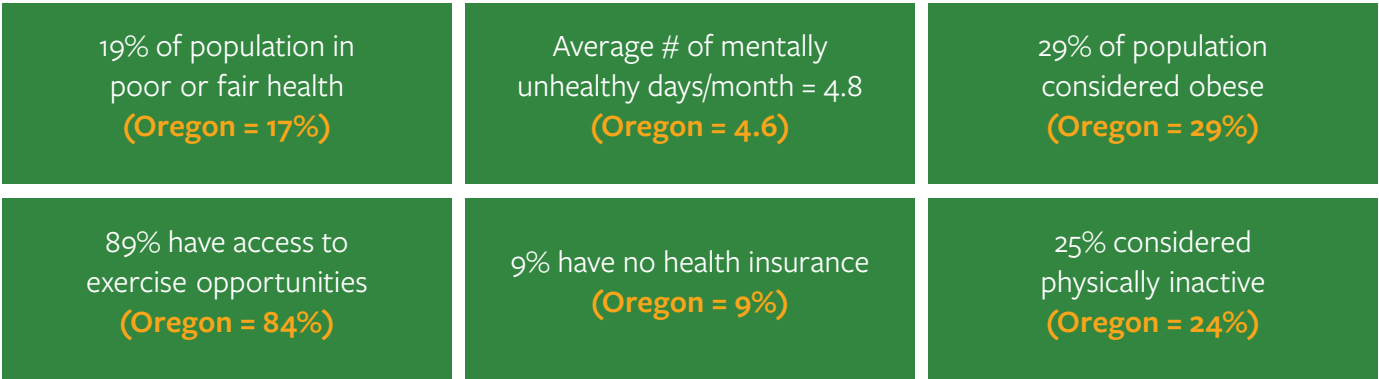


Figure 10: Lane County Health Rankings Overview
Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

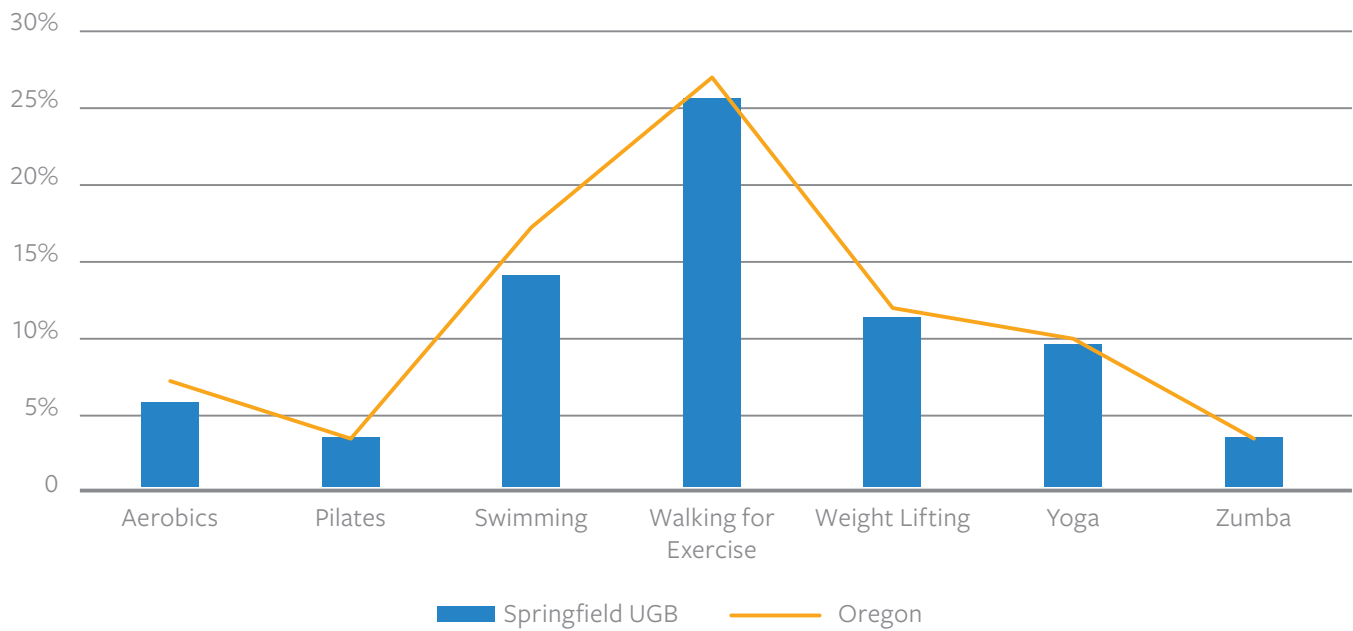


Figure 11: Adult Participation in Fitness Activities
Source: Esri Business Analyst

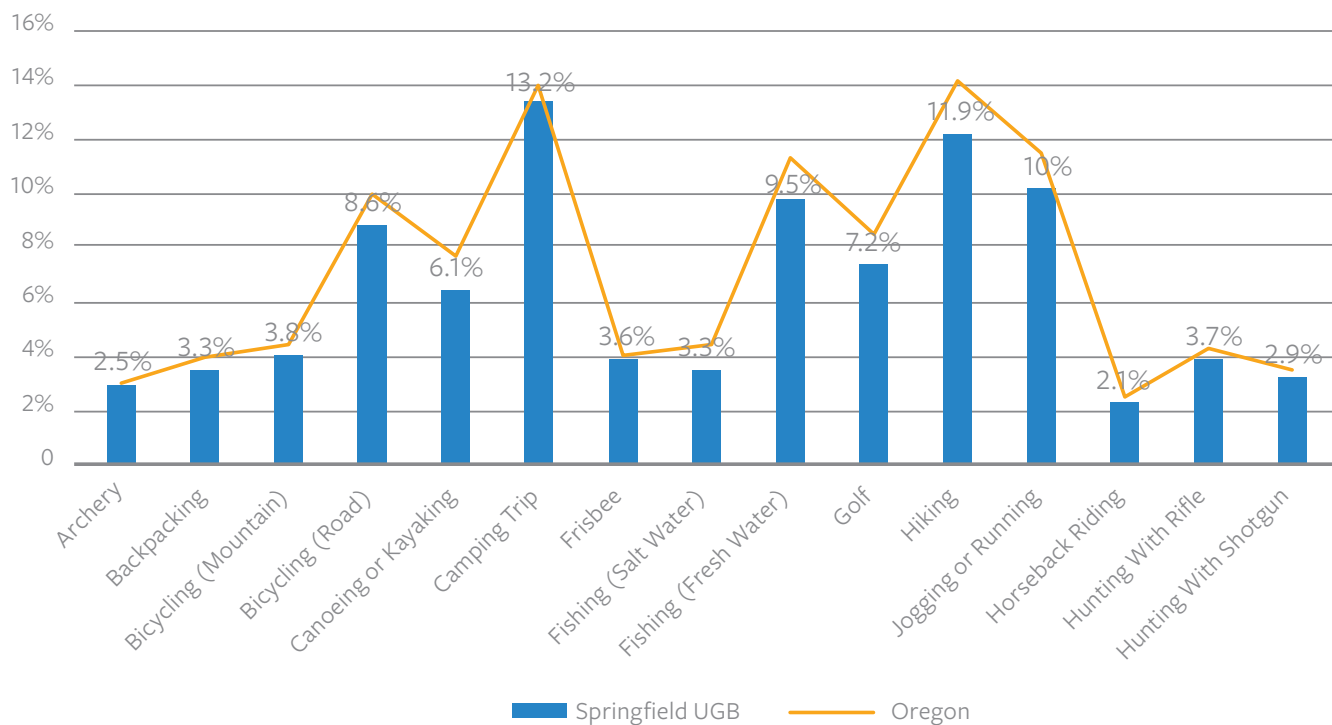


Figure 12: Adult Participation in Outdoor Recreation Activities
Source: Esri Business Analyst

The most popular outdoor recreation activities in 2021 were overnight camping, hiking/jogging, and freshwater fishing. The Oregon SCORP (2019 – 2023) reflected similar participation trends, as noted in [Figure 13](#). Walking on

local streets, sidewalks, and trails was the top activity. Following this were sightseeing, relaxing, beach activities, day hiking, and outdoor concerts (see [Figure 13](#)).

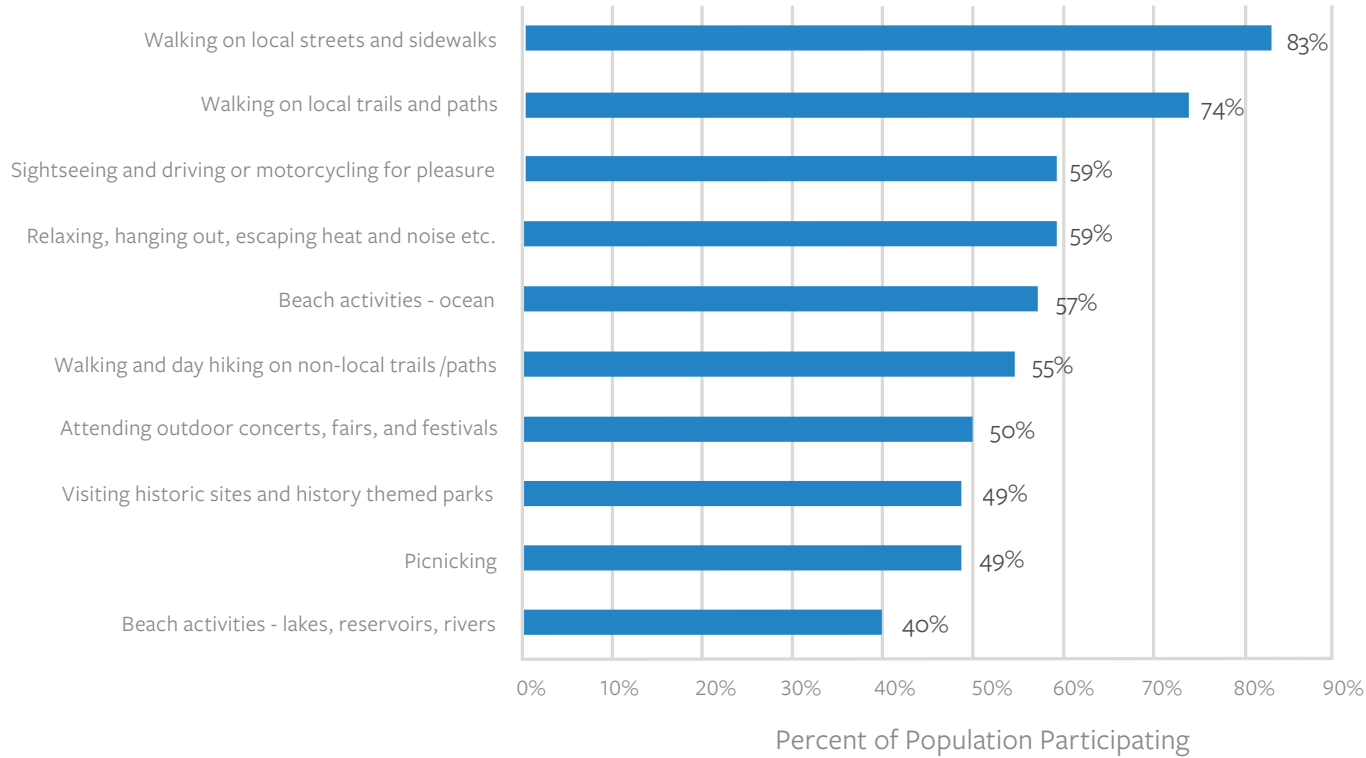


Figure 13: Top 10 Activities for Oregon Residents in 2017
Source: Oregon SCORP



4



Community Engagement

Over the course of the planning process, more than 3,800 community members provided input, with a majority of responses coming from the needs assessment survey and intercept events. Overall, 32,285 district residents either received targeted social media posts or email notifications (passive engagement) or provided some form of input (active engagement).

This section discusses the various public engagement strategies implemented during the planning process. As feedback was received, it was reviewed and confirmed through public town hall meetings, work sessions with the Willamalane Board of Directors, discussions with partners, Springfield Planning Commission, Springfield City Council, the Lane County Planning Commission, and the Lane County Board of Commissioners. See Appendix 1 for a summary of the community input received.

Outreach Strategy—Identifying Needs and Desires

This park and recreation comprehensive plan was built upon a well-established practice of active engagement with district community members, stakeholders and both users and non-users of parks and trails, programs, and facilities. To help ensure compliance with Oregon’s statewide land use planning Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement), a formal Community Engagement Plan was presented to the Springfield Committee for Citizen Involvement near the outset of the project. This plan is provided in Appendix 6. The tasks and schedule presented in the engagement plan focused first on identifying needs and then on confirming those needs as priorities. A timeline is shown in Figure 15.

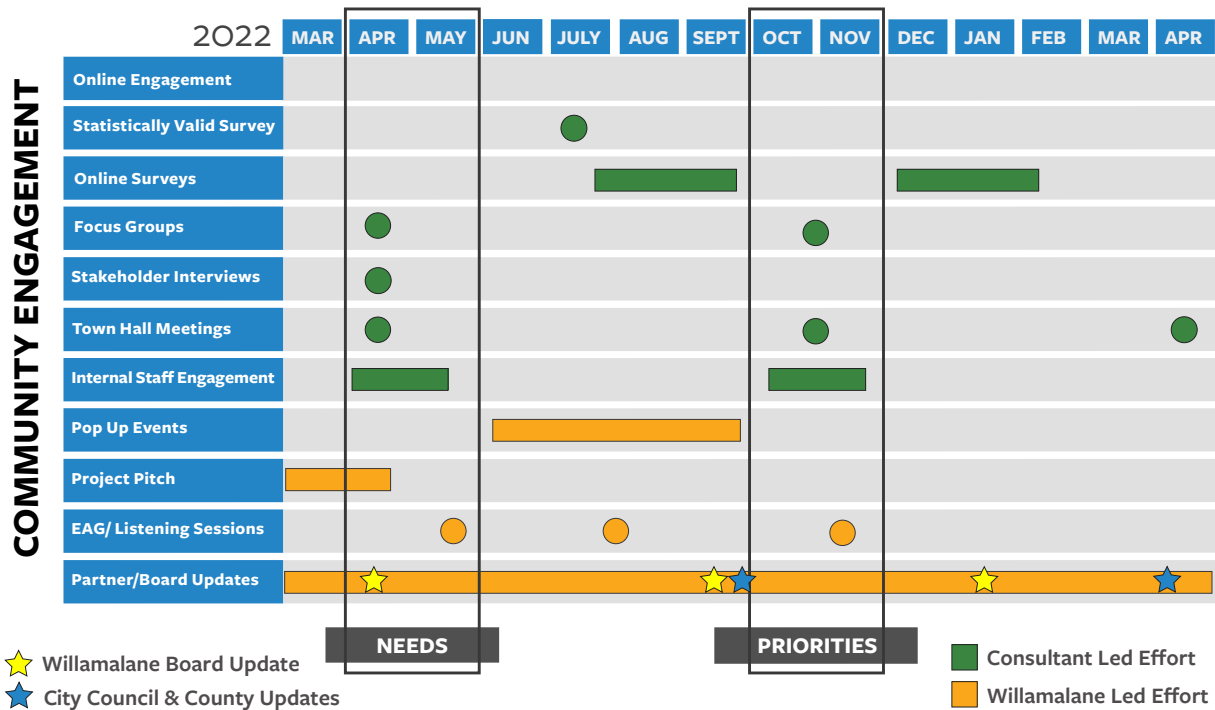


Figure 15: Community Engagement Schedule

An important goal was to complete a comprehensive assessment incorporating the opinions, needs, and desires of all district members in a transparent, credible, and inclusive way. Priorities were set to attract input from individuals and groups that may have been disproportionately less involved in past engagement opportunities. To meet this goal, the project team initiated a series of engagement opportunities along with both random invitation and open-link surveys.

The community engagement strategies selected for this plan support the following five goals in order to inform the overall comprehensive planning process:

GOAL 1: Promote project awareness throughout the planning process

- Find opportunities to engage early with various groups in the community.
- Provide as many opportunities as possible for community members to engage.
- Follow up and promote additional involvement with those that engage.
- Build relationships with participants and provide information about programs, events, and services Willamalane offers.

GOAL 2: Gain a deeper understanding of who Willamalane serves

- Who does Willamalane currently serve? Who is not being served?
- What are the demographics of users/non-users (age, race/ethnicity, families, renters/homeowners, gender, and socioeconomic status)?
- What demographic groups use Willamalane's facilities the most/least?
- What programs, parks, trails, activities, and events are accessed the most/least?
- How does the community learn about programs, events and services offered by Willamalane?
- How satisfied is the community with Willamalane's offerings?
- What are common hardships that make accessing park and recreation services challenging (physical/cognitive limitations, socioeconomic limitations, language barrier, schedule, feeling of safety or belonging, etc.)?



GOAL 3: Learn about gaps, barriers, needs, and preferences within the park district

- What does Willamalane do well? What can Willamalane do better?
- What improvements or changes would increase use of Willamalane parks, facilities, and programs?
- What new park opportunities should be considered?
- What new recreation opportunities should be considered?
- What is Springfield lacking?

GOAL 4: Understand the community's priorities for the future of park and recreation

- What are the most desired park/facility improvements?
- What are the most desired recreational opportunities?
- What types of park and facility improvement projects would the community fund?

GOAL 5: Gain support of final plan recommendations

Stakeholders and Focus Groups

Many of the focus groups included typical users or non-users of Willamalane's programs and parks, representing a variety of backgrounds and interests. These focus groups were held to gain a general perspective of district strengths and weaknesses and help inform creation of the survey tool. Other focus groups were held to help ensure participation was inclusive of groups that may not participate through typical engagement opportunities. These topic-specific focus groups were hosted for teens, the Latinx community, individuals with disabilities, natural areas advocates, trails advocates, and the American Indian/Alaska Native community.

These outreach efforts resulted in:

- Community stakeholders and focus group participants – **41 participants**
- Teen focus groups – **111 participants**
- American Indians/Alaska Natives – **22 participants**
- Inclusion and individuals with disabilities advocates (in English and Spanish)– **21 participants**
- Latinx specific focus group – **22 participants**
- Natural areas specific focus group – **12 participants**
- Trails – **6 participants**

The opinions of older adults were collected at engagement events, tabling, and through the survey.



A Summary of Input Received During General Stakeholder and Focus Group Interviews and Meetings

An abundance of district strengths were identified by the stakeholders who participated in these efforts. Among many key comments, the district's structure as a special district, its sustainable funding streams, and partnerships and support from the community were repeatedly mentioned by participants. Stakeholders also highlighted the relationship and significant support the district receives from Springfield Public Schools. The iPASS program that provides access to district and regional recreation opportunities was identified as an important district strength.

According to participants, areas of potential improvement include a need for more varied class and activity times, additional restrooms in parks, parking at the Adult Activity Center and additional aquatic programs and events. Relatedly, a barrier to participation included the district's lack of outreach to community members who may not be currently using parks and facilities. During the meetings, the following additional amenities and programs were identified as priorities:

Park components – outdoor basketball courts, pump tracks, splash pads, dog stations, family friendly restrooms, pickleball, and more.

Recreation classes and activities – pickleball classes, activities specific for adults ages 21-50, additional swimming lessons and environmental education/outdoor programs.

Additional special events in parks – movies, concerts and cultural festivals were also highlighted.



Many additional community priorities were identified and are shown in Appendix 1. A few key focus areas for the district are listed below.

FOCUS AREAS

- Increase footprint to help ensure accommodation of development and growth.
- Continue to grow the district and offer great programs and facilities to youth while providing health awareness to increase inclusivity.
- Continue to grow partnerships with Springfield Public Schools.
- Focus on safety measures.
- Continue to be a fiscally responsible organization.
- Remain engaged with the public and underserved populations.
- Help ensure that DEI is addressed at all levels.

A Summary of Input Received During Topic-Specific Focus Groups

These important focus groups brought stakeholders into the process that may not have participated otherwise. These discussions are only one way these groups were engaged with during the planning process. During the meetings, participants expressed desire for additional amenities and programs such as:

Teens	Trails
Latinx	Accessibility and Inclusion
Natural Areas	American Indian/ Alaska Native (AI/AN)

Table 3: Topic Specific Focus Groups



Teen-Focused Discussion

During the comprehensive plan update scoping and planning process, the project’s advisory committee identified teens as a user group they felt may not be reached through typical forms of public engagement like surveys and focus groups.

PROCESS

A total of 111 students in four classes (two middle school and two high school classes) volunteered to participate in this effort. Students in each class were given a presentation and then asked a series of questions for discussion in large or small groups facilitated by Willamalane staff. The session closed with a paper survey.

KEY THEMES

A few of the key themes emerging from the feedback are presented here:

- Teens are generally familiar with Willamalane and satisfied with their experiences at district parks and programs.

- Students are most familiar with bigger, destination-type recreation facilities in addition to the parks closest to their neighborhoods.
- Students are busy, and many teens who play sports are reaching more competitive levels. Parks and recreation provide an opportunity to engage in physical activity in a less competitive, more social environment that is not always available through school.
- Students rely on social media as a primary way of receiving information. Another communication method they recommended using to promote teen centered opportunities is school announcements (especially at the start of the year).

The students (111) completed a needs assessment and satisfaction survey, and their responses to some of the key questions are presented in Appendix 1. A few examples are included in Table 4.

Most Used Parks, Trails, and Facilities by Teens	Most Popular Teen Participatory Activities	Teen Desires for Additional Activities
• Splash at Lively Park (wave pool) • Bob Keefer Center for Sports and Recreation • Dorris Ranch • Thurston Hills Natural Area	• Hiking • Swimming • Weightlifting • Video games	• Roller skating in its own facility • Movie nights • PE games (Badminton, Spikeball™, corn hole, etc.)

Table 4: Teen Written Survey Most Repeated Responses

Latinx Community Discussion

PROCESS

Willamalane worked with local partners to host an event to help inform needs, desires, and priorities of Latinx community members. The event included a brief presentation about Willamalane's mission and values, what Willamalane provides in the community, and some background on how the feedback will be used. Willamalane also introduced its DEI Strategic Action Plan and DEI supervisor as a future point of contact for collaboration and questions.

Approximately 22 attendees were divided into three discussion groups. Each small group had a translator available. See Appendix 1 for the full summary of the process and findings.

KEY THEMES

Four priorities were identified that speak to the most desired improvements Willamalane could make to better serve the Latinx community, the full list is shown in Appendix 1:

- Hiring more bilingual staff
- Providing more stipends/scholarships for programs
- Providing more Latinx focused programming
- Providing more bilingual information in parks and buildings

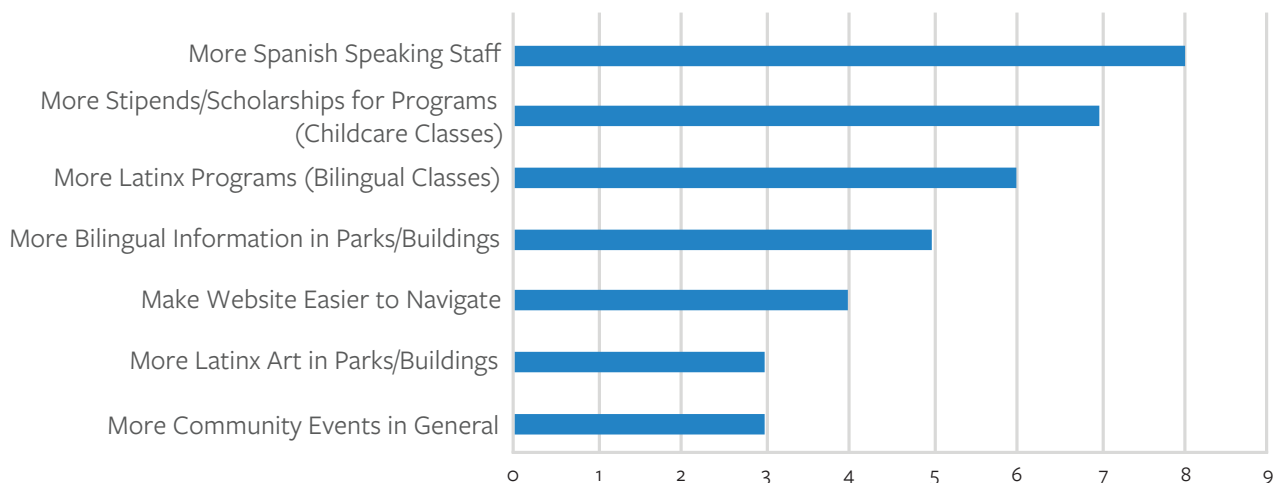


Figure 16: Latinx Service Priorities

Natural Area Specific Focus Group

PROCESS

Including input specific to natural areas was important for the comprehensive plan update because at the time of the 2012 update, Willamalane only managed 186 acres of natural area and employed no dedicated natural resource staff. Ten years later, Willamalane manages nearly 1,000 acres of natural area and has two full-time staff dedicated to planning and managing these areas. Participants in this conversation included representatives from 13 different agencies that have experience working with the district in various ways and/or doing similar work in the region.

KEY THEMES

Table 5 is a synthesized list of key topics and themes identified during the natural areas focus group meeting. See Appendix 1 for a full summary of process and findings.

