

2024



CITY OF STEVENSON

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan



2 0 2 4



Prepared by:



dcgwatershed.com

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sevaworkshop.com

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you for the active participation and input from the community leaders including residents, the Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, the City Council, City staff, community organizations, frequent parks system users, and others who contributed to this PROS Plan.

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Stevenson-Carson School District

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Pebble Beach

Executive Summary

Stevenson is a small town with community access to a wide range of parks, trails, and open spaces.

The process of creating this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan) has engaged stakeholders and public entities in a conversation that the city hopes will lead to parks that are higher quality, better funded, and wider serving. Most of these public spaces are not owned or maintained by the city. The city recognizes this and relies on collaboration and shared resources to meet the community's parks and recreation needs.

The impetus for creating this plan was the recognition by the City of Stevenson that many

lucrative grant funding opportunities require the adoption of a PROS Plan. Further, the adopted plan would require documentation that would demonstrate needs, community outreach, and consensus on priorities and recommendations. The city prioritized the formation of an Advisory Committee to collaborate on this plan to build relationships and define shared values between the entities that provide recreational opportunities to the public. In sharing an understanding of public needs and a vision for the future, the hope is that each entity can also share in working toward the solution.



MISSION:

To enhance Stevenson’s recreational and gathering spaces in ways that increase access to the area’s natural beauty and cultural heritage, for residents and visitors of all ages.

Gropper Loop Park

This PROS Plan is the first one created by the city. It builds upon recent planning projects including the recently updated 2022 Comprehensive Plan, the recently adopted 2023 Public Shoreline Access Plan, and the missions, plans, and visions of other stakeholders in the community. The intent of this plan is to create a six-year short-term vision for capital improvements, as well as a 20-year long-term vision for planning, operational, and capital projects. Projects identified by public agencies with an adopted PROS Plan are considered eligible for grant applications for six years from the date of adoption through Washington State’s Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The following is a summary of the plan results and recommendations:

GOAL 1: MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE

Ensure that parks are well-maintained, aesthetically pleasing, and safe for community use. Enhance the quality of park facilities and maximize the lifespan of park infrastructure. Fund, support, and implement site-specific maintenance projects, tailoring efforts to address the unique needs of individual park facilities.

GOAL 2: LET PEOPLE KNOW WHAT WE HAVE

Establish a community-focused approach to parks and recreation to create a more prominent presence of parks within the community, integrate park planning with city planning, and build organizational capacity for effective program management.

GOAL 3: FILL GAPS AND CONNECT PEOPLE TO WHAT WE HAVE

Improve access and connectivity to parks, ensuring equitable distribution, legible and accessible pathways, and inclusive amenities. Identify and address gaps in park coverage and create a connected sidewalk and trail network.

GOAL 4: IMPROVE AND EXPAND WHAT WE HAVE TO MEET DIVERSE COMMUNITY NEEDS

Develop a balanced system of recreational facilities, lands, and programs. Provide vibrant, accessible, and inclusive community spaces catering to the recreation needs of residents and visitors of all ages. Offer year-round recreational opportunities, activate underutilized spaces, address community desires, and ensure inclusivity for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

Capital Improvement Projects (6-year timeframe).

- 1st Street Sidewalk Trail Connection
- Stevenson Park Plaza
- County Fairgrounds Kayak Launch
- West Waterfront Trail
- Gateway Landscape Improvements
- Piper Road Trail

This plan identifies community-driven recommendations to improve and enhance parks, recreation facilities, trails, programming, and related services over the next 20 years. It will guide park enhancements in line with the city’s cornerstone principles: a desire for a high quality of life, natural/scenic beauty, a healthy economy, and an active waterfront.

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01

Community Profile



Stevenson’s character and identity is inspired by its proximity to natural areas and its relationship to the waterfront.

Stevenson Community Profile

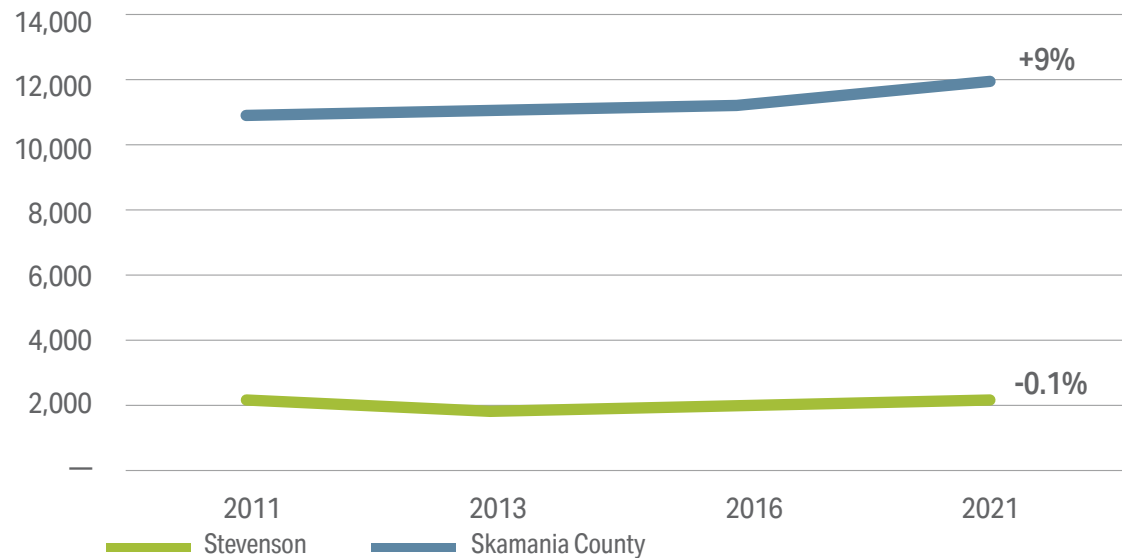
COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The City of Stevenson is 1.8 square miles (or 1,135-acres), located in southwest Washington along the Columbia River.

It is the county seat and one of two cities in Skamania County, and includes a large proportion of natural resource and forest lands. For purposes of this project, the Study Area includes the City of Stevenson and its unincorporated urban growth area (UGA) as shown in [Exhibit 1.2](#). All data presented in this report includes both the City and its UGA under the umbrella of “Stevenson”, unless otherwise noted.¹ This area includes 63.5-acres of parks and open space and 2.9 miles of trails.

The population of Stevenson is 2,049 and has remained consistent in size over the past decade (2011-2021).² While Stevenson’s population has been stable, the countywide population for Skamania County has increased 9% over the same 10-year period, concentrating in unincorporated areas. See [Exhibit 1.1](#). In Skamania County, unincorporated areas account for almost 80% of the population.³

Exhibit 1.1: Population for Stevenson and Skamania County, 2011-2021



1 - ACS data is summarized at the Census tract level, which may include a handful of individuals outside the UGA

2 - 2,049 population estimate reflects OFM 2022 data. 2011-2021 estimates from ACS 5-year estimates.

At the time of making this profile, this was the most current data available.

3 - OFM population estimates, 2021

Stevenson at a Glance



Population: **2,049**



Size:
**1,135-acres, with
63.5-acres of park space**



Median Household
Income: **\$63,860**



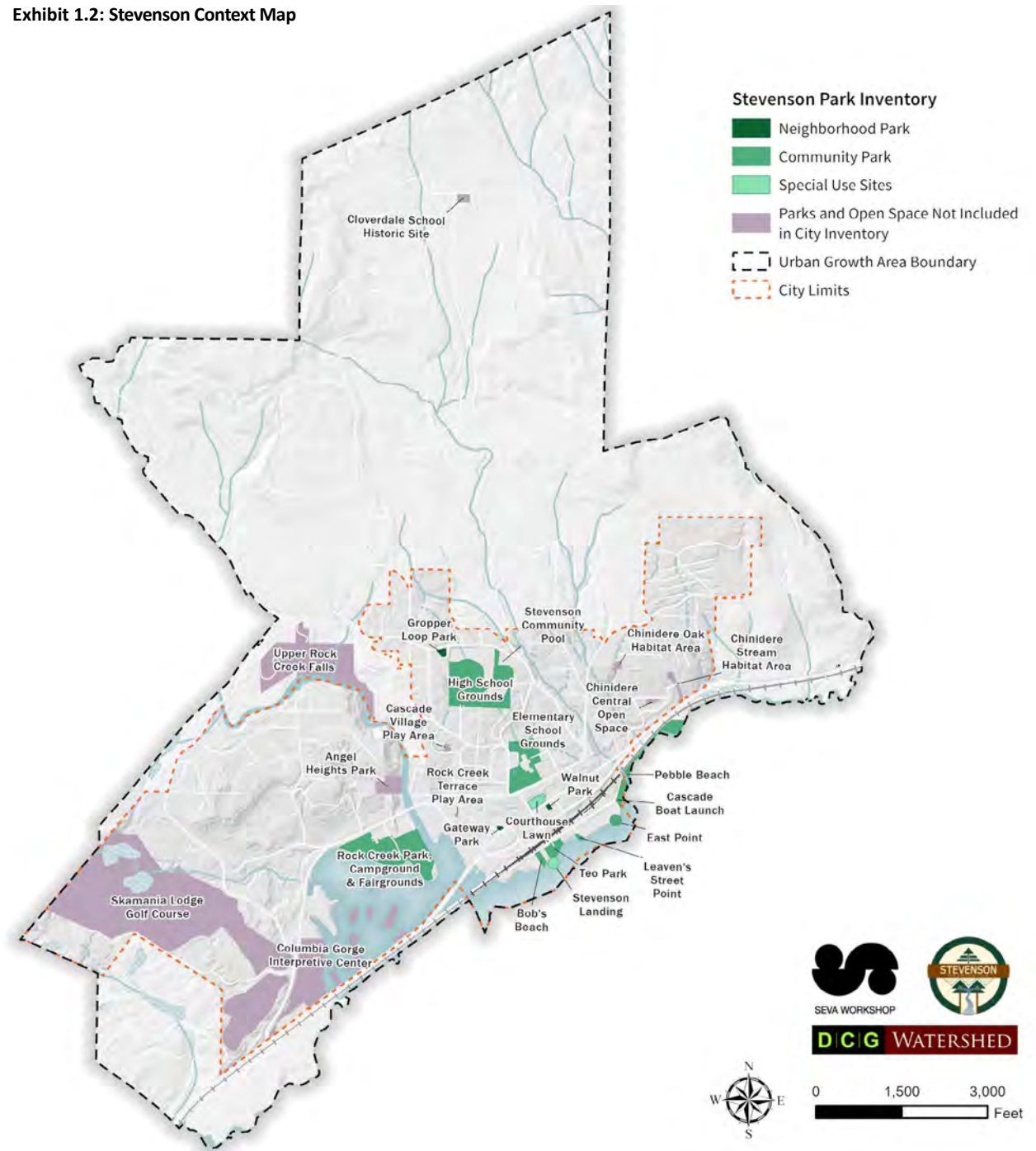
Race/Ethnicity: **84% White,
6% Hispanic, 10% non-Hispanic
People of Color**



Population with a
Reported Disability: **13%**

Sources: OFM population estimate for 2022;
ACS 5-year estimates, 2021.

