

# City of Raymond Parks and Recreation Plan

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# City of Raymond

## Parks and Recreation Plan

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## Table of Contents

<b><i>Introduction:</i></b> .....	<b>4</b>
<i>Community Description:</i> .....	4
<i>Demographics:</i> .....	5
<i>Parks and Recreation Facility Inventory:</i> .....	6
<i>Public Participation:</i> .....	9
<i>Demands and Needs Analysis:</i> .....	9
<i>Goals and Objectives:</i> .....	12
<i>Recommendations:</i> .....	15
<i>Implementation Plan:</i> .....	16
<i>Funding Strategies:</i> .....	16
<i>Conclusion:</i> .....	21

## Introduction:

The City of Raymond (the City) is located in Southwest Washington and bordered by the Willapa Hills, Willapa River, and the South Fork of the Willapa River. The City is approximately 4.62 square miles and hosts a variety of natural areas, shorelines, trails, city parks, and other recreational opportunities. The Parks and Recreation Plan (the Plan) is a six-year strategic plan and policy framework to meet the City's parks and recreational needs.

A well-conceived parks and recreation plan provides several key functions. These functions include:

- Meeting human needs for recreation and aesthetics;
- Providing for the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, as well as shaping the extent and patterns of development in the community;
- Providing opportunities for fitness and exercise; and
- Meeting the present and future diversity needs of the residents.

The Plan is one component of the larger community development plan. The Plan addresses improvements that serve residents, the surrounding communities, and tourists.

The City's objective is to provide parks and recreational facilities, programs, and open space that will be integrated into the community. The City is committed to providing recreational facilities that meet the needs of the community.

## Community Description:

The City is situated in Pacific County, approximately six miles upstream of Willapa Bay. The City's downtown area is located just east of the confluence of the Willapa River and the South Fork of the Willapa River. These rivers and their associated sloughs almost completely encircle the downtown area. Highway 101 bisects the downtown area, crossing both the Willapa River and the South Fork of the Willapa River.

The City was originally established as a residential lumber town at the forks of the Willapa River alongside what would later become Highway 101. Captain John Vail took a Donation Land Claim on the Willapa River in February 1853 (now known as the Riverdale section of Raymond), after his ship, the Willimantic, wrecked off Grays Harbor. The homestead was known as the "Home and Orchard of the Vail Family" for many years. In 1865, Dr. Edward T. Balch established his home on the South Fork of the Willapa River. Captain George Johnson bought the claim of the Perkins Brothers in 1875. Most of the Johnson property was muddy tideland but the high ground came to be known as "Johnson's Island" (now known as the island). In 1892-93, the Northern Pacific Railroad laid tracks over the mudflats below the island on the way to its terminus at South

Bend. Stella (Johnson) Raymond moved back to her father's property on the island (where she was born in 1875) with her husband Leslie V. Raymond in 1889 (L.V. Raymond). In 1902-03, Alexander C. Little (A.C. Little) rowed a boat to the tide flats at the forks of the Willapa River and South Fork of the Willapa River and decided to promote a town there. He immediately set to work attracting Jacob Siler and W.S. Cram to the site to build a sawmill and approached L.V. Raymond about selling portions of his father-in-law's old homestead. L.V. Raymond, who was already selling land, liked Little's enthusiasm and formed a company called the Raymond Land Improvement Company (November 1903) to survey a town site, sell property, build sawmills, and encourage the location of other industries in the town. The post office department established an office (February 23, 1904), naming the office "Raymond" in honor of the first postmaster, L.V. Raymond. Later in the same year, the Land Improvement Company filed a survey for the town of Raymond (October 1904). An election on August 4, 1907, approved the incorporation of the town and A.C. Little was elected as the newly formed city's first mayor.

In the early years, Raymond's industrial/business section and part of the residential section was built on stilts five or six feet above the tidelands and sloughs which crisscrossed the site. Elevated wooden sidewalks and streets connected most of the buildings. In 1913, Raymond claimed a population of 6,000 residents and had a reputation as a wild and wooly lumber mill town. City fathers resisted the unwanted recognition with promotions of Raymond as "The Empire City of Willapa Harbor", "The City That Does Things", and the "City of Smokestacks". Raymond's most active years were from 1912 to 1932, when twenty mills and factories lined the waterfront. Today, a single high technology sawmill dominates the Raymond waterfront and the city built on stilts is surrounded by a dike.