Trails Specific Focus Group

PROCESS

Walking for pleasure and exercise and hiking on both paths and trails were top priorities identified during the initial engagement process and the needs assessment

survey. As a result, a trails-specific focus group was facilitated to best understand trail needs both in the district and in the region. Individuals attending had backgrounds and represented:

- Back Country Horsemen of Oregon equestrians
- Local hiking and climbing club
- The City of Springfield’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Rivers to Ridges Partnership
- City of Springfield transportation planners
- Lane County senior transportation planner

KEY THEMES

Key issues identified during the focus group meeting are included in Appendix 1. Overall themes of feedback related to:

- A need for additional trails and trailheads
- Physical gaps in the existing trails network/regions in Springfield are underserved by the trail network
- Desired user experiences and amenities

NATURAL AREAS FOCUS GROUP INPUT

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES	PRIORITY PROJECTS	ACQUISITION OPPORTUNITIES
» Nature hikes and tours » Interpretive panels » Increase public awareness of efforts » Local flora/fauna, sensitive areas, and cultural aspects of natural resource work	» Focuses: urban stormwater, riparian and floodplain areas, urban forest, oak habitat » More viewpoints » Locations: Island Park Slough, Cedar Creek, Maple Slough	» Regional partner-owned land » Land to promote trail/habitat connectivity (especially along rivers) » McKenzie River access
PARTNERSHIPS	MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	APPROACH
» Maintain and continually expand partnerships » Expand for: fuel reduction work, land acquisition, and floodplain restoration	» Cross-train staff » Implement prescribed burns » Be systematic and proactive » Prioritize heavy impact areas	» Increase staff and capacity » Incorporate social justice » Acquire strategically/be proactive » Hire grant writer

Table 5: Natural Areas Focus Group Input

Accessibility and Inclusion Specific Focus Group

PROCESS

Given the high percentage of individuals with disabilities in the Springfield UGB, a targeted focus group was held to add perspectives offered by individuals or advocates for individuals with disabilities. A separate Spanish speaking group was facilitated in partnership with the Families Connected/Familias en Conexión program at The Arc Lane County. This program provides support to English and Spanish speaking families who are raising a child with a disability.

KEY THEMES

- Continue to provide accommodations to youth with disabilities through both specialized and integrated recreation programs and classes.
- Work with community partners (i.e., The ARC of Lane County, City of Eugene) to provide and promote additional indoor options for youth, especially during winter months.
- Continue to address mobility needs, including those individuals who are visually challenged.
- Continue to offer scholarships and other means to help ensure an equitable fee structure for individuals with disabilities and their families.
- Inclusion services (program participation) should be free for both participants and support workers.
- Continue to improve accessibility in parks, specifically playgrounds, and consider adding fencing and accessible restrooms.
- Provide interpretive signage on trails or at trailheads and online to reflect the anticipated trail experience (easy, intermediate, difficult), to indicate conditions (such as rough terrain or steep slopes) and identify potential barriers.
- Consider the addition of hex boards in playgrounds with communication tools.

See Appendix 1 for a full summary.

American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)

Given the history of forced removal of the Kalapuya Indigenous peoples from the area, and the influence Willamalane and the City of Springfield have on local and regional land management, Willamalane and the City jointly hosted a dialogue to better understand residents' needs and values and to gain awareness of the priorities of self-identified American Indian/Alaska Native residents living within Springfield and the surrounding areas.



PROCESS

Willamalane and the City of Springfield collaborated with an Indigenous planning consultant to host a public dialogue for AI/AN residents to share feedback and perspectives around agency awareness, values, and priorities. The planning consultant applied elder teachings while co-facilitating the session with indigenous community representatives.

The event included 22 AI/AN participants, affiliated with 13 tribal nations. The full summary of the dialogue and all findings are included in Appendix 1.

KEY THEMES

Some of the main themes from this conversation are presented below.

- A dire need for community space or a community center
- Intergenerational programming - it is important to include all generations (babies to elders) in programming for this community
- Accurate representation – raise awareness regarding accurate Kalapuya history and for current Indigenous people
- Protection and planting of native plant species
- Continued relationships between agencies and the community – town hall meetings, discussion forums, regular community meetings

- Communication/outreach specifically for Native programming
- Priority for Native language and signage in the public realm
- Access – to space, water/rivers, harvesting of traditional plants, affordable services, leadership roles
- Representation through AI/AN liaison role employed by agencies to engage with Native communities

Needs Assessment Community Survey Summary

The needs assessment survey was conducted to both understand the needs, desires, and gaps in district recreation and parks delivery and to confirm findings from stakeholder and focus group meetings. Willamalane's promotion of the survey included attending 22 community events. A total of 262 invitation survey responses were received, which suggests statistical validity with a 6% margin of error. While the goal was to achieve a 5% margin of error, the high number of open-link surveys received and the similarity between the invitations and open-link response suggests results that are accountable and accurate. See the full needs assessment survey summary report in Appendix 4.

The high number of open-link responses – 1,336 – allowed the data to be analyzed in a variety of ways. Over 600 comments were received. A summarized list is presented in Appendix 4.

METHODOLOGY

Statistically Valid Survey (Invitation Survey)

Paper surveys were mailed to a systematic random sample of addresses in Willamalane Park and Recreation District with the option to complete through online protected website (one response per household).

Open Link Survey

Later, the online survey was made available for all Willamalane Park and Recreation District stakeholders, including non-district residents (e.g., commuters or residents of nearby communities).



1,598
TOTAL SURVEYS

4,502 Surveys Mailed

4,406 Surveys Delivered

262 Invitation Surveys Completed

1,336 Open Link Surveys Completed
(+/- 6% Margin of Error)

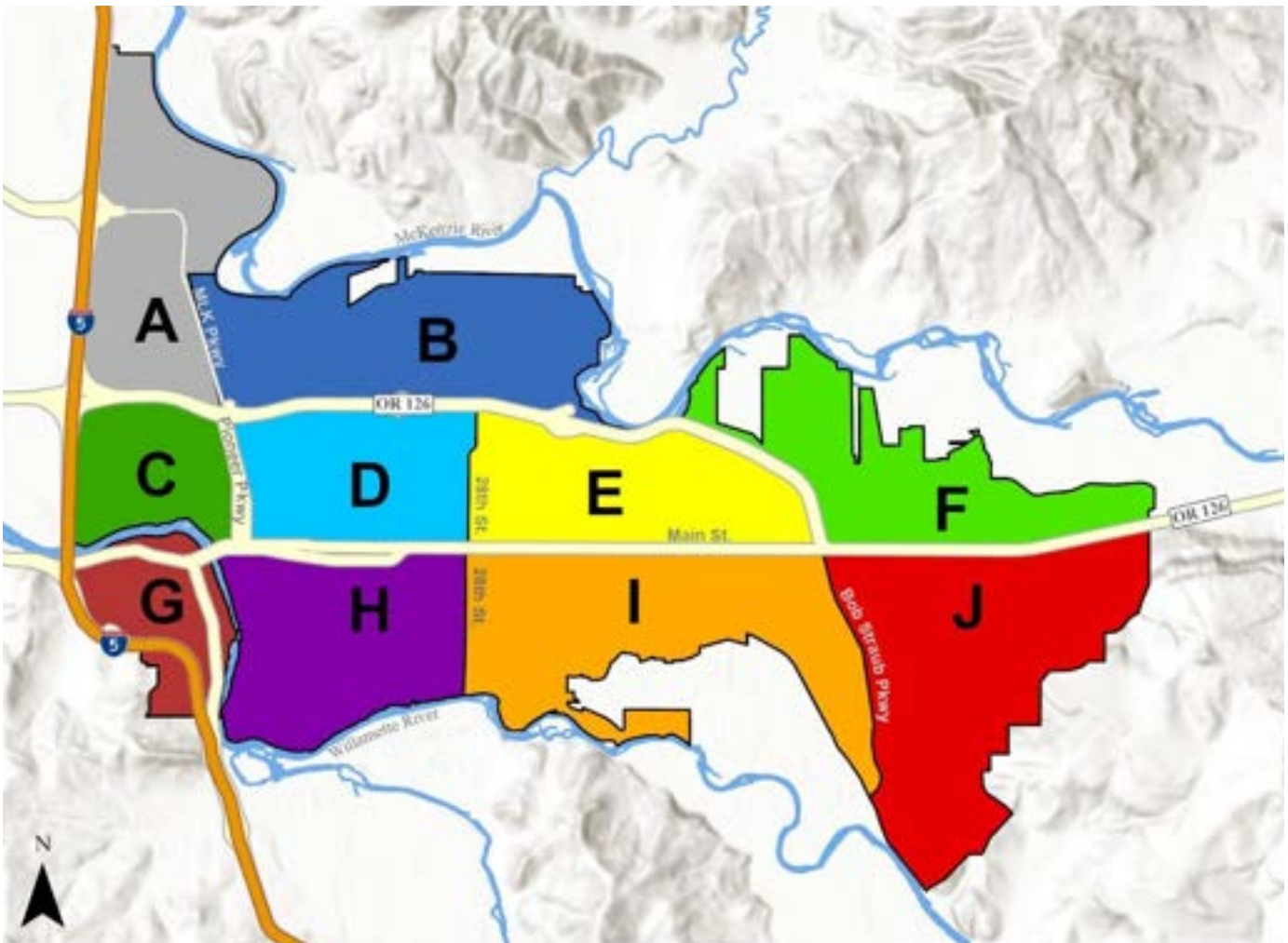


Figure 17: Study Areas Identified in the Needs Assessment Survey

Results of the survey are referenced throughout the plan. The data was weighted to help ensure adequate representation of the community.

The survey focused on usage of parks and recreation programs, satisfaction, priorities, communication, needs and desires, and was forward-looking—exploring future facilities, amenities, and programmatic opportunities for improvement. The survey also provided opportunities to cross-tabulate results by many demographic categories including by geographic area, per the map in Figure 17.

Key Findings from the Survey

Figure 18, provides a quick overview of digital outreach statistics for the survey.

Other findings from the survey are shown in *Tables 6, 7, and 8* below, and were integrated into the development of recommendations and actions for the comprehensive plan. Importance of facilities and services, importance of program needs, and overall priorities are presented here and in Appendix 4.

Key Findings

Two samples were collected in the survey effort, the statistically valid invite sample and the open-link sample, which had a strong response. Together they provide an excellent source of input on topics addressed through each survey. Survey results are presented in formats that compare responses from each sample, along with an overall response. In general, responses from the open-link survey are similar to the invite, a positive finding that it indicates a more general consensus across the two samples.

Respondents show higher levels of familiarity with the parks, recreation facilities, and services provided by Willamalane. The average rating for the invite sample was 3.6 out of 5 with 5 being “very familiar” and an average of 4 out of 5 for the open-link. Trails/paths maintained by Willamalane, natural areas/open spaces and parks and playgrounds are the most frequently used amenities by respondents in both samples.

Improving awareness of Willamalane’s facilities and services, especially in areas A and F, would increase usage, particularly among Latinx households with disabilities.

Overall, respondents generally feel very welcome in Willamalane parks and facilities. The average was 4.3 for the invite sample and 4.4 for the open link on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being “very welcome.”

The top priority for amenities and facilities was identified to be park safety and maintenance. Top priorities for the trail system includes soft-surface hiking trails and scenic settings, connectivity between existing trails and accessible walking trails.

Natural areas/open spaces, community centers and basketball courts needs are meeting the needs of the community well. Needs for restrooms in parks, pickleball courts, and outdoor fitness stations in parks are not being met.

Approximately 89% of invite respondents have children between the ages of 12 and 17 at home. Among those

with 12 to 17 year old children at home, 96% responded saying more trails and bike paths are needed.

Among invite respondents, 69% prefer direct mail for communication and 64% prefer e-mail communication. Currently, 63% of respondents received communication through direct mail. Communication effectiveness related to parks, recreation facilities, and services is rated to be at least 3 out of 5 by 74% of invite respondents.

About 69% of the invite respondents responded they will probably or definitely support a bond referendum for specific projects. In total for both samples, over half of respondents support fees for new development of parks and recreation facilities, while 45% of invite respondents do not support increased property taxes.

Other findings from the survey are shown in Tables 6, 7, and 8 below, and were integrated into the development of recommendations and actions for the comprehensive plan. Importance of facilities and services, importance of program needs, and overall priorities are presented here and in Appendix 4.

Top 10 Most Important Facilities and Services to Springfield Households	
Facility/Service	Percent Rating 4 or 5
Park safety and maintenance	90%
Natural areas/open space	87%
Trails in parks and/or trail systems	85%
Restrooms in parks	84%
Indoor swimming pool	58%
Off-leash areas in parks for dogs	55%
Community centers	42%
Outdoor fitness stations in parks	34%
Pickleball courts	26%
Basketball courts	26%

Table 6: Most Important Facilities and Services to Springfield Households

Most Important Future Priorities to Springfield Households

Most important future priorities	Percent ranking 1st, 2nd, or 3rd most important
Trails and bike paths	35%
Outdoor swimming pool	25%
Park safety and maintenance	22%
Better maintenance of existing parks and facilities	18%
Outdoor splash pad for water play	16%
Additional restrooms in parks	16%
Additional dog parks/facilities	14%
Open-air covered multi-use space	14%
Community farmers market	13%

Table 7: Most Important Future Program Needs to Springfield Households

Most Important Future Program Needs to Springfield Households

Program and Service	Percent Rating 4 or 5
Community farmers market	64%
Inclusive programs for individuals with disabilities	64%
Enrichment classes and activities	63%
More community special events	60%
Programs for adults 18-50	60%
Food access programs (meals on wheels, etc.)	57%
Programs for adults 50+	52%
Additional youth sports opportunities	52%

Table 8: Most Important Future Priorities to Springfield Households

Pop-Up Intercept Events

Willamalane created staffed pop-up event tables and attended 22 community events over the summer. Staff invited event attendees to play a voting game where each community member received five tokens and placed them in their choice of nine voting boxes (categories listed below). The voting game helped people understand the types of projects Willamalane is considering and collected feedback from various demographics about the community's broad priorities for park, facility, and recreation improvements. Participants were also encouraged to take the public survey available online. See a summary of pop-up intercept events in Appendix 7.

Willamalane attended a broad range of events in effort to attract as diverse of an audience as possible. Events included focuses on families, children, older adults, Latinx heritage, Asian American/Pacific Islander heritage, and the LGBTQIA+ community.



Community Engagement

In total, 1,766 people cast their votes at these events. The vote breakdown is on the right:

Those who voted for “Other” shared their ideas with a staff member who recorded them. Some ideas that were shared multiple times included:

- Dog parks
- Indoor or shaded playgrounds
- Disc golf courses
- Additional summer camp opportunities
- Splash pads
- Video game programs
- Therapeutic saltwater pool

Outdoor Pool and/or Water Play	27.5%
Expand Trail System	13.9%
Improve Existing Playgrounds	13%
Childcare Opportunities	11.3%
Field/Court Options in Parks	7.5%
Outdoor Recreation Equipment Rentals	7.3%
Fitness Classes	7.1%
Recreation Classes	7%
Other	5%

Table 9a: Priorities from Intercept Engagement Events

Digital Outreach

Digital outreach efforts lasted the entirety of the engagement process and included communication to community members through the Willamalane.org/future website, email blasts and use of social media. For a summary of the digital outreach effort, see Appendix 7.

Internal Staff Engagement

To best understand issues pertinent to the comprehensive plan, district leadership and staff were interviewed as part of a “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats” (SWOT) analysis. Results were used to craft questions for the needs assessment survey and gain a greater perspective on key issues affecting the district.

Staff involvement at each of the events was as follows:

- Staff SWOT – 141
- Aquatics staff focus group – 38
- Operations and maintenance staff focus group – 25



Figure 18: Digital Outreach Statistics

Aquatics Staff Input

Thirty-eight aquatics staff, (full- and part-time) met in October 2022. A full summary of the input received is presented in Appendix 1. Staff identified higher wages, the need for additional staff, the need for lifeguard recruitment and retention efforts, and more consistent operation hours as priorities for improvement.

Operations and Maintenance Staff Input

Twenty-five staff members were asked a series of questions in November 2022 and results were used to inform the maintenance assessment. Some of the top priorities include:

- » Increase staff to support growing system, especially in natural resources.
- » Acquire more space (storage, shop, office, parking). Current Park Services facility is beyond capacity.

Operations and Maintenance Staff Input

- » Address challenges associated with increase in unhoused community members, vandalism, and management of restrooms.
- » Be proactive in management vs reactive.
- » Consider needs for increased staffing and associated maintenance costs with growth in district assets.
- » Dedicate funding for large-cost maintenance needs (e.g. playground replacement).

- » Prioritize low maintenance designs.
- » Upgrade equipment to work efficiently.
- » Include parks staff in design and planning efforts.

District Staff and Leadership SWOT Analysis

The analysis identified strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities through both a written survey form and in-person interviews. The results are reflected below.

District Staff SWOT Analysis

MOST REPORTED STRENGTHS ☐ Amenities and facilities ☐ Resiliency (adaptability to change) ☐ Staff communication ☐ Parks ☐ Staff retention rate ☐ Seasonal community events ☐ Workplace culture ☐ Commitment to DEI ☐ Funding base (property tax provided to district) ☐ Community support ☐ Dedicated and competent staff ☐ Teamwork ☐ Attentive leadership	MOST REPORTED WEAKNESSES ☐ Programs (ages: 20–50) ☐ Staff salaries ☐ Vehicle replacement program ☐ Staying within mission ☐ Adding amenities without maintenance budget ☐ Reactive maintenance (be more strategic) ☐ Corrective action (patrons) ☐ Fee structure (increasing of fees) ☐ Visual appearance of parks ☐ ADA updates to facilities and parks ☐ Not enough staff for the workload ☐ Insufficient programming space ☐ Internal communication
MOST REPORTED OPPORTUNITIES ☐ Partnerships/sponsorships ☐ Grow volunteer programming ☐ Utilization of “Friends of” groups ☐ Expand river access ☐ Prioritizing underserved populations ☐ Hiring a procurement manager ☐ Employee engagement ☐ Outdoor tennis/pickleball courts ☐ Expand disc golf ☐ Park projects that increase capacity ☐ Partnerships and cultural opportunities ☐ A new community center and indoor aquatic facility	MOST REPORTED THREATS ☐ Lack of frontline staff ☐ Mid-management working outside of scope ☐ Lack of police response (safety and security) ☐ Need pay study to assist with recruitment ☐ Maintaining assets with growth ☐ Eugene fees being less than Willamalane’s ☐ Inaccurate media ☐ School district (need for updated MOU) ☐ Climate change ☐ Funding (not sustainable) ☐ Retaining employees ☐ COVID-19 pandemic

5



Park System Standards and Guidelines

Park system standards, as defined in an inventory created to evaluate the district's resources, are integral to ensuring positive end-user experiences for the community. This inventory and standards system helps by informing what kinds of amenities and resources are needed to provide all residents with equitable access to a high quality park system.

Parks and Facilities Inventory and Assessment

Inventory – What Do We Have?

In April 2022, a mobile audit tool, GRASP® (Geo-Referenced Amenities Standards Process), explained in Appendix 8 was applied to each park and facility to count and score the function and quality of:

- **Components (or improvements)** – things you go to a park to use, such as playgrounds, tennis courts, and picnic shelters
- **Comfort and Convenience Modifiers (or amenities)** – things that enhance comfort and convenience, such as shade, drinking fountains, and restrooms

A quality value (between 0–3) was assigned to each park site, component, and modifier, allowing the comparison of sites and analysis of the overall level of service (LOS) provided by the Willamalane park system. Photos depict various examples and conditions from those visits. See Figure 19.

Parks Assessment Overview

Team members created a scorecard and GIS Inventory Map for each park as shown in Appendix 8. Also in Appendix 8, find additional discussion on GRASP® and the scores for each park. The scorecard shows a variety of important information. See Figure 20 for a map page sample.

Each map shows the park boundary as a green polygon and component locations as a green diamond. The Inventory Atlas is provided as a supplemental document to the comprehensive plan and includes all parks and facilities (See Appendix 8).



Figure 19: Photos Taken During Inventory Site Visits



Figure 20: Example Quartz Park Map Page from the Inventory Atlas

Parks Summary Table

Table 9b includes an alphabetical listing of all parks and shows the total number of identified components and the park acreage. See Appendix 8 for a more detailed parks matrix.

Classification	Park/Location	Total Components	GIS Acres
Community Park	Island Park	12	16.0
	Lively (Jack B.) Park	11	31.2
	Willamalane Park	18	17.2
Sports Park	Bob Artz Memorial Park	6	11.3
	Guy Lee Park	6	13.6
	Les Schwab Sports Park*	11	19.1
Neighborhood Park	Arrow Park	6	5.8
	Bluebelle Park	4	2.9
	Douglas Gardens Park	6	5.6
	Fort (William S.) Memorial Park	7	5.2
	Gamebird Park	5	2.9
	James Park	3	3.0
	Jasper Meadows Park	5	5.9
	Jesse Maine Memorial Park	4	2.3
	Meadow Park	16	7.6
	Menlo Park	3	1.4
	Pacific Park	3	4.6
	Page Park	3	4.2
	Pride Park	3	2.3
	Quartz Park	4	2.7
	Rob Adams Park	5	32.0
	Royal Delle Park	4	2.6
	Thurston Park	5	5.6
Neighborhood Park	Tyson Park	5	4.0
	Volunteer Park	4	4.5
	Willamette Heights Park	4	4.2
Pocket Park	Marylhurst Park	2	0.3
	Robin Park	4	0.8
Special-Use Park	Clearwater Park	7	70.7
	Dorris Ranch	9	299.0
	Kelly Butte Overlook	2	5.8
	Ruff (Wallace M. Jr.) Memorial Park	6	16.8
Natural Area Park	Mill Race Park	6	0.5
	Eastgate Woodlands of the Whilamut Natural Area	8	40.8
	Georgia Pacific Natural Area	7	119.7
	Harvest Landing	2	22.7
	Moe Mountain Natural Area	1	11.0
	Thurston Hills Natural Area	4	666.4
	Weyerhaeuser McKenzie Natural Area	4	59.2
Linear Park	By-Gully Path	3	2.88
	EWEB Path	–	6.37
	Middle Fork Path	–	3.47
	Mill Race Path	–	4.94
	West D St. Greenway	6	23.58
	Weyerhaeuser Haul Road	4	42.98

Table 9b: Summary of Components and GIS Acres for Each Park

*Does not include indoor components. See indoor facility summary for indoor components total.

Park Classifications and Park Standards

Since the 2012 Comprehensive Plan was adopted, many important elements of the park system have changed. Some changes have been dramatic, such as the addition of the Thurston Hills Natural Area and several multi-use pathways, which greatly impact the level of service

in terms of the acres of open space Willamalane provides. Through review of park classifications and options for meeting future demand for parks, the district also identified a need for a smaller pocket park classification to address unmet needs within neighborhoods going forward.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are very small, have limited components and amenities, and are located in neighborhoods. They typically exist in more densely developed areas of town, do not have restrooms or parking and are generally located on very compact sites.

Service Area Radius	Current Range	Proposed average size for new parks
¼-½ mile	0.3-0.8 acres	Less than 1 acre

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Small playground
- Water fountain
- Plantings
- Monuments or art installations
- Sport court
- Limited seating

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are located within biking and walking distance of residential areas, and are generally designed for informal activities. Neighborhood parks provides access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents of all ages.

Service Area Radius	Current Range	Proposed average size for new parks
¼-½ mile	1-32 acres	Min. 3 acres-20 acres

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Children’s play areas
- Court sports facilities
- Picnic tables and benches
- Neighborhood gardens
- Lighting
- Drinking fountains
- Informal play areas
- Paths
- Portable restrooms, when needed
- Natural areas



Community Parks

Community parks are larger parks that provide active and passive recreation opportunities for all district residents and accommodate large group activities. These parks provide a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups and provide environmental education opportunities.

Service Area Radius	Current Range	Proposed average size for new parks
2 miles	16–31 acres	15–30 acres

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Children's play areas
- Competitive sports fields
- Community recreation facilities
- Soft-surface or loop pathways
- Court sports facilities
- Skateboarding facilities
- Off-street parking
- Restrooms
- Public art/fountains
- Single and group picnic areas
- Paths
- Lighting
- Natural areas
- Interpretive facilities
- Water access
- Amphitheaters
- Festival space
- Community gardens
- Unprogrammed open space



Natural Area Parks

These parks are managed for both recreational use and natural values. They provide opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, bicycling, and nature photography. These parks provide opportunities for experiencing nature close to home and protect valuable natural resources and wildlife. They are of sufficient size to protect resource and accommodate passive recreation.

Current Range	Proposed average size for new parks
11–666 acres	Undefined

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Trailhead amenities
- Multipurpose paved trails
- Soft-surface trails
- Boardwalks
- Benches
- Overlooks
- Off-street parking
- Interpretive facilities
- Wildlife blinds
- Water access

Linear Parks

Linear parks provides public access to trail and multi-use path-oriented activities, which may include walking, running, biking, skating, etc., and preserves open space. Trails and pathways may also provide connection to neighborhood recreation facilities where adequate space is available. They are of sufficient size to accommodate trail-related activities and green space.

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Multipurpose paved trails
- Multiple access points
- Benches
- Limited children's play areas
- Soft-surface trails
- Water access



Special Use Parks

People are drawn to these parks and they are managed for their unique features or uses. Special use parks provide a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups with experiences that are not commonly available at other parks in the community.

Current Range
0.4–300 acres

Proposed average size
for new parks
Undefined

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Interpretive facilities
- Off-street parking
- Water access
- Neighborhood park facilities
- Arboretums
- Natural areas
- Viewpoints
- Picnic facilities

Sports Parks

These parks primarily contain competitive sports facilities and may include both indoor and outdoor facilities.

Service Area
Radius
2 miles

Current Range
11–19 acres

Proposed
average size
for new parks
15–30 acres
or size sufficient
to place rectangle
and diamond
fields on site

EXAMPLES OF COMPONENTS AND COMFORT AMENITIES:

- Diamond ballfields
- Restrooms
- Rectangle ballfields
- Irrigated turf
- Lights
- Playground
- Parking
- Storage facility

Park Level of Service Standards for Park Classifications

Overall, Willamalane's LOS is meeting community members' needs; however, changes in the district, along with stakeholder and survey input, suggest a necessary change in park LOS standards (See Appendix 8.) These

changes are reflected in Table 9c. The table also includes park acres and trail miles needed by 2035 to meet the growing population's needs.