Exhibit 1.2: Stevenson Context Map





Demographic profiles provide a snapshot of the City’s current or previous population. However, community makeup will shift over time and the hope for a PROS Plan is to develop a durable system of amenities that provides high quality of life to an evolving community. The needs of both current and anticipated future residents should be considered.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

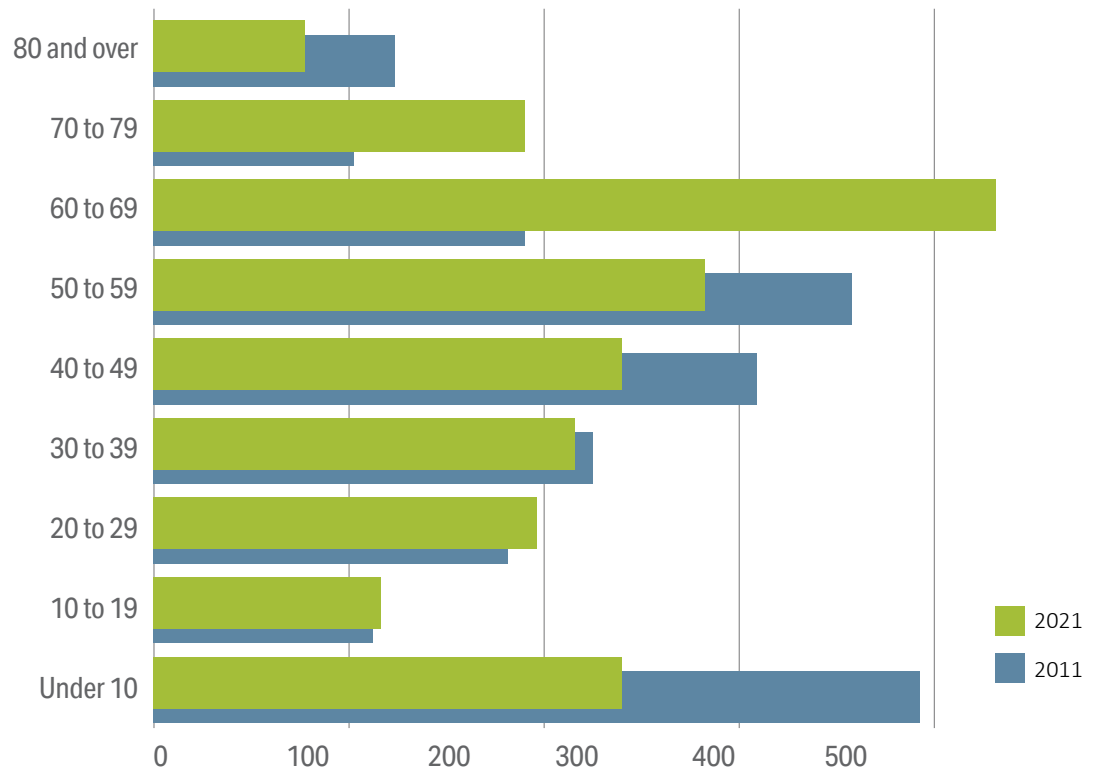
Stevenson’s population is trending older.

Compared to 2011, the current population has lower proportions of children under 10 and adults in the 30-59 age range. There are higher proportions of adults aged 60-79, a bracket that often includes many retirees. The population of children and adults aged 10-39 has remained relatively stable. See [Exhibit 1.3](#).

The aging population trend is observed in household composition as well, with a decrease in households that have children.

Today in Stevenson, 23% of households include children. In 2011, 28% of households had children.⁴ Given the age shifts observed in [Exhibit 1.4](#) (page 11), many of the added household types without children are likely to include adults aged 60-79. These trends may impact the types of parks and recreation services that will best meet the needs of Stevenson’s population in the coming years.

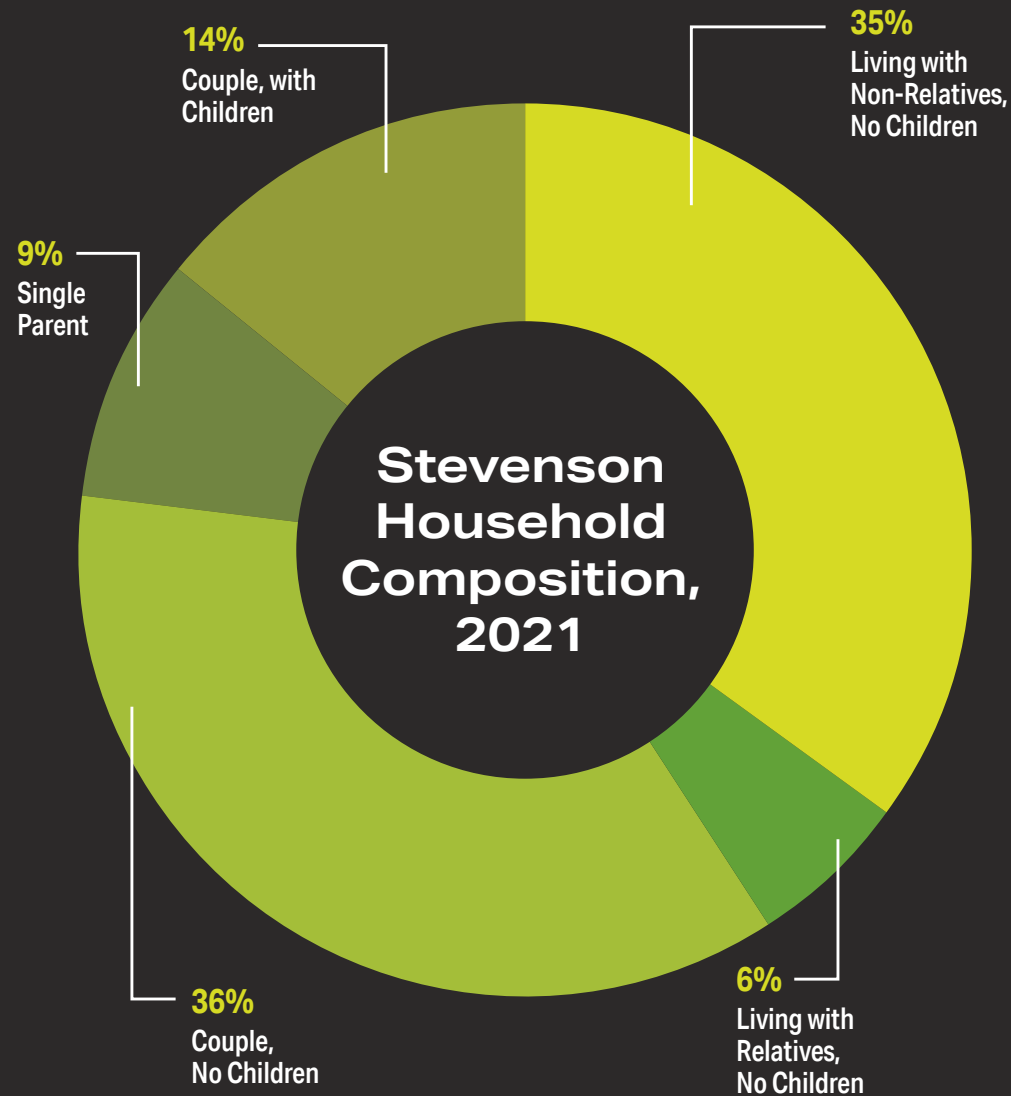
Exhibit 1.3 Stevenson Population by Age, 2011 & 2021



Sources: ACS 5-year estimates B01001, 2011 & 2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.

4 - ACS 5-year estimates B11005, 2011.

Exhibit 1.4: Stevenson Household Composition, 2021

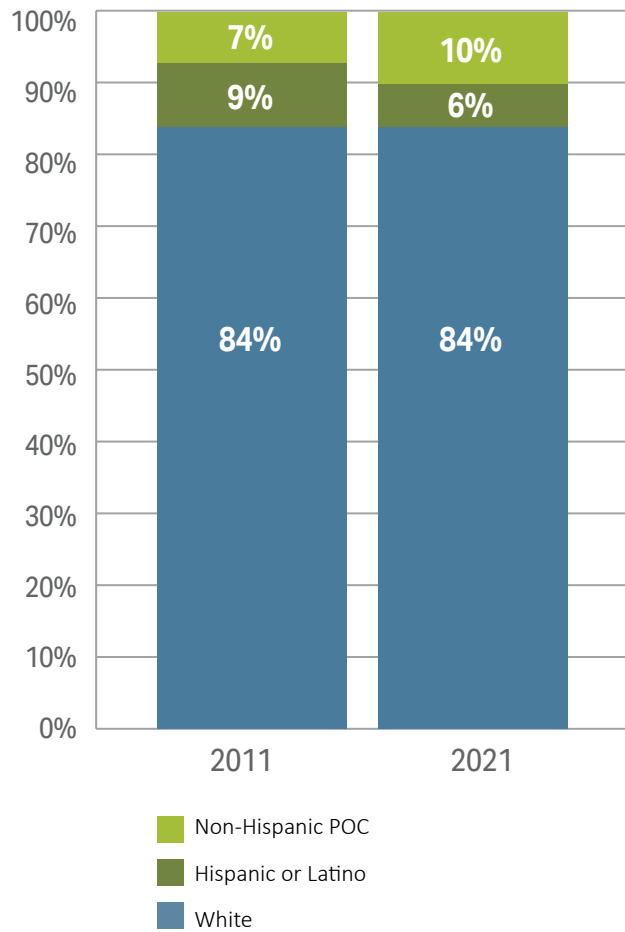


In 2021, 23% of Stevenson households include children. This represents a 4% proportional decrease from 2011, or a reduction of 39 households. This aligns with the population pyramid shifts, which show significant reduction in the population aged under 10 years old. The aging community may have different desires for investments in the park system.

Sources: ACS 5-year estimates B11005, 2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.

Stevenson’s population is 84% White (non-Hispanic), 6% Hispanic or Latino, and 10% Non-Hispanic People of Color. This is reflective of demographic trends across the County, although notably different from statewide demographics of 66% White, 13% Hispanic or Latino, and 21% Non-Hispanic People of Color as shown in [Exhibit 1.5 and 1.6](#).

Exhibit 1.5: Stevenson Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2011 and 2021.



Sources: ACS 5-year estimates B03002, 2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.



Exhibit 1.6: Stevenson Population by Race and Ethnicity, 2021.

RACE / ETHNICITY	STEVENSON POPULATION	% OF TOTAL	% OF TOTAL, WA STATE
American Indian/Alaska Native	38	2%	1%
Asian	4	0.2%	9%
Black	4	0.2%	4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	12	1%	1%
Other race	98	5%	0.4%
Two or more races	46	2%	6%
Hispanic or Latino	120	6%	13%
White	1,672	84%	66%
TOTAL POPULATION	1,994		

Sources: ACS 5-year estimates B03002, 2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.

