



City of Salem
Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

May 9, 2024
1:00- 2:30 p.m.

Hybrid Meeting

In Person: City Operations Building, 1457 23rd St. SE, Room 146

Via Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83745334646>

Via YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@cityofsalempublicmeetings8184>

Si necesita ayuda para comprender esta información, por favor llame 503-588-6336.
Para asistencia en español, llame al 503-540-2489.

PARTICIPANTS

Board Members

Keith Norris, Chair; Dylan McDowell, Vice-Chair; Alan Alexander; Woody Dukes; Rick Hartwig; Alan Holland; Joan Lloyd; Debbie Miller

Staff

Jennifer Kellar, Parks and Recreation Division Manager; Rob Romanek, Parks Planning Manager; Becky George, Recreation Supervisor; Milan Davis, City Urban Forester/Parks Supervisor; Leann Moore, Parks and Recreation Staff Assistant; Tammi Starrs, Engineering Administration Manager

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Call to Order
2. Approval of March 2024 Minutes
3. Public Comment - Appearance of persons wishing to address the Board on any matter other than those which appear on this agenda.
4. Board Items/Presentations
 - a. Fiscal Years 2025-29 Proposed Capital Improvement Plan: Park Planning and Development Highlights – *Tammi Starrs* (15 minutes)
Recommendation: Information and discussion.
 - b. Fiscal Year 2025 Proposed City Budget: Highlights of Parks and Recreation Impacts – *Jennifer Kellar* (15 minutes)
Recommendation: Information and discussion.

- c. 2024 Neighborhood Association Outreach Assignments – *Chair Norris* (10 minutes)

Recommendation: Information and discussion.

5. Board Member Updates
 - a. Research Committee Assignments
6. Information Reports – written
 - a. Mission Street Parks Conservancy Minutes
 - b. Parks and Recreation Division Monthly Report
7. New Business
8. Adjourn

Next Meeting: June 13, 2024

Interested persons may view the meeting online on [YouTube](#). Please submit written comments on agenda items, or pre-register to provide Public Comment on items not on the agenda, by 5 p.m. or earlier one day prior to the day of the meeting at salemparks@cityofsalem.net.

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City of Salem
Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
April 11th, 2024
[Hybrid Meeting](#)
Draft Minutes

Members Present

Keith Norris, Chair
Dylan McDowell, Vice Chair
Rick Hartwig
Joan Lloyd
Debbie Miller
Al Holland
Woody Dukes

Members Absent

Alan Alexander

City Council Liaison Present

Councilor Micki Varney

Staff Present

Rob Romanek
Jennifer Kellar
Leann Moore
Becky George
Jeff Johnson
Brandon Culcasi
Marlene Cisneros

-
1. **Call to Order** – Welcome and call to order by chair Keith Norris at 1:00 pm.
 2. **Roll Call** – Member Alexander was marked absent. Member Llyod present via Zoom. All other members present.
 3. **Approval of Minutes**
Vice Chair McDowell motioned an approval of the minutes from the meeting held on March 14th, 2024. Member Hartwig seconded the motion. Motion passed with all members present voting in favor of the motion.
 4. **Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items**
 - **Lynn Takata – Resident of Ward 1**
Wanted to encourage the city staff to work with the neighborhood associations on the planning of activities or events within the park that could potentially cause negative environmental impacts. Ms. Takata expressed that there has been much work being done for the overall restoration at Englewood Park and is concerned that future events could potentially damage or destruct the current projects. She is requesting more thorough communication when planning events within designated restoration areas in the future.
 5. **City Council Liaison Updates – Councilor Varney**
 - Councilor Varney shared updates regarding the vote that was made at the last city council meeting, where the council ultimately decided to discontinue the contract with Falck for the citywide EMS services. Councilor Varney reported that Falck was not following through with their end of the contract, which costed the city roughly \$3.3 million in overtime. The City of Salem Fire Department will now take back this role ‘in-house’, following the analysis of an outside consultant which suggested the ‘operator - ambulance model’.
 - Councilor Varney suggested a motion to the council requesting to view the preliminary plans for the implementation of the new model. Varney is also piloting the establishment of a ‘Steering Committee’ to oversee the entire process throughout the restructure.
 - Councilor Varney reported that there will be a city council work session on Monday, April 15th to explore the potential ‘Opioid-Funds’ that the city would be receiving through Opioid Settlements.
 - Lastly, Councilor Varney shared that at the upcoming budget committee meeting, the council will be reviewing the budget proposals that have been previously proposed. Ms. Varney shared that her concerns regarding the numerous amounts of reductions specifically to the Library and Parks & Recreation Departments.