Park Type ^A	Average Standards for Comparable Communities ^B (Acres/1,000 residents)	WPRD Existing Parks	WPRD Acres	WPRD 2022 Level of Service (acres/1,000)	WPRD Proposed Standards (acres/1,000 residents)	Additional Acres Needed to Meet Proposed Standard	
						Current Population	Projected 2035 Population
	2023 Data	2022	2022	2022	2022	2020	2035
Formula	–	–	A	B = ((A/2022 population) x 1,000)	C	70,337 D = ((Current Population/1,000) x C) - A	75,159 E = Projected Population/1,000 x C) - A
Pocket Park	0.02	2	1.1	0.001	0.05	2.42	2.66
Neighborhood Parks	1.5	20	109.25	1.54	2.00	31.42	41.07
Community Parks	2.0	3	64.44	0.91	1.50	41.07	48.30
Sports Parks	--	3	44.02	0.62	1.00	26.32	31.14
Other Parkland	9.5	17	1411.79	19.98	21.00	65.29	166.55
Natural-Area Parks	9.09	6	919.92	13.02	–	–	–
Special-Use Parks	0.36	5	392.80	5.56	–	–	–
Linear Parks	–	6	99.07	0.14	–	–	–
TOTAL		45	1629.50	21.80	25.55	166.51	289.71

^A See Park Classifications and Definitions

^B Bend, Salem, Corvallis, Albany, Roseburg, Olympia

Table 9c: Park Classifications and Proposed Standards

Although widely used, the standard industry technique of measuring the LOS based on a total population of the service area and the total number of acres by park type results in a very simplistic view of service standards. It provides a valuable perspective; however, level of service standards need to be supplemented with additional analysis that looks at the experiences available, the

quality of components, and with public desires in order to paint a more complete picture of the district's needs. The component-based evaluation system, as used in the GRASP analysis explained above, takes into consideration the quality and quantity of components that contribute to the overall park users experience and results in a more complete and accurate assessment of needs.

Natural Areas

Willamalane has seen significant growth in natural areas since 2012, increasing from 188 to 920 acres. New natural area parks include Thurston Hills Natural Area, Weyerhaeuser McKenzie Natural Area, and Moe Mountain (reclassified from undeveloped parkland in 2022.) According to the public survey, these types of parks were one of the most desirable for the community.

Technical experts have guided the district to carefully plan for natural area expansion based on available opportunities to increase wildlife corridors and protect unique and specialized habitats such as floodplains, wetlands, and oak prairie. There are also many opportunities to integrate green spaces throughout the urban core of Springfield with improvements such as green infrastructure, expansion of urban forests, and small nature trails within developed parks. Springfield Public Schools, the City of Springfield, and the Springfield

Utility Board are all public agencies with large land holdings that, through further collaboration, could increase efficiencies and impact of Willamalane's natural resource efforts.

The district's Natural Area Management Plan was created prior to the acquisition of much of the current acreage and is therefore not currently a useful guide for prioritization of tasks or management of this parkland. The comprehensive plan includes findings from the public, technical experts, and staff conversations that would provide a useful launching point to update this internal plan to better address its specific needs. The updated plan should incorporate all land acquired after the implementation of the previous plan and should also address prioritization of management, assess funding strategies and opportunities, and examine possibilities for future acquisition and expansion.



Undeveloped Land

In 2012, Willamalane included the following parks as undeveloped parkland: The Gray Homestead, Moe Mountain Linear Park, and Pierce Park Property. Since 2012, the park classifications or conditions of each of these properties has changed so that they are no longer accounted for under this category:

- **The Gray Homestead** sits adjacent to land that was acquired as Thurston Hills Natural Area and is now included within that park boundary and considered a natural area park.
- **Moe Mountain Park** currently has an informal trail passing through it and is providing service as a natural area park.
- **Arrow Park** is now a developed neighborhood park situated on the site previously known as the Pierce Park Property.

With these adjustments, Willamalane currently has no land identified under the Undeveloped Park classification. It does have several parks with opportunity for increased development or improvements. These parks, in essence, could be defined as “underdeveloped” and include

Eastgate Woodlands of the Whilamut Natural Area, Rob Adams, Lively Park, and Dorris Ranch.

Projected growth in the district suggests a need to acquire land for future park development

Indoor Facilities

Table 10 includes an alphabetical listing of indoor facilities. The table also shows the total number of identified components in each facility. Indoor components are improvements that enhance the user experience, such as rentable space, kitchens, restrooms, lobbies, vending machines, etc. For a complete list of indoor components for each facility, see Appendix 8.

Willamalane currently owns and operates two recreation facilities and two aquatics facilities. The district provides scheduled programs and drop-in self-directed activities at each facility.

The Bob Keefer Center is a 97,000 square foot sports and recreation facility that includes a hardwood floor gym, a multi-purpose floor gym, climbing and bouldering walls, a student technology lab, a preschool, and four meeting spaces available for rent. The hardwood and multi-purpose courts can be set up to accommodate



basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, roller skating, and other recreation and sports activities. The facility is co-located with the Les Schwab Sports Park.

The Adult Activity Center is an all-generation community recreation facility, although many of the programs offered focus on meeting the needs of older adults. The facility includes a kitchen, a multi-use space, meeting rooms, a wood shop and rock shop. Programs offered at the facility are in high demand and well received. The facility features food access programs, arts programs, leisure classes and special events.

The Willamalane Park Swim Center includes opportunities for leisure swimming and offers an eight-lane lap pool, warm-water and deep-water pools, spa, and fitness center. Programs include a variety of water fitness classes and swimming lessons.

Splash! at Lively Park is an indoor water park that offers a six-lane lap pool, children’s pool, a wave pool, slides, concessions, and a sun deck/community room. While the district offers incentives to

attract and retain lifeguards and swim instructors, attracting and retaining staff is challenging. Results from the needs assessment survey suggested that current community needs were generally being met for recreation and indoor pool facilities. On a scale of 1 (not being met) to 5 (being met), the two recreation facilities were rated a 4.1, and the two indoor pools were rated 3.9 by respondents of the random survey. Both the public and staff who work in these facilities were asked to participate in the engagement efforts.

Indoor Facility	Total Indoor Components
Bob Keefer Center for Sports and Recreation	20
Splash!	9
Willamalane Adult Activity Center	17
Willamalane Park Swim Center	7

Table 10: Indoor Facility Summary Table

Parks & Recreation System Map

Willamalane Park and Recreation District, OR

Legend

- Pedestrian Barriers
- Residential Areas

Main Map Legend:

- Indoor Facilities (W)
- School
- Designated Trailhead (A)
- WPRD Multi-Use Path
- WPRD Foot Path
- Non-WPRD Path
- Highway / Freeway
- Major Roads / Ramps
- Street / Road
- Other Roads
- Railroads
- River/Stream
- Community Park
- Sports Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Pocket Park
- Special-Use Park
- Linear Path Parcel
- Natural-Area Park
- Other WPRD Maintained
- WPRD Owned, No Public Access
- Study Area Boundary

Map Labels: Gamebird Park, Robin Park, Harvest Landing, Royal Delle Park, Yolande Elementary School, Briggs Middle School, Page Elementary School, Arrow Park, Moe Mountain Natural Area, Weyerhaeuser McKenzie Natural Area, Lively (Jack B.) Park, Ruff (Wallace M. Jr.) Memorial Park, Thurston Middle School, Thurston High School, Ridgeview Elementary School, Thurston Elementary School, Bob Artz Memorial Park, Jesse Maine Memorial Park, Thurston Hills Natural Area, Thurston Hills Path, Quartz Park, Jasper Meadows Park, Rob Adams Park, Fort (William S.) Memorial Park, Riverbend Elementary School, Bluebelle Park, Weyerhaeuser Haul Road, Volunteer Park, Mount Vernon Elementary School, Douglas Gardens Elementary School, Douglas Gardens Park, Agnes Stewart Middle School, Jasper Rd Trailhead, Clearwater Park, Dorris Ranch, Willamette Heights Park, James Park, Mill Race Park, Island Park, West O St Greenway, Eastgate Woodlands of the Whitlamut Natural Area, Academy of Arts and Academics, Marylhurst Park, Maple Elementary School, Willamalane Park Swim Center, Willamalane Park, Dos Rios Elementary School, Hamlin Middle School, Kelly Butte Overlook, Meadow Park, Springfield High School, Gateways High School - Brattain Campus, By-Gully Path, Centennial Elementary School, Menlo Park, Guy Lee Elementary School, Guy Lee Park, Pacific Park, Page Park.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Willamalane Park and Recreation District **55**

6



Level of Service Assessment

This section examines how well each park and the collective system of Willamalane parkland is meeting the need of district residents.

Level of Service Assessment How Are We Doing?

What is Level of Service (LOS), and why do we use it?

LOS measures how a system provides residents access to parks, open spaces, trails, and facilities. It indicates the ability of people to connect with the outdoors and nature and pursue active lifestyles with implications for health and wellness, the local economy, and quality of life. LOS for a park and recreation system tends to mirror community values reflective of personal connections to communities. It is also useful in benchmarking current conditions and directing future planning efforts. The service offered by a park or a component is a function of two main variables: location and ease of access.

What is GRASP®?

GRASP® (Geo-referenced Amenities Standards Process) has been applied in many communities across the country as a measure of LOS. With GRASP®, information from the park and facilities inventory is combined with GIS software that produces analytic maps and data called Perspectives that show the distribution and quality of these services.

What do Perspectives do for us?

Perspectives can be maps or other analyses incorporating statistics, diagrams, tables, and charts that provide benchmarks or insights useful in determining community success in delivering services. The park and facility inventory provides details of what is available at any given location, and GIS analysis measures user access. People use various ways of reaching a recreation destination: on foot, on a bike, in a car, via public transportation, or some combination. There are two

distinct types of service areas for examining the park system to account for this variability:

- 1) **Walkable Access**— uses a travel distance of one-half mile, a suitable distance for a ten-minute walk.
- 2) **Neighborhood Access**— uses a travel distance of one mile to each component and gives a premium for areas within a ten-minute walk. It is intended to account for users traveling from home or elsewhere to a park or facility, most likely by bike, bus, or automobile.

Further discussion on perspectives and other terminology is found in Appendix 8.

Component Scoring

To assess quality of service within existing parks, each park improvement, or component, was given a score of 1-3 based on condition, size, site capacity, and overall quality that impacts the experience provided to the user.

- 1 = Below Expectations
- 2 = Meets Expectations
- 3 = Exceeds Expectations

Typically, a rating of “1” suggests a need for improvement or replacement, “2” suggests the component meets the need but is not ideal, and “3” is newer and excellent. Willamalane components are more likely to be scored a “2” (over 80% of components), and less likely to be scored a “3” (less than 5% of components) when compared to averages from the national dataset. This could mean that the district has fewer signature improvements or destination type features within the park system. Table 11 illustrates district component scores compared to the national dataset.

Willamalane Neighborhood Park Component Scores		Willamalane Community Park Component Scores		National Dataset Neighborhood Park Component Scores		National Dataset Community Park Component Scores	
Scores	Percent %	Scores	Percent %	Scores	Percent %	Scores	Percent %
0	1%	0	0%	0	3%	0	3%
1	11%	1	11%	1	10%	1	11%
2	84%	2	85%	2	78%	2	77%
3	4%	3	4%	3	8%	3	9%

Table 11: District Component Score Breakdown vs National Dataset



Figure 22: Playgrounds Example Photos

As an example, Table 12 includes the park name, playground type, quantity, neighborhood score, and community score.

Park / Location	Component	Qty	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Arrow Park	Playground, Local	1	2	2
Bluebelle Park	Playground, Local	1	2	2
Bob Artz Memorial Park	Playground, Local	1	1	1
Douglas Gardens Park	Playground, Local	1	1	1

Table 12: Example Scoring for the Playground Component Assessment

Park Scoring

Park scoring measures how the parks and components serve residents and users. These scores often make the most sense when compared within the same classification, i.e., when comparing one neighborhood park to another neighborhood park. It may be reasonable that there are wide ranges of scores within a category. It may also be an opportunity to re-evaluate a park's particular classification based on the service to the community or neighborhood it serves. Park scores are made up of the collective component scores from the assessment.

In addition to locating components, the assessment includes quality, function, condition, and modifiers. Cumulative scores most directly reflect the number and quality of improvements, or components, within a park. The availability of modifiers, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, seating, parking, and shade, also affects park scores. Higher scores reflect more and better recreation opportunities than lower scores. There is no ultimate or perfect score.

To assist in prioritizing parks to improve level of service, each park has a neighborhood score and a community score. The biggest difference in these two scores is that the neighborhood score is focused on the diversity of experiences available at a park while community score considers the quantity of each experience and its ability to support a broader, community-wide use. An example of this might be a park that has several different improvements including a playground, a picnic shelter, a basketball court, and four tennis courts. The neighborhood score would reflect that users have access to four different components. The community score recognizes the four unique component types but also factors in the fact that there are multiple courts available. In this case, the park would have a higher community score than neighborhood score.

In Willamalane's park district, scores among the different classifications vary greatly (Tables 13-17). This likely means that some adjustments may need to be made to park categories (classifications) to closely match these park services and public expectations. The following park scores are grouped by classification and listed from high to low for both neighborhood and community scores.³

³ Natural areas are not included in this park score analysis.

Community Park	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Willamalane Park	58	82
Lively (Jack B.) Park	58	65
Island Park	55	60

Average Neighborhood Score: 57

Average Community Score: 69

Table 13: Community Park Scores

Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Meadow Park	46	79
Fort (William S.) Memorial Park	29	38
Arrow Park	34	34
Thurston Park	24	29
Rob Adams Park	29	29
Jasper Meadows Park	29	29
Volunteer Park	24	24
Quartz Park	24	24
Bluebelle Park	24	24
Williamette Heights Park	22	22
Royal Delle Park	22	22
Jesse Maine Memorial Park	22	22
Gamebird Park	22	22
Pacific Park	22	22
Page Park	19	19
Menlo Park	18	18
Pride Park	14	14
Douglas Gardens Park	12	12
Tyson Park	9	9
James Park	6	6

Average Neighborhood Score: 22

Average Community Score: 25

Table 14: Neighborhood Park Scores

Pocket Park	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Robin Park	22	22
Marylhurst Park	13	13

Average Neighborhood Score: 18

Average Community Score: 18

Table 15: Pocket Park Scores



Sports Park	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Les Schwab Sports Park	50	82
Guy Lee Park	22	29
Bob Artz Memorial Park	14	41

Average Neighborhood Score: 29
Average Community Score: 50
Table 16: Sports Park Scores

Special-Use Park	Neighborhood Score	Community Score
Dorris Ranch	72	72
Clearwater Park	38	38
Ruff (Wallace M Jr.) Memorial Park	34	34
Mill Race Park	31	31
Island Park	15	15
Kelly Butte Park	15	15

Average Neighborhood Score: 38
Average Community Score: 38
Table 17: Special Use Facility Scores

Walkable (½ mile) Access to Recreation

Walkability analysis measures how user-friendly an area is to walking and benefits a community in many ways related to public health, social equity, and the local economy. Many factors influence walkability, including the quality of footpaths, sidewalks or other pedestrian rights-of-way, traffic and road conditions, land-use patterns, and public safety considerations. One-half mile buffers have been placed around each park improvement and shaded according to their score. This ten-minute standard is consistent with other national initiatives by agencies, such as The Trust for Public Land and the National Recreation and Parks Association. In this analysis neighborhood access is equivalent to walkable access.

Pedestrian Barriers

Pedestrian barriers such as highways, major streets, railroads, large holdings of private property and natural features like rivers significantly affect walkable access in the district. Figure 23 shows zones within the district that are created by such identified barriers. These are displayed as dark purple lines and serve as discrete areas,

accessible without crossing a major street or another obstacle. Green parcels represent park properties. Indoor facilities and schools are also identified on the map with a black “W” and black flag icons respectively. The yellow outline represents the urban growth boundary. See Figure 23.

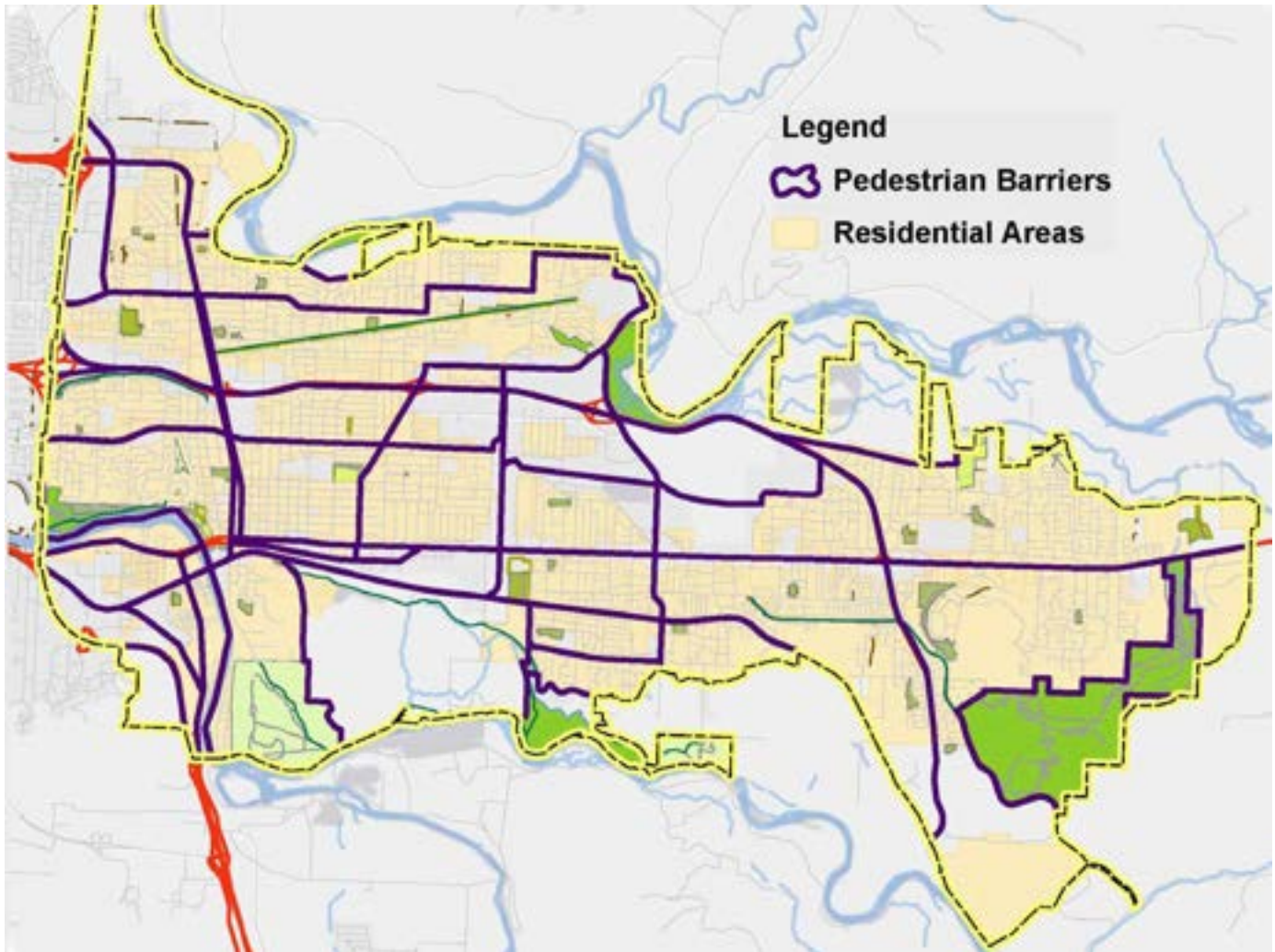


Figure 23: Walkability Barriers “Cut-Off” Service Areas Where Applicable

A series of maps represent the walkable LOS across the district based on a ten-minute walk. The darker orange gradient areas indicate more and higher quality recreation assets. Gray areas fall outside of a ten-minute walk. Environmental barriers can limit walkability, and

in this map, the LOS in the walkability analysis has been “cut-off” by identified barriers where applied. Larger versions of all of the maps included in this section can be found in Appendix 8.

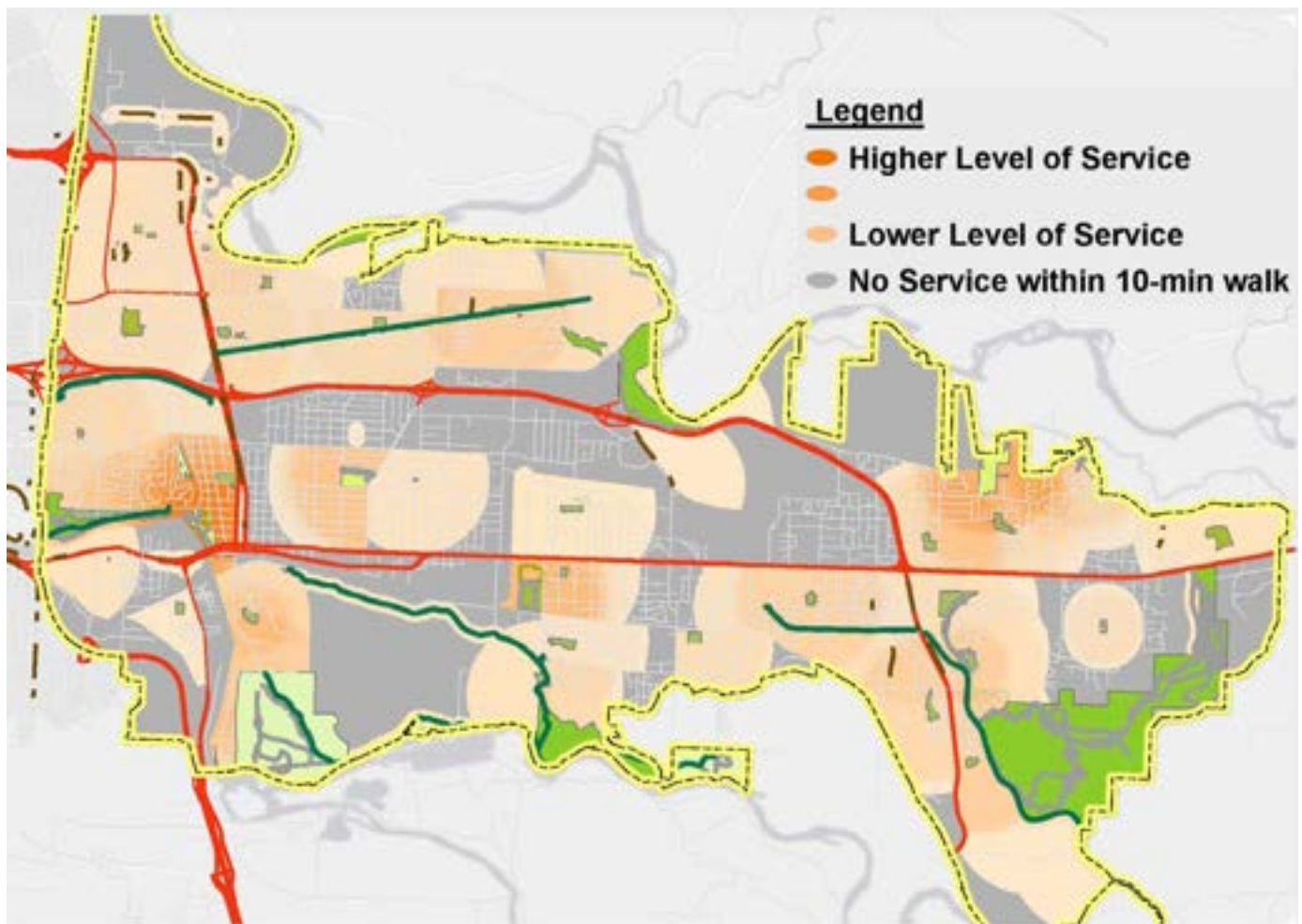


Figure 24: Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities

In general, this analysis shows a reasonable distribution of parks. The orange shading in the maps (Figures 24 and 25) allows for an understanding of LOS distribution and areas of concentration across the district. It should also be noted that while some of the gray areas in the map may be residential, many of the gray areas are industrial, commercial, or currently undeveloped and may not necessitate park access.

Figure 25 shows the high-value area near Island Park. Community members can access 41 components at seven parks, including the Willamalane Adult Activity Center, and a number of trails within the area defined by the dark red dashed-line.



Figure 25: High-Value Walk Area

Walkability Gap Analysis

The parks and their improvements will likely attract users from a walkable distance. The following map shows three levels of service in three separate colors. These levels, or colors, represent areas that provide an adequate or better level of service (purple), a low level of service (yellow), or no service (grey) within a walkable distance. Purple shaded areas indicate access to schools. Areas shown in yellow on the map can be considered areas of opportunity. Improving the service available in such areas may be possible by enhancing the quantity and quality of features in existing parks without acquiring new lands or developing new parks. Another option might be to mitigate pedestrian barriers in the immediate area to improve access to one or more park, trail, or natural area with additional user experiences available.

When combining the service levels with census data, the analysis indicates that parks are generally well placed and serve a large population of the land area. The district is well positioned, with over three-quarters (80%) of residents within walking distance to one or more outdoor recreation opportunities. One-quarter of residents live within a target score area. These are positive results and offer opportunities for improvement as well. The following chart displays the population percentages based on service levels. See Figure 26.