### Demographics:

According to the Office of Financial Management the City's current population is 3,096, representing approximately 13 percent of the total Pacific County population and making the City the most populous of the four incorporated cities in Pacific County.

The racial makeup of the City is 77% White, 2.3% Black or African American, 6.6% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 8.4% Asian, 0.4% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 12.3% from other races.

There are approximately 1,165 housing units in the City. Of those, 670 are family households and 495 are non-family households with an average household size of 2.52 inhabitants; 518 of those are married couples with families, 43 are males with no wife present, 109 are females with no husband present, 361 are single people living alone, and 175 are 65-years or older living alone. The median age is 43.3 years.

## Parks and Recreation Facility Inventory

The City presently operates parks that cover approximately 45 acres of the City. In addition, the City owns and operates the historic Raymond Theater and adjacent building for use as a rental property (currently Third Street Bakery and Bistro). The City has also developed approximately 5 acres along the South Fork of the Willapa River in partnership with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission. State Parks acquired the abandoned Burlington Northern Railroad properties and through an interagency agreement authorized the City to develop a downtown waterfront park. The City constructed a pier with floating docks, an off street paved parking lot, carriage museum, maritime museum, public market, restrooms, amphitheater, and added picnic tables with utility hookups. A three-and-a-half-mile section of the former Burlington Northern Railroad corridor between Raymond and South Bend parallels the Willapa River and has been paved for pedestrian use. The Raymond School District maintains a football field with an athletic track and grandstands; gymnasium with basketball a court, weight room, and shower/locker rooms; and an outdoor playground with a covered play shed.

These facilities provide for many recreational pastimes including baseball, tennis, basketball, football, soccer, skateboarding, fishing, biking, walking, hiking, boating, and picnicking. The following is a list of the City's parks and facilities;

1. Raymond Theater - In 1990, the City acquired the Raymond Theater in downtown Raymond. The facility includes a 400-seat historic theater; adjoining 3,000 square foot restaurant with a meeting room, restrooms, office, kitchen, and lobby area; and three upstairs apartments. The City leases/rents the restaurant and overhead apartments.
2. Raymond Timberland Library – The library is a 7,590 square foot building built in 1929 on land donated to the City for use as a library. The Neo-Tudor building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979 and still functions as a public library.
3. Dr. O.R. Nevitt Memorial Pool – The above ground pool was constructed between 1952 and 1955 by volunteers. The pool is managed by the People Organized to Operate Leisure Activities (P.O.O.L.) through an agreement with the City. There is no other public swimming facility in Pacific County. The City has renovated many elements of the pool over the years. This is an outdoor, uncovered pool and thus only operational during the summer months. The weather takes a toll on the facility during the off-season months due to its exposure to the elements.
4. South Fork Landing Park - In 1994, the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquired the 54-mile-long former Burlington Northern Railroad corridor between Chehalis and South Bend. State Parks granted the City authority to develop approximately 5 acres of the former railroad corridor along the South Fork of the Willapa River in downtown Raymond

as a City park. Through numerous grant sources the City constructed a 4000 square foot pier with floating docks, a plaza with a small amphitheater, an off street paved parking lot, Veteran's memorial, a building that houses the Northwest Carriage Museum, public restrooms, and installed picknick tables. The City also acquired the former Pacific County Lumber yard building next to the Northwest Carriage Museum and reconstructed it into the Willapa Seaport Museum at one end and a Public Market at the other end. In 2021 the City installed multiple water and electrical hookups throughout the park for use by vendors during special events.