6. Board Items/Presentations

a. Minto Island Conservation Area Restoration Grant Application to the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board – Jeff Johnson

- The City Natural Resource Planning staff with Salem Public Works is requesting approximately \$550,000 in funds from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for the financial assistance towards the continuance of restoration work within the Minto Island Conservation Area (MICA) – Phase 3. An open solicitation restoration grant is being sought to address the ongoing issues of aggressive invasive plants by continuing restoration efforts for an additional five years, slightly expanding the treatment area, and adapting methods to better address site conditions for the complete restoration of the native flood plain. Johnson and Jennifer Mongolo have submitted a written report to SPRAB and are requesting the Chair to write a letter in support of the application.
- **Vice Chair McDowell motioned to authorize Chair Norris to write a letter in support of the City's grant application for the continuance of restoration efforts in the Minto Island Conservation Area (MICA) Phase 3 Restoration Area, on behalf of SPRAB. Member Hartwig seconded the motion. Motion passed with all members voting in favor of the motion.**

b. Proposal Regarding Renovation and Improvements to the Willamette University Baseball Stadium and Tokyo International University of America Softball Stadium – Rob Passage, Willamette University; Luke Emanuel, Salem Baseball Club; Lara Tiffin, Salem Keizer Public Schools

- Introductions were made from the three parties:
 - Rob Passage; Willamette University – Director of Athletics
 - Lara Tiffin; Salem & Keizer Public Schools – Coordinator of Athletics and Activities
 - Luke Emanuel; Salem Baseball Club LLC
- Willamette University, City of Salem, Salem Keizer Public Schools, and Salem Baseball Club LLC have entered a memorandum of understanding for a Willamette University project, aiming to improve and renovate the Willamette University Baseball Stadium and the Tokyo International University of America Softball Stadium.
- The proposal and projects overarching goals are specifically aimed towards the ultimate renovation and availability for community usage of both Willamette University fields for Salem Baseball LLC and Salem-Keizer Public Schools. The main renovations outlined by Willamette University for the project are:
 - Installation of Synthetic Turf (Playability, Flexibility, Maintenance)
 - Installation of Sports Lighting (Winter Month Usage, Schedule Flexibility)
 - Installation of New Field Netting (Spectator Safety, Less Park Disturbance)
 - Increased Accessibility and Safety/Security to both Willamette University Fields
- Willamette University and the City of Salem have an existing agreement dated 09/24/1982 to allow, in part, for the Baseball Stadium located adjacent to Bush's Pasture Park to encroach on the park.
- Willamette University is asking to expand the existing easement on the southside of the Baseball field in Bush's Pasture Park an additional 8-12 feet to allow for:
 - Renovations
 - ADA Accessibility
 - Human Traffic Flow to the Stadiums Staircase
 - Security
- The expansion of this easement would also add an entrance gate and small pathway to the stadium complex near the existing tennis courts, off an existing developed park path.

Public Comment – Agenda Items

Victor Dodier – Ward 2 – President of the South-Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN)

Wanted to provide updates to the SPRAB Board with background regarding SCAN's actions that have currently been taken regarding the Willamette University baseball and softball field renovation project proposal. Dodier shared that this discussion has been on-going for roughly two years now, starting in July

2022 with a presentation to the SCAN board given by Mr. Emanuel, of Salem Baseball LLC. Following this discussion, the SCAN board adopted a resolution supporting a summer league baseball organization in Salem. An updated presentation was given to the SCAN Board in October of 2023 regarding the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the City of Salem, Willamette University, and Salem Baseball LLC. Following this update, the SCAN board adopted a resolution in support of the non-binding MOU. Mr. Dodier will be sharing the compiled list of questions that have been generated by neighbors and SCAN Board members to the SPRAB Board.

Jim Stenbridge – Resident of Ward 2

Expressed his support for the MOU between Willamette University, Salem Baseball LLC, City of Salem, Salem Keizer Public Schools. Stenbridge also shared concerns and questions regarding the nighttime activities, lighting, and alcohol sales that could potentially arise from the overall project and renovations.

Roz Shirack – Resident of Ward 2

Shirack expressed their specific concerns regarding the addition of night games to the park and the flow of traffic throughout the park after, as the City parks close by sundown. Shirack shared her opinions regarding why there should not be accommodations made to the park systems hours of operation, and why the existing easement should not be expanded.

Evan West – Resident of Ward 7

West shared his concerns and opinions regarding the SPRAB boards 'ethical' and 'legal' obligations to uphold and enforce Bush's Park non-availability for purchasing and renting by commercial enterprise. West also shared his concerns regarding the deed and related conditions at Bush's Pasture Park, and the potential consequences of any violations.

Bob Monson – Willamette University Graduate – Class of 1965

Shared opinions regarding the MOU between Willamette University, Salem Baseball LLC, and the City of Salem, and Salem Keizer Public Schools.

