

2021 ANNUAL REPORT TO SALEM CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF *Salem*
AT YOUR SERVICE
Parks and Recreation

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Est. June 1952

Advanced Wilderness Camp

General Board Information

Meetings: Second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

Members: Dylan McDowell – *Chair*, Micki Varney – *Vice Chair*, Alan Alexander, Tony Caito, Rick Hartwig, Woody Dukes, David Fridenmaker, Keith Norris, Paul Rice

City Staff: Robert Chandler, Mark Becketl, Patricia Farrell, Jennifer Kellar, Becky George, Milan Davis, Toni Whitler



Our Mission

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (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.

Our 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, wellbeing, community, and the environment.



The following SPRAB Annual Report reflects the importance of parks and natural resources through the City's Strategic Plan mission, vision, values, and goals that were developed in 2017. The six, established result areas are the framework for this report, which also highlights Council Priority Areas as applicable.



Youth Corps Clean Stream Crew

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommends a proactive approach through vegetation and grounds maintenance to provide safe walking and recreation areas for all people to enjoy the outdoors. Parks provide increased opportunities for volunteer engagement and local stewardship while presenting a visually clean, safe, and active environment. Safe and accessible routes to parks, while outside the purview of SPRAB, are a critical component for a safe community.

- SPRAB does not recommend that Salem parks be used for permanent or temporary campsites.

SPRAB recommends City Council provide funding of the following:

- Increasing Park maintenance staff and equipment to levels sufficient to maintain new and existing park properties and amenities.

- Continued park cleanup of Cascades Gateway Park, Wallace Marine Park, and other park properties where camping has occurred.
- Maintaining Marion County agreements for corrections crews who assist in park and right-of-way maintenance.
- Coordination of volunteer programs such as Minto-Brown and Bush's Pasture Park Patrols, and establishment of local park stewards.
- Provide additional park rangers and police coverage of parks where higher incidences of threat are likely and to provide needed enforcement of park rules and regulations.
- Providing additional security lighting, which allows police and residents a clear view into park areas.



WELCOMING AND LIVABLE COMMUNITY



Pickleball Camp

Council Priority Area 4, Building Great Neighborhoods

Close-to-home and fully accessible parks and recreation facilities are vital to a welcoming and livable community. Salem's neighborhood, community, and urban parks, as well as our trails and natural areas allow for diverse outdoor and recreational opportunities. Maintaining and improving existing parks and expanding Salem's parks and recreation activities through additional programs, new park acquisitions and development, upgrades to existing parks, and new trail connections will ensure Salem continues to provide outdoor recreational opportunities across the City and for all Salem residents.

SPRAB has endorsed and recommended the following opportunities and actions:

- In May 2021, City Council requested that SPRAB identify policy recommendations for park usage and permitting of events at City parks in order to provide a clearer and more equitable

process for park and event reservations, along with expectations for conduct in city parks. This task was completed and recommendations presented to City Council in September 2021.

- Approval of Master Plans for Geer Park, Woodmansee Park, and Bush's Pasture Park & Deepwood Gardens Cultural Landscape Management Plan.
- Phase One improvements to Woodmansee Park including reconstructed tennis courts, multi-use field, picnic shelter and hard surface pathway.
- Eight-unit restroom facility at Riverfront Park completed this year.
- Initiation of annexation of 2-acre Fisher Road park addition.
- Salem Park Improvement Fund Program awards.
- Rehabilitation of several multi-sport courts.
- Rehabilitation of basketball courts, including new striping, basketball posts and backboards.



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- Upgrade and/or replacement of parks amenities, including parks entrance signage, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables, kiosks, shelters and playground equipment.
- Annual refurbishment of two softball infields each year in Wallace Marine Softball Complex.
- New playground near soccer fields at Wallace Marine Park.
- New playground at Rees Hill Park.
- Continuation of fee waivers for low-income families to provide positive, healthy activities for children and families through recreation programming.
- Continued collaborative relationships with neighborhood associations through the Salem Park Improvement Fund and Salem Parks Foundation partnerships.
- Applications for funding assistance through Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and National Park Service grant programs for park improvements and development.