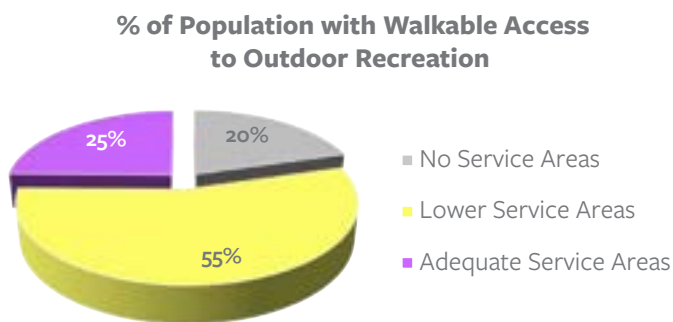


Figure 26: Percentage of Population with Walkable Access to Outdoor Recreation

Neighborhood (One-mile) Access to Outdoor Recreation

Neighborhood, or one-mile, access to recreation opportunities was also examined. A heat map (Figure 28) shows the results of this analysis, where darker gradient areas indicate higher quality recreation assets based on a one-mile service area. In general, the district has an excellent distribution of parks and facilities in terms of one-mile access. It is assumed that for most park users, access to a neighborhood park one mile from their residents will involve driving and therefore, barriers are not considered.

Neighborhood Gap Analysis

While 12% of the land area has limited one-mile access, nearly all residents (99%) have good access to outdoor recreation opportunities within one mile and meet the target score as discussed previously. These analyses are shown in the following charts. See Figure 27.

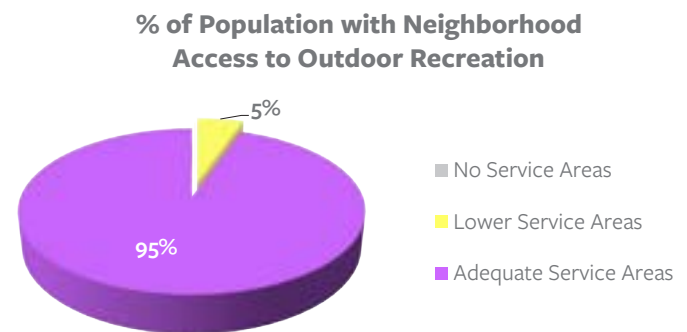


Figure 27: Percentage of Population with Neighborhood Access to Outdoor Recreation

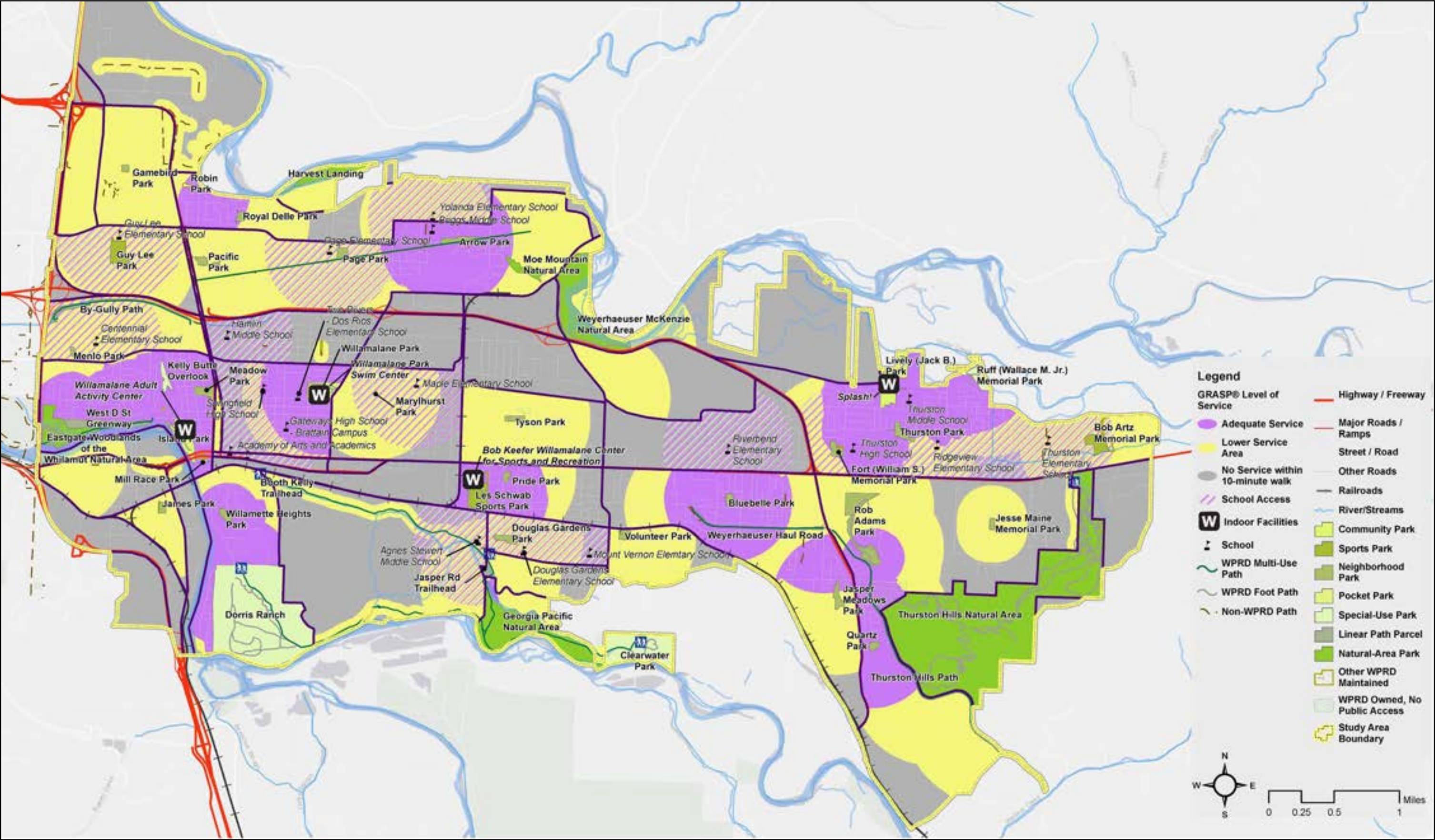


Figure 28: Walkable Service Area Analysis

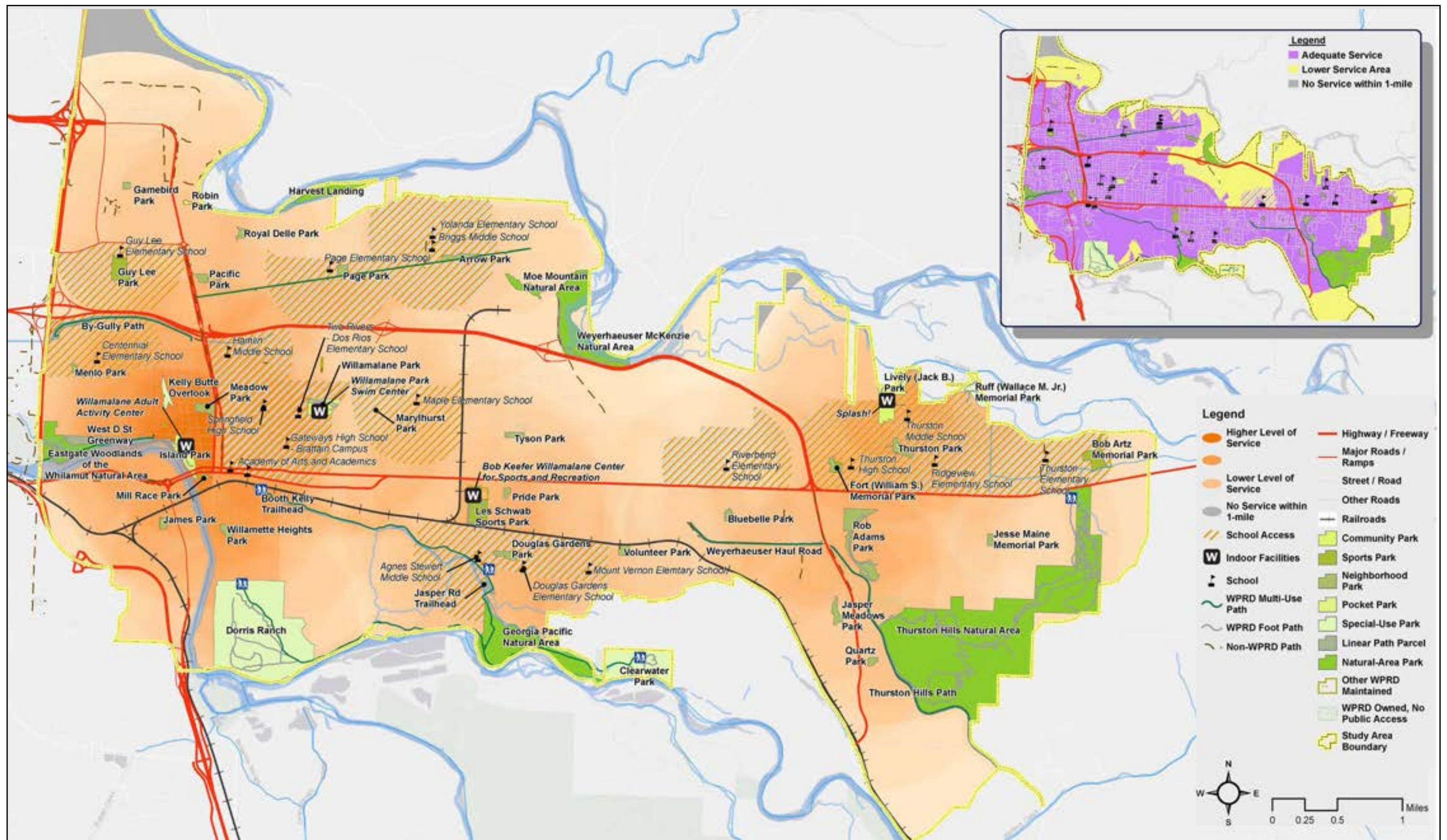


Figure 29: District Neighborhood Drivable (One-mile) Access to Outdoor Recreation



Overall Qualitative Observations

Qualitative observations based on park and facility visits include the following:

- A good standard of providing formal trailheads is evident.
- Park signage is standardized and displays consistent branding across the system.
- Playground replacement schedule is being implemented.
 - Newer playgrounds were recognized at Jasper Meadows, Bluebelle and Quartz Parks.
- Sport courts need updates to surfacing (basketball, tennis, etc.).
- More shelters seem appropriate to provide relief from weather.
- The system lacks a “signature park.”
- There seems to be a wide range of parks and offerings within the neighborhood park classification.

Additional Analysis

Similar-Size Agency Comparison

The district was compared to a national dataset consisting of 86 agencies, 5,632 parks, and over 31,000 components.



2 Parks

Top 100 of all
Park Scores



4 Parks

Top 10% of all
Park Scores

- Some parks, like Thurston Park, have nice settings with lots of mature trees.
- Some parks have several components while others have minimal recreation opportunities.

When comparing Willamalane to other agencies and parks in the dataset, four parks scored in the top 10% of all parks. Willamalane Park and Les Schwab Sports Park are in the top 430 parks out of more than 5,600 parks. Additional findings in these comparisons reveal

that the district is above the average of other similarly sized agencies in total number of parks. The district matches the average in components per capita and parks per capita.

=48

Total Locations

Frederick, MD – 85
Encinitas, CA – 63
Arlington Heights, IL – 57
Grand Junction, CO – 53
Georgetown, TX – 52
Tamarac, FL – 15

=4

Parks Per 1,000 People

Encinitas CA – 7
Grand Junction, CO – 5
Arlington Heights, IL – 5
Frederick, MD – 5
Georgetown, TX – 4
Tamarac, FL – 2

=0.7

Components Score
Per 1,000 Population

Frederick, MD – 1.1
Encinitas CA – 1.0
Arlington Heights, IL – 0.8
Grand Junction, CO – 0.8
Georgetown, TX – 0.7
Tamarac, FL – 0.2

Categories where Willamalane falls short of the comparable average are “components per park” and “average score per park.” These two categories are directly related. In addition, only 25% of the

population lives in a walkable 10-minute service area. This is well below the average of other agencies across the nation.

31

Average Score Per Location

Tamarac, FL – 42
Encinitas CA – 31
Arlington Heights, IL – 36
Grand Junction, CO – 34
Georgetown, TX – 31
Frederick, MD – 21

25%

% Walkable - Target

Frederick, MD – 79%
Arlington Heights, IL – 64%
Encinitas CA – 63%
Grand Junction, CO – 35%
Tamarac, FL – 27%
Georgetown, TX – 23%

5

Components Per Location

Tamarac, FL – 7
Encinitas CA – 7
Arlington Heights, IL – 6
Grand Junction, CO – 6
Georgetown, TX – 6
Frederick, MD – 4



Oregon Agency Comparison

Comparisons are also available for other agencies within Oregon (see Table 18 below). While populations are different among this group, when the following comparisons are adjusted for the population differences,

generally the district has fewer parks per capita, but more development (average number of components per site) in the parks than other agencies in Oregon.

City / Agency	Umatilla	Canby	Wilsonville	Corvallis	Willamalane	North Clackamas	Tualatin Hills	Average
Year	2020	2021	2017	2011	2020	2012	2018	-
Population	7,723	18,952	22,919	54,462	70,337	115,924	265,078	79,342
Population Density (Per Acre)	2.4	6.3	4.7	3.0	4.8	5.0	7.6	4.8
People per Park	644	824	1,091	1,009	1,465	1,246	982	1,037
Park per 1k People	1.6	1.2	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.0
Average # of Components per Site	6.4	3.0	8.4	5.7	5.2	3.2	3.3	5
Average Score/ Site	16.0	16.3	52.0	41.1	31.5	23.7	26.4	30
Components per Capita	10	4	8	6	4	3	3	5
GRASP® Index	24	20	48	41	21	19	27	28
% of Total Area w/ LOS > 0	74%	98%	95%	93%	100%	97%	100%	94%
Average LOS per Acre Served	112	265	388	289	148	183	489	268
Average LOS / Population Density per Acre	47	42	82	96	31	36	65	57
% of Population with Walkable Access	62%	87%	67%	NA	25%	40%	72%	60%

■ Better than average
 ■ Below average
 ■ Neutral

Table 18: GRASP® Comparative Data (Oregon Agencies)

Capacity Analysis

Capacity analysis is a traditional tool for evaluating service levels. This analysis compares the ratio of components and the population. It projects future needs based on this ratio (e.g., as the population grows over time, components may need to be added to maintain the same proportion). Table 19 shows the current capacities and the projected need in 10 years. While there are no correct ratios, this table can be used in conjunction with input from focus groups, staff, and the public to determine if the current ratios are adequate. Based on growth projections, components highlighted as red should be added to maintain the same LOS.

The usefulness of this analysis depends on future residents' interests and behaviors and relies on the assumption that they will be the same as they are today. It also assumes that today's capacities are in line with needs. Table 19 (the capacities table) bases analysis on the number of assets without regard to distribution, quality, or functionality. Higher LOS is achieved only by adding components, regardless of the location, condition, or quality of those assets. In theory, the LOS combines location, quantity, and quality. This table should be used with discretion and in conjunction with the other analyses presented.



Table 20 illustrates agency performance benchmarks for many components. According to this NRPA Agency Performance Review, Willamalane meets or exceeds the median in all categories except tennis courts, youth diamond fields, and rectangular fields. It should be noted that the district does have eight half-court or practice basketball courts that likely fulfill the local need. The population would need to more than double to trigger development of another dog park or skate park based on these calculations.



	2022 Count	2022 Ratio per 1k Population	2022 Ratio per Component	Total Needed Based on 2035 Population	Add
Basketball Court	16	0.2	4,396	17	1
Basketball, Practice	10	0.1	7,034	11	1
Bike Course	2	0.03	35,169	2	0
Diamond Field	7	0.1	10,048	7	0
Diamond Field, Practice	7	0.1	10,048	7	0
Disc Golf	1	0.01	70,337	1	0
Dog Park	1	0.01	70,337	1	0
Educational Experience	6	0.1	11,723	6	0
Event Space	4	0.1	17,584	4	0
Fitness Area	1	0.01	70,337	1	0
Game Court	2	0.03	35,169	2	0
Garden, Community	3	0.04	23,446	3	0
Garden, Display	3	0.04	23,446	3	0
Historic Feature	2	0.03	35,169	2	0
Horseshoe Court	3	0.04	23,446	3	0
Loop Walk	17	0.2	4,137	18	1
Open Turf	31	0.4	2,269	33	2
Passive Node	7	0.1	10,048	7	0
Pickleball Court	8	0.1	8,792	9	1
Playground, All Sizes	26	0.4	2,705	28	2
Public Art	7	0.1	10,048	7	0
Rectangular Field, Large	4	0.1	17,584	4	0
Shelter, All Sizes	9	0.1	7,815	10	1
Skate Park	1	0.01	70,337	1	0
Tennis Court	8	0.1	8,792	9	1
Trailhead	5	0.1	14,067	5	0
Volleyball Court	3	0.04	23,446	3	0
Water Access, Developed	3	0.04	23,446	3	0
Water Access, General	6	0.1	11,723	6	0
Water, Open	10	0.1	7,034	11	1

Table 19: District Component Capacities Ratios

2022 NRPA Agency Performance Review: Park and Recreation Agency Performance Benchmarks						
Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities						
Outdoor Facility		Agencies Offering this Facility	Median Number of Residents per Facility	Willamalane Current Quantity	Willamalane Residents per Facility	Need To Add To Meet NRPA Median
Playgrounds	Playgrounds	95%	3,807	26	2,705	(8)
Courts	Basketball courts	86%	8,477	16	4,396	(8)
	Tennis courts	78%	6,413	8	8,792	3
	Pickleball courts	18%	11,999	8	8,792	(2)
Diamond Fields	Diamond fields: baseball – youth	79%	8,095	7	10,048	2
	Diamond fields: softball fields – adult	65%	17,228			(3)
	Diamond fields: softball fields – youth	62%	11,688			(1)
	Diamond fields: baseball – adult	54%	25,097			(4)
Rectangular Fields	Rectangular fields: multipurpose	68%	13,151	4	17,584	1
	Rectangular fields: soccer field – youth	50%	8,224			5
	Rectangular fields: soccer field – adult	44%	16,231			0
	Rectangular fields: football field	35%	30,599			(2)
Dog Parks	Dog parks	67%	56,084	1	70,337	0
Skate Parks	Skate parks	39%	65,000	1	70,337	0
Community Gardens	Community gardens	51%	49,351	3	23,446	(2)
Comparison based on median for less than 50,000 to 99,999 population comparison						

 Better than average
  Below average

Table 20: Outdoor Park and Recreation Facilities – Median Population Served Per Facility

7



Trails and Pathways Assessment

A key component of the planning effort is documenting the community's input on the existing and potential future trail network within Willamalane's boundaries and assessing existing access and user needs. Potential prioritization criteria for future trail improvements and a set of preliminary recommendations are included.

Access

Willamalane’s trail network currently includes 38.1 miles of trails available to a range of users. Table 21 highlights low, median, and upper quartiles (in miles) for typical trail systems serving similarly sized communities as Springfield. The district provides miles of trails at a rate comparable to other agencies around the country and over double the median miles of trails for similar sized communities.

Willamalane is part of a regional network of parks and open spaces in adjacent Eugene and outlying areas of Lane County. The regional vision for trails and connectivity is defined in the Rivers to Ridges Vision shown on the map in [Figure 30](#). Willamalane has been an active partner in this effort since 2000.

Access to local amenities is generally evaluated within a quarter- or one-half mile radius of the resident’s home. [Figure 32](#) shows the accessibility of the existing trail network within a one-half mile of trail access points. It also shows that the trails in the network are

concentrated in the western and southern areas of the district, thus making access to the trail network disproportionate for Willamalane residents.

The quality of access to trails (e.g., length of consecutive trail available for recreation) is another important factor. [Figure 32](#) shows that many residential areas in the district have access to trails. Residents in the center and northwest areas have limited access to trails. [Figure 32](#) also indicates which trails are maintained by Willamalane as well as other accessible trails not managed by the district. The analysis shown in [Figure 32](#) shows accessibility of all trails in the district, regardless of whether they are managed by Willamalane. Trails shown in dark red are in areas with the best trail connectivity and continuity within the district, while areas in dark and light orange have relatively less access to the trail network. The map demonstrates a significant gap in trail access in the center of the district and lack of connectivity in northeast Springfield.

Willamalane Miles of Trail		National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Miles of Trails	
38.1		All Agencies	Population 50,000 – 99,000
	Median	14	14
	Lower Quartile	5	7
	Upper Quartile	39	29
Miles of trails in 2022 includes those from the following GIS data: Willamalane multi-use paths and foot paths, “formal trails,” Thurston Hills Natural Area Phase II, and non-Willamalane multi-use paths within the Springfield UGB.			