5. L.V. and Stella Raymond Memorial Park (formerly known as the Eighth Street Park) - This 7.5-acre park is located in the northeast corner of the downtown core of the City just two blocks off Highway 101 in a residential area adjacent to the Raymond Elementary and Junior/Senior High School buildings. The park provides 50 paved parking stalls in combination with multiple lots and concrete walkways lead from these parking lots throughout the park. Benches, picknick tables, and trash receptacles are located along the walkways. The park has two softball fields with bleachers, backstops, and dugouts; an outdoor basketball court; two tennis courts; a concessions stand/restroom facility, and a children's play area equipped with large toys and swings. In 2022 the city began a sidewalk replacement program aimed at repairing the failing sections of walkways and anticipates completion in 2025. The city also received funding from the L.V. Raymond Foundation in 2022 and the Raymond Weyerhaeuser Timber Company donated all the building materials for replacement of the four softball field dugouts. The local school district's woodshop class partnered with the City so the students are projected to provide the labor to complete the dugout replacement project in 2023.

6. Willapa Landing Park - This 12-acre park is located along the Willapa River and was completed in 1992. The park includes a concrete boat launching ramp, wooden docks, graveled parking lot, restroom facility with covered picnic area, interpretive displays, and a wetland trail. The park was constructed over a 4-year period with funds from the State Interagency Commission for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), Department of Natural Resources Aquatic Land Enhancement Account (ALEA), Coastal Zone Management program, and a donation of over \$80,000 from the estate of Marjorie Morse Carse, an active supporter of the Raymond community.

7. Skateboard Park - In 2002, the City collaborated with HUGS to create a skateboard park near the L.V. & Stella Raymond Memorial Park and Willapa Landing Park. The City furnished property within the Willapa Landing Park for the skate park. Skateboard enthusiasts and BMX bike riders alike use the facility.

8. Anderson Athletic Field - This 15-acre park was completed by volunteer labor in the late 1940's on land donated by L.V. Raymond. It is in the northern residential area of the City known as Riverdale. The park is comprised of two baseball fields, each with bleachers and dugouts; a

restroom/concession building; an indoor batting facility; graveled parking for up to 200 vehicles, and lighting. The park is completely enclosed by a security fence.

9. Raymond Wildlife/Heritage Corridor - The City created a sculpture corridor along Highway 101 which includes over 200 steel sculptures and landscaping. The sculptures depict the natural wildlife and culture of the local communities.

10. Lion's Club Park - The one-acre Park was constructed using volunteer labor and materials on donated land. This park is located along Highway 105 adjacent to a small creek and abutting Anderson Field. The park has a covered picnic area with tables, an outdoor basketball court, and on-street parking.

11. Fifth Street Park - This 2.3-acre park is located along Fifth Street in the downtown business core of the City and extends for three city blocks. The park has a visitor information center with public restrooms, a unique climbing structure, swing set, teeter-totter, picnic tables, wading pool, a large open space with utility hookups for use during festivals, concrete walkways, and extensive landscaping. The park abuts the Dr. O.R. Nevitt Memorial Pool.

12. Case's Pond - This is a 3-acre pond with a small wooden fishing dock. It is in a lush, wooded area located in the eastern residential area of the City just off Highway 6. The pond is stocked annually by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and is a favorite fishing spot for youngsters and adults alike.

13. Willapa Bay Water Trail - The Washington State Parks Department acquired the 57-mile segment of the former Burlington Northern Railroad corridor between Chehalis and South Bend and added it to the states inventory of cross state trail systems. The City entered into an interlocal agreement with the State Parks Department to allow the City to make improvements to the three and a half mile section of the trail within the City's limits. The City has paved a nine foot wide pathway across a majority of the trail for nonmotorized uses; there is one section of the trail that veers off from the former railroad corridor through a section of the business district and Port of Willapa Harbor in order to get beyond the derelict rail bridge crossing over the South Fork of the Willapa River.

14. Lincoln Avenue Park - The City's newest park is in the southwesterly neighborhood of the City known as Riverview, on property owned by the Grays Harbor College Satellite campus. This park was created through a collaborative partnership between the Alliance for a Better Community, Grays Harbor College, and the City. The park boasts a play structure, a fenced basketball court, picnic tables, paved parking lot, grass play area, and trash receptacles.