SPRAB recommends support and/or funding for the following actions and programs:

- The inclusion of park development and upgrades as priority spending areas for a potential bond measure.
- The enhancement of Salem's parks through funding and development of additional recreational program opportunities, park acquisitions, and upgrades to existing and new parks.
- Continued collaboration with Salem Art Association, Friends of Trees, Mission Street Parks Conservancy, Lord and Schryver Conservancy and Gardeners, Deepwood Gardeners, Deepwood Estates, Salem Riverfront Carousel, and Gilbert House Children's Museum.
- The Summer Parks Program, sport camps, Owl Prowls, Jr. Ranger programming, and outdoor survival programs.





STRONG AND DIVERSE ECONOMY



Gerry Frank Salem Rotary Amphitheater

Beautiful and diverse parks and ample recreational opportunities contribute to a thriving economy. SPRAB recognizes and fully supports the outstanding recreation events and event facilities within Salem that provide strong economic support to the City. SPRAB recognizes that a strong park system is an economic driver for the community and the region.

SPRAB has endorsed and recommended the following opportunities and actions:

- The completion of the Gerry Frank Salem Rotary Amphitheater that will provide a new venue for future events and continue to promote Salem.
- The Ironman event held in July that drew 2,200 participants and an estimated 11 million dollar impact for our community.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the many events that have assisted in building a strong and diverse economy in Salem, including Riverfront Park's quality events and regional festivals such as:

- Cherry Fest NW, World Beat, Fourth of July Celebration
- River Rock and Fish/El Rey Concerts

While most community events were canceled in 2021 due to the pandemic, the following outdoor recreational opportunities for youth and families did occur and followed COVID regulations established by the State of Oregon.

- Softball/kickball leagues and tournaments run by City of Salem recreation staff as well as facility sport rentals for baseball and softball tournaments.

SPRAB recommends continued funding and support for the following actions and programs:

- National and regional softball and soccer tournaments
- STRIDE and 5K/10K/Half marathon and special event runs/walks
- Promotion of regional marathon, half-marathon and multi-sport events



SAFE, RELIABLE, AND EFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE



Peter Courtney Minto-Brown Island Bridge

Council Priority Area 4, Building Great Neighborhoods

SPRAB supports infrastructure improvements as noted in the Salem Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan and Salem Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan to connect parks with trails and family-friendly bike and pedestrian routes throughout the City.

SPRAB recognizes the importance of park infrastructure to the health and wellbeing of the entire Salem community. Multi-use paths, safe connections between parks, schools, and neighborhoods, and support facilities such as restrooms and drinking water fountains are key elements to a healthy park system.

SPRAB has endorsed or supported the following actions and programs:

- A grant application to Department of Transportation for a pathway along Pringle Creek in downtown through a letter of support from the Board.

- SPRAB requested the enhancement of public transportation to Geer Community Park with the reduction of parking spaces at the park in the 2021 Geer Park Master Plan Update.
- Pringle Creek trail connection linking downtown to Riverfront Park

SPRAB recommends continued funding and support for the following actions and programs:

- Safe Pedestrian Crossings Program for safer pedestrian access to parks.
- Bike share locations in City parks.



Jr. Park Ranger Camp

Council Priority Area 5, Taking Action on Climate Change

Parks, green spaces, natural areas, and the urban tree canopy are priorities for community health, individual health, and economic vitality, and are all important components of climate change and the Climate Action Plan. Parks play a key role in protecting these features for climate change resiliency, carbon sequestration, and equity.

SPRAB advocates for opportunities to provide connections to nature, important plant and wildlife habitat, and overall sustainability for the next generation of Salem residents. SPRAB recognizes the importance of healthy natural areas and tree canopies for water quality benefits, urban heat island reduction, carbon sequestration, and restorative passive recreation opportunities.