Table 21: Willamalane Miles of Trails



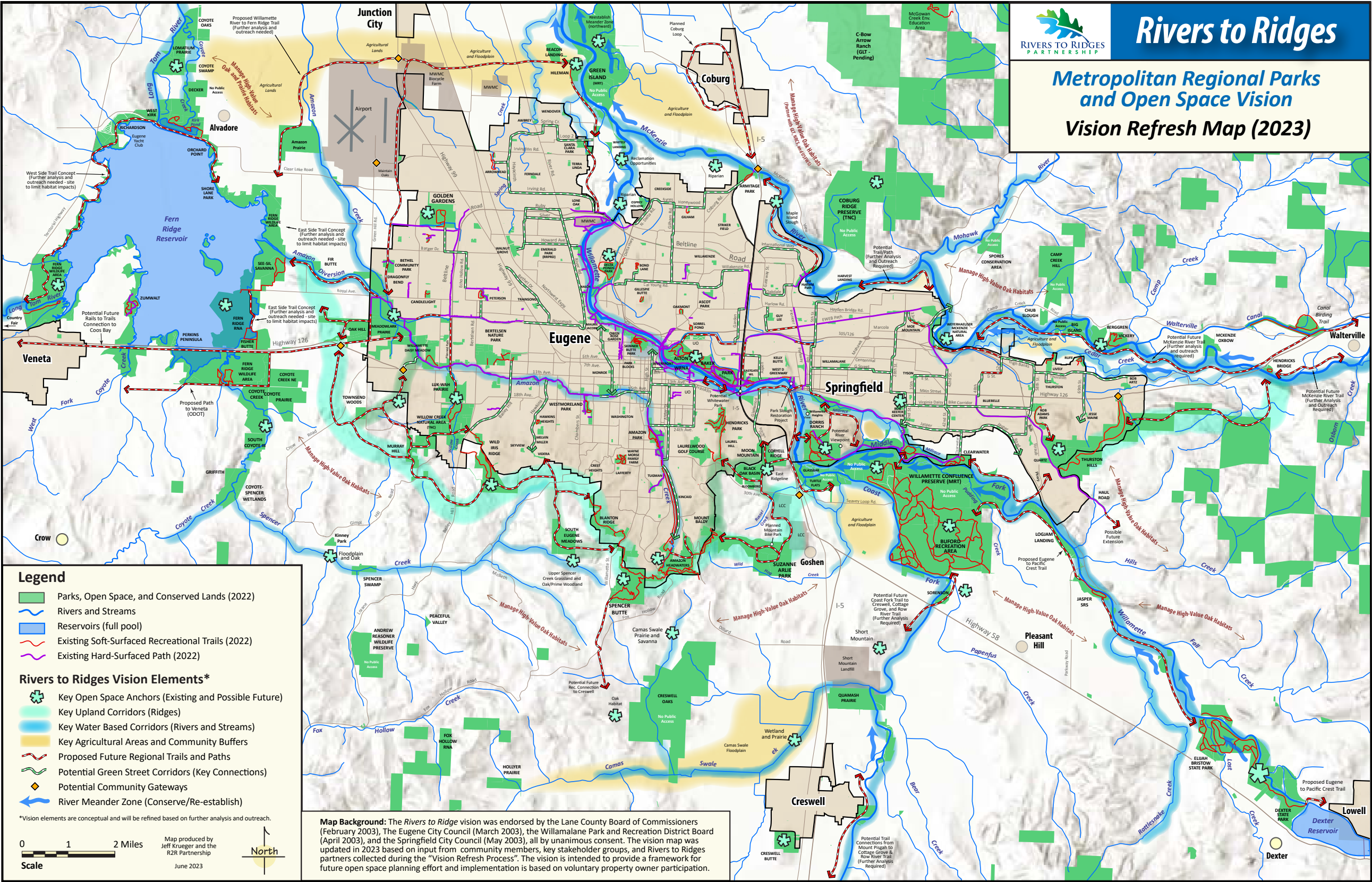


Figure 30: Regional Trails, Rivers to Ridges, 2023

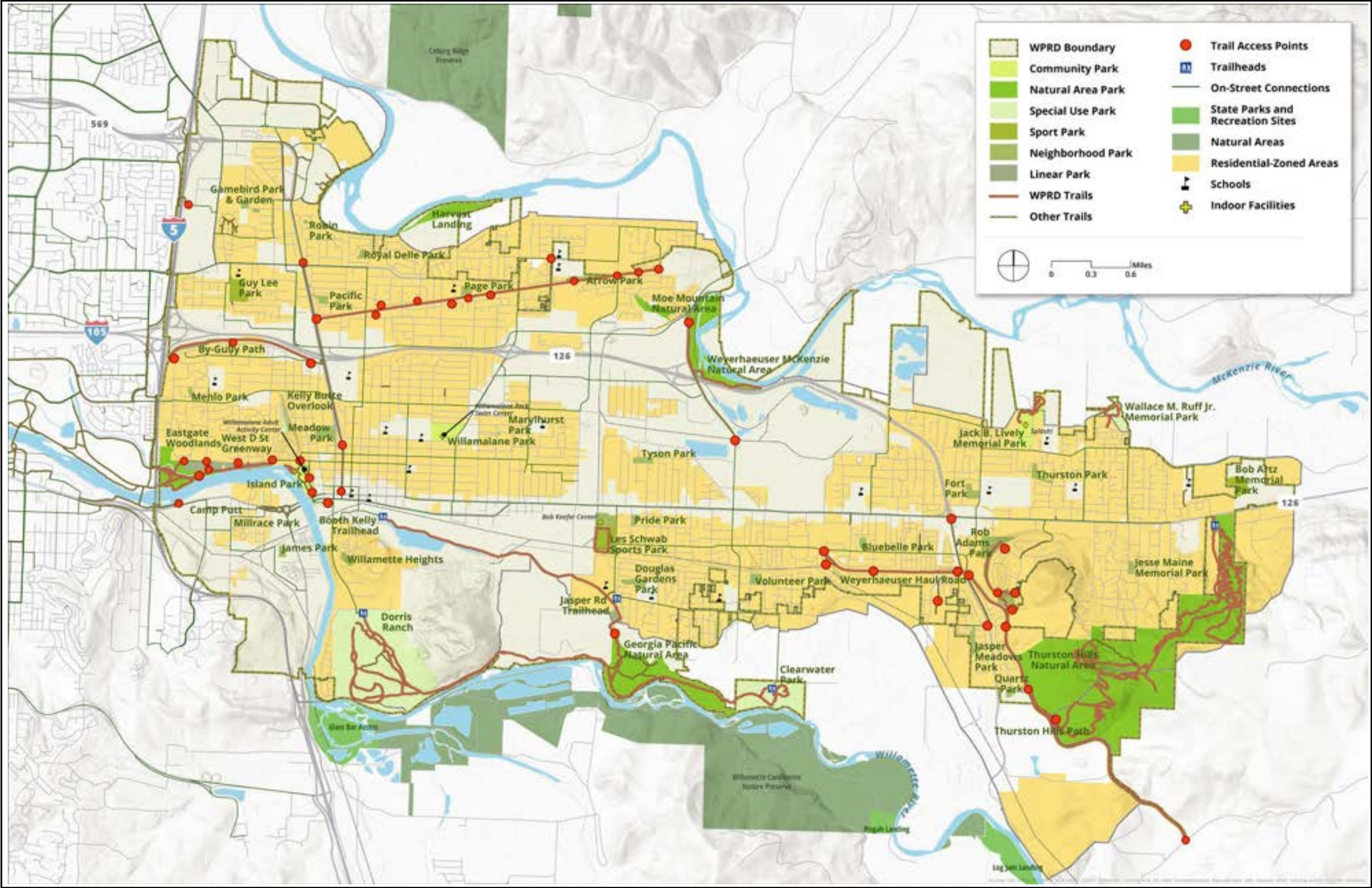


Figure 31: Willamalane Trail System

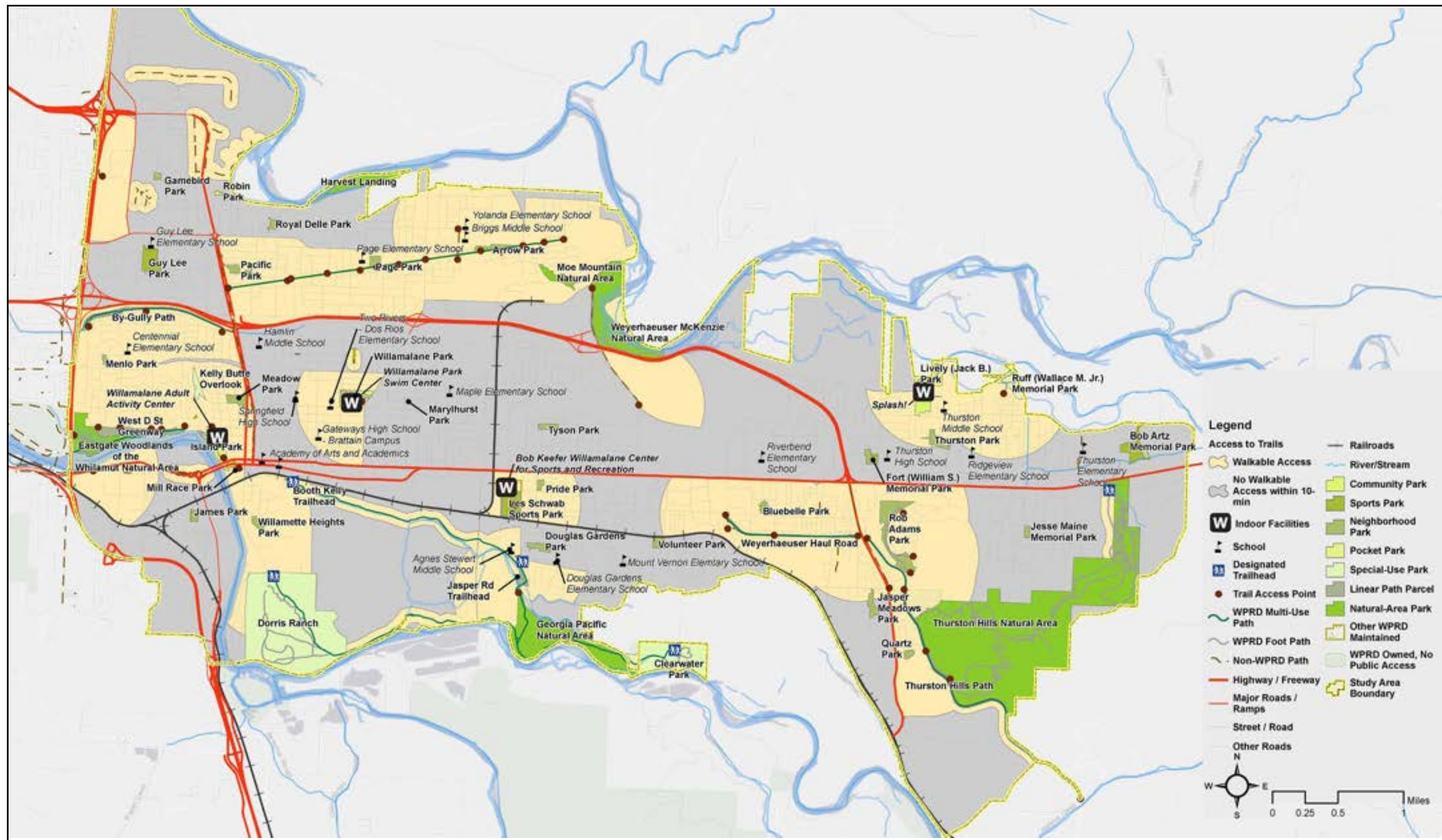


Figure 32: Springfield Areas Within One-Half Mile Service Area to Trail Access Point

Public Engagement—Trails Use and Desires

As part of the community engagement for the comprehensive planning effort, Willamalane hosted focus groups, distributed community surveys, and conducted stakeholder interviews. A priority for Willamalane throughout this process was to obtain input from a broad demographic across the entire district to better understand needs across the numerous communities. Input was gathered from the Springfield Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee (BPAC), City of Springfield staff, and a targeted focus group to further clarify trail needs. Participants included Rivers to Ridges and Lane County Transportation staff (to best understand the regional vision), members representing the Latinx and tribal communities, and those attending a targeted focus group specifically dedicated to accessibility and inclusion discussion. A targeted focus group to gather teen input suggested hiking opportunities were a top recreation interest for this group. Input was used to shape and define this and other sections of the plan.

While some nuances exist in terms of user desires among the various communities throughout the district, needs assessment survey results indicated that a majority feel that the most important needs within the district are more trails and bike paths.⁴ This does not suggest that the trails network is not meeting the needs of the community. In fact, a substantial majority of survey respondents use recreation trails and paths at least once a month, while nearly half of respondents use them weekly or daily. Three top priorities that the community feels would help improve the existing network include:

- More soft-surface hiking trails in scenic settings
- Improved connectivity between existing trails
- More accessible walking trails

Previous Trail Planning Efforts

This plan recognizes the various trail planning efforts that have occurred in the past as well as those currently ongoing. Goals, policies, strategies, and actions were analyzed to gain a broad perspective of district-wide efforts and to assist in developing goals and strategies for this plan. The intention is to help ensure consistency between plans and foster collaboration between the various jurisdictions involved in trail planning within and

adjacent to Willamalane's boundaries. The following plans were just a few of the documents reviewed:

- Rivers to Ridges Vision (2003 & 2023)
- Willamalane Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan (2012)
- Lane County Sea to Summit Parks & Open Space Master Plan (2018)
- City of Springfield 2035 Transportation System Plan (2020)
- Lane County Bicycle Master Plan (2022)

Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) adds additional perspective on prioritizing trails both regionally and within the county.

Since the completion of Willamalane's last comprehensive plan in 2012, the district has prioritized trail improvements that met goals and strategies identified in the plan. These improvements include: a new soft-surface trail system at Thurston Hills Natural Area for hiking and mountain biking (10 miles), completion of the Middle Fork Path providing a paved multi-use corridor along the Willamette River to Dorris Ranch (final mile-long section of the four-mile path), and construction of the Mill Race Path which provides paved multi-use path connection from downtown Springfield to the center of the Middle Fork Path along the Willamette River (three-miles). In addition, the paved Weyerhaeuser Haul Road (four-miles) is now open to the public for use and portions of this trail have been improved. See [Section 9](#) for goals, strategies, and action items that include trails and pathways.

Level of Service Comparisons

Using Bend, OR, Olympia, WA, and Missoula, MT as peer communities, the combined miles of trail provided per 1,000 residents averages to 0.374. A service level of 0.645 miles per 1,000 residents presents the highest ratio of miles of trails compared to residents among the three communities. Willamalane compares favorably by achieving a ratio of 0.545 miles per 1,000 residents. Willamalane is not proposing a LOS standard for trails to guide expansion in this plan. Future growth and expansion of the trail system will be determined based on the need for improved access, greater connectivity, and the community's desire for additional trail opportunities.

⁴ When asked to assign a level of importance for future improvements, 69% of statistically valid survey respondents rated trails and bike paths either a "4" or "5" on a scale of 1 – 5; 5 being very important and 1 not important.

Trail Users

Willamalane recognizes that there are a range of trail users, and the plan development process attempted to reach existing and potential user types for consideration in priorities for future trail projects. At a high level, and as identified during the public engagement process, potential trail users include walkers/runners, hikers, bicyclists, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

Challenges

While Willamalane's trail network continues to evolve, understanding shortcomings will help to ensure that the community's needs are met. Public feedback throughout the plan development process provided a window into these challenges, which have been categorized under five themes: connectivity, access, safety and comfort, overcrowding, and trail variety.

Connectivity

Through observing the trails map and quantifying the miles of trails throughout the district, the trails network presents many strengths and opportunities. However, one key challenge of the network is connectivity. Addressing gaps identified within the current system could improve user experiences through better interconnected trails throughout the area. Further, the same can be said for connectivity to the regional network and those trails that lie beyond Willamalane's boundaries, such as those that provide routes into Eugene or those between east Springfield and Thurston Hills, for example.

Access

Access is a key issue that has a significant impact on usage, equity, and user experience. As described in the section above, accessibility to Willamalane trails varies across the district. Some neighborhoods contain greater levels of access due to proximity, trailheads, and other features that make using the trails easier for some than others.

In addition to proximity, access also includes consideration for a range of users with varying abilities. While the community is generally satisfied with the opportunities available, many are concerned that maintenance, upgrades, and additions should afford greater access for users of all ages and abilities, including those with needs identified in the Americans with Disabilities Act.



Safety and Comfort

Another theme that emerged from community feedback involved the perceived safety and comfort of the trail network. The COVID-19 pandemic led many more people to get outside and explore the outdoors, particularly in their local environments. As such, the trail network saw an increase and greater diversity of users. One area of concern is the safety and comfort of bicyclists versus users on foot or other slower moving modes. Friction occurs when these higher-speed users interact with slower users in close proximity, causing some level of discomfort for each. Community members have suggested that more designated, separated facilities for different users are needed in high traffic areas. This includes both the open space trails network and the on-street walking and biking network.

Another area of concern involves the lack of amenities along Willamalane's trails network. The amenities mentioned each contribute to user experience and are intended to enhance the experience and attract a greater diversity of users. The requested amenities include:

- Designated bike parking
- Signage and wayfinding
- Path and trail lighting
- Additional shade
- Restrooms
- Regularly spaced benches
- E-bike/e-scooter charging stations



Finally, maintenance was a significant concern across the district. While it has an impact on user experience, maintenance also has implications on user safety. All demographics and age groups that participated in the needs assessment survey highlighted a desire for enhanced maintenance, making it a key priority in this planning effort.

Overcrowding

Over the past few years and particularly during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, hiking activities have risen in popularity, drawing more visitors to trails with scenic vistas, especially near populated areas. Willamalane is fortunate to have a rich natural environment for community members to enjoy; however, with limited accessible scenic vistas, concern has arisen regarding potential overcrowding at regional overlooks. Community members have suggested that providing access to additional scenic points could help to reduce these impacts. Within Willamalane's boundaries, Springfield Butte and Vitus Butte are two examples of locations that could offer alternatives and help to spread out users between regional overlooks in the future.

Trails Variety

The access section discusses the desire for a wider demographic of user types to be able to utilize Willamalane's extensive trails network. A potential solution would be to provide a greater diversity of trails that provide a larger array of options for different users. The

mountain bike community, for example, cited a need for additional trails for beginners and those new to mountain biking who may find the existing network too advanced or technical. Another user group that expressed a need are equestrian users. Equestrian accessible trails largely exist beyond Willamalane's boundaries, and the key is to provide access points that offer connectivity from the district. While these two user groups are more niche, they speak to the popularity of Willamalane's trails network and the varying types of users.

Project Prioritization

The criteria for prioritizing new trails (or extending connections for existing trails) within Willamalane's trail network is derived from both regional planning efforts and the community input referenced in the engagement section. The community engagement efforts completed for the comprehensive planning process revealed the following community priorities for trails: soft-surface hiking trails in scenic settings, connectivity between existing trails, and accessible walking trails. These were also among the overall top priorities for the plan (see [Section 9](#)). The recommendations listed below provide proposed criteria for evaluating progress in future development of the trail network according to these priorities. It also provides general recommendations for improvements to Willamalane's trail network in order to meet the comprehensive plan goals.

Evaluative Criteria for Project Prioritization

Criteria can be helpful to prioritize future trail and pathway projects. The following provide options for such criteria:

- Soft-surface hiking trails in scenic settings
 - Identify scenic locations within district boundaries
 - Measure miles of soft-surface hiking trails (existing and planned)
- Connectivity between existing trails in areas where off-street connections are missing in the trail network
 - Priority connections should be in areas where users are less likely to own a car and where alternative routes via walking or biking are not available.
- Accessible walking trails
 - Define accessibility (if beyond requirements for ADA)
 - Track quantity (through miles of trails and consecutive trail mileage) of accessible trails available in the district.
- Miles of trails per 1,000 residents
- Apply equity criteria (population impacted, household income, diversity, and crime index). See Appendix 8.

Key Findings

- Incorporate recommendations from the Rivers to Ridges Vision Update, particularly where it overlaps with Willamalane's key priorities.
- When developing new trails or repairing existing trails, try to include desired amenities, such as designated bike parking, signage and wayfinding, trail lighting, shade, restrooms, places for rest such as benches, and e-bike/e-scooter charging stations.

- Identify highest use trails where friction exists between user types (e.g., bicyclists and pedestrians). Consider creating separated facilities along these segments.
- [Figure 32](#) identifies underserved areas in central Springfield and in the Thurston area. Potential solutions may be (1) an extension of the The By-Gully Path across Pioneer Parkway to central Springfield and (2) an extension of the Levee Path east along the McKenzie River, connecting to Game Farm Road. North Thurston (NE Springfield) has no connectivity into the western parts of Springfield.
- There is a gap in the network between Island Park and Booth Kelly Trailhead, between the EWEB Path and the Levee Path, between the Levee Path and Thurston, between the By-Gully Path and Eastgate Woodlands.
- There is a desire for additional access points to the Middle Fork Path trail network. Major barriers within the region limit bike and pedestrian connectivity. Willamalane should work with partners to reduce barriers by creating safe crossings to: Highway 126, railroads, Main Street, 29th St., and 42nd St. Industrial land in central Springfield also serves as a significant east/west barrier.
- There is a demand for trail access to and along the McKenzie River.
- Look for opportunities to connect to trails or other recreational opportunities outside of the district boundary (i.e., to Armitage Park, Coburg, over Hayden Bridge, to BLM land, to Howard Buford Recreation Area, to future Glenwood riverfront, and to Wallace Creek Road.)
- There is demand for additional trailhead and access points to Thurston Hills Natural Area.

8



Delivery of Services

This section includes key findings from assessments of Willamalane’s organizational and financial practices, its recreation delivery system, and park maintenance and operations practices, the full content of which can be found in Appendix 1. Also included in this section are assessments of external communication and Willamalane’s approach to DEI and facilitation of a sense of belonging. Key findings from each assessment are presented in this section.

Key Findings: Organizational and Financial Analysis

The purpose of this analysis is to carefully review the district's investment in parks and recreation services by looking at staffing and finances. The analysis included review of financial records made available by Willamalane staff. COVID-19 was considered as the pandemic skewed the historical review of the district's staffing, finances, and program participation. As a result, data from pre-pandemic in 2019 was included (and sometimes prioritized) in the analysis.

The analysis is found in Appendix 9, the key findings are provided below:

- Intermittent facility closures and decreased service delivery have resulted from a lack of frontline staff and inability to recruit candidates. Some of this may persist from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Willamalane invests an appropriate amount of tax support in delivering parks and recreation services in comparison to a typical parks and recreation agency serving a similarly sized population.
- Willamalane's cost recovery demonstrates a high functioning park and recreation agency. The application of its resource allocation philosophy drives budget and programming decisions.
- A significant number of Willamalane residents (69%) may support bond measures for specific projects.
- Many alternative methods of financing and efficiencies that reduce funding needs for park and recreation agencies are available to Willamalane.
- Willamalane's current System Development Charge (SDC) methodology needs to be updated.
- Willamalane's distribution of positions suggests that the district is understaffed in park maintenance and has above average staffing in recreation delivery.



Key Findings: Recreation Assessment

The analysis of Willamalane’s recreation programming is intended to assess the effectiveness of the district’s provision of community recreation facilities and programs. The general overview considered programs and services based on staff interviews, community engagement findings, the needs assessment survey, and Willamalane’s Recreation Program Plan 2022 – 2024. This plan includes goals for each functional area of the Recreation Services Division (Appendix 9). To accurately assess the recreation program, pre-pandemic data (2018-19) was used in some instances. Current data was used for areas where the pandemic was less impactful. The full assessment is in Appendix 9. Key findings are as follows:

- Survey data demonstrates that the overall community recreation needs of district residents are being met. A variety of recreation activities were identified in the engagement process and needs assessment survey. Some examples of proposed activities include: community farmers markets, inclusive programs, enrichment classes, art programs, and martial arts, and special events.
- The community Willamalane serves is becoming more diverse. The district can understand and meet the community’s changing needs by partnering with agencies or community organizations, conducting continual and meaningful engagement, and implementing the district’s DEI Strategic Action Plan.
- Gaps exist in adult (20 – 54) and older adult (55 – 85+) programming. The adult population makes up 46% of district residents and older adults make up 30%, but only 23% of enrichment programs (combined) target these age groups that make up 35% of program registrations. As community members continue to age, an increasing need for additional programming to meet the needs of older adults is anticipated. Most programs take place at the Adult Activity Center, which is already near capacity in regard to programming space. Additional space to expand programming capacity will be needed.
- Adult athletic events are in high demand, and Willamalane does not currently offer this type of programming. An athletic field demand study could help clarify the possible need for additional artificial turf fields to support adult programming and other potential use.
- Hiring and retaining aquatics staff has become very challenging due to the job market. While Willamalane has done a very good job attempting to address this issue, staff shortages have nevertheless caused temporary facility closures—largely due to fluctuating availability and retention of lifeguards. Opportunities to partner with other local aquatic facilities (sharing staff that have limited hours by policy) may assist with this challenge.
- While Willamalane does a good job surveying program participants, additional performance measures reported on a quarterly basis may help the Recreation Services Division become more flexible in changing program opportunities as needed. Specific performance measure examples are in Appendix 9.
- Staff carefully monitor program lifecycles.
- As shown in the organizational and financial analysis sections of the plan ([section 8](#)), Willamalane’s financial and staffing investment in recreation is similar in comparison to other parks and recreation agencies serving similar populations across the United States.
- Willamalane currently offers programs and activities at all hours, but is not able to meet the full extent of the community’s needs during peak hours (evenings and weekends) due to lack of programmable space and staffing.
- Willamalane has many partnerships that add great value to the Springfield community.
- A significant amount of program registration comes from out-of-district residents (30%). A district “buy-in” membership may help ensure district residents are not subsidizing out-of-district residents. This is an opportunity afforded to out-of-district residents that would allow them in-district status and fees on an annual basis.

Key Findings: Maintenance and Operations Assessment

The assessment of park maintenance and operation practices is intended to assist Willamalane with providing safe, clean, and vibrant parks, trails, and open spaces.

The evaluation, analysis, and resulting recommendations identify efficiencies and opportunities to help Willamalane meet its current and future maintenance and operational objectives.

This evaluation of maintenance and operations practices recognizes many of the same topics identified in the public input process and needs assessment survey. Overall, the need for greater resources – particularly additional staffing – has been identified as a key priority area.

The full maintenance and operations assessment is located in Appendix 9. Key findings are presented below.

- Park maintenance is sufficient to meet community needs. However, while poor maintenance is not identified as impacting participation, there is a public desire for a higher level of standard and care.
- Space at the Park Services Center is limited and requires expansion of office space, storage, vehicle parking, and staging areas to accommodate current staffing and maintenance levels. The need for space will become even more essential to accommodate additional staff recommended in this assessment.
- Willamalane recognizes the importance of an asset management program related to maintenance workload planning and equipment replacement. A full equipment risk assessment may greatly assist the district to further prioritize equipment replacement.
- Seasonal staffing related to athletic field maintenance was reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic and has not been restored.
- Willamalane's investment in park maintenance is below the national median for typical agencies of similar size. Focus areas may include fully funding operations and maintenance for new park development when new parks are approved, and incrementally increasing funding and staffing levels closer to the typical national median.
- Willamalane could create neighborhood-based volunteer groups (e.g., Friends of Ruff Park) to assist with project work and to provide stewardship of the spaces.
- A pipeline to provide seasonal employees with opportunities for full-time positions may assist the district to fill seasonal vacancies.
- Additional park rangers may help to keep the parks safer, and also reduce maintenance and operations costs by deterring vandalism and nuisance behaviors.
- Willamalane's maintenance manual is an exceptional resource, clearly defining standards for maintenance of park components and amenities.



Key Findings: Natural Resources

Natural resource parkland saw the largest increase in acreage of any of the park classification types since 2012. This growth was in response to public demand and was one of the biggest identified goals within the 2012 comprehensive plan update. To understand how the district is responding to this change, a focused effort was made to look at opportunities and constraints for the planning and management of district natural areas. Feedback relating to natural areas was gathered through the public survey, staff meetings, the maintenance and operation assessment, and a focused discussion with regional partners and technical experts. Key findings are as follows:

- With a significant inventory of 920 acres of natural areas to maintain and operate, two FTE appear insufficient to provide long-term sustainable maintenance practices.
- The natural areas management budget is insufficient to adequately maintain and manage natural areas in a long-term and sustainable manner.
- Natural resource staff could be further supported through cross-training maintenance staff, community partnerships, and continuing to expand use of volunteer work groups.
- The department is very effective at obtaining grant funds. These funding sources are limited in the types of work they support.
- The district has a broad range of active partnerships that have been an effective tool for implementing projects.
- Dramatic growth has made it hard for staff to proactively plan for and make continuous progress on restoration efforts.
- There is opportunity for more education and storytelling about work being done within the natural areas.
- There is a need for trail maintenance expertise to assist with monitoring, maintaining, and building additional trails within natural areas.
- There is an opportunity to increase the use of prescribed fire and other culturally appropriate management techniques.
- The Natural Areas Management Plan is outdated and needs to be updated to serve as a more useful guide for the Natural Resources department.
- Willamalane has the opportunity to influence a number of priority projects for the region, such as: urban stormwater/green infrastructure projects, protecting riparian & floodplain areas (including Island Park Slough and Cedar Creek), expanding urban forests, and oak and prairie habitat restoration.

Key Findings: Communication

Willamalane places a high priority on effective communication within the responsibilities of the district's Community Engagement department. The department has seven focus areas as documented in Willamalane's Community Engagement Strategic Plan, completed in 2022. The plan identifies priority projects and illustrates key responsibilities and focus areas.

The Community Engagement Department's Seven Focus Areas:

- » Serving as a strategic partner for the district
- » Facilitating community connection
- » Helping to ensure brand consistency
- » Advocating for an exceptional patron experience
- » Marketing
- » Public relations and communication
- » Legislative affairs

During the engagement process and from the needs assessment survey, communication with the public scored as excellent, but communication with residents who do not already use parks, facilities, or programs has room for improvement. The analysis is taken primarily from the survey and feedback from targeted public engagement efforts that should be considered in order to improve communication in particular with marginalized groups within the community. These included meetings with representatives from the Latinx and tribal communities, and advocates representing individuals with disabilities.

Communication Effectiveness

The needs assessment’s random invitation survey demonstrated that 27% of residents did not feel communication was effective, although the open-link survey suggested only 15% thought communication was not effective. This is most likely because the open-link survey is more apt to capture program users. Overall, only 18% of survey respondents thought communication was not effective as shown in Figure 33 below.

There is some room for improvement regarding Willamalane’s communication about parks and recreation opportunities. The average rating for the Invite sample is 3.3 on a scale of 1-5, with 5 being “very effective”. The open-link rated effectiveness of communication slightly higher, with an average score of 3.6.