15. Dick Kindle Park: Parking lot on SR6 created by the Eagle Scouts. Has a covered picnic area and flagpole which was donated by the City.



16. Raymond School District Facilities - The Jr/Sr High School has a 3-acre athletic field with a track, grandstands, concession stand, restroom facility, and paved parking; a majority of the parking is street side. There is a gymnasium with locker rooms, showers, weightroom, and concessions. Across the street at the Ninth Street Elementary School there is a paved playground with a large, covered play shed. The school's facilities are open for public use when school is not in session.

### **Public Participation:**

Public involvement and input are essential to the success and validity of the Plan. The public was informed and encouraged to participate in each element of the Plan's update process via the City's website, social media accounts, and legal ads posted in the local newspaper. The Plan was developed through a series of public meetings and an online community survey that citizens of the City and surrounding areas were encouraged to participate in.

The community survey was a key tool in gathering information from the public regarding the needs of the community, how they recreate, and what they would like to see for the future of the parks system in the City.

### **Demands and Needs Analysis:**

The results of the demand and needs analysis are based on the community survey, public workshops, stakeholder interviews, and inventories conducted as part of the Plan update.

#### **How the citizens of the City and surrounding areas recreate:**

- The community survey asked residents about the frequency of their participation in certain activities on a scale of daily, weekly, a few times a year, or never. (76 surveys were completed)
- When asked if the citizens use the parks alone or with friends, respondents indicated that 14.5% do both, 34.2% with others, and 43.3% with children / family.
- When asked what the two recreational opportunities are the most important to have locally, the respondents answered as follows;
  - I. 82.9% playgrounds;
  - II. 72.4% athletic fields;
  - III. 55.3% areas for social gatherings, picnics, and neighborhood events;
  - IV. 30.3% scenic and natural areas;

- V. 26.3% learning opportunities;
- VI. 23.7% areas for exercise and fitness; and
- VII. 7.9% other.

- 39.5% of respondents indicated they use the parks as part of a fitness routine, while 48.7% of respondents do not.
- According to the data, the most used park facilities are as follows:
  - I. The L.V. and Stella Raymond Memorial Park is the most used park at 65.8%. The most common reasons for this are the softball fields, playground equipment, and access to public restrooms.
  - II. 18.4% of the respondents use 5<sup>th</sup> street park. This is primarily due to its cleanliness and unique play structure.
  - III. 13.2% of the respondents indicated that they use Anderson Field / Lions Club Park. The most common reason for this is youth sports.
- Overall, the top three activities, according to the data collected from those who took part in the survey, are as follows:
  - I. 90.8% of citizens that completed the survey take part in Walking / Hiking / Jogging;
  - II. 80.3% take part in Baseball / Softball; and
  - III. 79% use the playground areas.
- According to the data the most infrequent activities are as follows:
  - I. 19.7% of those that completed the survey play tennis or frisbee golf;
  - II. 21.1% chose "Other"; and
  - III. 26.3% use the Skate Park.

**Satisfaction, quality, and usage of the parks, trails, and natural areas:**

- When asked if the parks are clean and well maintained 42.1% of the respondents felt that the parks were clean and well maintained, while 48.7% felt that they were not.
- When asked if they felt safe at the parks, 57.9% of the respondents indicated they do, while 30.3% do not.
- When asked what park facilities or services are most important, the respondents answered as follows:

- I. 33.3% indicated a variety of safe play areas and structures for kids, and access to public restrooms;
  - II. 26.3% athletic fields; and
  - III. 13% indicated clean and well-maintained facilities.
- When asked if there were any improvements that would draw you to use the parks, respondents answered as follows:
    - I. 26.3% indicated more access to sanitary and stocked public restrooms;
    - II. 19.7% better maintenance to existing grounds and facilities (paint, landscaping, road access, sidewalks, etc.);
    - III. 13.2% better drainage and maintenance of the athletic fields; and
    - IV. 7.9% indicated a covered play area for inclement weather.