Kathy Lingo – Resident of Ward 2

Lingo wanted to share her specific concerns regarding the currently accepted MOU and potential impacts that would be made to the surrounding neighborhood and park itself from the project. Lingo highlighted her opinions regarding the overall responsibility towards stewardship of the park, and the potential impacts that could arise from the increase in park users.

Claudia Howells – Resident of Ward 2 – Directly adjacent to Bush Park's Eastern entrance

Howell wanted to share her specific experiences that they have encountered while living on the Eastern entrance of the park. Howell ultimately expressed their concerns regarding the limited parking availability that is already established, and the neighborhood impacts of street parking that would arise from any additional usage. She is asking that the City of Salem conduct significant 'in-house' research to understand all the variables and aspects of the project and proposal.

Dan Simmons – Resident of Ward 2

Simmons shared his concerns regarding the specific location of Willamette Universities field, and the expansion of the West Coast League into Salem. Simmons also shared his concerns for the historic fragile landscape at Bush's Pasture Park, and the overall adherence to the City of Salem's adopted Landscape Management Plan for the park.

Joan Stenbridge

Stenbridge wanted to share her concerns and opinions regarding the MOU between Willamette University, Salem Baseball LLC, City of Salem, and Salem Keizer Public Schools. Stenbridge is asking SPRAB members to consider every single type of citizen/ park user when evaluating the project.

Ellen Stevens – Resident of Ward 8 – Historic Preservation Parks and Garden Committee

Stevens shared her opinions and concerns regarding the MOU between Willamette University, Salem Baseball LLC, City of Salem, and Salem Keizer Public Schools. Stevens specifically shared their concerns regarding the proposal and the changes that have been applied to the projects outline already.

Board Member Questions

The SPRAB Board's inquiry into the proposed field renovation was categorized into three main concerns: turf quality and sustainability, lighting and timing effects, and netting impacts on wildlife.

- Member Holland asked about the impact on Wallace Marine Parks due to heavy usage. Emanuel and Passage assured there would be minimal impact, noting coordination efforts to allow Willamette University's baseball field to double as a softball field, helping to accommodate larger tournaments.
- Member Hartwig inquired about funding options for Willamette University and the use of Volcano Stadium by Salem Baseball LLC. Passage explained that the partnership with Salem Baseball LLC was financially beneficial and fostered community inclusivity. Emanuel added that Volcano Stadium, while widely used, lacks facilities for Salem youth softball.
- Chairman Norris raised questions about the terms and anticipated use of the field complex by the Salem Keizer Public Schools. Tiffin responded that the school district is eager to use the field rent-free for the first 10 years, helping to mitigate issues with their current grass fields during rainy seasons.
- Member McDowell asked about the inclusivity of the space for various groups and the parking situation at Bush's Pasture Park. Passage highlighted the field's year-round appeal to diverse groups and mentioned ongoing discussions with Salem Health and Cherriots for parking and transportation solutions.

Chairman Norris concluded by directing any further inquiries to Leann Moore to pass on the project proponents.

7. Information Reports - (Information reports provided as written reports ahead of the meeting.)

- a. Parks and Recreation Division report
 - i. Item #10
 1. Lot No. 2 should be completed the week of June 3rd.
 2. Lot No. 3 should be completed the week of June 15th.
 - ii. Maureen McGee has provided the quarterly report to SPRAB.
 - iii. Wanted to inform the SPRAB board that Mission Street Conservancy has been following the conversation and MOU between Willamette University, Salem Baseball LLC, City of Salem, and Salem Keizer Public Schools. They are looking forward to being apart of future conversations as an engaged stakeholder.
- b. Mission Street Conservancy Quarterly Report
- c. Parks Damage Report

8. New Business

- a. Member McDowell wanted to give Kudos to Becky George and the non-profit group in Salem, Punks with Purpose. McDowell also wanted to give Kudos regarding the new sign in West Salem at Eola Ridge Park.
- b. Member Holland wanted to acknowledge all the riparian restoration work being done at Orchard Heights Park.
- c. Chairman Norris will write a letter in support of the City's grant application for the continuance of restoration efforts in the Minto Island Conservation Area (MICA) Phase 3 Restoration Area, on behalf of SPRAB.