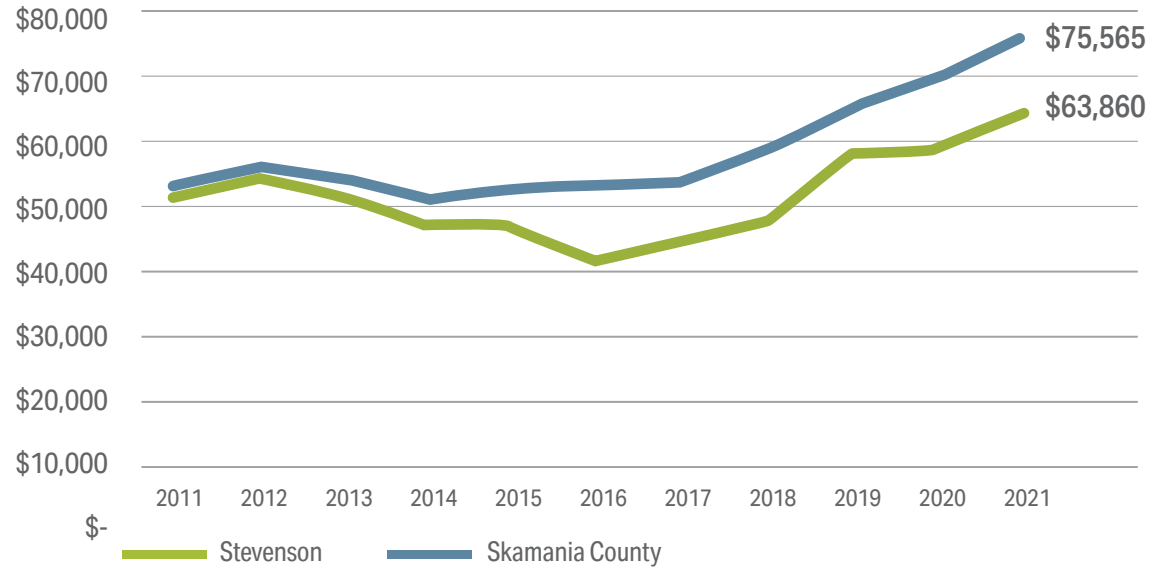


Stevenson households have lower incomes and have seen slower income growth over the past decade than those in Skamania County overall. The median household income in Stevenson is \$63,860. This is 15% lower than the median household income in Skamania County.⁵ In 2011, median incomes in Stevenson were similar to those for the county overall. However, from 2011-2021 the median income in Stevenson grew by 24% while the median income in Skamania County grew by 43% over the same period. See [Exhibit 1.7](#). This information might suggest that Stevenson households were hit harder by impacts of the 2008 recession and continue to struggle with a full recovery.

Over half (58% of Stevenson’s households have incomes that qualify at low-income levels or below. In 2021, households in Skamania County were considered low-income at \$77,350 or less.⁶ By this definition, approximately 18% of households are low-income and 40% are very- or extremely-low income. See [Exhibit 1.8](#) for details. Households with lower incomes are likely to benefit more from publicly accessible resources such as parks and trails, as they may lack access to quality outdoor space in their personal living situation.

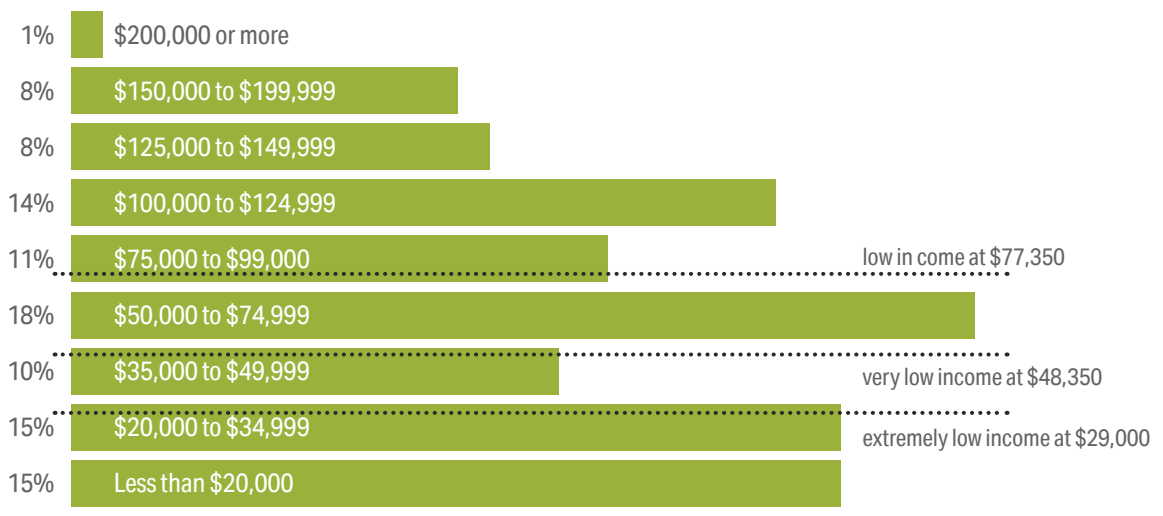
5 - ACS 5-year estimates B19013, 2021.
 6 - Based on HUD income limits, aggregated at the regional level, for FY 2021. Low-income thresholds are established at 80% of median household income, very-low income thresholds at 50%, and extremely low-income at 30%.

Exhibit 1.7: Median Household Income in Stevenson and Skamania County, 2011-2021.



Note: Each estimate reflects a 5-year summary of data. Therefore, impacts from events such as the 2008 recession are shown with a delay, as pre-2008 income information impacts estimates through year 2012.
Sources: ACS 5-year estimate B1903, 2011-2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.

Exhibit 1.8: Household Incomes in Stevenson, 2021.



Sources: ACS 5-year estimates B19001, 2021; HUD income limits for the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metro area, 2021; Seva Workshop, 2023.



Skamania County Fairgrounds in Stevenson, WA
 Source: Skamania Lodge

7 - Based on information available about cruise ship capacity and trip frequency from American Cruise Lines and American Queen Voyages. Assumes 121 trips annually across six vessels.

8 - Washington Department of Revenue [2019 Fair Report](#).

9 - SDA Branding Survey, 2021

TOURISM AND VISITORS

The Stevenson community attracts a wide network of visitors who enjoy the scenic landscape, the Columbia River, the Gorge winds, and regional events and festivals. Some visitors are once a year and event-specific, while others come regularly to enjoy the farmer’s market and waterfront amenities. A 2021 survey from the farmer’s market identifies between 280-450 annual visitors to Stevenson’s Downtown, with more than half of these visitors coming on a weekly basis. Downtown visitors, both residents and from outside communities, report enjoying the charming, small town feel; the beautiful surroundings; and a sense of friendly community spirit.⁹

Cruises and the County Fair attract up to 41,000 visitors each year, in addition to a selection of additional events and festivals hosted each year in the city. This list highlights Stevenson’s biggest tourism drivers:

- **Cruises.** Throughout summer months, two different river cruise lines with six vessels offer trips up and down the Columbia River,

stopping in Stevenson. If fully booked, these trips have the capacity to bring 21,000 visitors to Stevenson annually.⁷

- **The County Fair.** The Skamania County fairgrounds are located in Stevenson, hosting the annual Skamania County Fair and Timber Festival in August. Estimated attendance is 20,000.⁸
- **Events and Festivals.** A wide variety of events and festivals are held in Stevenson each year, including events, music festivals, and holiday celebrations.
 - Country Chic (craft bazaar)
 - Sip & Stroll (food and beverage tasting event)
 - Gorge Blues and Brews (music festival)
 - 4th of July Celebration
 - GorgeGrass (music festival)
 - Stevenson Waterfront Music Festival
 - Show & Shine (car show)
 - Christmas in the Gorge



02

Parks Inventory and Level of Service



Parks Inventory

The purpose of the parks inventory is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the existing recreational and open space resources within the City of Stevenson planning area.

This inventory extends beyond city-owned and maintained properties, and includes Skamania County, Port of Skamania, Stevenson-Carson School District, and Stevenson Pool District facilities within Stevenson that support public access and opportunities for recreation for the community. The assessment includes a report on the supply and condition of existing recreational facilities including the following key elements:

- Ownership and classification
- Supply and condition: outlines the current state of recreational facilities, noting

conditions and highlighting any weaknesses or areas requiring attention.

- Natural resources
- Other: programmed events, planned projects, or other notable features

The inventory serves as a foundation for proposed projects, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the condition, functionality, and sustainability of maintaining existing facilities. It identifies weaknesses and potential areas for renovation or replacement, and provides indicators of usage levels. The evaluation of level of service informs the needs analysis and identifies the capacity of the current inventory, determining whether facilities meet the demand for recreational activities.

In the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, Stevenson's parks are categorized into four classes based on size, characteristics, general use, and service area. The classifications in Stevenson's comprehensive plan included:

- Class I: Pocket Park
- Class II: Passive Green or Blue Space Park
- Class III: Neighborhood/Community Park
- Class IV: Sacred Places

These classifications no longer fully capture the diverse range of services and experiences that parks provide in the present day. As the city looks to enhance the parks and recreation system, there is a need to update these classifications.



Teo Park

Moving forward, this plan will adopt new classifications, grounded in National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) guidelines, which encompass three main categories: Parks and Recreation, Open Space, and Trails. The comprehensive plan should be amended to avoid conflicts between plans.

PROPOSED PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

1. PARKS AND RECREATION

a. Neighborhood Parks I

Neighborhood parks are relatively small, community-oriented spaces designed to serve the recreational needs of residents within a specific locality. These parks often feature playgrounds, green spaces, and amenities for passive and active recreation, providing a local gathering point for families and individuals. Neighborhood parks are located throughout the community to encourage access by walking, biking, and transit. Vehicular parking is not typically provided at Neighborhood Parks.

b. Community Parks II

Community parks are larger in scale and designed to serve a broader population, often drawing visitors from throughout Stevenson and outside of the community. They offer a wider range of recreational facilities and amenities to meet the needs of a wider user group. Community parks cater to a diverse set

of recreational interests. Community parks are typically located centrally within community to encourage access by walking, biking, transit, and vehicles. Vehicular parking is typically provided at Community Parks.

c. Special Use Sites III

Special use sites refer to areas within the parks and recreation system that have specific, unique purposes. Special use sites are typically tailored to meet distinct community needs or provide unique recreational experiences.

2. OPEN SPACE

In a community like Stevenson, the concept of open space extends beyond formally designated areas outlined by zoning or land use codes. Apart from designated open spaces or habitat areas, additional areas are safeguarded by critical areas ordinances, including shoreline and stream buffers, wetlands, and geologically hazardous zones, such as steep slopes. These preservation measures intend to preserve ecological health, biodiversity, and promote community well-being by limiting impact to these spaces to trails and passive recreation opportunities. It is important to recognize that areas outside critical zones lack the same level of protections, making them susceptible to potential land cover changes as Stevenson experiences growth. Despite existing open space requirements and development

incentives within city limits, there arises a need for a comprehensive inventory of preserved open spaces and perceived open areas in the future. Such an inventory would facilitate a thorough understanding of the potential impact of future development on the overall open space network, ensuring a balanced approach to urban expansion while preserving the ecological integrity of the community.

3. TRAILS

Trails are designated pathways or routes designed for walking, hiking, biking, or other recreational activities. They can traverse various landscapes, including parks, natural areas, and urban spaces. Trails provide opportunities for outdoor exercise, connectivity between different areas, and a means for individuals to explore and appreciate the surrounding environment. They can vary in length and difficulty, catering to a diverse range of users and recreational preferences. In addition to the recreational value of trails, these corridors often double as wildlife corridors.

Exhibit 2.1 locates existing park and recreation resources within Stevenson.

The following inventory identifies city and non-city owned and maintained parks and open spaces. **Exhibit 2.2** Summarizes the condition and amenities within those spaces.