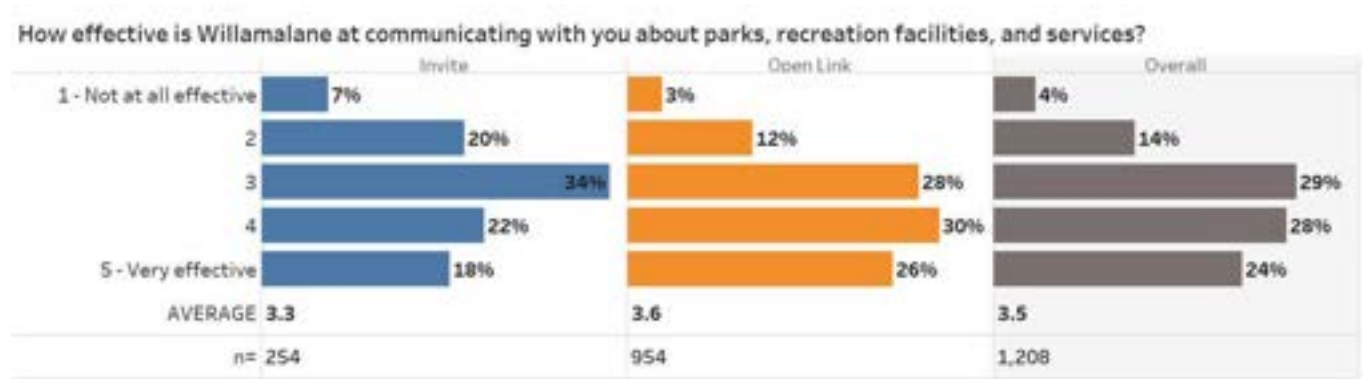


Figure 33: Communication Effectiveness

It is helpful to compare how residents currently receive information from the district with their preferences for methods of receiving information as shown in Table 22 below. Percentages sum to greater than 100% because respondents selected multiple communication opportunities.

	Current Communication Method	Preferred Communication Method
Direct Mail	63%	69%
Word of Mouth	38%	12%
Willamalane’s Website	32%	31%
Email	31%	64%
Social Media	13%	26%

Table 22: Current and Preferred Communication Methods



It may also be helpful to look at age groups in the district and the manner different generations desire to receive information as shown in Figure 34.

Preferred Communication Methods By Age of the Invite Sample

How respondents prefer to receive information was more varied across age categories, with younger respondents preferring email over direct mail.

How do you prefer to receive information about parks, recreation facilities, and services? (Select up to 3)

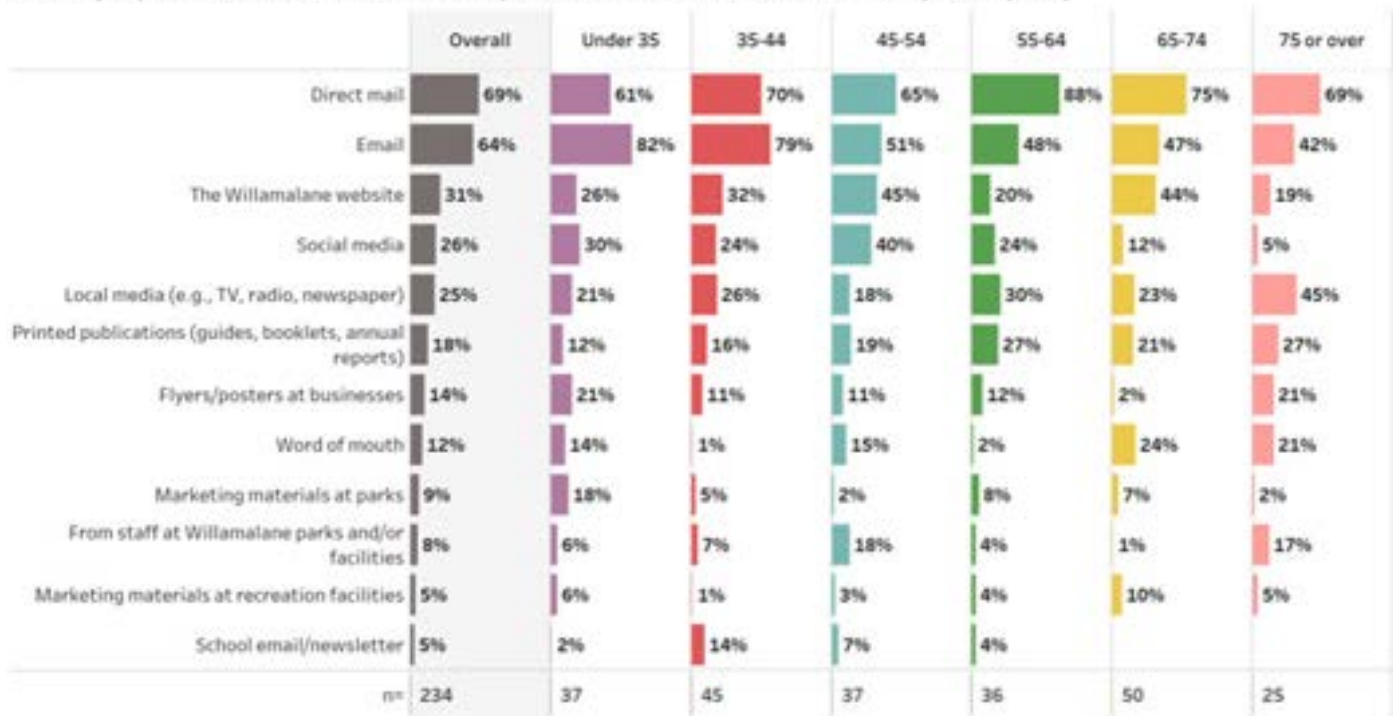


Figure 34: Preferred Communication Methods by Age of the Invite Sample



Key Findings:

- The district does an excellent job communicating with community members, especially those who are current users.
- There is room to improve communication with non-users.
- Increased use of social media as a communication channel is an opportunity.
- “Word of mouth” is effective, but is not a preferred method of communication.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and a Sense of Belonging (DEI)

DEI Initiatives and Priorities

Willamalane's population continues to become more diverse, is growing older, and includes a significant number of individuals with disabilities (5% more by population than the state of Oregon). To respond to this, Willamalane is making diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging a top priority for the district. In 2021, Willamalane adopted a DEI Strategic Action Plan that guides the district's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The district's plan identifies goals that represent a three-to-five-year, comprehensive approach to DEI. The approach is intended to go beyond completing lists of tasks, instead it attempts to foster a true sense of belonging for everyone Willamalane currently serves, including staff. The plan identified nine goals and included action items directly applicable to this planning effort. See Appendix 9 for the DEI Strategic Action Plan. The spirit of these initiatives came forward in both the engagement process and in the needs assessment survey.

- » **Develop a support system for DEI initiatives**
- » **Demonstrate leadership and staff commitment and accountability**
- » **Design a cohesive and inclusive work culture**
- » **Help ensure recruitment, hiring practices, selection, and promotion processes encouraging DEI**
- » **Create and implement policies and procedures that are socially responsible for staff, stakeholders, patrons, participants, and vendors**
- » **Engage marginalized communities**
- » **Support departmental DEI efforts**
- » **Provide reasonable accommodations in the workplace**

Meeting The Needs of All Community Members

Community engagement efforts identified key issues Willamalane can address to increase and strengthen relationships with marginalized groups within the community.

- Encouraging DEI and a sense of belonging is of the utmost importance to the community (both internally within the agency and external facing to the community).
- There is a lack of equity in the LOS for parkland. GIS analysis showed a strong correlation between parks that scored better and higher household incomes, as well as lower crime rates and lower population diversity. This means that residential areas with low-income households, higher rates of diversity and that experience higher rates of crime are receiving lower levels of service in regard to parks and open space.
- The district is becoming more diverse. Latinx populations are trending upward from 11.3% in 2010 to ~17% in 2026.
- There is demand for bilingual (Spanish) classes and programs, especially relating to arts, culture, and fitness.
- A greater relationship, connection, and access to community space and programming is desired by the American Indian and Alaska Native communities.
- There is a need for bilingual staff at the customer service desks or answering phones to reduce communication barriers.
- As Springfield's Latinx population continues to grow, Willamalane may best meet their needs by continuing to utilize purposeful outreach methods and fully implement the district's DEI Strategic Action Plan.
- Providing more stipends/scholarships for programs can increase diverse communities' participation in programs and activities. Marketing these opportunities to diverse audiences can also increase awareness of these opportunities.
- There is a desire for more bilingual information in parks and facilities both to promote a sense of belonging and to increase awareness of Willamalane's offerings.



Inclusion Services and Adaptive Recreation

One in five district residents report some form of disability. Willamalane currently responds to this need through accommodation requests, which can be completed online. Currently, the district does not provide staffed inclusion assistant or aide positions.

Willamalane has very few specialized recreation programs. The current approach is to make Willamalane's recreation programs as inclusive as possible and practical for a wide range of participants.

Members of the topic-specific focus group suggested the following areas of focus for inclusion services.

- Continue to provide accommodations to youth with disabilities.
- Continue to address mobility needs, including those individuals who are visually challenged.
- Continue to offer scholarships and other means to help ensure an equitable fee structure for individuals with disabilities.
- Inclusion services (program participation) should remain free to both participants and support workers.
- Continue to improve accessibility in parks (per ADA Transition Plan), specifically playgrounds and consider fencing inclusive playgrounds.
- Provide interpretive signage on trails or at trailheads and online to reflect the anticipated trail experience (easy, intermediate, difficult), and to indicate conditions such as rough, steep, and declining slopes and potential barriers.
- Consider the addition of hex boards in playgrounds with communication tools.

9



Moving the District Forward

Based on the research in this plan, goals, strategies and prioritized action items are provided to guide the district for the next 10-20 years.

Key Findings, Goals, Strategies, and Actions

This section of the plan describes key findings identified during the planning process and goals, strategies, and actions to both address the key issues and position the district for future growth over the next 20 years. The goals, strategies and actions are organized into nine categories that both reflect the 2012 comprehensive plan and the changing community.

This section is organized as follows:

- Key findings identified during the planning process
- Comprehensive plan goals
- Strategies and actions with implementation timeline
- Map of 2023 proposed park improvements
- 2023 comprehensive plan projects list with operating and capital costs

Key Findings

Key findings were identified throughout the project and are reflected in a matrix document shown in Appendix 10. The document shows where the findings were identified, both in qualitative and quantitative data points.

The following key findings align with the goals identified in the plan:

CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY

- Springfield's population is expected to experience modest population growth in the next 10 years and is growing older. The median age of district residents is projected to increase from 34.6 in 2010 to 38.6 in 2026.
- The percent of adults 55+ is projected to increase from 25% in 2010 to 31% by 2026.
- The number of younger community members (ages 0 – 14) is trending downward, but is projected to become stable within the next five years.
- A significant percentage of district residents (18%) lives below the poverty level.
- Almost one in five district residents have a disability, which is greater than the state of Oregon (See [section 3](#)).
- Obesity affects the lives and health of 29% of the community. Willamalane is in a unique position to make a positive impact on the community's health.



Parks and Natural Areas

- The district does not have an inventory of undeveloped land and should place a priority on future acquisition to not fall behind current service levels.
 - There has been significant growth in natural areas, from 186 acres of natural area and no dedicated natural resource staff in 2012 to over 900 acres of natural areas and two full-time staff dedicated to planning and managing these areas.
 - Thirty-two percent of community residents have walkable access to a park within a 10-minute walk; 45% have some access but not an adequate amount, and 23% lack access. Various perceived and actual barriers may be limiting walkable access.
 - Overall, 289.70 acres will be needed to maintain current standard of LOS by 2035.
 - The LOS can be greatly impacted by adding or improving additional components/amenities in parks—particularly restrooms, courts, shelters, shade, etc. Fewer than half of survey respondents feel their park amenity needs are met.
 - Park maintenance is more frequently reactive than proactive at times due, in part, to staffing needs both in approved positions and ability to recruit qualified applicants.
 - A majority of community members favor both taking care of existing assets and expanding the park system.
 - Many playgrounds use engineered playground chips, which meet ADA requirements but provide limited inclusive opportunities in terms of accessibility.
 - Athletic fields are well used. Expanded capacity could be gained with additional artificial turf fields.
 - Natural areas are important to the community, and there are unique opportunities to acquire and preserve additional parkland for this purpose.
 - Almost everyone lives within a one-mile drive to parks with outdoor recreation components.
 - Restrooms at parks are a top priority—permanent restrooms rather than portable restrooms as well.
- 
- A photograph showing a person standing on a rocky, elevated area, looking out over a vast, dense forest that covers a hillside. The person is wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants. The forest is lush green, and the sky is clear and blue.
- Region-based park maintenance plans, generated by the maintenance team, may increase staff efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Annually, the district invests \$1,932 per acre in park maintenance, far below the median of \$9,642 that a typical agency may invest. This is primarily due to the amount of open space/natural areas the district manages that are less expensive to operate and maintain than developed parks.
 - The community desires new recreation improvements not currently available within the district, such as bicycle pump tracks and splash pads, as well as additional items like BBQ grills and more disc golf courses.
 - The district should infill existing parks with additional amenities, where needed, to improve equity across the community.

- Taking care of existing assets should be a district priority, including dedicated budgeting for renovation and replacement of all major capital assets.
- Survey respondents from households with children desire trails and bike paths, better maintenance of existing parks and recreation facilities, and an outdoor swimming pool.
- Willamalane recognizes the importance of an asset management program related to equipment replacement. A full equipment risk assessment may greatly assist the district to prioritize equipment replacement.
- The natural areas management budget is insufficient to adequately maintain and manage natural areas in a long-term sustainable manner.
- Willamalane could create neighborhood-based volunteer “friends groups” for parks to assist with project work and to provide stewardship opportunities for park spaces.
- Natural resource staff could be further supported through cross-training maintenance staff, community partnerships, and continuing to expand use of volunteer work groups.
- The district is very effective at obtaining grant funds. These funding sources are limited in the types of work they support.
- The district has a broad range of active partnerships that have been an effective tool for implementing projects.
- There is a need for trail maintenance expertise to assist with monitoring, maintaining, and building additional trails within natural areas.
- There is an opportunity to increase the use of prescribed fire and other culturally appropriate management techniques.
- The Natural Areas Management Plan is outdated and needs to be updated to serve as a more useful guide for the Natural Resources department.
- Natural resource staff should prioritize projects relating to: urban stormwater/green infrastructure, protecting riparian & floodplain areas (including Island Park Slough and Cedar Creek), expanding urban forests, and oak and prairie habitat restoration.

Trails and Pathways

- Soft-surface trails in scenic areas are the most desirable additions for the community, followed by increased connectivity and accessible walking trails.
- There is a lack of access to trails in central Springfield. East Springfield (north Thurston area) lacks connectivity to a multi-use path system.
- Desired amenities along paths and trails include designated bike parking, signage and wayfinding, trail lighting, shade, restrooms, places for rest such as benches, and e-bike/e-scooter charging stations.
- Consider creating separated facilities along segments where user friction exists.
- Gaps in the network exist between Island Park and Booth Kelly Trailhead, the EWEB Path and the Levee Path, Levee Path and Thurston, and between The By-Gully Path and Eastgate Woodlands.
- There is a desire for additional access points to the Middle Fork Path.
- Major barriers within the region limit bike and pedestrian connectivity. Willamalane should work with partners to reduce barriers. Consider safe crossings to: Highway 126, railroads, Main Street, 29th St., and 42nd St. Industrial land in central Springfield also serves as a significant east/west barrier.
- There is a demand for trail access to and along the McKenzie River.
- Look for opportunities to connect to trails or other recreational opportunities outside of the district. Consider providing equestrian access when appropriate.
- There is demand for additional trailhead and access points to Thurston Hills Natural Area.

Community Recreation Facilities

- Outdoor pool and/or water play amenity were a high priority for community members, as expressed in both the statistically valid survey and at intercept opportunities.
- The Adult Activity Center requires an expansion or a second similar facility to meet the needs of older adults over the next 10 – 20 years.

Community Recreation Programs and Services

- Programs for older adults are sometimes difficult to access because classes fill up quickly. The programs are very popular and parking can also be a barrier to participation. The Willamalane Adult Activity Center has limited space for both parking and building expansions to address these needs.
- Adult athletic events are in high demand, and Willamalane does not currently offer this type of programming. An athletic field demand study could help clarify the possible need for additional artificial turf fields to support adult programming and other field use needs.
- Walking and swimming are the two largest participatory fitness activities within the district and remain a priority for community members. Primary desires for recreation programs include community farmers markets, inclusive programs, enrichment classes, food access programs, and music and dancing events in the parks (Salsa, swing, and Bachata).
- Teens desire similar recreation activities to adults—walking, swimming, and hiking. They prefer activities that allow them to be social in their otherwise structured and busy lives and alternatives to competitive sports available through school, such as PE games and activities.

Management, Finance, and Partnerships

- The district invests an appropriate amount of tax support in delivering parks and recreation services. The district's cost recovery model demonstrates a high functioning parks and recreation agency.
- Community members (69% of randomly selected survey respondents) support a future bond referendum for specific projects.
- Many alternative methods of financing and efficiencies that reduce funding needs for parks and recreation agencies are available to the district.
- The district's current System Development Charge methodology is out of date, and a methodology update needs to be completed.
- Recent increases in unhoused community members in parks, vandalism, theft and dumping of waste suggest a need for an expanded park ranger program.

Communication

- A large majority of district residents feel communication is good—only 27% of randomly selected survey respondents suggested communication was not effective.
- A majority (86%) of community members are familiar with Willamalane parks, facilities, and services; however, there is room for improvement in communication and outreach to non-users of district parks and services. Over 65% of randomly selected survey respondents are unaware of available recreation programs.
- The community desires additional survey engagement, such as an annual or bi-annual survey.
- District residents receive information in many of the ways they prefer; however, survey results indicate that only 13% of district residents receive information by social media, although 26% would like to receive information by social media.
- Residents desire additional bilingual information in parks and facilities.
- While Willamalane does effectively survey program participants, additional performance measures reported quarterly may help the Recreation Services Division to become more flexible in altering program opportunities as needed.

A High Functioning Team

- Willamalane has strong leadership and a very positive culture as was expressed during staff input opportunities, community leadership stakeholder meetings and during the general public input opportunities.
- The district's distribution of positions suggests that Willamalane is understaffed in park maintenance and overstaffed in recreation delivery. Collectively, the district is well staffed with full-time positions within what a typical agency would employ.
- A comparative pay-scale analysis may greatly assist with recruitment and retention, especially in the Aquatics program. Part-time seasonal wages may lag behind market rates, making recruitment and retention challenging.
- Seasonal staffing presents a challenge given the difficulty of attracting candidates for casual positions.

- There is increasing demand placed on park maintenance positions based on recent escalation of nuisance behavior in the park.
- Hiring and retaining staff has become very challenging due to the job market. While Willamalane has focused efforts to address this issue, staff shortages have nevertheless caused temporary aquatic facility closures, largely due to fluctuating availability and retention of lifeguards. Opportunities to partner with other local aquatic facilities may assist with this challenge.
- Historic seasonal staffing levels related to athletic field maintenance were reduced from five to two positions prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and those positions have not yet been restored.
- A pipeline to provide seasonal employees with opportunities for full-time positions may assist the district to fill seasonal vacancies.

DEI and a Sense of Belonging

- Encouraging DEI and a sense of belonging is of the utmost importance to the community (both internally within the agency and external facing to the community).
- There is a lack of equity in level of park services. There is a strong correlation between better parks and higher household income, lower crime rates, and lower population diversity. This means that residential areas with low-income households, higher rates of diversity and that experience higher rates of crime are receiving lower levels of service in regard to parks and open space.
- The district is growing more diverse. Latinx/Hispanic populations are trending upward from 11.3% in 2010 to about 17% in 2026. There is demand for bilingual (Spanish) classes and programs of all sorts, but especially relating to arts, culture, and fitness.
- A greater relationship, connection, access to facility space, and programming is desired by American Indian/Alaska Native community members.
- Having bilingual staff at the customer service desks and/or available over the phone can greatly reduce communication barriers.
- Willamalane will best meet the needs of the Latinx community by continued, purposeful engagement and continuing to implement the district's DEI Strategic Action Plan.

Comprehensive Plan Goals

The following seven goals reflect an increased emphasis on DEI and a sense of belonging, reinforce the community's desires for pathways and trails, and establish a focus on retaining the district's high-performing staff. Collectively, the goals serve as a foundation for meeting the district's mission and values, in line with its adopted core values.

- ☐ **Goal 1: Continue to operate the district at naturally accredited CAPRA standard.**
- ☐ **Goal 2: Provide a safe and equitable system of parks and natural areas.**
- ☐ **Goal 3: Provide an easily accessed and connected system of paths and trails.**
- ☐ **Goal 4: Provide access to high-quality and affordable recreation facilities.**
- ☐ **Goal 5: Strive for a high standard of care for the maintenance of parks, trails, and facilities across the district.**
- ☐ **Goal 6: Offer recreation programs and services that respond to district needs and encourage healthy lifestyles.**
- ☐ **Goal 7: Be a responsible steward of district resources and partnerships.**

Strategies and Actions

This section describes strategies and actions for acquiring, developing, improving, and managing Willamalane Park and Recreation District over the next 20 years. Seven overarching comprehensive plan goals serve as the genesis for a series of strategies and actions, which provide a roadmap the district can employ to maintain and enhance efficiencies and service to the public.

Some of the strategies include actions that have been prioritized into ongoing, short-term (1-5 years), mid-term (6-10 years), and long-term (11+ years) projects. Higher priority actions include projects that address more pressing needs or provide a broader community

benefit, per the analysis of this plan. Willamalane should attempt to implement proposed projects in the most efficient means possible, using the prioritization as a guide while also allowing for opportunities as they present themselves. Current best practices should also be utilized during implementation of all of the proposed actions and the correlating projects listed in the Capital Project List (Appendix 11.)

Numbers included at the end of actions in parenthesis are references to similar actions included and carried forward from the Willamalane Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan, 2012. More information on capital projects can be found in the project list, Appendix 11.

GOAL 1. CONTINUE TO OPERATE THE DISTRICT AT A NATIONALLY ACCREDITED (CAPRA) STANDARD.

Strategy 1.1: Review and update plans, policies, and procedures to align with the changing needs of the community.

- a. Update Willamalane’s Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan per the district’s administrative policies. Include an assessment of community needs and a review of the district’s vision statement and core values as a part of this effort. (11.17)
- b. Review and update divisions and department guiding plans on a regular basis.
- c. Regularly assess policies and procedures to keep them current and useful for district staff and community members.
- d. Provide documentation for the CAPRA self-assessment annual reviews.
- e. Keep district technology current and up to date. (11.3)

Strategy 1.2: Strive for effective and transparent communication.

- a. Continue to build the district’s brand.
- b. Prioritize internal communication.
- c. Enhance equity in communication and outreach.
- d. Continually evaluate and choose the most effective way to communicate with the public.
- e. Increase marketing to non-users of district parks, programs, and facilities.
- f. Increase direct community outreach efforts. (11.8)
- g. Partner with TEAM Springfield to expand communication to youth and teens.
- h. Provide more bilingual signage in parks and facilities to create a welcoming environment.
- i. Work with TEAM Springfield partners to expand wayfinding to district services and amenities throughout the district.

Strategy 1.3: Prioritize Willamalane resources to best serve community members of all abilities.

- a.** Ensure compliance with all ADA updates.
- b.** Perform annual reviews and regular 5-year updates to the district's ADA Transition Plan (2021) to keep it current.
- c.** Actively work towards making sure all aspects of Willamalane's parks, facilities, programs, and services are as inclusive as reasonably possible.
- d.** Promote inclusive programming and employ strategies to help ensure that community members with disabilities are aware of how to access programs.
- e.** Provide training and increase awareness of Willamalane's inclusion services among district staff.

Strategy 1.4: Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) in every facet of district services.**Ongoing Actions** (Occurs continually)

- a.** Implement the district's DEI Strategic Action Plan with the support of the DEI Committee, staff, partners, and consultants.
- b.** Update the DEI Strategic Action Plan based on feedback from internal and external stakeholders on a 3-5 year basis.
- c.** Actively partner with community groups that do work to support marginalized communities in the district.

Short-term Actions

- d.** Broaden access to translation services so they are readily available for district staff.
- e.** Explore forming steering committees to focus on communication and collaboration with marginalized community members.

Strategy 1.5: Prioritize workplace culture.

- a.** Enhance job effectiveness by providing ongoing staff development and training. (11.4)
- b.** Continue to provide professional development opportunities for district staff.
- c.** Continue exploring options to promote a more flexible work environment.
- d.** Provide and encourage staff engagement opportunities that contribute to a positive workplace culture.

Strategy 1.6: Strengthen employee recruitment and retention.

- a.** Conduct a salary survey every 3-5 years. (11.6)
- b.** Work with the DEI supervisor to incorporate recruitment and hiring practices that support diversifying Willamalane's workforce.
- c.** Provide a district-wide orientation to new staff.
- d.** Strengthen internship programs to create a pipeline for entry level positions; partner with local colleges/universities within certificate training programs and practical experience opportunities for students (Lane Community College, University of Oregon, & Springfield Public Schools).
- e.** Work with regional partners to identify opportunities to address staffing constraints in aquatic facilities.
- f.** Continue providing seasonal employees with opportunities for permanent positions to assist with filling vacancies.
- g.** Increase bilingual staff at the customer service desks to reduce communication barriers.

GOAL 2. PROVIDE A SAFE AND EQUITABLE SYSTEM OF PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS.