## Goals and Objectives:

The following goals and objectives were developed from the public involvement results, and the demand and need analysis:

### **Goal 1: Provide high quality parks, trails, and natural areas with facilities that serve residents and visitors of all ages, abilities, and interests.**

Objective 1A: Provide a system of parks facilities and assets within walking and easy bicycling distance of all the City's residents.

Action: Identify park opportunities in developing and re-developing areas.

Action: Identify park opportunities in underserved areas.

Objective 1B: Provide a mix of park facilities that provide for a diversity of interests.

Action: Provide a mix of court and field activity facilities, such as basketball, tennis, soccer, baseball/softball, and volleyball.

Action: Host covered picnic areas in parks.

Action: Provide play structures that serve children of all ages and abilities.

Action: Develop and maintain water access at multiple locations.

Action: Work with the hospital, schools, and other youth programs to create and improve park facilities to meet their needs.

### **Goal 2: Provide an interconnected system of high quality, accessible multi-use trails that offer diverse, healthy, and informative outdoor experiences and link downtown, schools, parks, other facilities, and neighborhoods.**

Objective 2A: Connect and unify the community with a multi-use trail system.

Action: Create and mark new trails to connect downtown, schools, parks, other facilities, and neighborhoods.

Action: Where possible, design for and permit multiple non-motorized uses of trails, such as walking, jogging, and bicycling.

Action: Connect and mark trails to transit stops, bike routes, and sidewalks.

Action: Link trails within the City to other community, county, and statewide trails.

Objective 2B: Expand usage of the trails through safety improvements, amenities, and education.

Action: Improve trail safety through signage, trail surface improvements, lighting, and monitoring.

Action: Provide some trails that comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Action: Furnish trailheads with signage, including maps, mileage information, interpretive features, and rules and regulations.

Action: Provide trailhead amenities, such as clearly marked parking, bicycle racks, benches, dog waste stations, and trash containers.

Action: Provide opportunities for rest and picnicking.

Objective 2C: Protect natural resources along trails and provide opportunities for nature and cultural heritage education.

Action: Site trails to protect natural resources, especially water quality, and maintain or restore native vegetation, streams, and wetlands where possible.

Action: Provide interpretive signage about natural and cultural heritage.

**Goal 3: Conserve and steward healthy natural areas to protect water quality, wildlife habitat and migration corridors, sensitive ecosystems, open space, outdoor education opportunities, and scenic views.**

Objective 3A: Conserve key streams, rivers, and wetlands to protect water quality, provide wildlife habitat, and maintain migration corridors.

Objective 3B: Conserve natural forests in and adjacent to parks and trails to maintain views and the nature experience, provide wildlife habitat, and maintain migration corridors.

Objective 3C: Conserve key ecosystems that host Endangered Species Act-listed wildlife and plant species.

Objective 3D: Steward natural areas to persist for future generations.

Action: Monitor, provide signage, and maintain natural areas to minimize dumping, invasive species, and other issues.

**Goal 4: Create a distinct identity that celebrates the natural, cultural, and historic character of the City through park and facility design and education.**

Objective 4A: Integrate natural, cultural, and historic interpretation, and education into the park system.

Objective 4B: Host events that celebrate the City's character.

**Goal 5: Cultivate strong, positive partnerships with public, private, and non-profit organizations to support the park system.**

Objective 5A: Develop, strengthen, and facilitate strong partnerships with individuals, service groups, non-profits, agencies, and other organizations to increase park system use, improve and grow park facilities, and operate them.

Action: Identify potential partners and invite them to become involved.

Action: Host periodic partner coordination meetings focusing on the park, trails, and natural areas system.

Objective 5B: Coordinate planning between organizations, especially government agencies, local school districts, youth programs, and the hospital, to increase the availability and accessibility of outdoor recreation facilities and programs.

Objective 5C: Increase communication and coordination between city staff, elected officials, and committees to support the park system.

Objective 5D: Facilitate community involvement and stewardship.

Action: Promote volunteer opportunities such as volunteer work parties and Adopt-A-Park or Trail programs.

Action: Work with high school students, service organizations, 4-H, and other youth programs to complete projects.

Action: Attract and involve local companies and their staff in projects.

Action: Promote community events at the different parks and trail sites.