Exhibit 2.1: Stevenson Parks Network by Ownership

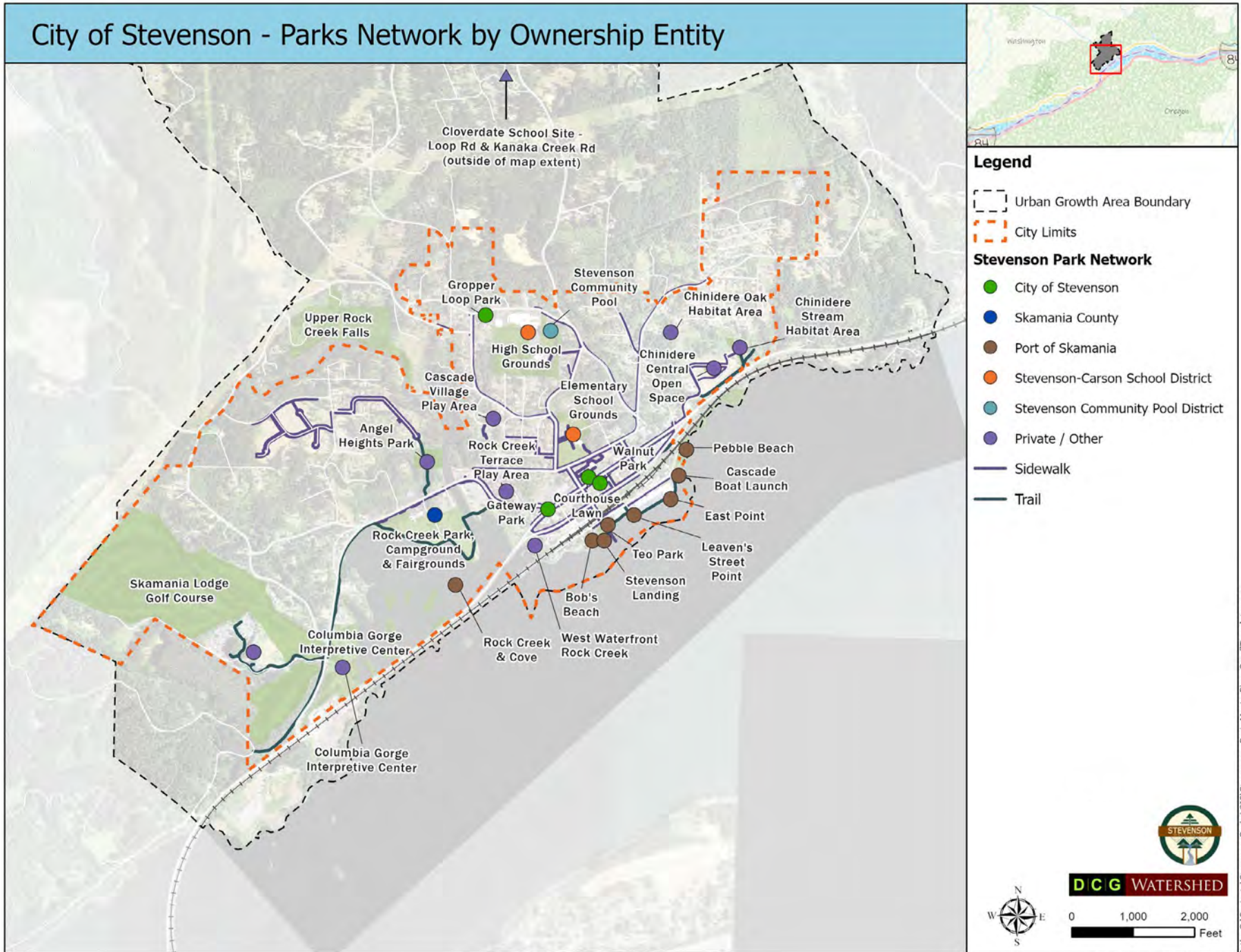


Exhibit 2.2: Existing facilities and amenities.

Park Name	N = Neighborhood Park C = Community Park SU = Special Use Site	Total (Count of Parks)	Gateway Park	Gropper Loop Park	Walnut Park	Stevenson High School	Stevenson Elementary	Stevenson Community Pool	Rock Creek Park & Fairgrounds	Bob's Beach	Teo Park	Leaven's Point	East Point	Cascade Boat Launch	Pebble Beach	Stevenson Landing	Skamania County Courthouse Lawn
	Park Class		N	N	N	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	SU	SU
	Total Acres	62.5	0.1	0.5	0.2	26.5	9.5		22.3	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.2	0.9	0.3		1.1
Active Recreation	Baseball/Softball Field	0						X									
	Basketball Court	1						X									
	Swimming Pool	1															
	Track	1				X											
	Fitness Equipment	0															
	Football Field	1				X											
	Soccer Field	1				X											
	Tennis Court	1				X											
	Skate Park	0						C									
	RV Camping	1							X								
	Boat Launch	1												X			
	Concession Stand	1				X											
	Fishing Access	3							X					X	X		
Passive Recreation	Flexible Use Lawn Area	9				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X
	Picnic Shelter	1							X								
	Outdoor Musical Play Equipment	2								X	X						
	Play Structure	3					X		X		X						
	Dog Park	0															
	Water Feature (Pond/Lake)	8							X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Adjacent Water Feature	1							X								
	Natural Area/Open Space	1							X								
	Interpretive Elements	6			X				X		X	X	X				X
	Trails (Soft-Surfaced)	1													X		
Trails (Hard Surface)	5							X		X	X	X				X	
Amenities	Barbecue	0															
	Bench	8	X		X		X	X	X	X				X			X
	Bike Racks	3	X		X												X
	Bus Shelter	1	X														
	Changing Shelter	2								X				X			
	Community Garden	1							X								
	Informational Kiosk/Sign	4	X		X				X					X			
	Drinking Fountain	2											X	X			
	Flagpole	2							X								X
	Parking - Off Street	6				X	X	X	X	X				X			
	Picnic Tables	5			X		X		X					X			X
	Restroom	4							X	X	X			X			
	Shade Structure	1					X										
Waste Receptacles	3			X				X					X				



Gateway Park

City of Stevenson

GATEWAY PARK

A 0.12-acre site located to the northeast of the intersection of Second Street and Rock Creek Drive in downtown Stevenson, Gateway Park was constructed in 2000 to beautify and soften the western entrance to downtown Stevenson. The park includes landscaping, irrigation, a bench, a bike rack, a bus shelter with a bench, rock walls and pillars, a Stevenson sign, a trash receptacle, and seasonal decorations.

The landscaping is showing signs of stress including areas of the lawn that are not being irrigated, shrubs that have died back, and a line of declining trees separating the park from the adjacent gas station. This site is underutilized as a space for community uses or gatherings. Although named Gateway Park, there are minimal features or indicators that this site identifies one of the gateways into downtown.

Classification: **Neighborhood Park**

Natural Resources: Ornamental landscaping

Other: Planned projects include irrigation repair



Walnut Park

WALNUT PARK

A 0.19-acre property located on the south side of Second Street between Russell Avenue and Leavens Street, Walnut Park adds pleasant greenery to Downtown Stevenson’s urban fabric. As part of 2004’s Second Street improvement project, this park was rehabilitated and now includes landscaping, tables, benches, bike racks, trash cans, rock retaining walls, interpretive signage, a directional kiosk, an in-pavement dance tutorial, and pavers purchased through community donations. The central space of the park is currently being leased by the adjacent business during the summer months to be used as an outdoor dining area.

Classification: **Neighborhood Park**

Natural Resources: The site contains a legacy Walnut tree that provides both shade and character to the site. A few younger walnut trees are also located on the site.

Other: Leased as an outdoor dining area

GROPPER LOOP PARK

A 0.54-acre site located on the south side of Gropper Road between its two intersections with Gropper Loop Road. The tree and grass open space is the result of a realignment of Gropper Road. Other than a series of decorative trees encircling the area and regular mowing, the site has never been developed or maintained for active park purposes.

Classification: **Neighborhood Park/Undeveloped**

Natural Resources: Street trees and unirrigated lawn

Other: N/A



Gropper Loop Park



Rock Creek Drive Multi-use trail

ROCK CREEK DRIVE MULTI-USE TRAIL

The Rock Creek Drive multi-use trail is an 8' wide asphalt paved trail, approximately 0.35-mile long, connecting Mallicott Road to the Mill Pond Trail. The trails converge at the intersection of SW Rock Creek Drive and SW Skamania Lodge Way.

Classification: **Trail**

MILL POND TRAIL SIDEWALK CONNECTOR

This 0.5-mile trail begins at Columbia George Interpretive Center Museum as an accessible concrete sidewalk and follows along the shoreline of Rock Cove, connecting to an extension of this trail on the Skamania County Fairgrounds. The trail along SW Rock Creek Drive and on the County Fairgrounds total 1.8 miles.

Classification: **Trail**

ANGEL HEIGHTS TRAIL

The Angel Heights trail is a 0.2-mile asphalt paved trail connects the Angel Heights neighborhood down the hill to the County Fairgrounds and is maintained by the city.

Classification: **Trail**

UNCATEGORIZED CITY LAND

Although not specifically inventoried in this plan, the city owns many uncategorized spaces such as underutilized areas, vacant lots, rights-of-ways, and utility corridors that hold significant potential to contribute to parks and recreation goals. These areas are maintained and indistinguishable from private land in most instances. They contain no amenities such as benches, trash cans, or signs.

Classification: **N/A**

Natural Resources: Some areas have been planted with street trees and provide stormwater management.

Other: N/A



Mill Pond Trail



Skamania County Fairgrounds



Courthouse Lawn

Skamania County

ROCK CREEK PARK, CAMPGROUND & FAIRGROUNDS

Rock Creek Park and the Fairgrounds are located on a 31-acre site owned by Skamania County between Rock Cove and Rock Creek. The site is home to many festivals and events, including the long-standing county fair which has been in Stevenson since 1908. The park offers camping, a place for leashed dogs, open fields, parking, picnic areas, a shelter, a play area, restrooms, and a viewpoint. Also on the site is a community garden, a decommissioned skate area, an arena, barns, and trails along Rock Cove. The Hegewald Center community center and a footbridge across Rock Creek provide connections for the larger Stevenson community. The property provides park amenities like a play area, indoor pickleball, trails and community garden which can be used by the community year-round.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Fairgrounds boast diverse natural resources, including a riparian area along Rock Creek, a shoreline along Rock Cove with sections restored and other areas protected by riprap.

Adjacent to Rock Creek Drive, a notable stand of old oak trees enhances the scenic landscape.

Other: Programmed Events held here include the County Fair and Timber Carnival, Columbia Gorge Bluegrass Festival, Community Garage Sale, Gorge Blues & Brews, 4th of July celebrations, and Christmas in the Gorge.

COURTHOUSE LAWN

This 1.07-acre site is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Russell and Second streets. Home to the community's Christmas Tree lighting ceremony, first choice of political and free speech demonstrations, a natural amphitheater used for high school band performances, premier barrel rolling hills for the youngest area residents, and Armed Forces Memorial. The Courthouse Lawn has street-side benches and drinking fountain, a prominent flag pole, and small picnic area with a monumental petrified log. In 2020 the Stevenson Downtown Association opened the Stevenson Sreatery, which is a public gathering place for outdoor dining adjacent to Second Street which has picnic tables painted by local resident artists surrounded by railings.

Classification: **Special Use Site**

Natural Resources: Irrigated lawn with large trees throughout the landscape

Other: Programmed events held here include Christmas in the Gorge, Stevenson High School Band Concert. Planned Projects include planning underway for the development of a new Park Plaza. The project consists of working with the Stevenson Downtown Association and Skamania County on constructing a plaza in front of the courthouse and establishing a long-term maintenance agreement.

MILL POND TRAIL

This 1.3-mile trail follows along the shoreline of Rock Cove and connects along the cove as an asphalt trail on the Skamania County Fairgrounds. The trail crosses Rock Creek over a footbridge and connects to a crosswalk at SW Rock Creek Drive near Lotz Road. This trail connects to the City's portion of the Mill Pond Trail along SW Rock Creek Drive which extends another 0.5 miles to the Columbia Gorge Museum.

