

# 2020 Annual Report to Salem City Council

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board | Est. June 1952



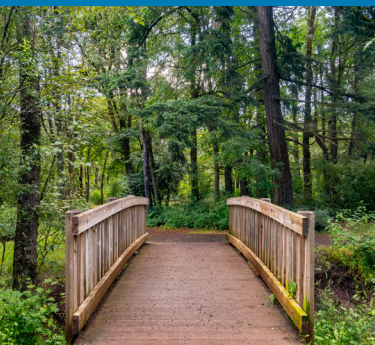
## General Board Information

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

**Members:** Dylan McDowell – *Chair*, Micki Varney – *Vice Chair*, Alan Alexander, Tony Caito, Diana Dickey, 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 (Board) is a strong advocate 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 by receiving input from the community and providing 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, well-being, 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 Board understands that the current COVID-19 pandemic has imposed temporary restrictions and social distancing requirements on large group gatherings and events to maintain public safety. The goals and actions presented by the Board are understood to be implemented through adherence to these requirements until such time as they are lifted.*





## Safe Community



## Welcoming and Livable Community



# Safe Community

The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (SPRAB) 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.

### **SPRAB recommends City Council provide funding of the following:**

- Increasing Park maintenance staff and equipment to levels sufficient to maintain existing and newly acquired properties.
- Maintaining Department of Corrections / Marion County agreements for DOC 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.
- Providing additional Park Ranger(s).
- Supporting the expansion of the Park Ranger's duties and service area to better serve the Community's needs.
- Providing additional security lighting, which allows police and residents a clear view into park areas.
- The Board recommended Salem parks should not be used for permanent or temporary campsites (Motion made 12/12/20. Letters to Council 1/9/20 and 12/14/20.)

# Welcoming and Livable Community

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.

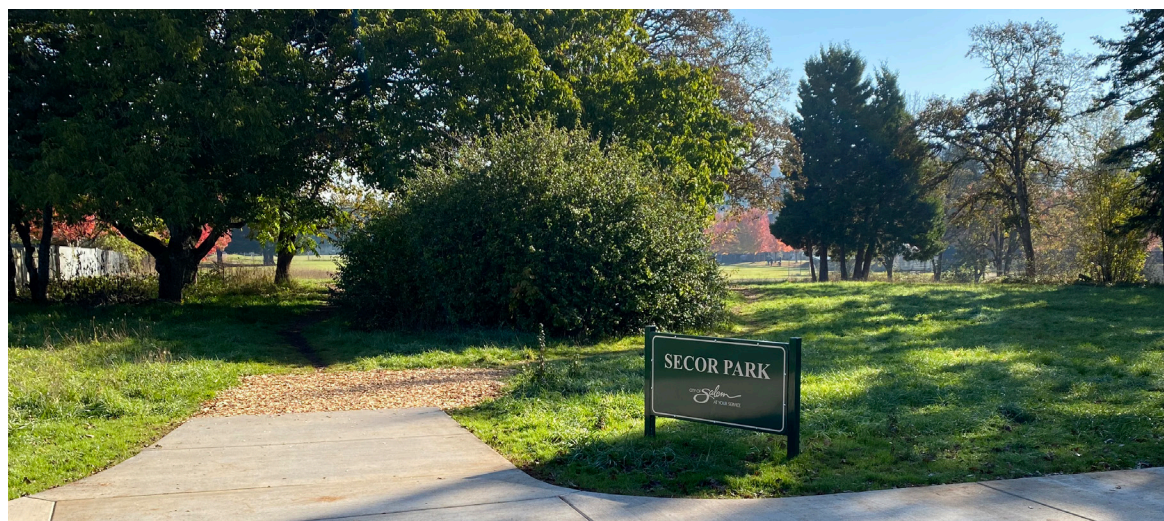
### **SPRAB has endorsed and recommended the following opportunities and actions:**

- Approval of Master Plans for Eagle's View Park, Geer Park, and Woodmansee Park and Bush's Pasture Park & Deepwood Gardens Cultural Landscape Management Plan.
- Letter of Recommendation to Oregon Recreation and Parks Association/ North Face for grant application for assistance with recreation programs.