SPRAB has supported or recommended the following actions and programs:

- Increasing funding for the Urban Forestry Division to manage and maintain over 300,000 right of way trees. Increase staffing to provide

certified arborists for GIS asset management, customer service and tree planning & preservation. As well as adding arborists to provide high quality care of existing tree canopy and increased tree planting efforts that will support future goals laid out by the Climate Action Plan and the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

- The creation of a City Climate Action Plan by participation on the Climate Action Plan Task Force.
- Salem Tree Report summarizing Public Works tree projects for 2020.
- The development of a tree survey for property owners to assist in identifying tree planting opportunities and barriers on private property.
- The Salem Climate Action Plan.
- Hearing of appeals related to removals of City trees.
- Participation in implementing the Community Forestry Strategic Plan goals, including formation of a tree committee to assist in education and outreach.



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SPRAB recommends continued funding and support for the following actions and programs:

- Protection of established trees, preservation of Oregon white oaks, and continued commitment to tree plantings in low canopy areas of the city.
- Protection and enhancement of sensitive natural resources in parks through restoration and public education.
- Working in partnership with Friends of Trees and local environmental groups for community tree planting events, pollinator habitat gardens, and weed pulls.
- Partnership with Willamette Riverkeeper to control invasive aquatic weeds in the Willamette Slough.
- Protection of new eagle's nest in Minto-Brown Island Park through signage, buffer area, and public education and outreach.
- Natural Resource strategies in the Climate Action Plan as they relate to parks.
- Salem Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and new canopy goal of 28% by 2030.
- Applications for grant funding for restoration of natural areas.
- Salem Library explorer backpack kits for nature exploration in parks.
- Mayor's Monarch Pledge and pollinator habitat creation in parks.
- The development of a management plan for Minto-Brown Island Park.
- Expanded tree planting efforts through contracts with Friends of Trees and Treecology.
- Update to the City's Integrated Pest Management Plan.
- Opportunities for natural area and trail enhancements for passive recreation.
- Public education through door hangers, interpretive signage, bird walks, owl prowls, and outreach through tree and native vegetation planting events.
- Continuation of Minto-Brown Island Park Turtle Habitat Restoration project with ODFW.





The Board acknowledges and appreciates City Council's proactive approach to preserving parks, open space, natural areas, and trees as well as recognizing the need for additional recreation programming and park maintenance. These efforts will provide a more sustainable and economically stable community.

SPRAB has endorsed and recommended the following actions:

- Two important City-wide plans that are being finalized in 2021, including Our Salem, an update to the City's Comprehensive Plan, and the Climate Action Plan. Both plans recognize the importance of parks for a livable city and for addressing climate change. Both plans also propose new policies and strategies that promote complete streets and neighborhoods, thereby reducing the need to drive and enhance other travel options, such as biking or walking to local destinations.
- The inclusion of park development and upgrades as priority spending areas for a potential bond measure in 2022.
- Improvements to Parks & Recreation web pages as part of the implementation of new City website software to provide equitable access for the public to find information on park features, recreation programming,

reservable facilities, volunteering in parks, contact information, and a link to the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

- Coordination with Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs per the Memorandum of Understanding.

SPRAB is proud to serve in an advisory manner to City Council and the Public Works Director on park-related matters and recommends that it continue in these capacities.

- Provide advice and counsel in matters referred to them by City Council and the Public Works Director such as the recent request for policy recommendations on park usage and permitting.
- Participate in advisory groups, such as the Climate Action Plan Task Force and Library Strategic Plan Steering Committee.
- Continue to provide SPRAB members as liaisons for park master planning efforts.
- Continue SPRAB's role with regard to hearing SRC 86 appeals or referrals on City-owned trees.
- Conduct annual board retreat or online survey to identify priorities and emerging issues for the Board annual work plan.



Public Works Department

APWA ACCREDITED AGENCY

Information on all City Boards and Commissions is available through the following link:
www.cityofsalem.net/boards-and-commissions

