

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Annual Report to Salem City Council
February 2025

Bush's Pasture Park

CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE

ABOUT SPRAB

Duties

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board acts as a community catalyst for our parks and recreation system. It makes recommendations, offers advice, and issues reports to City Council and other groups. SPRAB also issues decisions involving city-owned tree removal appeals as well as Heritage Tree designation nominations.

Mission

SPRAB advocates for the acquisition, planning, development, preservation, protection, and enhancement of Salem's parks, including their natural resources, trees, and recreational opportunities for current and future generations through input from the community and advice to City Council.

Vision

Our vision is for our community to have ample and robust parks that contribute to urban tree canopy, open spaces, and recreation opportunities for all people to gather, celebrate, contemplate, and engage in activities that promote health, well-being, community, and the environment.

BRIEF HISTORY

1952

Public Park Advisory Commission created.

1954

Name changed to Parks Advisory Board.

1969

Name changed to Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

1974

Board increased from seven to nine members to represent broader community interests.

1976

Bylaws established: operational pattern for communications to community groups, other boards and commissions, and City Council.

Picnickers at Wallace Marine -1958

Cascades Gateway Park-1962

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Date: 12 March 2024
To: Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members
Cc: Micki Varney, City Council Liaison to SPRAB
From: Keith Norris, SPRAB Chair
Re: 2024 Research Committee Charges and Guidance

During our February 2024 meeting, I established 3 new committees. These committees tasked with researching specific topics with the ultimate goal of advising City Council and Parks and Recreation Division on policy opportunities and strategies that will help the city achieve its Emission Reduction Goals and implement its Climate Action Plan. This memo includes guidance to those committees regarding their specific scope and assignments.

Salem City Council adopted Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission reduction goals in October 2023:

- By 2035, Salem's GHG emissions are reduced to 50% of the citywide GHG emissions from the baseline year of 2016, and
- By 2050, Salem is carbon neutral.

Committee assignments and scope: Each SPRAB member is assigned to a committee. As chair, I will remain connected to each committee as an *ex officio* member and will periodically check-in with committees on their progress to offer input and guidance.

A. Material Used in Capital Projects: Alan and Woody

- Should the city consider using certain types of low carbon materials in capital projects (e.g., low carbon concrete)? If so, how?

Consider a wide range of materials and projects related to city parks.



Advanced Salem's Climate Action efforts by establishing committees, hosting a work session on polices related to park development and operations, with recommendations expected in 2025.



Endorsed the updated Fairview Park Development Plan, incorporating sustainable design and community input to create a vibrant, accessible, and inclusive park.

Recommended City Council approve an updated agreement with Willamette University for managing Spec Keene Stadium and Bush's Pasture Park, emphasizing public access, sustainability, and improved facilities.



Provided guidance on Emerald Ash Borer response strategies to protect Salem's urban tree canopy and ecosystems.



Conducted the first park tour since 2019, highlighting priorities for capital projects and the impact of the Salem Park Improvement Fund.



Continued effort to increase neighborhood association engagement, resulting in a record 12 project ideas from 10 neighborhood associations for the Salem Park Improvement Fund.



Supported grant applications for the Riverfront Park Playground Redevelopment and Minto Island Conservation Area.



Participated in the University of Oregon Sustainable City Program and promoted parks through outreach, social media, and neighborhood presentations.



Goals for 2025

Minto-Brown Island Park



ADVISE CITY COUNCIL ANDS CITY STAFF

- Advocate for parks and recreation budget allocations—especially for staffing and maintenance—to meet the needs of Salem’s growing community.
- Provide recommendations for adopting policies, practices, or procedural changes based on the Board’s climate action committee research and findings.



Salem Parks Planning community outreach at ¡Viva Salem!

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- **Continue regular engagement with Salem’s 17 neighborhood associations by sharing information about upcoming opportunities and initiatives.**
- **Promote parks and recreation by participating in events, including the City’s celebration of National Walk to a Park Day on Friday, October 10.**

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Contribute to the update of the Salem Comprehensive Park System Master Plan.**
- **Host a strategic planning retreat in fall 2025 to align on goals and priorities for the Board's 2026 workplan.**
- **Conduct a tour of 2025 park improvement projects to assess progress and inspire future initiatives.**

Thank you for supporting Salem's parks and recreational opportunities!



**COME OUT
AND PLAY!**