Strategy 2.1: Improve existing parks to enhance the district's current level of service.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a.** Prioritize investments to increase overall equity in planning and delivering park improvements.
- b.** Increase levels of service in high priority areas by infilling amenities and recreation components where opportunities exist.
- c.** Address low-scoring components and amenities within existing parks by upgrading and replacing these where appropriate.
- d.** Replace/upgrade playground equipment needs based on the low-scoring amenities list, Willamalane's internal replacement schedule, and life expectancy. Replace with all-inclusive playground equipment and fall protection surfacing when possible.
- e.** Place a focus on accurately acknowledging the contributions of people of American Indian and Alaska Native heritage, especially in art, interpretation, and naming opportunities in parks and facilities.
- f.** Enhance habitat and provide natural area supporting amenities within developed parks. This could include, green infrastructure, expanding urban forest, short nature trails, nature play elements, and/or signage and interpretation.
- g.** Seek opportunities to provide additional high demand recreation improvements within the park system, including community gardens, water play, nature play, bike pump track, off-leash dog parks, river access, disc golf, and pickleball. (7.5, 7.6, 7.8, and 7.9)
- h.** Work with partners to include additional outdoor fitness parks in the district as opportunities arise. Consider locating them adjacent to schools and swim or fitness facilities.
- i.** Work with community partners to actively preserve and protect historic and cultural resources in the district.
- j.** Continually update the Historic and Cultural Resources Management Plan to integrate best practices into the management of historic and cultural resources within the district.

Strategy 2.1 Continued: Improve existing parks to enhance the district's current level of service.**Short-term Actions (1-5 years)**

- k.** Proactively work with the community and partners to plan and design for future park and trail projects: Booth Kelly Trailhead to Middle Fork Path Connector, Dorris Ranch, Guy Lee Park, Island Park, Moe Mountain Natural Area Multi-use Path, Wallace M. Ruff Jr. Memorial Park, and West D St. Greenway Master Plan.
- l.** Update and expand existing parks in high priority areas to improve level of service, including: Gamebird Park & Garden, Menlo Park, Tyson Park, Willamalane Park, James Park, Georgia Pacific Natural Area.
- m.** Conduct minor updates within existing parks to address failing components: Meadow Park courts and Bob Artz Memorial Park playground.
- n.** Develop an outdoor water feature in the district.

Mid-term Actions (6 – 10 years)

- o.** Proactively work with the community and partners to plan and design for future park and trail projects: McKenzie River Boat Access, Jack B. Lively Memorial Park Design, Rob Adams Park, Weyerhaeuser McKenzie Natural Area.
- p.** Update and expand existing parks in high priority areas to improve level of service, including: Bob Artz Memorial Park, By-Gully Pocket Park, Dorris Ranch, Eastgate Woodlands of the Whilamut Natural Area, Guy Lee Park, Jesse Maine Memorial Park, Les Schwab Sports Park, Mill Race Park, Page Park, Wallace M. Ruff Jr. Memorial Park.
- q.** Conduct minor updates within existing parks to address failing components: Douglas Gardens Park court upgrades, Fort Park playground, Heron Park playground, Pride Park playground, Robin Park playground, Royal Delle Park playground, Thurston Park playground and courts.

Long-term Actions (11+ years)

- r.** Update existing parks and add new recreational experiences within existing parks to improve level of service in high priority areas, including: Clearwater Park, Douglas Gardens Park, Island Park, Jasper Meadows Park, Kelly Butte Overlook, Lively (Jack B.) Park, Marylhurst Park, Pacific Park, Rob Adams Park, Volunteer Park, Weyerhaeuser McKenzie Natural Area, Willamette Heights Park.

Strategy 2.2: Expand acreage and recreation offerings to accommodate population growth and provide parks and recreation opportunities in under served areas.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a.** Add park space to help ensure all district residents live within a 10-minute or one-half mile walk of an adequate or high performing park.
- b.** Increase park acreage to meet adopted standards for pocket, neighborhood, community, sports and other parkland.
- c.** When developing new parks consider unique or alternative types of park spaces to best meet the changing needs of the district.
- d.** When developing new parks consider including components that are in high demand including community gardens, water play, nature play, bike pump track, off-leash dog parks, river access, disc golf, and pickleball. (7.5, 7.6, 7.8, and 7.9)
- e.** Work with SPS to improve playgrounds and increase public access to school grounds to expand level of service in the community. Prioritize efforts in neighborhoods where there is the greatest need.
- f.** Look for opportunities to acquire land to support improved capacity and access to existing natural areas, including: Harvest Landing, Thurston Hills Natural Area, Willamette Heights, and Georgia Pacific Natural Area.
- g.** Work with the City to develop a natural area park at Booth-Kelly / Mill Pond site. (3.4)
- h.** Work with TEAM Springfield partners to explore feasibility of developing an urban plaza downtown per the City's Downtown District Urban Design Plan. (5.2)
- i.** Work with community partners and landowners to seek opportunities for land acquisition to support future planned park projects, including: Glenwood riverfront (N18), Jasper Meadows Wetland, Lo2, Lo4, L29/N26, No3, No7, N14, L11.
- j.** Work with partners to acquire land and easements to support future trail expansions.
- k.** Work with partners to acquire land along the McKenzie River as opportunities arise.

Short-term Actions (1-5 years)

- l.** Plan and develop new parks in areas under-served or experiencing significant growth: L10, No7.
- m.** Work with partners and private landowners to acquire land to expand recreation opportunities in no service and low service areas, including: L10, No6, N23.
- n.** Work with partners and private landowners to acquire land adjacent to existing parks in order to support expanded access and use: Bob Artz Memorial Park, Moe Mountain Natural Area, Thurston Hills Natural Area.
- o.** Work with regional partners and landowners to promote expansion of the Thurston Hills trail system onto adjacent properties.

Mid-term Actions (6 – 10 years)

- p.** Plan and develop new parks in areas under-served or experiencing significant growth: N27, N23
- q.** Work with partners and private landowners to acquire land to expand recreation opportunities in no service and low service areas.

Long-term Actions (11+ years)

- r.** Plan and develop new parks in areas under-served or experiencing significant growth: Lo4.

Strategy 2.3: Improve and enhance the district's sustainability initiatives.

- a.** Limit the district's carbon footprint. Create an internal sustainability plan with measurable goals and action items.
- b.** Consider design standards and horticultural practices that feature native and drought-resistant plants to conserve water.
- c.** Help ensure all current and future park and facility lighting is as energy efficient as possible (e.g. LED). Consider dark sky compliant lighting where possible.
- d.** Expand recycling program in district parks and facilities. (9.2)
- e.** Work with local partners to identify and address green infrastructure needs throughout the park system.
- f.** Prioritize environmentally conscious and energy efficient alternatives when replacing district's gas-powered vehicle fleet and maintenance equipment.

GOAL 3. PROVIDE AN EASILY ACCESSED AND CONNECTED SYSTEM OF PATHS AND TRAILS.

Strategy 3.1: Improve connectivity and access to existing paths and trails.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a.** Develop and expand trail system to minimize gaps, meet community desires, and provide mileage consistent with comparable communities.
- b.** Improve trail access in areas of Springfield that have limited connectivity.
- c.** Work with partners to improve on-street bike and pedestrian connections, especially when improving safe access to parks and riverfronts and formalizing on-street connections in the trail system.
- d.** Support the Rivers to Ridges Vision as a regional trails framework; incorporate recommendations particularly where it overlaps with the key priorities for Willamalane.
- e.** Expand opportunities for additional views, vistas, or viewpoints along the trail system as opportunities arise, consider Springfield Butte and Potato Hill.
- f.** Coordinate with city and county partners to explore opportunities for additional on-and off-street connections from the Middle Fork Path to neighborhoods to the north. (4.20) Possible opportunities include Dorris Ranch, east of Quarry Butte, 26th, 39th, 42nd, and Clearwater Ln.
- g.** Work with partners to design and provide additional safe crossings for pedestrians and bikes across significant barriers such as waterways, railroads, and busy roads. Specifically, to improve north/south access to rivers and existing trails, east/west access between Thurston and central Springfield, and to expand service to priority neighborhoods.
- h.** Work with regional partners to assure Willamalane is planning for and accommodating opportunities for regional bike and pedestrian connections to land outside of the district boundary, including: BLM land, Armitage Park, Coburg.
- i.** Seek opportunities to work with partners and landowners to expand the Lyle Hatfield Trail in either direction.
- j.** Seek opportunities to expand access to Cedar Creek and the McKenzie River.
- k.** Seek opportunities and work with partners to expand the Middle Fork Path eastwards utilizing on- and off-street connections as available.
- l.** Work with partners and neighbors to develop a plan for improved access to Thurston Hills Natural Area from adjacent neighborhoods.

Short-term Actions (1-5 years)

- m.** Work with partners to provide additional multi-use path connections to fill missing links in the existing trail network: McKenzie River Multi-use Path, South Weyerhaeuser Haul Road.
- n.** Build soft-surface trails in scenic settings: Gary Walker Trail System at Dorris Ranch, Thurston Hills Natural Area Trail Expansion.
- o.** Build new trailhead at south side of Thurston Hills Natural Area.

Strategy 3.1 Continued: Improve connectivity and access to existing paths and trails.**Mid-term Actions (6 – 10 years)**

- p.** Work with partners to provide additional multi-use path connections to fill missing links in the existing trail network: Booth Kelly trailhead to Island Park, Booth Kelly Trailhead to Middle Fork Path, By-Gully Path Extensions, Glenwood Riverfront Multi-use Path West, Moe Mountain Natural Area Multi-use Path.
- q.** Conduct feasibility studies with regional partners on the siting and design of two new pedestrian bridges across the Willamette, providing access from the Middle Fork Path to Howard Buford Recreation Area and Island Park to Glenwood. Include pedestrian, bike, and equestrian access as considerations in this process.
- r.** Build soft-surface trails in scenic settings at Clearwater Park.
- s.** Expand trailhead capacity at the existing trailhead on the north side of Thurston Hills Natural Area if/as use increases.

Long-term Actions (11+ years)

- t.** Work with partners to provide additional multi-use path connections to fill missing links in the existing trail network: Booth Kelly Road Multi-use Path, EWEB Path Extensions, Glenwood Riverfront Path.
- u.** Coordinate with regional partners to develop bridges over the Willamette River, connecting the Middle Fork Path to Howard Buford Recreation Area and Island Park to Glenwood.
- v.** Conduct feasibility studies with regional partners on the siting and design of a new pedestrian bridge across the Willamette, providing access from Glenwood to Dorris Ranch. Include pedestrian, bike, and equestrian access as considerations in this process.

Strategy 3.2: Provide a desirable experience for trail users.

- a.** Make improvements to existing paths to enhance the user experience, such as benches, public art, and other amenities, especially for the By-Gully and EWEB Paths. (8.2)
- b.** Work with Community Engagement to implement a signage and wayfinding plan for trails that is inclusive and consistent.
- c.** Work with Community Engagement staff to provide as much trail user information as possible on district website so visitors can understand the user conditions.
- d.** Create and implement universal design principles in design and development of additional trails and paths.
- e.** Monitor, expand, and adapt the trail system at Thurston Hills Natural Area to meet user needs and increase sustainability of the trail system.
- f.** Provide secure bike parking at parks, with racks located near each use area.
- g.** Add self-service bike repair stations at community parks, near trails and at popular cycling destinations.
- h.** Identify potential locations for bike-share installations in partnership with local agencies.
- i.** Support development of a variety of trail types and trail experiences to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community.

GOAL 4. PROVIDE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE RECREATION FACILITIES.

Strategy 4.1: Add or expand facilities to best meet user demand in the district.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a. Consider development of an additional community center in southeast Springfield to meet the growing demand of the community.

Short-term Actions (1-5 years)

- b. Conduct a district-wide space assessment to address programmatic and staffing needs and to develop a plan to maximize use of existing facilities. At a minimum consider the following as a part of this effort:
 - Assess space needs at the Park Services Center for storage, parking & office space needs
 - Evaluate opportunities for additional class and storage space at or near the Adult Activity Center
 - Identify best use for expansion of the Bob Keefer Center
 - Identify best use for future expansion of Splash! Swim Center
 - Assess highest and best use of rental properties
- c. Based on results of the feasibility study for an outdoor pool, create a plan for design, construction, and management of an outdoor water recreation feature in the district.
- d. Evaluate opportunities for additional class and storage space at or near the Adult Activity Center.
- e. Renovate the parking lot and consider opportunities for expanding parking at the Adult Activity Center.
- f. Explore opportunities to lease space to provide additional capacity for enrichment opportunities until new permanent community center facilities are available.

Mid-term Actions (6 – 10 years)

- g. Reassess plans for proposed building expansion at Splash! including additional multi-use programming space as a part of the Lively Park Master Plan update. Consider expansion of the lobby with any building improvements.
- h. Construct improvements identified in the Dorris Ranch Master Plan including additional community gathering/ event space at overlook on Allen Property.

Long Term Actions

- i. Design and construct a building expansion at Splash! to provide additional community space. (7.2)
- j. Incorporate recommendations from the Space Study into update to the Lively Park Master Plan. Consider expansion of the lobby with future improvements.

GOAL 5. STRIVE FOR A HIGH STANDARD OF CARE FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF PARKS, NATURAL AREAS, TRAILS, AND FACILITIES ACROSS THE DISTRICT.

Strategy 5.1: Maintain a high standard of care for parks and open spaces.

- a. Create 5–7 additional positions to support parks and recreation service delivery as outlined in this plan:
 - Landscape and Grounds positions (3)
 - Park Rangers (2)
 - Positions to support natural areas (2)
- b. Increase investment in park maintenance – phased over 10 years – to bring the district in line with typical park maintenance funding levels for comparable agencies.
- c. Provide appropriate shop, office, and storage facilities to promote proactive maintenance of park spaces.
- d. Develop and implement a plan for optimizing park restroom design and maintenance to reduce vandalism and other forms of misuse.
- e. Work with interested partners to enhance habitat and public access to non-Willamalane properties, including: Maple Island Slough, Cedar Creek, Bureau of Land Management property, Lane County property, TEAM Springfield property, the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers.
- f. Develop an asset management plan for equipment based on life cycle and risk of asset failure.
- g. Address community safety concerns by increasing the availability of park rangers to seven days per week.
- h. Review and update park maintenance standards for trash removal, graffiti and vandalism abatement, and restroom maintenance, and sustain excellent responsiveness rate for component and amenity repair or replacement.
- i. Inventory trees in parks and create a long-term plan for tree maintenance and replacement. (9.7)
- j. Restore athletic field maintenance staff positions that were reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- k. Work with partners to develop best practices and training opportunities for maintenance of green infrastructure facilities throughout the district.
- l. Maintain a comprehensive playground safety program. (9.1)
- m. Facilitate and encourage the formation of adopt-a-park groups for each park and facility. (9.5)
- n. Maintain a GIS database as a part of the maintenance management program for the district. (9.5)
- o. Explore expansion of the Dorris Ranch Historic District to include the Briggs House during implementation of the Dorris Ranch Master Plan improvements. (5.6)
- p. Provide a dedicated budget for implementing the ADA Transition Plan.
- q. Work with partners and local experts to incorporate environmentally sustainable and responsible orchard management practices at Dorris Ranch.

Strategy 5.2: Proactively manage existing natural areas.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a.** Continue to collaborate with and foster positive relationships with community partners, local tribes, and American Indian and Alaska Native community members to manage and maintain Willamalane's natural areas.
- b.** Develop management plans for natural areas that currently do not have plans in place.
- c.** Develop annual work plans for effective management of natural areas.
- d.** Increase and sustain resources and staffing to account for prior and future natural area acquisitions, using comparable agencies as benchmarks.

Short-term Actions (1-5 years)

- e.** Update Willamalane's Natural Area Management Plan to incorporate natural areas acquired since the plan was created. This plan should identify priority habitats and opportunities for future expansion.

Strategy 5.3: Proactively manage and update trails and pathways in the district.

- a.** Develop a management plan for repair and maintenance of existing soft-surface trails and multi-use paths.
- b.** Budget dedicated funds to maintain and resurface existing paths.
- c.** Create welcoming pedestrian and cyclist entrances to parks, with pedestrian and bike paths that are visually prominent, direct, and physically separated from parking lots.
- d.** Develop a plan to protect important sightlines and viewsheds to maximize trail user experience.

Strategy 5.4: Manage facilities to create a safe and enjoyable user experience.

- a.** Attain a comprehensive understanding of deferred maintenance, liabilities, and facility upgrades needed to provide adequate level of service and meet community and programming needs.
- b.** Assess and plan for opportunities to improve the function of existing facilities, including renovations to locker rooms, parking lots, entrance lobbies, historic and cultural resources, etc.
- c.** Budget dedicated funds for implementing renovations, updates, and addressing maintenance needs for each facility to keep them current and minimize risk of deferred maintenance.

GOAL 6. OFFER RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT RESPOND TO THE COMMUNITY'S NEEDS AND ENCOURAGE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES.

Strategy 6.1: Maximize participation in recreation activities across the district.

- a.** Expand programs and activities for individuals with visible and invisible disabilities in partnership with Inclusion Services.
- b.** Address inactivity and obesity rates among community members through low-cost programs and activities; consider offering free health and fitness programs in neighborhood parks during spring, summer, and fall.
- c.** Add additional facility hours of operation, especially evening and weekend times as space is available.
- d.** Promote active lifestyles by enhancing and increasing walking and running programs for adults and seniors.
- e.** Provide programs using outdoor fitness and exercise equipment in neighborhood parks.
- f.** Collaborate with Lane County Public Health and regional health providers to deliver programming that supports community health initiatives.
- g.** Expand community partnerships to assist in the development of parks and programming.
- h.** Improve usability of the online reservation and registration system. (11.2)
- i.** Expand scholarships and opportunities to meet the needs of lower-income community members.

Strategy 6.2: Expand and adapt programs in response to the changing needs and desires of the community.

- a.** Update Recreation Programming Plan on a 5-year basis. (10.1)
- b.** Maintain existing and develop new relationships with community partners to expand recreation programming focusing on specific cultural groups or for potentially underserved members of the community.
- c.** Expand programs and activities for adults and older adults (55+).
- d.** Expand youth recreation and skill building programs.
- e.** Develop more activities and events for high school youth based on feedback from students. (10.20)
- f.** Expand adult (20+) recreation to include a variety of adult athletic leagues and programs.
- g.** Provide a focused effort at offering new activities in facilities and parks: walking and swimming activities, enrichment classes, food access programs, and music and dancing events (Salsa, Swing, and Bachata)
- h.** Expand and maintain relationships with community organizations to collaboratively plan and offer a minimum of three multi-cultural community events each year.
- i.** Establish and consistently implement participant input opportunities after all programs ensuring feedback from all communities.

For a complete list of projects and a map, please refer to Appendix 11.

Strategy 6.2 Continued: Expand and adapt programs in response to the changing needs and desires of the community.

- j.** Develop and report performance measures as described in the plan to evaluate the quality of recreation programs and services.
- k.** As the Latinx population in the district continues to grow, work to meet the existing and future demand for bilingual (Spanish) classes and programs that prioritize arts, culture, and fitness.
- l.** Expand education programs that support community health, food security, and nature-based learning.
- m.** Develop water-related programming, such as boating and fishing classes and activities. (10.4)
- n.** Work with community partners to expand the district’s community garden program. (10.6)
- o.** Expand self- supporting athletics programs for youth. (10.7)

GOAL 7. BE A RESPONSIBLE STEWARD OF DISTRICT RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS.

Strategy 7.1: Develop a long-term funding strategy for capital improvements for new facilities and upgrades.

Ongoing Actions (Occurs continually)

- a.** Conduct regular updates, every 5-10 years, to the district’s System Development Charge (SDC) methodology to provide an adequate level of service as the community grows.
- b.** Prioritize marginalized communities, encouraging access to free and low-cost programs for district families.
- c.** Consider implementation of a district “buy-in” membership to help ensure out-of-district residents are paying fees that cover the complete cost of their participation.
- d.** Incorporate new funding strategies as feasible to assist with implementation of the comprehensive plan.

Short-term Actions (1-5 years)

- e.** Consider a general obligation bond to fund projects identified in the plan.
- f.** Update the district’s System Development Charge (SDC) methodology to reflect projects identified in the current comprehensive plan.

2023 Comprehensive Plan Projects and Capital Costs

Criteria for setting priorities for capital investment is recommended to be based in part on walkable access to parks and spaces, considering the LOS in each of those parks and facilities, and opportunities to meet the needs of underserved areas of the community.

Using the values scored in the previous analysis and isolating the lower service areas identified in the plan, the following analysis suggests possible priorities for future years. Gap areas were identified where available services may not be fully meeting community needs and thus present an opportunity to increase the LOS to the community.

This means that community members have access to some opportunities, but perhaps not yet at a level that might be considered adequate. Additional analysis of each of these potential gap areas includes total

population, median household income, diversity index, and crime index. These are all critical factors when prioritizing future improvements or new parkland.

The following map ([Figure 35](#)) illustrates sections of the district that have the greatest need to create a higher level of walkable service to parks. Areas in red and peach have the greatest need and therefore could be considered the greatest priorities based on the four equity criteria – people impacted, diversity, household income and crime index scores. Applying equity criteria to trails and pathways, Table 23 demonstrates that areas that have walkable access to trails and pathways also have a higher median household income and lower crime index.

Willamalane Trails and Pathways					
Walkable Access	2022 Total Population	% of Population	2022 Median Household Income	2022 Diversity Index	2022 Total Crime Index
No	38236	54%	\$ 53,484.00	51.8	159
Yes	32654	46%	\$ 57,913.00	52.5	120

Table 23: Willamalane Trails and Pathways Walkable Access and Equity

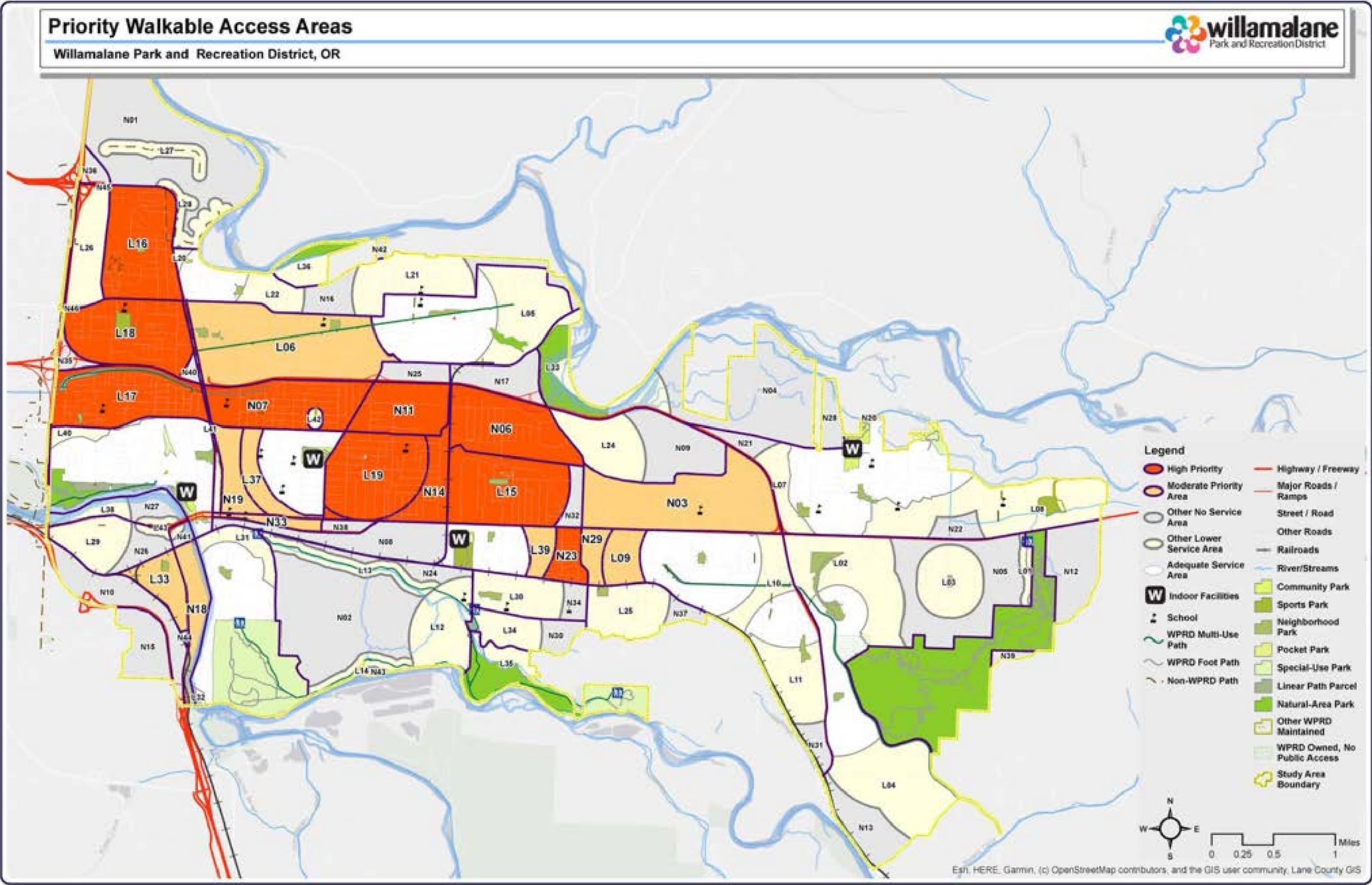


Figure 35: Priority Walkable Access Area Map

Phase One Project Costs

The prioritized Phase One project list and associated project costs are provided below. Project cost estimates were made in 2023 dollars and a 30 percent contingency was added to capital construction projects to account for costs of inflation and potential unknowns during design and construction. These estimates will be refined

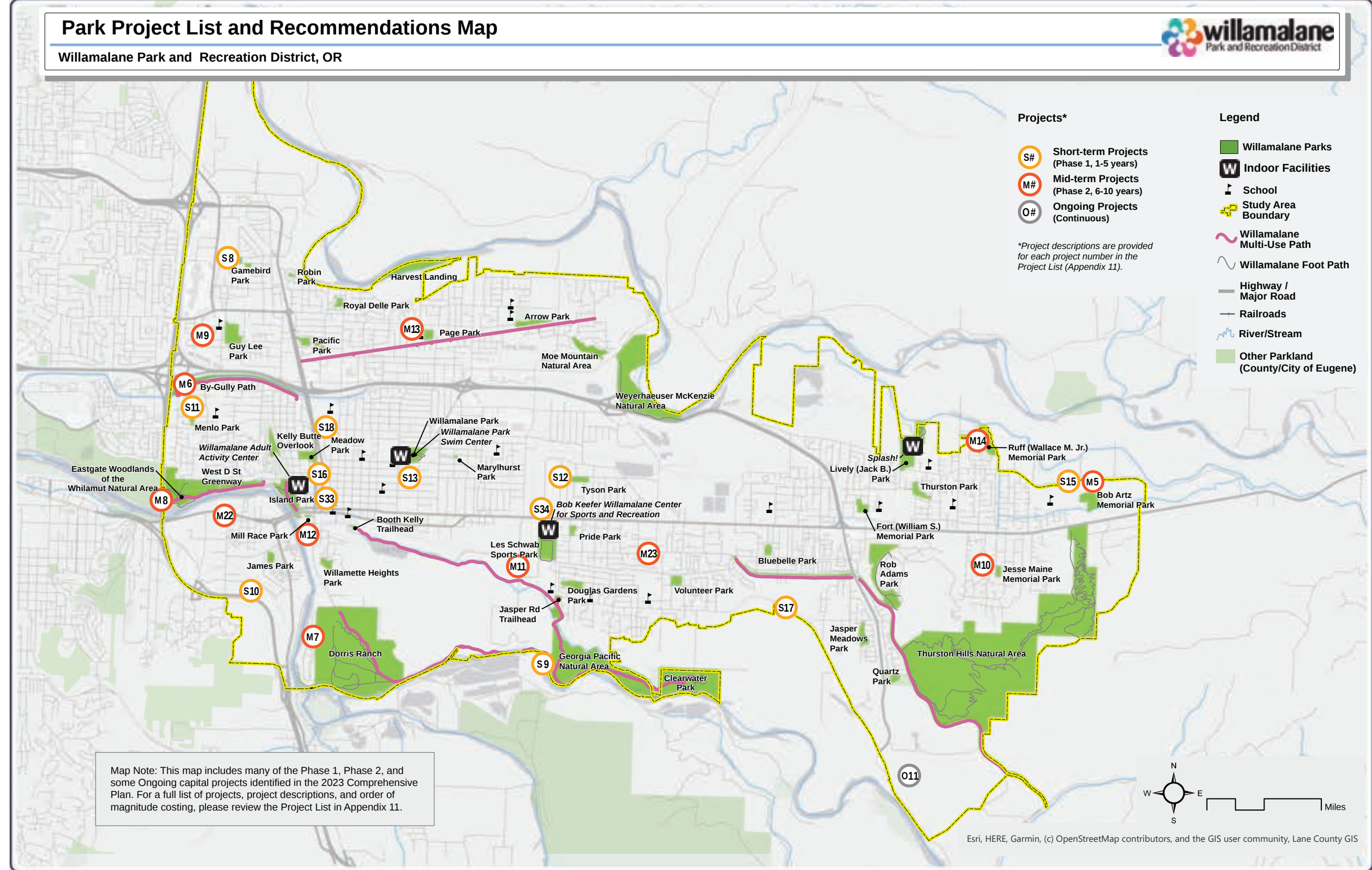
as projects move through the design process. They provide the district an understanding of the overall anticipated financial costs associated with implementing high priority projects identified in this plan.