9. Next Meeting – Hybrid with the option to join in person, May 9th, 2024, at 1:00 pm.

10. Adjourned at 2:50 pm.



Board Meeting and Planning Retreat Minutes
March 15, 2024

In Attendance

Melissa Bazargani
Julia Battle
Gretchen Carnaby
Maureen McGee
Kathy Savicki
Patti Sieg
Emily Standish
Mike Weber

NOTES	ACTIONS
<p>1. Agenda and Addition to the Board: Maureen called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. Kathy moved and Mike seconded appointing Melissa Bazargani as a new Board member.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes: Julia moved and Gretchen seconded approval of the January minutes. Motion passed.</p>	
<p>3. Financial Report: The end of January reports were reviewed and questions identified. Melissa will take the lead on filing our 990 tax return, with help from Kathy and Christine. Melissa will serve as back-up for Gary with QuickBooks.</p>	<p>Kathy will check with Gary about questions, and will forward his reports to the Board when received. Melissa will research our costs for data and software services.</p>
<p>4. Advocacy and Community Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emily has learned that a year after our application was submitted the City has not moved on the <u>heritage tree designation</u>, and that only the property owner can apply. • It is unclear who is leading our segment of the <u>heritage tree walk</u> on April 6 (in conjunction with Lord & Schryver Conservancy and Deepwood). • A group of board members viewed the <u>proposed changes to Willamette’s stadium</u> to accommodate a summer baseball league. The engagement with proponents was appreciated, as was their intention to protect the wildflower hillside and 	<p>Emily will explore whether we should apply to the state program instead, and learn what SPRAB’s role would be.</p> <p>Gretchen will confirm Mike Slater’s involvement, and will be back-up with Mike W.</p> <p>Maureen will provide a statement if requested regarding our</p>

Mission Street Parks Conservancy
Board Meeting Minutes for March 15, 2024

<p>the newest oaks. The Board decided not to take a position on the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several Board members participated in the community meeting in response to the <u>recent shooting in Bush Park</u>. We will talk with our volunteers about involvement in providing more adult presence in the Park, and graffiti abatement. 	<p>interaction with proponents. Julia will contact Amanda, Brian and Amy to determine how we might help.</p>
<p>5. Projects: Planting trees and shrubs in the <u>Woodland Garden</u> will be completed next week, with groundcover planting waiting until fall so that Brian can spray now to prevent emergent weeds. We will discuss Phase II addition of tables and chairs at a July 7 donor event in the Park. Donors will be recognized on our website and on posters for the donor party and grand opening celebration, but not in the Garden itself. Gretchen reported that we expect 12 more old roses for the Old Rose collection.</p>	<p>Julia will research table sizes to allow wheelchair access. Kathy will submit a final Phase I grant report to OCF.</p>
<p>6. Programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia reported that we have been invited to include some nature content in the <u>SAA summer art program</u> for children. • Julie will be teaching the monthly <u>Nature Play groups</u> for pre-school children in Bush Park for the next 6 months. • Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District is holding their <u>Great Raindrop Scavenger Hunt</u> in the park this month. • We will sponsor a free <u>Solstice Day Scavenger Hunt</u> in the Park for June, with flyers distributed at Salem Harvest’s event the end of May. • Patti moved and Melissa seconded that Julia be appointed our Education Coordinator. Motion approved. • Emily has identified the possibility that we could partner with Lord and Schryver Conservancy and Deepwood to produce a <u>radio show</u> through KMUZ. 	<p>Julia will collaborate with SAA for planning. Julia will explore including MSPC branding for these events.</p> <p>Julia and Melissa will develop a flyer.</p> <p>Emily will take the lead to explore this.</p>
<p>7. Plant Sales: The Board decided that we will not mail postcards advertising the plant sales, but will send posters to our email list. SAA has shared their draft layout for the fall art fair, which keeps us in our usual summer location next to Bush House.</p>	
<p>8. Development/Fundraising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gretchen will draft and Maureen edit a <u>fundraising appeal</u> letter for June. • We did not develop a plan for the <u>newsletter</u> or for <u>grant writing</u>. • Maureen will take the lead on a <u>business sponsor</u> campaign, with help from Mike W and perhaps Chris. All Board members will be expected to help contacting businesses. 	<p>Maureen will research the best time of year for these approaches.</p>

<p>9. General Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melissa will review our <u>data and software subscriptions</u> and ensure that the log-in credentials and our passwords are accurate. • Maureen has learned that sharing staffing with Lord and Shryver Conservancy is not a possibility at this time, but that they are open to a discussion about long term partnership possibilities. We are interested in contracting with the person who does their <u>website</u>. • In April we will review a revised <u>Garden Manager</u> job description and develop a strategy for recruitment and contractor management. • Emily will manage <u>social media</u> content. • Our <u>plant database and GIS maps</u> need updating. This task will need to wait for a garden manager, or perhaps as a paid student externship. • For <u>spring plantings</u>, Gretchen and Patti will design and purchase plants for an herb garden in front of the conservatory. Mike W and Gretchen will plan for other spring and any <u>fall planting</u> outside the Woodland Garden. • Until we hire a Garden Manager, Mike W will handle <u>tree purchases</u> and memorial plaques on trees. • Volunteers will be asked to add an outreach/education category to their monthly <u>volunteer hour reporting</u>. • Maureen will compile an updated list of Board standing committees, and will work on additional documentation of Board duties and obligations. • Patti will organize and host a <u>volunteer potluck</u> in August. 	<p>Melissa will lead research into options for systems that can better handle our emailing. Kathy will get Melissa access to Dropbox</p> <p>Maureen will lead, with help from Gretchen and Mike.</p> <p>Gretchen and Mike will coordinate with Brian.</p> <p>Emily will communicate this to volunteers.</p>
<p>10. 2024 Budget: Mike moved and Julia seconded approval of the 2024 budget as discussed, pending Board review of an email of the final amended document. Motion passed.</p>	<p>Maureen will email a final version for Board vote via email.</p>