**Goal 6: Ensure long term economic sustainability in park system planning, design, and operation.**

Objective 6A: Identify and pursue funding from a wide variety of sources for park acquisition, facility development, and maintenance.

Objective 6B: Promote community partnerships and encourage volunteerism to contribute to the development and maintenance of the system.

Objective 6C: Consider long-term management and cost of new park sites or facilities prior to their development.

### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations concerning the City's parks and recreation areas are based on the public outreach program developed by the City as part of this Plan. The recommendations outline the vision developed for the park and recreation areas over the next six years.

The recommendations, proposals, and projects outlined in this plan are conceptual and subject to further study, feasibility, and funding. It is not the intention of the Plan that any recommendations limit the City's ability to act on an opportunity that may arise provided the opportunity supports the Plan's goals and objectives. Coordination with other public and/or private participants that may be affected by or interested in the outcome of any project, such as adjacent residents or funding partners, will also affect the outcome or overall validity of any recommendation. As a result, all recommendations presented here are done with the understanding that they will only be implemented as opportunity, funding, and feasibility allow.

The following recommendations were prioritized through the public process and input from stakeholders. The criteria for these were based on the following:

- Reflects the community needs and values as identified through the public process.
- Expands recreation opportunities.
- Improves existing recreation resources.
- Enhances partnerships and volunteerism.
- Strengthens the community.

Short term and day-to-day recommendations are intended to be completed in the shorter term more easily with little or no funding by staff or volunteers. Longer term projects are more involved and would require time and larger funding amounts. Tier 1 projects are higher priority and are intended to be completed prior to Tier 2 projects. Tier 1 & 2 projects may not be completed within the six-year plan period but will be re-visited in the next plan update. Any projects on properties not owned or controlled by the City would be cooperative and necessitate landowner consent.

#### **Short term and day to day recommendations:**

- Clean, maintain, and stock public restrooms and/or Sani cans for daily public use.
- Pick up litter and debris on a regular basis.

- Remove graffiti regularly.
- Add more trash receptacles at both the parks and existing trail system.
- Hold more community sponsored events in the parks.
- Work with City staff and partners to maintain the vegetation along existing trails.

**Longer term recommended projects – Tier 1:**

- Add and improve park amenities, including new and increased signage, drinking fountains, dog waste bag stations, bicycle racks, and trash cans.
- Add more picnic/BBQ areas.
- Add more seating near the playground areas and along the trail.
- Add interpretive/educational signage indicating points of interest, historical significance, and informational content.
- Work with State Parks and other partners to clean and maintain Rails to Trails.
- Improve foot bridge across creek in Lions Park.

**Longer term recommendations – Tier 2:**

- Better connect the Parks to each other and downtown through signage, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- Improve access to roads and develop parking areas, including sidewalks, bike lanes, and Americans with Disabilities Act accessible parking.
- Add public restroom facilities to Anderson Field / Lions Park and Lincoln Avenue Park.
- Improve lighting and drainage at the athletic fields including those belonging to the Raymond School District.
- Add covered seating at the athletic fields.
- Add covered play area for use during inclement weather.

**Implementation Plan:**

Implementing the Plan advances the community-wide vision and guides long-term decision making. The critical balance is to provide enough direction to create action toward the community’s vision while retaining a high degree of flexibility to adapt to opportunities created by development and redevelopment, changes in political priorities, new partnerships, and the availability of outside resources. Given that the operating and capital budget for the City is limited, looking towards these alternative funding strategies and opportunities is critical to the Plan’s success.

**Funding Strategies:**

A variety of funding and volunteer sources are available for park construction and operations. The following pages present existing and potential financing and funding sources for acquiring, developing, and maintaining parks, natural/scenic areas, trails, and other recreational programs.



## **General Fund**

This is the City's primary source of operating revenue. Most of this revenue comes from taxes levied on property, retail sales, and utilities within the City's boundaries and are used to fund and run the day-to-day services and functions of the City.