Willamalane Park and Recreation District Project List for the Comprehensive Plan			
Project Number	Name/Location	Project Description	Project Cost
Planning and Design for Future Park and Trail Projects			
S1	Booth Kelly Trailhead to Middle Fork Path Connector	Work with partners and landowners to design an additional trail connector along Springfield Butte that connects the Middle Fork Path to the Booth Kelly Trailhead. Include consideration of a new viewpoint along Springfield Butte if feasible.	\$225,000
S2	Dorris Ranch	Plan and design for master plan improvements including parking lot, use of the Allen property, and nature play areas.	\$100,000
S3	Guy Lee Park/ Elementary	Work with SPS to create a master plan for the park that maximizes recreation opportunities and public access on the combined properties.	\$22,500
S4	Island Park Design	Work with partners to update the master plan for Island Park.	\$62,500
S5	Moe Mountain Natural Area Multi-use Path Design	Work with partners to design new multi-use path from northernmost point of Moe Mountain Natural Area, connecting to northernmost point of the Levee Path.	\$192,500
S6	Wallace M. Ruff Jr. Memorial Park	Update park master plan to incorporate acquired land since the last master planning effort.	\$20,000
S7	West D St. Greenway Master Plan	Work with partners and the public to create a master plan for the waterfront area.	\$75,000
Sub-Total			\$697,500

Expand Level of Service (LOS) in Existing Parks			
S8	Gamebird Park and Garden	Revisit design and conduct entire park upgrade. Look for opportunities to expand service on adjacent Springfield Public Schools land. Add path connection between Flamingo Ave. and N. Cloverleaf Loop.	\$1,150,000
S9	Georgia Pacific Natural Area	Implement Georgia Pacific Natural Area improvements per the park master plan.	\$1,700,000
S10	James Park	Prepare master plan and redevelop park.	\$1,225,000
S11	Menlo Park	Update and add to components in this park to provide better level of service to the neighborhood.	\$675,000
S12	Tyson Park	Prepare master plan and redevelop park.	\$1,100,000
S13	Willamalane Park	Complete master plan for this park and implement improvements.	\$4,600,000*
S14	Outdoor Water Play Feature	Determine ideal location(s) for development and then develop an outdoor water feature within the district.	\$712,500
Sub-Total			\$11,162,500*
*The outdoor pool at Willamalane Park (approximately \$19 million) is not included in Phase One estimates.			
Conduct Minor Updates in Existing Parks			
S15	Bob Artz Memorial Park	Update playgrounds.	\$550,000
S16	Meadow Park	Upgrade courts at this park.	\$700,000
Sub-Total			\$1,250,000
Develop New Parks in Growing and High Priority Areas			
S17	New Neighborhood Park	Develop a neighborhood park adjacent to new Woodland Ridge development in this region.	\$1,940,000
S18	New Pocket Park	Plan, design, and construct a new pocket park in the region.	\$1,000,000
Sub-Total			\$2,940,000
New Acquisitions			
S19	New Neighborhood Park	Acquire land for a new neighborhood park adjacent to new development happening at Woodland Ridge.	\$400,000
S20	New Neighborhood Park	Seek opportunities for acquisition for future neighborhood or pocket park in this high priority area.	\$270,000
S21	New Pocket Park	Acquire land in this high priority area for a new pocket park.	\$135,000
S22	Bob Artz Memorial Park	Acquire adjacent land to expand ballfields.	\$270,000
S23	Moe Mountain Natural Area and trail connection	Acquire land south of Moe Mountain Natural Area (i.e. abandoned railroad) to promote connectivity between the south end of Moe Mountain to the Levee Path.	\$270,000
S24	Thurston Hills Natural Area	Acquire land adjacent to park for improved access and an additional trailhead.	\$5,070,000
Sub-Total			\$6,415,000

Trail Projects			
S25	McKenzie River Multi-use Path	Design and construct a new multi-use path from the south end of the Levee Path, along McKenzie River (north of 126), connecting to High Banks Road at 52nd St.	\$2,675,000
S26	South Weyerhaeuser Haul Road (Thurston Hills Path)	Design and construct a 3-mile 10-foot wide paved multi-use path on existing Weyerhaeuser Haul Road.	\$2,350,000
S27	Gary Walker Trail System at Dorris Ranch	Build additional trails at Dorris Ranch per the master plan update.	\$575,000
S28	Thurston Hills Natural Area Trail Expansion	Develop 1.5 mile single track trails and 1 mile widened soft surface (graveled) accessible trail to accommodate beginner mountain bike riders and trails that consider principles of universal design within the Thurston Hills Natural Area.	\$275,000
S29	Thurston Hills Natural Area South Trailhead	New trailhead access to Thurston Hills Natural Area on the south side.	\$1,975,000
Sub-Total			\$7,850,000
Building Facilities			
S30	District Space Study	Conduct a district-wide space assessment to address needs and maximize use of existing facilities to meet programmatic and staffing capacity needs for the district.	\$80,000
S31	Willamalane Park Swim Center Feasibility Study	Complete a seasonal outdoor pool feasibility study to assess opportunities to co-locate an outdoor swimming pool at the Willamalane Park Swim Center.	\$70,000
S32	Park Services Center Facility	Design and build park services center facility improvements based on recommendations from the facility space study.	\$652,000
S33	Willamalane Adult Activity Center Parking Lot Renovation	Improve existing parking lot to minimize erosion and improve year-round usability. Design expansion of parking lot and an accessible walkway from the adjacent parcel to the west.	\$437,500
S34	Bob Keefer Center Expansion	Develop a master plan and construct an expansion to the Bob Keefer Center to provide additional programming and recreation space.	\$17,550,000
Sub-Total			\$18,789,500
Coordinate with Partners			
S35	Centennial Elementary	Work with SPS to improve playground and increase public access to this school to help meet the need for service in this neighborhood.	\$250,000
S36	Maple Elementary	Work with SPS to improve playground and increase public access to this school to help meet the need for service in this neighborhood. Work with the City and Safe Routes to Schools to assure safe connections to this play area from adjacent underserved areas.	\$250,000
S37	Riverbend Elementary	Work with SPS to improve playground and increase public access to this school to help meet the need for service in this neighborhood.	\$250,000
Sub-Total			\$750,000
TOTAL FOR PHASE 1 =			\$49,854,500

Map of 2023 Proposed Park Improvements



Map of 2023 Proposed Path and Trail Improvements

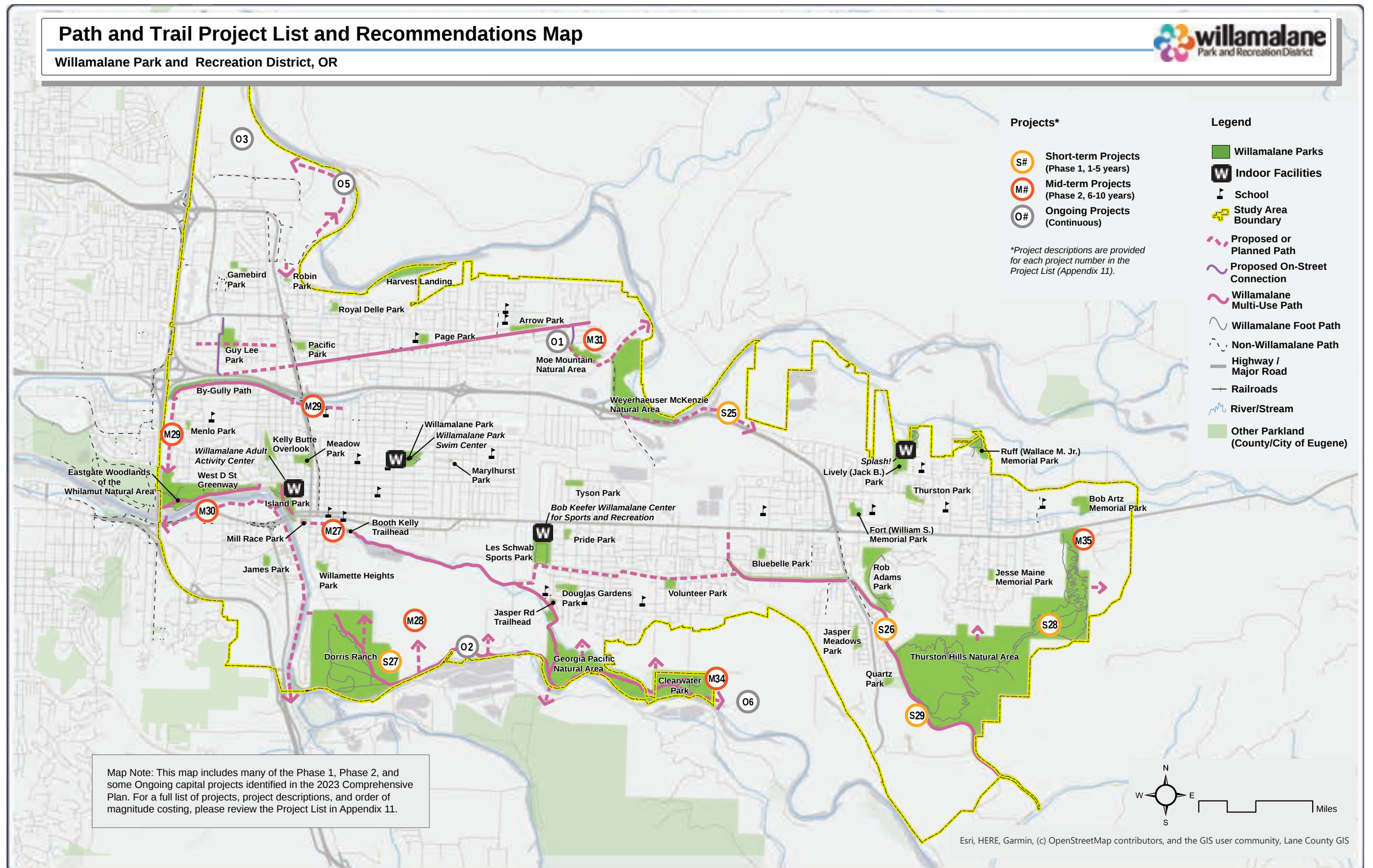


Figure 37: Map of 2023 Proposed Path and Trail Improvements

Financial Strategy

The Project List and Phasing Plan provided in Appendix 11 identifies projects that support the implementation of strategies and actions discussed in this plan. Proposed projects are prioritized into three phases: Phase One (short-term, one to five years), Phase Two (mid-term, six to 10 years), and Phase Three (long-term, 11+ years). Ongoing projects are also identified as projects that have priority, but will be implemented as opportunities exist. Cost estimates are provided for Phase One projects. The total capital cost for the first phase of projects is estimated to be 49.85 million dollars. Phase Two costs were not analyzed in detail but are anticipated to be in the range of 42 - 49 million dollars. Cost estimates are not provided for Phase Three or Ongoing projects listed in the plan. Many of these projects' timelines are assumed to be further out or are unknown. If opportunity exists to implement one of these projects sooner, the district will need to adapt its approach to

funding, accordingly, making intentional decisions based on the priorities established in this plan.

A new outdoor pool and water play area was one of the biggest projects that received strong support during the public engagement process. A ballpark cost for a project of this scale is anticipated to be 17 to 19 million dollars. This plan proposes a feasibility study in Phase One to better understand costs for construction, maintenance, operation, and market demands for this project. Pending outcomes from this study, it is anticipated that a large project like this would happen in Phase Two. Future updates to the funding strategy will need to account for the anticipated large cost for implementing this project.

The following financial strategy builds from the Capital Improvement Plan created in 2012 to propose a current and strategic approach to funding the first phase of prioritized projects.



Capital Project Funding

The district currently has four primary sources of revenue that support the district's capital project budgets. These funds include:

- Building and Construction (B&C) Fund:** This fund is allocated to planning and capital development, and is most often used for rehabilitation projects. It comes from the district's General Fund and is funded through public tax dollars. Annual expenditures from this fund are currently projected at about \$473,000 for the next five years, which is an almost 50 percent increase from what was projected in 2012 (\$320,000).
- System Development Charges (SDCs):** System Development Charges are fees imposed on new residential development to pay for growth-related impacts on the park and open space system. Park SDCs can only be used for park and facility acquisition and/or new development. The district's SDC methodology was last updated in 2006 and is scheduled for an update in FY 2024. The 2012 plan over-projected SDC revenues based on an overestimation of population growth. In 2012, population growth between 2010 and 2020 was anticipated to be 42 percent greater than the rates projected for the first 10 years of the 2023 comprehensive plan. Despite this disparity, the district has also seen that new housing development is currently out-pacing population growth and this fund has more recently increased closer to previous projections.
- Grants and Donations:** There is a wide range of government sponsored grant programs available for different types of capital projects; however, funding availability fluctuates with each budget cycle. While the district has shown consistent success in its efforts to obtain grant funds, the proposed reliance on these funds for 28% of the overall project costs in 2012 was well above what Willamalane was able to obtain. Recently, the district created a resource development program to offset its reliance on public tax dollars and maximize success in securing donations and partnership contributions.

- General Obligation Bond:** These voter-approved bonds are an assessment on real property. Funding can be used for capital improvements, but not maintenance. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time, usually 10-30 years. The district issued its last bond in 2012 upon completion of the comprehensive plan update in order to secure \$20 million in funding for development projects. The district generally considers bonds on a ten-year cycle; therefore, an additional bond may be a possible source of funding for the implementation of this plan. The proposed use of bond funds for the purpose of this funding strategy is hypothetical and additional due diligence is needed prior to actual issuance of a bond to the public for voter approval. Projects proposed through use of bond funds will be highly dependent on public support.

The financial strategy in the 2012 plan assumed the following percentage of investments from each of these funding sources:

<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>Percentage of Funding</u>
Building and construction funds	9.3%
System development charges (SDC)	18.6%
Grants and donations	28.0%
General obligation bonds	44.1%
Total	100.0%

To implement the 2023 updated comprehensive plan, project costs for the short-term projects (1-5 years) are estimated at \$49,854,500.

2023 Comprehensive Plan Capital Project Funding Strategy		
	Project Costs	Percentage of Funding
Building and Construction (B & C) funds	\$4,985,450	10%
System development charges	\$7,478,175	15%
Grants and donations	\$7,478,175	15%
General obligation bonds	\$29,912,700	60%
Total	\$49,854,500	100%

While the funding type percentages were intended to follow those in 2012, some shifts were made to account for recent trends and lessons learned since 2012. The following considerations were made during creation of the above strategy:

- Reliance on use of B & C funds was kept as minimal as possible to prioritize use of these funds for general operation of the district and implementation of strategies and actions noted in the plan that are not accounted for in the capital cost estimates. These additional costs may relate to administration, recreation, human resources, communication, maintenance and other services the district provides. This is the primary, currently available funding source that will need to absorb increases in operation and maintenance costs associated with each proposed project that are not quantified in this plan. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.
- SDC projections have been downsized to account for reductions to future population projections.⁵ Funding from this source will likely fluctuate with development and with future SDC methodology adjustments planned for FY 2024. These adjustments will be reflected in future funding strategy updates.
- Reliance on grants and donations was greatly reduced in 2023 to more accurately reflect a realistic quantity based on recent experience. This reduction results in an assumption of \$1.5 million in grant funding per year, instead of \$2.8 million per year. The reduced reliance on grants and donations results in an increased reliance on general obligation bond funding. Increases in bond funds can be leveraged to provide the match requirement for many of the grants for which the district may be eligible.

Operational Costs

The district currently has an approximate operational cost of \$162 per capita, which is lower than the Oregon average of \$190 and higher than the National Recreation and Park Association data for similar sized agencies nationwide (\$104). More information on existing operational costs is included in Appendix 9.

Willamalane's past comprehensive plans have not accounted for projected operational impacts for proposed projects and, in alignment with that approach, will not include these in this update. It is difficult to accurately forecast the costs of these impacts until a project is closer to implementation. The district is currently implementing an asset maintenance management software that will make these costs much easier to identify in the near future. This is an important exercise for the district to undertake prior to implementation of each project going forward.

In addition to increases in operational costs associated with proposed projects, this plan also identifies an existing deficiency in staffing to support parks, natural resources, and the ranger program. Additional staffing will need to be funded through the district's General Fund. To avoid future deficiencies, it is important for the district to assess operational costs for each project as it is planned, budgeted, and implemented going forward.

Funding Opportunities

The following are possible funding sources for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. Some of these sources have been used in the past and others have not been used but may be appropriate in the future. Willamalane should continue to pursue alternative revenue opportunities in order to leverage limited local funds:

- **Special Serial Levy (local option levy):** This is a property tax assessment that can be used for the construction, operation, and/or maintenance of parks and facilities. This type of levy is established for a given rate or amount for a specific period of time, generally one to five years. The advantage of the serial levy is that there are no interest charges. The district should be aware of tax limitations that could influence use of this as a funding strategy.
- **Revenue Bonds:** These bonds are sold and paid from the revenue produced from the operation of a facility. While revenue bonds are a potential funding source they are not recommended for the projects in this plan.

⁵ Projected funding is based on current SDC balance and projected funding using the current district SDC methodology.

- **Full Faith and Credit Bonds:** Full faith and credit bonds may be used, payable from the district's general resources. They are not tied to a specific revenue source, but the payment of principal and interest comes from available operating funds.
- **Public/Government Grant Programs:** There are a wide range of government sponsored grant programs available for different types of capital projects; however funding availability changes with each budget cycle.

Below is a list of some of the programs available today:

- **Community Development Block Grant Programs (CDBG):** These grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development are available for a variety of projects in lower income areas of the community. Currently, local grant dollars are minimal, but the district has received several small grants in the past.
- **Land and Water Conservation Fund:** This is a federal grant program that receives its money from offshore oil leases. The money is distributed through the National Park Service and is administered locally by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. In the past, this was one of the major sources of grant money for local agencies. The funds can be used for acquisition and development of outdoor park facilities and require a match.
- **Federal Transportation Funding:** The Oregon Community Paths (OCP) Program is a new grant program dedicated to helping communities maintain connections through multi-use paths. The Oregon Department of Transportation will use monies from the state Multimodal Active Transportation fund and federal Transportation Alternatives Program fund for this program. OCP will fund project including development, construction, reconstruction, major resurfacing or other improvements of multi-use paths that improve access and safety for people walking and bicycling.
- **Local Government Grant Program (LGGP):** This Oregon program uses Lottery dollars to



fund land acquisition, and development and rehabilitation of parks and outdoor recreation facilities. A 50 percent match is required. Willamalane has been very successful competing for LGGP funding.

- **Recreational Trails Program:** This is a grant program funded through the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Projects eligible under this program include: 1) construction of new trails, 2) major rehabilitation of existing trails, 3) development and rehabilitation of trailhead or other supporting facilities, 4) acquisition of land or easements for the purpose of trail development, and 5) safety and education projects. Grants are distributed on an annual basis and require a small percent match. The Clearwater Park restroom was funded with help from an RTP grant, because the park is on the Willamette Water Trail.
- **Oregon State Marine Board Grants (OSMB):** The Oregon State Marine Board manages Oregon's waterways. The agency also provides construction grants for waterfront improvements such as boat ramps, rest rooms, parking, and other related projects; and operations funds for maintenance and patrol. Funds are also available for maintenance of such facilities. It receives its revenue for grants from the licensing of pleasure boats and a portion of the automobile gas tax. The boat landing at Clearwater Park was funded with help from an OSMB grant.
- **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a State agency led by a policy oversight board. Together, they promote and fund voluntary actions that strive to enhance Oregon's watersheds. OWEB's programs support Oregon's efforts to restore salmon runs, improve water quality and strengthen ecosystems that are critical to healthy watersheds and sustainable communities. OWEB administers a large and small

grant program that Willamalane has recently used for restoration projects.

- **Private Grants and Foundations:** Private grants and foundations can provide money to public agencies for a wide range of projects, although most of their giving is to the nonprofit sector. They often fund unique projects or projects that demonstrate extreme need.
- **Land Trusts:** Private land trusts such as The Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy employ various methods, including conservation easements, to work with willing owners to conserve important resource land. Land trusts assist public agencies in various ways, including acquiring and holding land for eventual acquisition by the public agency.
- **Donations:** Donations of labor, land or cash by service agencies, private groups or individuals is a popular way to raise small amounts of money for specific projects. Service agencies such as the Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary often fund small projects such as picnic shelters or playground improvements. Springfield Rotary helped pay for the development of the dog park at Lively Park.
- **Lifetime Estates:** This is an agreement between a landowner and Willamalane that gives the owner the right to live on the site after it is sold to the district.
- **Exchange of Property:** An exchange of property between a private landowner and the district can occur. For example, the district could exchange a less useful site it owns for a potential park site currently under private ownership.
- **Public/Private Partnerships:** This concept is relatively new to park and recreation agencies. The basic approach is for a public agency to enter into a working agreement with a private business to help fund, build, and/or operate a public facility. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of obtaining facilities for the public at a lower cost.



Moving Forward

The district proposes to update this financial strategy on a five-year basis, which will allow for more accurate cost estimates for Phase Two and Phase Three projects. The update will reflect the impacts of future market fluctuations and inflation rates that have increased dramatically over recent years. This timeline also correlates with the already anticipated five-year (minor) and 10-year (major) comprehensive plan updates outlined in the district's administrative policies.

The financial strategy is intended to serve as a roadmap to guide the district's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which schedules projects for implementation. Through the CIP process, projects are selected and budgeted for on a five-year cycle that is annually reviewed and updated by a committee of Willamalane staff. Each update to the proposed projects and funding strategies is approved by the Willamalane Board of Directors.

10



Implementing the Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan

This section provides tools and best practices to implement the action items in the plan.



IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

This plan outlines specific goals, strategies, and actions that can be fully implemented given appropriate community engagement, transparent decision-making, and sufficient resources. Some best practices for implementing this comprehensive plan include:



Leading

Internal task force groups specific to individual objectives and action items (made up of frontline staff with one supervisor/manager).



Measuring

See Appendix 12 for example performance measures that can be used to assess district progress toward meeting the comprehensive plan goals.



Reporting

- Annual reporting on comprehensive plan progress.
- Quarterly implementation review and share status at all-staff meetings.
- Include implementation status in regular reports to the public, which showcase accomplishments and project status.
- Quarterly reporting on master plan status to the Willamalane Board of Directors.





COMPREHENSIVE PLAN