Next meetings
April 16, 12:00
May 28, 12:00
June 24m 12:00

SALEM PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (SPRAB) MEETING

Parks and Recreation Division Update – May 2024

1. Events/Facility Use

- We continue to receive and process a high volume of facility use requests. The summer months continue to be highly desirable. The number of expected events with finalized or pending permits is as follows: May (15), June (22), July (15), August (22), September (14), October (4), November (1), and December (1).
- City organized events in Riverfront Park are currently scheduled as follows (subject to budget constraints):
 - STRIDE 5K/10K: June 22 and September 7, Frightfully Fun Run: October 26, Turkey Trot: November 23, Jingle Bell Relay: December 13
 - Viva Salem (organized by Community Services Admin Division): September 28
 - Let's Dance (organized by Center 50+): July 14, August 25, September 22
- Preparations for the July 4th Fireworks Display at the Oregon State Fairgrounds continues, including coordination with internal city departments for support with traffic, safety, and emergency response.
- Planning for the 2024 Food Truck program in the Riverfront Park vendor plaza has begun. We expect to have a robust rotation of great vendors!

2. Youth Recreation Programs

- The 2024 Recreation Guide was mailed out to past participants earlier this week and is now available online. We've already accepted over 300 registrations in the last few days. A copy of the Rec Guide is included in your packet.
- We have some new programming this summer which is marked "new" in the guide.
- The first STRIDE Run/Walk is scheduled for May 18th in Bush's Pasture Park.
- We're currently in the process of interviewing potential staff for the upcoming recreation season. The recruitment recently closed.

3. Softball and Kickball Leagues/Tournaments

- League play began on Friday, April 12th. Every night has been able to get games in (the 1st two weeks) before the big batch of rain came through.
- Two tournaments have been played so far, with the next one being our City Hosted – Play for Mother's Day Play for a Cure Fundraiser on May 11-12. The schedule has been posted.
- Summer league registration is set to close May 1st, and we're completely full in all leagues!

4. Urban Forestry

- Ice Storm Restoration – Urban Forestry continues to perform storm related tree work, stump removals and tree plantings. From the beginning of the project in June of 2022, we had a goal to complete 1000 stump removals and 1000 tree plantings with the \$700,000 in reimbursements from the city's insurance provider. Four limited duration staff were hired to help complete this work and as of May 2, 2024, Urban Forestry staff have completed 1371 stump removals, planted 1375 trees, removed 879 trees and pruned 4255 trees with fulltime and limited duration staff. With another 6

months remaining for two of our limited duration staff we have far exceeded our expectations on the work we wanted to complete.

Limited Duration Ice Storm PMO Brandon Culcasi is scheduled to remain with us thru July 1st and Limited Duration Ice Storm PMO Matthew Stone is scheduled to remain with us through Dec 1st, 2024. Once these durations have been completed we can conclude our projects for the Ice Storm Restoration and share the accomplishments from this work. We hope to share the highlights of this work and show how efficient city crews were and compare the cost of having full time staff vs using contractors for the city's tree planting program.

- USDA Grant – The grant from USDA Inflation Reduction Act for \$1,000,000 was officially funded in April of 2024 and we are working with Trust for Public Lands on next steps. Developing a pilot Urban and Community Forestry Program for schools in Salem will be the focus, working with a total of 3 schools in disadvantaged areas of Salem over the course of 4 years.

Existing staff positions will manage the grant program and oversee a new internship program that consists of a mix of high school and college interns (about 4 per year) to support planting, plant establishment, inventory, and other grant program related work.

An RFP will be constructed for a contractor in tree planting/native plants restoration field to develop and manage an apprenticeship program component of the grant. We are looking for organizations that already have apprenticeship programs in place that provide classroom and field training for youth from underserved communities. We will work with this contractor to expand the program to recruit from and focus a certain number (TBD) of apprentices to focus on enhancing tree canopy in disadvantaged areas of Salem, ultimately working within selected schools on site design and tree planting.