## **Volunteer & Community Based Action**

The donation of labor, land, or cash by service agencies, religious groups, youth groups, private groups, or individuals is a popular way to acquire land, complete projects, and/or raise small amounts of money for specific projects. One example of soliciting such support is going through a service club such as the Kiwanis, Lions, Elks, or Rotary to fund picnic or playground improvements. The local high school has a community service program that students must participate in to graduate and/or senior projects through which some fundraising and/or actual project might be completed.

## **Joint Public/Private Partnership**

The City could enter into a working agreement with a private corporation to help fund, build, and/or operate a public facility. Generally, the three incentives a public agency can offer are free land to place a facility (usually a park or other parcel of public land), certain tax advantages, and access to the facility. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of obtaining public facilities at a lower cost.

## **Public or Non-Profit Partnerships**

The City could consider developing partnerships with other jurisdictions, agencies, or non-profit service providers to implement projects identified in the Plan. Some potential partners could include the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, private sport groups, neighborhood organizations, or neighboring jurisdictions such as the county or the City of South Bend. For acquisition, private land trusts such as the Trust for Public Land, Inc. and the Nature Conservancy will acquire and hold land for eventual acquisition by a public agency.

## **Shared Facilities**

In some situations, other services provided in the City, or in private utilities, may be able to share the cost of improvements that would benefit the parks and recreation system. One example is utility corridors; in some instances, land used for sanitary sewers, water, or power lines may make an excellent trail corridor. In this situation, the utility may pay to develop a service road that can also serve as a trail.

## **Grant Programs**

Beyond the City's own resources, the largest funding source for park and recreation projects is grants from the State of Washington's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The RCO is responsible for administering a wide variety of public funds and provides technical assistance and policy development in addition to preparing statewide plans on trails, boating facilities, habitat preservation, and off-road vehicles. This section outlines the major RCO programs as well as several other relevant granting agencies. It is important to note that most grant programs require a portion of the project cost to be provided by a local partner as match funding. In most cases granting agencies will not fund more than 75-percent of a project's cost. These programs also require training, tracking, and other staff attention throughout the life of the grant to maximize success.

### **RCO Boating Facilities Program**

This grant program is funded by boaters' gasoline taxes and administered by the RCO. Projects eligible under this program include acquisition, development, planning, and renovation projects associated with launching ramps, transient moorage, and upland support facilities. RCO allocates up to \$200,000 for planning projects and up to \$1,000,000 for acquisition, development or projects that combine planning with acquisition or development. Grants require a minimum of 25 percent matching funds by a local agency.

### **RCO 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 administered locally by the RCO. The funds can be used for acquisition and development of outdoor facilities and require a 50 percent match.

### **RCO Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program**

This program is administered by the RCO. There are two accounts under this program: 1) Habitat Conservation; and 2) Outdoor Recreation. Projects eligible under this program include acquisition and development of parks, water access sites, trails, critical wildlife habitat, natural areas, and urban wildlife habitat. Applicants must provide a minimum of a 50 percent non-RCO match. Local park projects have maximum requests of \$300,000 for development and \$500,000 for acquisition costs. There are no maximum request levels in the following categories: urban wildlife habitat, trails, and water access.

### **Youth Athletic Facilities**

The Youth Athletic Facilities is a grant program designed to provide funding for new, improved, and better maintained outdoor athletic facilities serving youth and communities. This program

was established by State Statute (RCW 79A.25.800-830) as part of the State Referendum 48, which provided funding for the Seattle Seahawks Stadium. The program is administered by the RCO and applicants must provide matching funds of at least 50 percent. The grant amounts vary by use from a minimum of \$5,000 for maintaining existing facilities to a maximum of \$150,000 for developing new facilities.

#### **RCO Aquatic Land Enhancement Account**

This program is administered by the RCO and supports the purchase, improvement, or protection of and access to aquatic lands for public purposes. Grant applications are reviewed once every two years for this program. Applicants must provide a minimum of a 50 percent match.