Classification: **Trail**



Stevenson-Carson School District

STEVENSON HIGH SCHOOL

An approximately 26.25-acre site located between Willard Street, Bulldog Drive, and Gropper Road, the Stevenson High School is part of the heart of the Stevenson community. The School facility has an indoor gym, auditorium, weight room, and library and meeting rooms. Outdoors, the School offers a stadium for football, soccer, and track, practice fields, and tennis courts. Some indoor and outdoor facilities, such as the gym and football field, are available to the community to rent.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: The managed open spaces on the high school property are primarily either irrigated or non-irrigated lawn. Areas around the school entrance and near the pool building are landscaped

with ornamental plantings. A number of edges of the property contain significant tree canopy.

Other: N/A Community Rental Spaces

Natural Resources: The managed open spaces on the high school property are primarily either irrigated or non-irrigated lawn. Areas around the school entrance and near the pool building are landscaped with ornamental plantings. A number of edges of the property contain significant tree canopy.

STEVENSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

More than two thirds of Stevenson Elementary School's 9.5-acre site located to the northeast of the Vancouver Avenue and School Street intersection is devoted to open space and recreation. The facility offers a covered play area, multiple swings and play structures, grass and asphalt play areas, basketball hoops, benches, landscaping, public art, an undisturbed wooded area, and an indoor gym and auditorium. The outdoor play structures are old

and although many are in functional condition, they don't meet the standards for the appropriate age ranges and provide limited opportunities for kids with differing needs and abilities. Outdoor play structures are available for the public to use during non-school hours.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: The managed open spaces on the high school property are primarily non-irrigated lawn. Areas around the school entrance and the parking lot are landscaped with ornamental plantings. The northern edge of the property contains significant tree canopy. The Southern edge of the property, adjacent to Vancouver Ave has a number of non-native and invasive plants that are a challenge to maintain.

Other: The School district is planning playground updates to provide age appropriate play opportunities.



Stevenson Community Pool District

STEVENSON COMMUNITY POOL

The Stevenson Community Pool is a popular aquatic facility in the community, providing a place for residents and visitors to enjoy swimming and aquatic activities. It offers various programs, including swimming lessons for different age groups, open swim sessions, water aerobics, and special events. This pool serves as a valuable resource for recreation, fitness, and water safety education in the Stevenson area. The pool parking lot is on a steep slope and may be difficult to navigate for individuals with mobility challenges. Next to the pool is a fenced area containing basketball courts. The surfacing is cracked and that area is underutilized.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: N/A

Other: The bleachers next to the pool are going to be removed to make more space next to the pool.





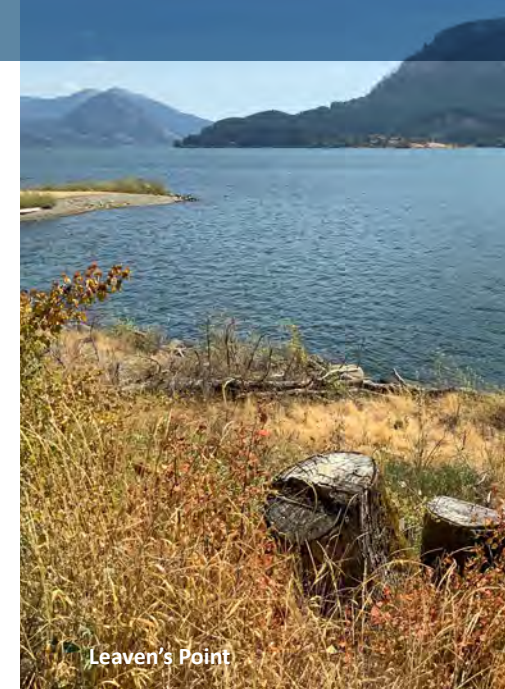
Stevenson Landing



Bob's Beach



Teo Park



Leaven's Point

Port of Skamania County

The port of Skamania County owns approximately 18-acres of land along Stevenson's waterfront. There are a number of parks and open spaces located along the waterfront connected by a continuous trail. Although not directly connected, these parks are thought of by the community as a cohesive park space and thus this string of parks can be considered a community park. These parks are:

BOB'S BEACH

Bob's Beach features a lawn open space, natural stone steps into the water, a covered changing cabana, easy spacious launching area, picnic tables, as well as public parking and public restrooms located at the Port of Skamania's offices.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Shoreline, beach, tree canopy

Other: N/A

STEVENSON LANDING

Stevenson Landing is a cruise ship pier located on the Columbia River at mile 150 in the heart of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The concrete pier is 200 feet long, 15 feet wide and has a 55' by 6'6" adjustable steel gangway. Three sets of dolphins are centered on the gangway at 12', 66' and 156', which allow for a range of docking possibilities.

Classification: **Special Use Site**

Natural Resources: N/A

Other: N/A

TEO PARK

Teo Park is a one-acre site with amenities that include picnic tables, benches, outdoor musical play equipment, lawn on the Columbia River bank with views of the Columbia River and mountains of the Gorge, restrooms, Andrew Carson's kinetic wind art sculpture. Accessible parking is located in the adjacent parking lot. The Stevenson Farmers Market

is hosted on the adjacent Port owned potential development.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Irrigated lawn, shoreline, tree canopy

Other: The Stevenson Farmers Market takes place on the greenspace directly adjacent to Teo Park to the east.

LEAVEN'S POINT

Leaven's Point is a picnic area located just east of Stevenson Landing and provides nice views of Stevenson Landing. The site drops from the elevated level of the trail down to a lawn open space adjacent to the waters edge. The park includes interpretive signage, gravel beach access, slides that follow the slope, and outdoor musical play equipment.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Shoreline

Other: N/A



Pebble Beach



East Point



Cascade Boat Launch

EAST POINT

East Point is a water access point that is a favorite spot of kiteboarders. The upper portion of the site is adjacent to the waterfront trail and parking and has a picnic table, informational sign, and a small lawn area used by kiteboarders to lay out their gear. A narrow unimproved path connects the upper portion of the site to a gravel beach near the water. A restroom and changing cabana is located nearby.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Irrigated lawn, shoreline, beach

Other: N/A

CASCADE BOAT LAUNCH

Cascade Boat Launch is a free launch providing access for jet skiing, fishing, sailing, and kayaking, and is located just off of Cascade Avenue. It has a small parking lot, several picnic tables, a restroom facility and changing cabana, a water fountain, a lawn area, and an informational kiosk with a life jacket loaner station.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Lawn, shoreline, beach

Other: N/A

PEBBLE BEACH

Pebble Beach is a waterfront access point tucked away from the rest of the waterfront. The park contains unimproved trails and a wooden bridge over Kanaka Creek. Visitors can park at the Cascade Boat Launch parking area to access Pebble Beach.

Classification: **Community Park**

Natural Resources: Natural shoreline, beach, tree canopy

Other: N/A

WATERFRONT TRAIL

A 0.3-mile asphalt paved trail runs along the top of the Columbia River's shoreline, connecting Teo Park, Stevenson Landing, Leaven's Point, East Point and the Cascade Boat Launch. An informal unpaved trail section connects through Pebble Beach to the water's edge.

Classification: **Trail**



Annual Maintenance and Operational Costs

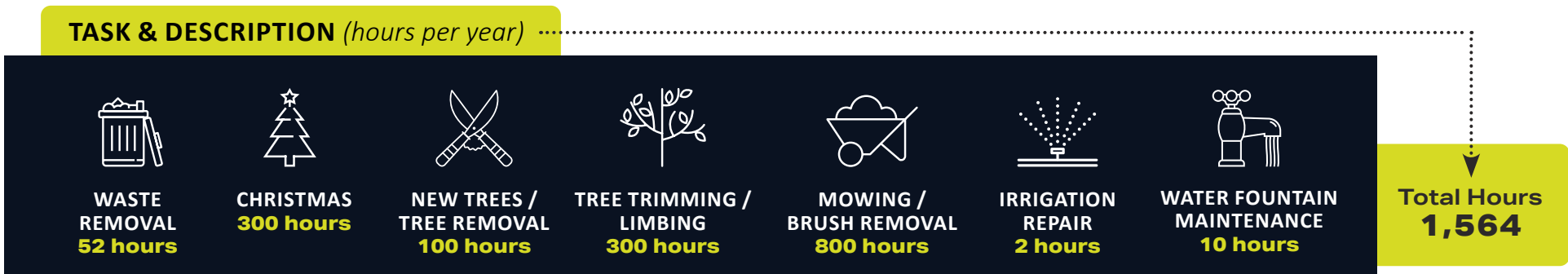
The following summary describes the annual tasks and costs associated with maintaining and operating each existing recreational site in the city by the City of Stevenson staff.

The city employs four, full time, Utility maintenance workers. The focus of their job is to maintain city utilities, and secondary to their duties is the

maintenance and upkeep of any park, streetscape, or open space owned by the city. Tasks include waste removal, tree care (trimming or limbing) and tree planting, mowing, brush removal, tree removal, irrigation maintenance and repair, water fountain maintenance and winterization, and the annual installation and removal of Christmas decorations.

The total approximate effort in hours per year to complete the above tasks is 1,564 hours (see table). This is equivalent to 75% of one FTE hours. Park

maintenance expenditures per year are estimated at \$100,000 including salaries. This breaks down to approximately \$46,500-\$57,750 to cover staff hours, and \$53,500- \$42,250 for equipment, maintenance costs, and other expenses. The city funds these yearly costs through their annual operating budget. For any capital projects such as tree planting, new landscaping, or other park enhancements, they attempt to locate grants to fund them. Currently there are discussions to purchase snow removal equipment for sidewalk maintenance.



3 - Stevenson Budget Book 2024

4 - <https://rco.wa.gov/recreation-and-conservation-office-grants/find-a-grant/>

Existing Demand and LOS for Park Services

Parks promote health and wellness, encourage early childhood development, build community connection, and contribute to resilience and ecological health.¹ The development and maintenance of a robust parks and recreation network is an important function that many cities assume. The City of Stevenson is a small community by population, and there is no official Parks and Recreation department. Still, the City owns and manages 3 neighborhood parks; residents have access to a variety of larger parks and open spaces via the school district, County services, and a handful of privately-owned spaces; and the Port of Skamania owns and maintains a breathtaking waterfront with public access along the Columbia River.

Recreation services in the community, such as youth sports leagues are offered via entities such as the school district, sport-specific nonprofits, and Skamania County's Cultural Events and Recreation department. Residents, workers, and visitors in Stevenson have access to an exceptional opportunity for waterfront access and recreation through the Port's spaces and amenities, as well as the Skamania Lodge and Golf Course. Given this, the focus of the City of Stevenson's future planning is to strengthen and support the parks network that is woven throughout city neighborhoods. These spaces provide direct benefits to the everyday members of the Stevenson community.

1- [NRPA "Parks and Recreation is Essential"](#)

Stevenson's public park network consists of 15 parks, totaling 63.5-acres and 2.9 miles of trails.

These parks range from small, neighborhood parks to large, regional highlights such as Stevenson Landing and Bob's Beach at the Port of Skamania Waterfront. In addition, a collection of undeveloped open spaces and privately owned recreation spaces add to greenspace in the city. The two largest parks areas – Stevenson High School grounds and Rock Creek Park Campgrounds and County Fairgrounds – account for 77% of the total acreage.

Level of Service (LOS) for this plan will focus on the 15 parks identified on the map in Exhibit 2.1.