With coordination between City staff, interns, and apprentices, we will plant and maintain up to 1,000 large stock trees, with approximately 300 of these trees being planted on school properties/adjacent right of way and the rest within close proximity to selected schools or areas identified by the schools as being in need of more tree canopy. Since we will now be working with only 3 schools, we feel that a reasonable goal for stems in the ground on school properties would be 50-100 trees at each school. Large stock trees can/will be supplemented with small stock trees and shrubs as appropriate for each school landscape.

With coordination between City staff, interns, and apprentices, we will carry out an Urban and Community Forestry curriculum within each of the 3 selected schools, with ultimate goal of including a participatory design component and working with students and faculty to plant trees on the school property.

- Earth Day Planting Event with AAUW – On Friday, April 26, the Salem Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), in partnership with Salem Parks and Recreation, hosted a tree planting event at Stephens-Yoshikai School Park, located at 4962 Hayesville Drive NE. Thanks to the generous contributions from AAUW members, 19 native trees were added to the landscape. This builds upon the 38 native trees planted the previous year. Marking the Salem AAUW's inaugural initiative aimed at addressing climate change, the project aligns with the Salem Climate Action Plan and celebrates International Earth Day.



- **Mill Race Beatification Gets New Life** – In Fall 2023, Michael Slater, a Salem Planning Commissioner and University of Oregon ecological design student, initiated a project to enhance the Mill Race Beatification, a linear park spread across three blocks along Trade Street SE to the east of the Salem Civic Center. Collaborating with the City Manager, Parks Planning, and Urban Forester, they utilized funds from the City’s Tree Fund to align tree planting with the original design concept for the park, aiming to augment shade along Mill Race to cool the stream. This initiative builds on the park’s historical roots tied to the construction of Waller Dam in 1864, which originally powered a waterwheel for manufacturing.

Mill Race Park, developed between 1970 and 1972 alongside the Salem Civic Center, features a Brutalist aesthetic with a linear walking path. This year, 21 trees were planted as part of an Arbor Month event, marking the first phase of efforts to expand the tree canopy. Future plantings are planned to continue these beautification efforts, enhancing both the park’s usability and ecological function.



- **Neighborhood Tree Planting** – On Saturday, April 13, over 87 volunteers planted trees in the North Lancaster Neighborhood Association and East Lancaster Neighborhood Association area. The event is part of the Neighborhood Tree Program with Friends of Trees, which seeks to increase the tree canopy within Salem while educating community members about the benefits of trees. It ended up being a great volunteer turnout on a beautiful day! There was lots of community engagement since it was the annual opt-in yard tree/street tree pilot program event. A total of 54 trees were planted. To view photos, [visit this link](#).



5. **OWEB Grant Award** – Exciting news! In a collaborative effort with Willamette Riverkeeper and the City has been granted an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Restoration Grant. This funding will support a comprehensive five-year project aimed at the removal of Ludwigia and other invasive species in and around Oxbow Slough in Minto Brown Island Park. Additionally, the grant will facilitate restoration plantings. This project continues a [partnership that began within and around the Willamette Slough](#) in 2020.
6. **University of Oregon Sustainable City Year Program Celebration** – The collaboration between the University of Oregon and the City of Salem has greatly benefited our local parks. As we approach the end of the year, we would like to extend an invitation to all SPRAB members to join us for a celebration on June 3, from 3:30 to 6:00 pm at Center 50+. During this event, students along with some faculty members will showcase their achievements in Salem over the past year. We expect to see displays of student projects in the form of posters. This open house will also function as the final presentation and evaluation for two courses from the Spring quarter:
- Topics in Bicycle Transportation, focusing on Transportation Planning, Policy, & Design
 - Landscape Architecture Urban Park Equity Workshop, focusing on Park Assets Assessment

SAVE THE DATE

University of Oregon
**SUSTAINABLE CITY
YEAR PROGRAM**

**END OF YEAR
CELEBRATION**

Salem Partnership

June 4, 2024
3:30-6 pm

Center 50+
2615 Portland Rd. NE
Salem, OR

3:30-4:30 pm
Drop in to connect
with students

4:30-6:00 pm
Celebrate Salem's yearlong
partnership with the UO!

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

CITY OF Salem
AT YOUR SERVICE

SCYP
Sustainable City Year Program

SCI
Sustainable Cities Institute

7. Willamette University Baseball/Softball Improvement Project – The Willamette University and the City of Salem are developing a draft written agreement to update and expand upon the 1982 agreement. This agreement will address the use of any additional City park property to accommodate the proposed improvements. Staff anticipates that the agreement will be brought to SPRAB for review at the June 13th meeting, prior to City Council consideration of approval.

At the last SPRAB meeting, Chair Norris asked members to send Parks and Rec staff any unanswered questions regarding the University's proposal. Several SPRAB members provided follow-up questions and comments. Staff distilled this feedback into a list of 19 questions. Willamette University and Salem Baseball Club are currently preparing responses. The questions are listed below.