#### **RCO Salmon Recovery Funding Board**

Salmon recovery grants are awarded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, from state and federal sources, to protect and restore salmon habitat. The board funds projects that protect existing, high-quality habitats for salmon and that restore degraded habitat to increase overall habitat health and biological productivity. The board also awards grants for feasibility assessments to determine future projects and for other salmon related activities. Projects may include the actual habitat used by salmon and the land and water that support ecosystem functions and processes important to salmon. The program funds acquisition, restoration, design, and non-capital projects with no project limit. Local agencies are required to match 15% of grant funds. The local granting organization is the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board.

#### **RCO Boating Infrastructure Grant Program**

The Boating Infrastructure Grant Program provides funding to develop and renovate boating facilities targeting recreational boats 26 feet and larger. Grants also may be used for boater education. This program is funded by the Aquatic Resources Trust Fund and administered by the RCO. The local agency match requirement is 25% and projects are split into two categories for projects under \$95,000 and over \$100,000.

#### **RCO Recreational Trails Program (RTP)**

The Recreational Trails Program, funded by federal gas taxes and administered by RCO, provides funds to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails and facilities. These grants support a backcountry experience, which means that the trail's physical setting, not its distance from a city or road, should be predominately natural. Under limited circumstances, new "linking" trails, relocations, and education proposals are also eligible. Grants top out at \$75,000 per project and require a 20% match for local agencies.

### **Community Development Block Grants**

These grants from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development are available for a wide variety of projects. Most are used for projects in lower income areas of the community because of funding rules. Grants can cover up to 100 percent of project costs.

### **Surface Transportation Program**

Washington has received considerable revenue for trail-related projects from the Surface Transportation Program. Projects eligible for funding include (federal-aid non-NHS) highway and bridge construction and repair; transit capital projects; bicycle, pedestrian, and recreational trails; and construction of ferry boats and terminals. The Washington State Department of Transportation administers the funding through Pacific County. Currently, the county gets \$300,000 per year for projects.

### **Transportation Alternatives Program**

Eligible projects for this federal grant include on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and improved mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental remediation; recreational trail program projects; and federally funded safe routes to school projects.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may provide technical assistance and administer funding for projects related to water quality improvement through debris and habitat/vegetation management, watershed management and stream bank erosion, and sediment deposition projects. Their Coastal Wetland and the North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant programs also provide wildlife habitat acquisition and restoration funding focused on wetlands. Due to their complexity, partnering with an experienced partner, such as Columbia Land Trust or Ducks Unlimited, is recommended.

### **National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program**

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects through technical assistance. Conservation and recreation planning professionals' partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities. They can help define project vision and goals, inventory, and map community resources; identify and analyze key issues and opportunities; engage collaborative partners and stakeholders; design community outreach and participation strategies; develop concept plans for trails, parks, and

natural areas; set priorities and build consensus; identify funding sources; and develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project. Applications for assistance are due annually in August.

### **Private Grants and Foundations**

Private corporations and foundations provide money for a wide range of projects targeted to the organizations' mission. Some foundations do not provide grants to governments but will often grant to partner organizations.

### **Real Estate Excise Tax**

Real Estate Excise Tax is a tax on all real estate sales and is levied against the full value of the property. The City is allowed under the statutes to levy 0.5% in addition to the State of Washington tax. These funds can only be used for projects identified in the Capital Facilities Plan Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

### **Park Impact Fees**

Park Impact Fees are fees imposed on new development to pay for capital projects required to accommodate the impacts of development on the City's infrastructure.

### **Exactions**

Exactions are costs of necessary public improvements that are passed onto designated landowners through the development agreement process.

### **Park and Recreation Service Area**

A Park and Recreation Service Area is a type of special tax district that can levy regular property tax up to \$0.60 / 1,000 property value. It is authorized under RCW36.68.400.620 when voter approved by special levy.

### **Conclusion:**

The community's vision for the future of parks and recreation areas, trails, and natural areas has been the foundation of this planning effort. The recommendations built on the vision should serve the City well, providing guidance to the end of this decade and beyond. The Plan is designed to be an informative guide to the parks and recreation system, a reference for future projects, and a toolbox for implementing recommendations and taking advantage of unique opportunities as they arise. These projects will help the City to renew the investment in these critical community assets, and achieve the vision laid out by the community.