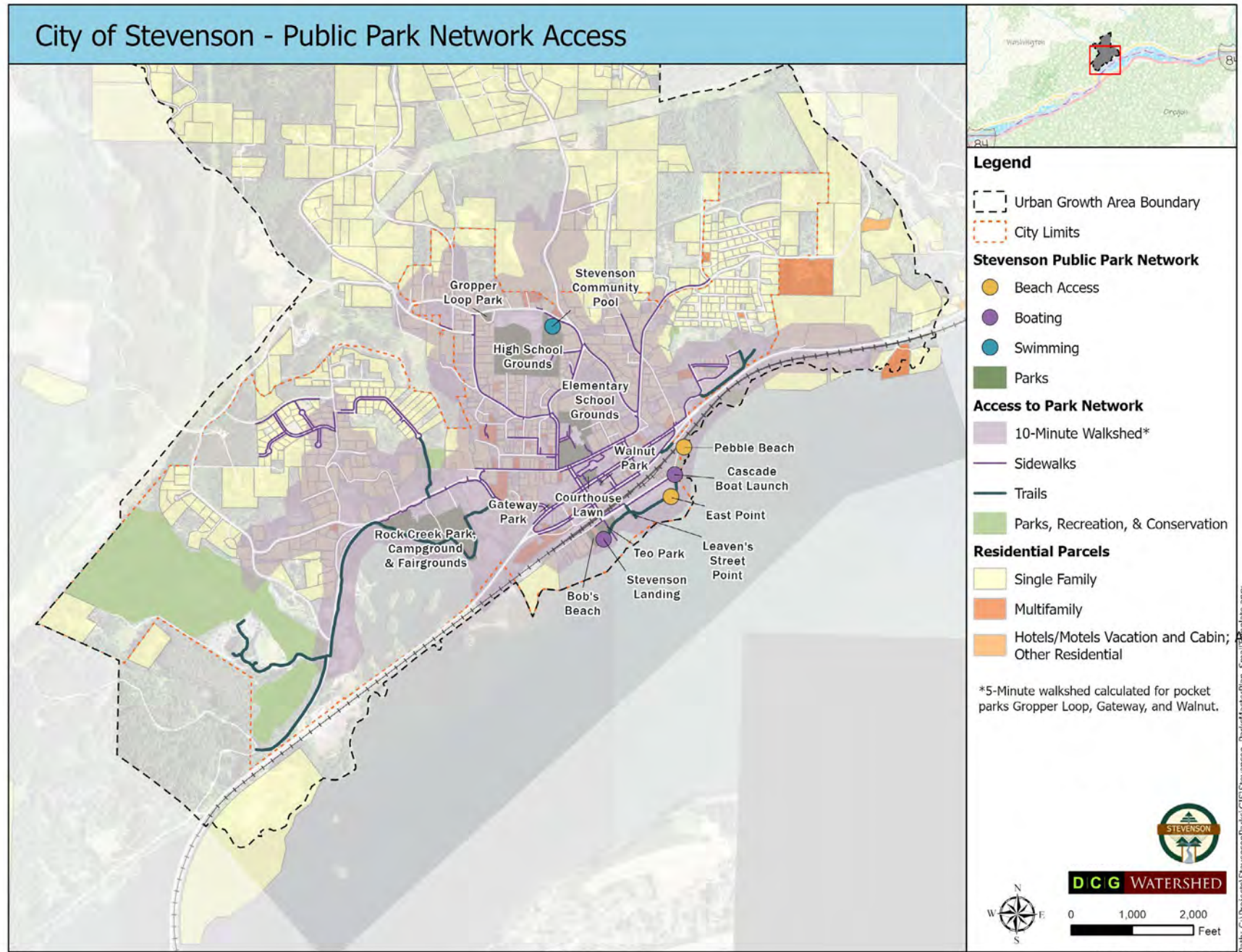
Additional undeveloped open spaces and privately owned recreation spaces are shown on the map as well. These spaces add value to a community in a variety of ways – offering outdoor recreation opportunities, improving air quality and tree canopy, and providing protected habitat spaces important to local biodiversity. However, these spaces do not offer public access in the same way as the parks included for LOS analysis. Some have paid entry (such as the golf course), some are closed off for general public access (such as multifamily building sites), and others are protected habitat areas with limited entry points for the general public.

These are considered in this project for a better understanding about neighborhood access to green space and amenities but will not be included for purposes of LOS calculations.

This LOS analysis considers 3 major categories of services, but these are not the only metrics that matter. For example, service is not broken out by park type. This means that acreage of all parks are combined, regardless of their use. This helps paint a good picture of the overall space and trail lengths available in Stevenson, but does not identify needs by type of space- such as preserved open space versus programmed park area. Another example is service levels for specific facility types, such as playgrounds or sport courts. With its smaller population, national metrics don't fit well for Stevenson in these categories. Instead, this PROS Plan takes a qualitative approach to evaluate facility and amenity offerings. As Stevenson continues to grow its population, additional approaches to LOS analysis may be needed to ensure adequate balance of preservation and open space/ conservation areas as well as programmed park space for community recreation.



Exhibit 2.3: Park Access Map, City of Stevenson





The map in **Exhibit 2.3** also shows a 10-minute (or ½ mile) walkshed around each park, indicated with purple, to explore access and LOS to park space geographically. Walksheds around neighborhood parks are reduced to 5-minute. This park access map reveals gaps of coverage for residential areas in northeast Stevenson and to the north of Rock Creek Fairgrounds. This walkshed coverage, however, does not take into account topography – which, in parts of Stevenson, presents a significant additional barrier to access for residents. Elevation changes in Stevenson are steep and can make even a short walk a high barrier to access for those who live nearby.

The table in **Exhibit 2.4** summarizes existing levels of service (LOS) in Stevenson for three main categories – total acreage, trail length, and percentage of households (or residential parcels) within the walkshed boundary. The Stevenson community has higher LOS for total acres of park space, at 31.0-acres per 1,000 residents than the national median of 13-acres (per NRPA). Trail access, however, is lower at 1.5 miles per 1,000 residents compared to 4 miles nationally. By walkshed, coverage within city limits is at 86% and within the full UGA boundary is at 69%. **Exhibit 2.3** identifies the residential parcels outside of the existing walkshed boundary.

Exhibit 2.4: Stevenson Parks LOS, 2023

	Stevenson	NRPA median for cities less than 20,000
Acres of park per 1,000 pop	31.0	13
Miles of trails per 1,000 pop	1.5	4
% of households* within the walkshed boundary (city limits)	86%	N/A
% of households* within the walkshed boundary (city + UGA)	69%	N/A

**Households, for this LOS metric, are defined as residential parcels from assessor data. These parcel counts have been cleaned for accuracy. Sources: City of Stevenson, 2023; OFM Population Estimates, 2022; National Recreation and Park Association, 2023; Seva Workshop, 2023.*



Teo Park



Stevenson Community Pool

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks, often referred to as “pocket parks” serve daily needs for residents, offering play spaces for children and recreation or relaxation opportunities for adults. These parks are one acre or less in size. They are community focused and pedestrian-oriented spaces. They may contain features and amenities such as bike racks, benches, tables, or small play structures. Neighborhood park networks are important for ensuring a high quality of life to residents.

There are 3 existing neighborhood parks in Stevenson for purposes of LOS calculations, totaling 0.85-acres of space. All of these parks are owned and maintained by the city: Gateway Park, Gropper Loop Park, and Walnut Park. Gropper Loop Park is undeveloped, while the other 2 offer amenities such as benches, bike racks, and informational signs. Walnut Park offers picnic tables, interpretive elements, and waste receptacles. None of these parks include play structures, fitness equipment, flex use lawn area, or restrooms. See a comprehensive inventory of amenities at these parks in [Exhibit 2.2](#).

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks are mid-sized parks that serve as active and/or passive recreation spaces. They range between one and ten acres in size; can be

pedestrian- or vehicle-oriented; and might include facilities such as a community center, sport or pool complex, hiking trails, or a boat launch. The network of community parks is an important system that provides recreation opportunities and gathering spaces within a city. With more specialized facilities, these spaces often serve a wider segment of the population or geographic area who may be driving to attend a youth baseball game or for a swim at the pool.

In Stevenson, there are 10 community parks, totaling 61.6-acres of space. These include Stevenson High School and Stevenson Elementary School (both owned and maintained by the Stevenson-Carson School District) the Stevenson Community Pool, operated by the Pool District, Rock Creek Park, Campground, & Fairgrounds, owned and managed by Skamania County, and the Port waterfront including Bob’s Beach, Stevenson Landing, Teo Park, Leaven’s Point, East Point, Cascade Boat Launch, and Pebble Beach. The Stevenson Community Pool is located on the site of the high school. The high school is a large, 26.5-acre site that includes many athletic facilities such as a track, football and soccer field, tennis courts, and flex-use lawn area. Indoor recreation facilities include a gym, auditorium, weight room, library, and meeting rooms. These spaces are available to the community, but access is controlled

through the school’s administrative office and community entry is not allowed during school hours.

The community pool was previously operated by Skamania County and then the Stevenson-Carson School District, but budget concerns led to its closure. The facility was reopened in 2022 and is now under management of the Pool District. It is open 6 days a week, with paid entry. Stevenson Elementary School is a 9.5-acre site. Much of its acreage is devoted to open space and recreation. There are play areas, basketball hoops, benches, and open space. Indoor facilities include a gym and auditorium available to the community outside of school hours via the school’s administrative office. Like the high school, outdoor spaces are open to the general public when not in use by students. A comprehensive list of these parks’ amenities and features can be found in [Exhibit 2.2](#).

While these 3 sites offer a wide range of recreation facilities and open spaces for Stevenson’s community benefit, each site has limitations for public access. Schools are only open to the broader community outside of academic hours and use by school-sponsored recreational activities. The pool has paid entry and limited hours, given the need for lifeguards and high levels of maintenance.



Courthouse lawn



Stevenson boat launch

SPECIAL USE SITES

Special use sites can come in any size but hold unique and intangible value to the Stevenson community. These spaces reflect community values, build civic pride, and help define a community’s identity. Special use sites often draw tourists or regional visitors as well. In Stevenson this consists of the County courthouse lawn and Stevenson Landing.

The Skamania County Courthouse Lawn is an important gathering site in the city. Its location is adjacent to downtown and the waterfront and serves as a civic commons and a hub for public life.

In addition to the Courthouse Lawn site, Stevenson Landing is identified as a special use site in Stevenson. This dock provides water recreation access to the Columbia River.

OPEN SPACE

Open space parks can be any size and are reserved primarily for natural area preservation and passive recreation. They may be pedestrian- or vehicle-oriented and could include amenities such

as bathrooms, shelters, picnic areas, open areas, or trails. These spaces are important within an urban environment for access to nature, providing connections through natural areas, and protecting habitats and/or view corridors. In addition to park space, the open water provides acres and acres of flexible space enjoyed by the community.

No open space parks within Stevenson are suitable for inclusion in LOS calculations. Angel Heights Park meets this description, but it is privately owned and primarily serves as an amenity for the neighboring subdivision. There is a publicly maintained multi-use trail within the park, and the remaining area is wooded and undeveloped.

FACILITIES

The range of active and passive recreation facilities available in a city should reflect the diverse interests and lifestyles of its community members. Passive facilities are those that are flexible and informal, such as open lawns, picnic shelters, and trails. These types of facilities are typically in high demand across all age groups and demographic

segments. Active facilities are more structured and facilitate certain types of recreation, such as playgrounds, sport courts or fields, boat launches, skate parks, pools, or community centers. These amenities may be more popular among people of certain age groups, genders, income segments, or cultural backgrounds. Demand for these specific types of activities may ebb and flow over the years.