1. What is the anticipated pedestrian flow through the park before and after baseball games, and what impacts might this have on sensitive ecological areas?
2. What measures will be taken to prevent damage to sensitive areas like the oak savannah remnants and camas prairies?
3. Can a visual diagram of the stadium with proposed entrances, showing the connection to parking, be provided?
4. How will the stadium's construction and operation align with the goals and management guidelines set out in the Cultural Landscape Management Plan for Bush's Pasture Park?
5. Will the improvements necessitate modifications to the existing park pathway system to limit plant community fragmentation and minimize disturbance to restored habitat?
6. Is there a detailed map showing areas where construction equipment and materials will be moved and stored, ensuring compliance with city ordinances protecting trees?
7. Will the new expansions follow previous agreements between Willamette University and the City of Salem, or will there be different terms?
8. Are parts of the 1982 agreement between Willamette University and City of Salem regarding park and facility use still in force?
9. How will the aesthetics of foul ball netting be managed to minimize impact on park aesthetics and local wildlife?
10. What are the specifications for the new lighting and any electronic display signs? Will this lighting comply with DarkSky International standards and minimize light pollution?
11. What are the proposed specifications for the PA system, including decibel limitations?
12. What design is proposed for the new outfield fencing, particularly in terms of height and opacity/lack of transparency?
13. Have Native American representatives taken a position on the proposed stadium development?
14. How will insurance for the stadium be coordinated?
15. Are there any trees designated for removal as part of the project?
16. How will the increased demand for parking during games affect regular park users and local neighborhoods?
17. What responsibilities will the operators of the ballfield and Willamette University have regarding burdens placed upon Salem Parks maintenance crews and Bush Park itself?
18. How will the availability of alcohol on Willamette University property affect park users and park property?
19. What alternatives, like using Chemeketa Community College baseball fields, have been considered to avoid the intense use of Bush's Pasture Park?

8. Individual Park Master Planning

- Fairview Park Master Plan Revisit and Refinement – The second round of community-wide engagement for the Fairview Park master plan is concluding following two successful pop-up events, several stakeholder interviews, and over 650 responses to an online survey published in late March. The survey will officially close on May 13, and then project team will begin synthesizing the feedback to guide development of a preferred park master plan concept.

While the survey is still open, the community feedback received so far provides a wide range of perspectives on the two preliminary designs, Concept A and Concept B. Here are some of the key points we've identified already.

Design Preferences:

- Concept A is favored for its extensive amenities, including multi-use fields, pickleball courts, and playgrounds.
- Concept B is preferred by those who value nature preservation and a quieter, more natural environment. This concept avoids heavy infrastructure like amphitheaters and sports courts that might disrupt the natural setting.

Common Concerns and Suggestions:

- Residents are concerned about noise and traffic that might be introduced by the new park amenities.
- Many respondents emphasized the need for maintaining natural spaces and wildlife habitats, suggesting that the park should have less concrete and more greenery.
- The proximity of amenities to homes, particularly sports courts, was a concern due to potential noise.
- There is a strong desire for amenities that cater to all ages, including children and seniors, with a specific call for pickleball courts, which are noted as lacking in the area.
- Lighting, safety, and hours of operation are unclear to some community members and they seek more information.

Mixed Use Suggestions:

- Several community members proposed a hybrid approach, integrating elements from both concepts to provide a balance between active recreation areas and preserved natural spaces.
- Suggestions included adding more environmental features like stormwater management systems to more active designs, or incorporating some sports facilities into the more nature-focused designs.

Community and Environmental Impact:

- The feedback indicates a community deeply interested in sustainable and environmentally friendly park design.
 - There is a clear divide between those wanting more sports and recreational facilities and those advocating for the preservation of natural settings as urban spaces become denser.
- Fisher Road Park Master Plan – In April, the Parks Planning team reviewed and provided feedback on two preliminary park design concepts developed by Greenworks PC. These designs incorporate a variety of features and amenities, reflecting the input previously gathered from the community. After incorporating revisions based on staff feedback, these updated concepts will be presented to

the community during a second phase of neighborhood outreach. This next stage will include an open house, an online survey, and additional focus groups conducted by the park ambassador to gather further community feedback.

The current project schedule includes the following milestones:

- Ambassador Training Meeting #2: Week of June 3rd
- Open House #2: Week of June 10th
- Online Survey #2: Three weeks, launching the day of the open house.

Parks Planning is looking forward to inviting Vice Char McDowell and Members Lloyd and Alexander to join us at the upcoming Ambassador Training Meeting.

9. Park Improvements

- Rees Park Playground Equipment Replacement — Located at 1545 Rees Hill Road S in Ward 4, Rees Park is a neighborhood park that is undergoing a significant upgrade. Starting next week, a playground replacement project will begin with site preparation, including the removal of the old playground equipment. A specialized contractor is set to install the new equipment during the week of May 20, with the playground expected to reopen in June.