- Purchase of seven acres of land on Reed Road SE for a neighborhood park, purchase of 17 acres of land on Rees Hill Road SE for a Community Park, purchase of 2-acre property adjacent to Fisher Road Park, purchase of 7-acre D Street property.
- Annexation of 45-acre Hazelgreen Road park property and 17-acre Rees Hill Road property.
- Application for an Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) Local Government Grant for Bill Riegel Park Phase II development.
- Riverfront Park master plan implementation including completion of Riverfront Park north restroom facility through OPRD grant assistance and Parks SDCs.
- Riverfront Park master plan implementation in the south four-acres. Improvements include additional parking, entrance plaza, maintenance yard, and new amphitheater and performance stage.
- Completion of Secor Park Phase I development.
- Salem Park Improvement Fund Program awards.
- Rehabilitation of multiple multi-sport courts.
- Rehabilitation of basketball courts, including new striping, basketball posts and backboards.
- Complete refurbishment of tennis courts at Orchard Heights Park, including four new pickleball courts (Capital Improvement Program).
- Upgrade and/or replacement of parks amenities, including parks entrance signage, drinking fountains, benches, picnic tables, kiosks, shelters and playground equipment.
- Upgrade and/or replacement of Wallace Softball Complex features, including all dugouts, buildings, viewer bleacher stands, and individual field playing turf.
- New curb cuts and paths to address ADA accessibility issues at Woodmansee Park as part of the Safe Routes to Parks program.







**Strong and Diverse  
Economy**



## **SPRAB recommends support and funding for the following actions and programs:**

- The enhancement of Salem's parks through funding and development of additional recreational program opportunities, park acquisitions, and upgrades to existing and new parks.
- Continuation of fee waivers for low-income families to provide positive, healthy activities for children and families.
- 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.
- 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.

## **Strong and Diverse Economy**

Beautiful and diverse parks and ample recreational opportunities contribute to a thriving economy. The current restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the canceling of normal events of the summer season. 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 Fest Concerts

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.

While most community events were canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, youth recreation opportunities such as the Summer Parks Program, sport camps, and outdoor programs did occur. In addition, softball/kickball leagues and tournaments run by City of Salem recreation staff were held, as were facility sport rentals for baseball, softball, soccer and volleyball tournaments. All programs and reservations were required to abide by COVID regulations established by the State of Oregon.





## Safe, Reliable, and Efficient Infrastructure



## Natural Environment Stewardship

**SPRAB recommends funding for the following programs in accordance with restrictions on social distancing:**

- National and regional softball and soccer tournaments
- STRIDE and 5K/10K events
- Promotion of regional marathon and half-marathon events

## Safe, Reliable, and Efficient Infrastructure

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 well-being 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:**

- Grant funding applied for and received by Transportation Planning to construct safe pedestrian crossings to Orchard Heights Park (at Parkway Drive NW) and River Road Park (at Riviera Drive NE); construction in 2024.
- Minto-Brown Island Park trail development.
- Pringle Creek trail connection linking downtown to Riverfront Park.
- Bike share locations in City parks.
- Riverfront North Restroom facility.

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

- Safe Pedestrian Crossings Program for safer pedestrian access to parks.

## Natural Environment Stewardship

Parks, open space, natural areas, and the urban tree canopy are priorities for community health, individual health, economic vitality, and climate change resiliency. 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, heat island reduction, carbon sequestration, and restorative passive recreation opportunities. SPRAB fully supports the protection of established trees, preservation of Oregon white oaks, and continued commitment to tree plantings in low canopy areas of the city. Additionally, SPRAB fully





supports the protection and enhancement of sensitive natural resources in parks through restoration and public education.

**SPRAB has endorsed or recommended the following actions and programs:**

- The active development of a tree survey for home owners to assist in identifying tree planting opportunities on private property.
- Participation on the task force for 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.
- Applications to Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for restoration grants at Minto Island Conservation Area.
- 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.
- Ludwigia treatment at Minto-Brown Island Park.

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

- Salem Urban Tree Canopy Assessment and new canopy goal of 28% by 2030.
- Applications for grant funding for restoration of natural areas.
- 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, and outreach through tree and native vegetation planting events.
- Continuation of Minto-Brown Island Park Turtle Habitat Restoration project with ODFW.
- Continued assessment and inventory of the City's street trees.
- Development and implementation of the Salem Climate Action Plan.





## Good Governance



## Good Governance

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. These efforts will provide a more sustainable and economically stable community.

### **SPRAB has endorsed and recommended the following actions:**

- The development of an online fact sheet for Parks & Recreation information to provide one location 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.
- SPRAB supports the exploration of a future park bond measure, and other parks funding methods for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of Salem parks, as well as revenue opportunities for park maintenance funding and recreation programming.

### **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.
- Participate in advisory groups, such as the Climate Action Plan Task Force.
- 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.



Information on all City Boards and Commissions is available through the following link:

[www.cityofsalem.net/boards-and-commissions](http://www.cityofsalem.net/boards-and-commissions)