There is no perfect balance of amenity and facility offerings in a community. Rather, a city should hope to respond to community interest and offer a range of options attractive to residents and visitors alike. The quantity and distribution of offerings will vary based on budgets, maintenance needs, geography, and available space. Passive facilities are important for their broad appeal – securing access across Stevenson’s neighborhoods to trails, playgrounds, and open space is an important goal of the park system. Active facilities add unique character, inspire and enhance recreation activity, and have a community-building impact. The table in [Exhibit 2.2](#) details a full list of existing facilities and amenities offered throughout Stevenson’s parks.



The open water provides acres and acres of flexible space.

PASSIVE RECREATION FACILITIES IN STEVENSON

Passive recreation facilities include lawn and picnic shelters, trails, and other features that contribute to flexible recreation. Rock Creek Park is the only space with picnic shelters. There are 4 parks that offer play structures or play musical equipment. Soft surface trails can be found at Pebble Beach and hard surface trails are featured at 5 of the parks.


By the numbers, as shown in the image to the right, Stevenson’s trail network falls short of national standards. The map in [Exhibit 2.5](#)

examines walkability across Stevenson, along with the locations of its current and proposed parks. Walkability was analyzed using both existing conditions inventory data and through public involvement and surveys about walking patterns and perceptions of safety. This map includes walkability via trails as well as sidewalks. Gaps in walkability persist across the community, particularly moving farther away from the

Columbia River. On the map, red- and orange-colored lines indicate poor pedestrian conditions, while light and dark green-colored lines highlight good walkability. There are some complete connections across Stevenson, but many areas do not have direct access to quality pedestrian paths that lead to parks. Residents and visitors in the center of the city and neighborhood along Angel Heights Road are most likely to be able to take a walk directly from their doorstep.

RECREATIONAL AMENITY DISTRIBUTION

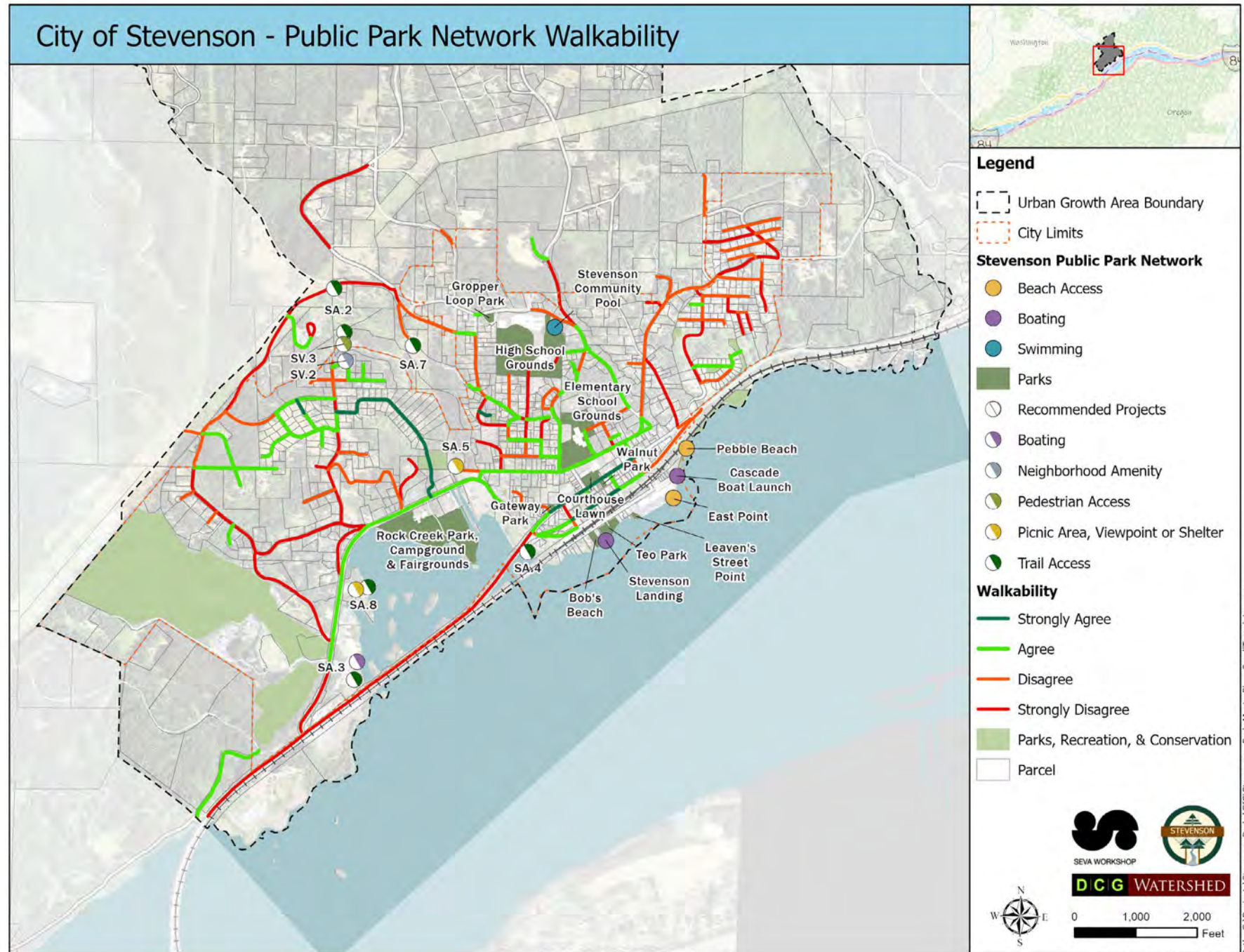
In addition, core project amenities such as playgrounds, picnic tables, benches, and restrooms are not evenly distributed across the system. [Exhibit 2.6](#) highlights the location of these amenities in Stevenson. Community feedback confirms a desire for a stronger system of publicly accessible places to sit, gather, and play.



**City of Stevenson:
1.5 miles of trails per
1,000 population**

**NRPA 2023 cities of less
than 20,000
4.0 miles of trails per
1,000 population**

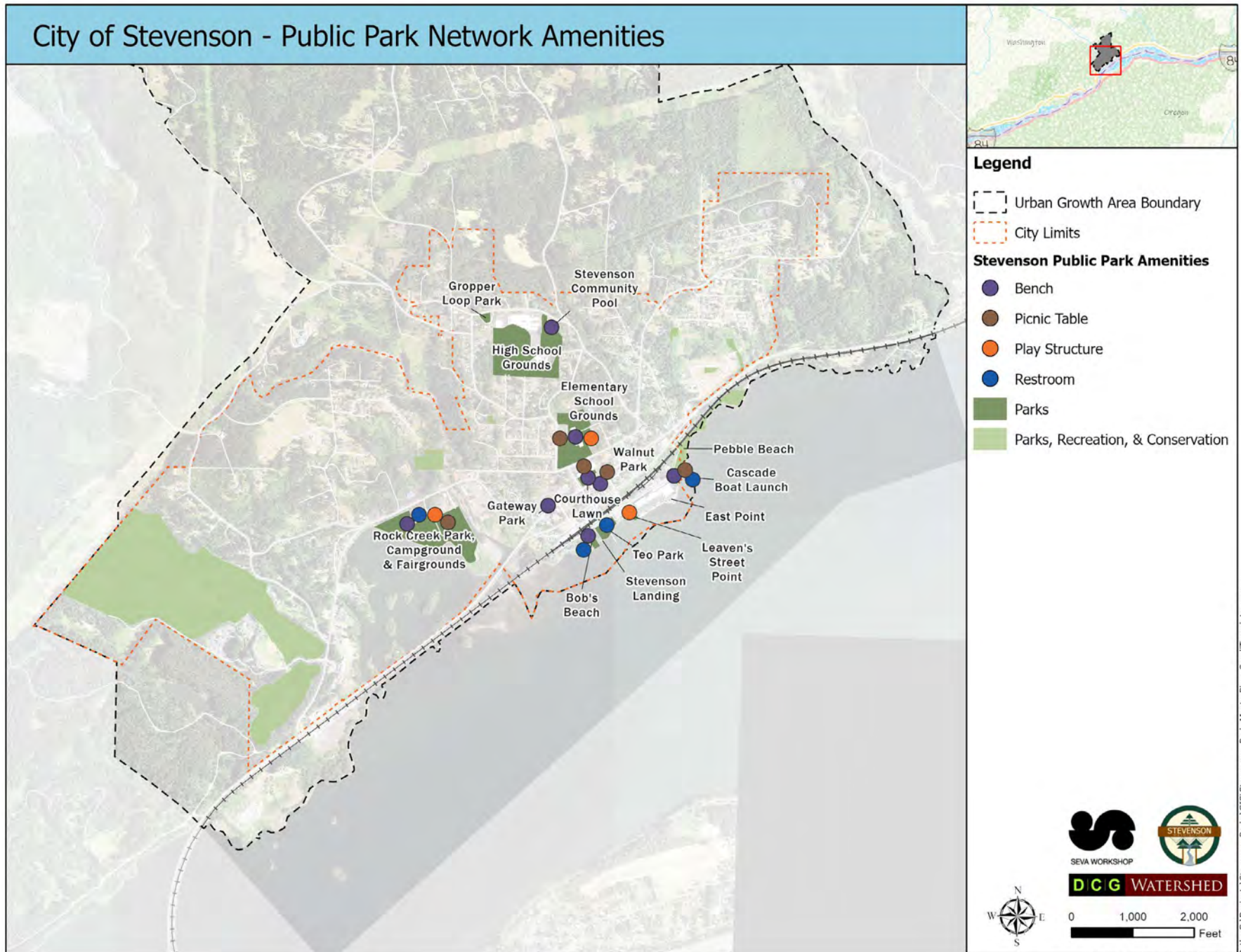
Exhibit 2.5: Stevenson Public Park Network Walkability



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Exhibit 2.6: Stevenson Core Amenity Distribution



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03

Public Involvement



Public Outreach Plan

The City of Stevenson desired to create a PROS Plan that would provide a roadmap for investment of resources into future parks development. The plan is based on many factors, but one of the most critical was input from the community through public outreach. This plan aimed to bring community stakeholders together in evaluating park opportunities and prioritizing the City's efforts to realize future projects. Public outreach engaged the community within the city limits and the UGA to solicit feedback and document attitudes and perceptions about parks and open spaces as well as public access needs and improvements.

Public Outreach Activities and Roles

The public outreach effort was a collaboration between the City and the Consultant (DCG/Watershed). The City led Advisory Committee and stakeholder identification, notification, and outreach. The City also handled event and project promotions, incorporating messaging and content developed with the Consultant. The Consultant created materials and facilitated engagement events to efficiently solicit Advisory Committee and stakeholder feedback relevant to the planning and design process. The Consultant also led the creation of an online public survey.

While the City of Stevenson has many public park spaces, the majority of these spaces are not owned or maintained by the City. In order to have a comprehensive understanding of all public amenities in the city, an Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from each agency that provides parks and recreational facilities within Stevenson. Throughout the parks planning effort, this Advisory Committee contributed knowledge about the current conditions, resources, needs, audiences, and opportunities at various existing locations. They also contributed more broadly to the development of the plan by providing feedback and insight at key times throughout the process. Committee members were identified by City staff based on the individuals' past involvement in providing recreational opportunities to the public through their agency, or their interest in the future of local recreational facilities and opportunities. The Advisory Committee included representatives from the following organizations and governing bodies:

- City of Stevenson
- Skamania County
- Port of Skamania County
- Stevenson-Carson School District
- Stevenson Community Pool District

In addition to forming an Advisory Committee, the City also identified a pool of key stakeholders and special interest group leaders. These selected

representatives were considered well connected to their respective groups and their role was to provide input on the plan that reflected the interests of their group in the community.