This project has a budget of approximately \$230,000 and is funded by the General Fund. The selection of the new playground equipment was driven by community input from the surrounding neighborhood, gathered through online surveys in September and December 2023. The community favored a nature-based theme from Buell Recreation, which has been ordered and is now awaiting installation.



- McKay School Park Bond Project – In April, the City invited proposals from designated Consultant of Record Landscape Architecture firms for design services for enhancements at McKay School Park, as part of the Safety and Livability Bond approved in November 2022. The project, estimated at \$2.5 million with direct construction costs under \$2 million, encompasses several key improvements aimed at increasing the usability and aesthetics of the park. The scope of work includes renovating two soccer fields with natural turf and new irrigation systems, studying a possible reorganization of existing sports fields, constructing a new picnic shelter, removing (or possible reusing) an old un-utilized playground area, and planning infrastructure for a future restroom. Design is set to start in July 2024. Staff is aiming to begin constructing in summer 2025.
- Minto-Brown Island Parking Lot Improvements – Project construction is currently set to begin the week of May 27, following an anticipated weather delay. The City’s construction contract allows for 45 days to complete Lot No. 2 and 90 days for Lot No. 3.

During construction, park trails and the dog park will remain open, but parking and vehicle access will be impacted. The Parks and Recreation Division, in collaboration with Public Works Engineering and the City Communication Team, will provide updates on parking lot closures and alternative access routes. Measures are in place to ensure pedestrian accessibility, including for individuals with disabilities, around the work zones.

This project is a key component of the park improvement initiatives funded by the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond, serving to enhance visitors experience with improved parking facilities.

Geer Park Skate Park and Pathways – Contract negotiations with Paul Brothers, Inc. are currently ongoing.

The City of Salem is advancing the initial upgrades to Geer Park as outlined in the 2021 Geer Park Master Plan, which includes constructing a skatepark, paved pathways, a spectator viewing plaza, and a picnic shelter. Following a public hearing on January 8, 2024, the Design Build (DB) contracting method was approved by the City Council, and an RFP was issued two days later. Proposals were received from three teams.

After thorough evaluations and interviews on March 13 and 18, 2024, Paul Brothers, Inc. emerged as the preferred contractor due to their extensive experience and proven track record in similar projects. The team includes Greenworks PC, KPFF, and Evergreen Skateparks, ensuring continuity and expertise. Contract negotiations with Paul Brothers, Inc. are currently ongoing to finalize the details for design and construction.

- Geer Park Bond Project – The City of Salem solicited proposals from five Landscape Architect Consultant of Record (COR) firms to support the planning, design, and construction phases of various priority improvements outlined in the *2021 Geer Park Master Plan*. These improvements, funded by the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond, include the renovation of existing sports fields, creation of a dog park, construction of a picnic shelter, and the development of a new pedestrian crosswalk and sidewalk connection to the park from the northwest, alongside coordination with the Geer Park Skate Park and Pathways project.

Proposals were received from three COR firms. Following a thorough review and evaluation process by the selection committee, containing staff from Parks Planning and Public Works Engineering,

Lango Hansen Landscape Architects has been selected as the consultant of record. We are currently negotiating the level of effort and fee with Lango Hansen. The project is scheduled to commence in May with construction expected to begin by April 2025.

- Livingston Park and Morningside Park Playground Rehabilitation – Livingston Parks at 2855 Hawthorne Avenue NE and Morningside Park at 1330 Ewald Ave SE are set for playground improvements next summer as part of the first phase in a plan to enhance ten playgrounds under the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond. Public Works Engineering Division staff are currently developing preliminary designs for these enhancements, focusing on accessibility and surrounding amenities.

Parks Planning staff are continuing to craft public engagement and outreach strategies, particularly targeting local residents and park users. Cameron McCarthy Landscape Architecture and Planning is now under contract to lead focus group engagement for Livingston Park, organizing two focus group events in both English and Spanish to better include local Latinx and Black or African American people. This initiative addresses historical gaps in engagement among residents in city park planning. A schedule for these public activities is currently being laid out.

- Sports Courts at Highland, Hoover, Morningside, River Road, and Sumpter Parks – Park upgrades across five parks, including River Road, Highland, Hoover, Morningside, and Sumpter School Park, are part of the sport court improvements funded by the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond. AKS Engineering and Forestry, the design and planning consultant, has submitted 90% construction documents and cost estimates for the tennis courts at River Road Park and the sports courts at Sumpter Park. These documents are currently under review by Engineering Division staff and Parks Planning staff, with construction aimed for the 2024 season. Improvements at the remaining three parks are planned for the following year.