This Public Outreach Plan provides an outline of the public involvement effort.

- City created project webpage with content from the Consultant
- Consultant created posters and designs for social media posts to inform the public about the project and to invite the public to complete the public survey
- City printed, posted, and distributed advertisements and updated website
- Online survey was developed by consultant and reviewed by city staff
- Consultant led stakeholder interviews
- City led Pop-Up events with materials created by consultant
- Consultant led in-person advisory committee meetings. City facilitated communication and hosted the meetings
- Legislative meetings were attended by city representatives. Consultants provided materials and attended meetings as appropriate.



Local residents walk along the Mill Pond Trail year-round.

Public Outreach Strategies and Activities: Three Phases

Outreach was implemented through three separate phases: **1) visioning**, **2) sharing findings and generating ideas**, and **3) assessing success**.

Throughout these phases, various methods were applied to gather input: an online public survey, focus group meetings with the Advisory Committee, and one-on-one stakeholder interviews.

PHASE 1 - VISIONING

The first phase of outreach built public awareness of the PROS Plan and assessed needs and resources. This phase initiated the development of clear mission, goals, and objectives for the plan. Outreach methods in this phase included a focus group meeting with the Advisory Committee, an online public survey, and one-on-one stakeholder interviews.

PHASE 2 - SHARING FINDINGS AND GENERATING IDEAS

Having gathered robust information and ideas from stakeholders, the Advisory Committee, and the

general public, the Consultant facilitated a second phase of engagement in which an overview of the findings from Phase 1 was shared. A draft of the mission, goals, and objectives were presented and further input and feedback was solicited at that time. Finally, additional input and specific ideas about how to meet the needs and best leverage the resources assessed during Phase 1 was gathered. Outreach methods in this phase included a charette with the Advisory Committee plus select stakeholders, and more stakeholder interviews.

PHASE 3 - ASSESSING SUCCESS

In the final phase of outreach, the draft needs, goals, and objectives were assessed to determine if they accurately reflected the community and Advisory Committee’s values within the PROS Plan. Recommendations and the plan were presented for public comment. Outreach methods in this phase included a focus group meeting (Advisory Committee Meeting), a presentation of findings to the City Planning Commission, a presentation of findings to City Council, and final stakeholder interviews.



PHASE 1 VISIONING

August-October 2023

- Advisory Committee Meeting #1
- Stakeholder Interviews Phase #1
- Public Survey



PHASE 2 SHARE FINDINGS & GENERATE IDEAS

October-November 2023

- Advisory Committee Meeting #2 (charette)
- Stakeholder Interviews Phase #1



PHASE 3 ASSESS SUCCESS

December 2023-January 2024

- Advisory Committee Meeting #3
- Stakeholder Interview Phase #2

Methods of Gathering Public Input

1) ONLINE SURVEY

In order to maximize the possible input received from the general public on this plan, the method of creating an online survey was selected. To invite public participation in the online survey, a digital survey link was shared through the City’s webpage, via printed posters with QR codes, and through the city’s social media platforms. Print copies were made available and then collected at City Hall. Survey questions were developed to help identify the plan’s mission, goals, and objectives, and to assess the current uses and potential needs for local parks and amenities. The public was also asked to rate existing project ideas on how they address their needs. To gather sufficient data from a diverse segment of the population, the survey was designed to take less than ten minutes to complete. Optional demographic questions were included to understand the profile of respondents. The survey remained live from October 20, 2023, to November 27, 2023.

2) STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

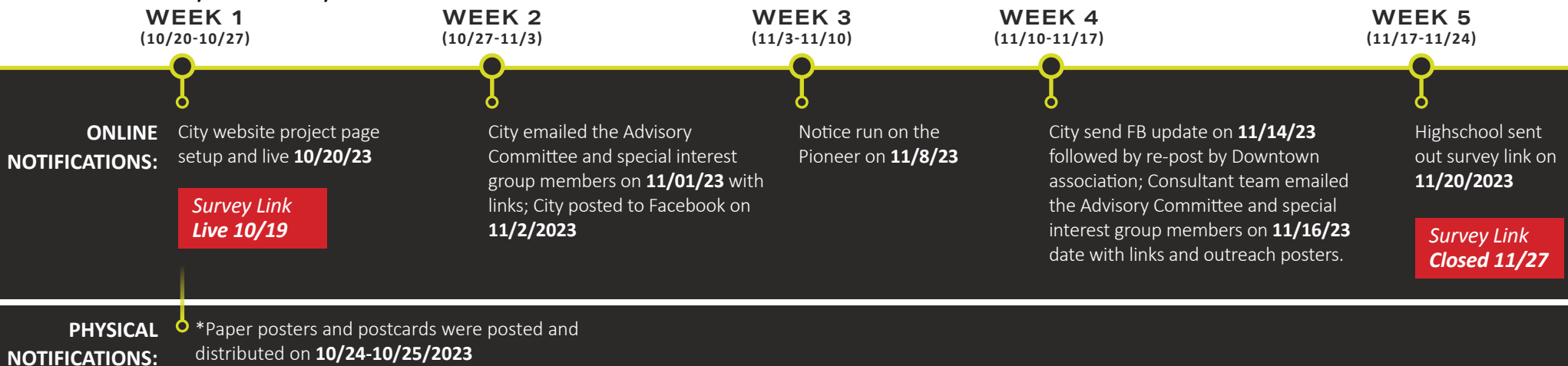
Throughout the process, local stakeholders were interviewed to better understand the needs, goals, objectives, and priority projects for local parks and amenities for specific groups. Initial interviews targeted local decision makers and Advisory Committee members identified by the City. Subsequent suggestions focused on special interest groups and representatives of active local committees or boards. Each stakeholder was prompted for recommendations for additional interviewees. Interviews were conducted one-on-one, virtually, in the form of real-time open-ended conversations. A digital brainstorming platform called Miro was used for note-taking and facilitation. A consistent framework of graphic prompts on the Miro board was used for each interview. Stakeholders represented the following organizations, governing bodies, and interest groups:

- City of Stevenson
- City of Stevenson Public Works

- Skamania County, Skamania County Fairgrounds
- Port of Skamania
- Stevenson-Carson School District
- Stevenson Community Pool District
- Stevenson Main Street Program; Stevenson Downtown Association
- Columbia Gorge Museum
- Skamania Lodge
- Wind Sport Community
- Columbia Gorge Running Club
- Other stakeholders represented the community in general and provided insight into the local economy, accessibility needs, and other related factors.

When attempts to engage a stakeholder were unsuccessful, a replacement was contacted if possible. The attempt to interview a representative for the cycling community was unsuccessful.

Exhibit 3.1: Summary of online survey outreach



*Locations: Columbia Hardware, Columbia Hardware No 2, High 5, Bigfoot Coffee Roasters, Skamania Physical Therapy, Stevenson Eye Care, Umpqua Bank, The Barber, Chamber of Commerce, NAPA, Big River Grill, Subway, Windermere, Columbia Gorge Title, A & J Supermarket, Bloomsbury, Out and About, Northbank Books, Skamania County Pioneer, Stevenson Hotel, Main Street Chevron, Traverse PNW Market Place, Skamania Acupuncture Clinic.



Photo Credit: Port of Skamania - Bob's Beach

Phase one interviews included questions about the basic needs, goals, and objectives for local parks and amenities. Stakeholders described the available resources, primary uses, and existing audiences of specific sites. They also recommended ways to enhance existing sites and to plan and develop local recreational opportunities more broadly.

Phase two interviews were designed to gather more specific feedback about the drafted Plan and recommendations, and whether they were in line with earlier input. Stakeholders gave input on the draft mission, goals, and relevance of specific proposed projects to the mission and goals.

Questions included prompts for any final ideas, or points of contention, in relation to the Plan.

3) FOCUS GROUP: ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As with the stakeholder interviews, focus groups were created to gather more detailed information about current needs and perceived goals and objectives for local parks and amenities. The small group setting allowed for comprehensive, in-depth discussions with multiple stakeholders. The role of each stakeholder was to represent their knowledge of their specific park or recreation areas and the user group's needs and priorities for those areas.

The first meeting focused on mission and goals, existing inventory and use, and how this plan would incorporate future project ideas. A three-hour in-person meeting was held in the City of Stevenson. Goals included having a discussion of goals and vision, understanding the RCO grant process, and sharing ideas and information that was relevant to the plan process. A representative from RCO attended the meeting to present an overview of how the plan related to grant funding and to answer questions.



Skamania County Courthouse Lawn

The second meeting took the form of an in-person 3-hour charette. The core Advisory Committee was expanded to include special interest group leaders and stakeholders. This session began with an overview of the findings from Phase 1 including the online survey results and the completed stakeholder interviews, as well as a brief presentation and discussion around the drafted mission, goals, and objectives. Participants brainstormed a variety of specific ideas about how to meet the needs and leverage the resources assessed during Phase 1. The group was divided into three smaller groups to discuss specific geographic regions of the city that most closely related to each members focus. For example, the group focused on the waterfront included the representative from the Port, the entity that owns and operates the waterfront parks located there.

The expanded advisory committee included representatives from the following organizations and governing bodies:

- City of Stevenson (including Public Works, Planning, and a City Council member)

- Skamania County
- Port of Skamania
- Stevenson-Carson School District
- Stevenson Community Pool District
- Columbia Gorge Museum
- Stevenson Downtown Association

A final, 90-minute virtual meeting was held to discuss plan recommendations. The committee was asked to share feedback on whether the recommendations met the previously discussed goals and mission of the plan, and/or addressed the needs expressed in the plan. The committee was asked to provide feedback and contribute to any projects relevant to their organization.

4) PRESENTATIONS

The final outreach effort for public involvement was the presentation of the draft plan to city leadership. These presentations occurred at the end of the planning process and summarized the draft recommendations of the plan. The goal of this outreach was to seek input and insight from

city leaders, and to ensure the plan was on track for adoption. The draft presentation with excerpts from the plan was available for review prior to the meetings and was able to be accessed by the public once the meeting agenda was posted. Both meetings and presentations were open to the public and each meeting's agenda was structured to accept public input if requested.

The first presentation was to the city council. This provided an opportunity for discussion and questions from the council members. This council was able to provide big picture feedback on the plan, and the city and consultant team were made aware of any significant concerns prior to finalizing the plan and presenting it for adoption by the city council.

The second presentation was to the city planning commission. Similarly, this provided an opportunity for review, discussion, and questions from the commission members on the plan recommendations. Big picture feedback from the commission was able to be incorporated into the final plan.



04

Priorities and Needs Analysis



Stevenson Community Garden Gate

The City of Stevenson has access to a wide range of natural resource recreation options. Public input has confirmed the community's desire to enhance those recreation options while preserving the natural beauty of the area. This chapter summarizes the analysis and observations of current and future parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open space needs for Stevenson. The results also compare the current performance of these areas to standards elsewhere in the region. This analysis will help determine the plan and priorities for the City to move forward with future park improvements.

The priorities and needs analysis is based on analysis of:

- Public feedback from online survey responses
- Information collected from Stakeholder Interviews
- Knowledge and expertise of City staff and the Advisory Committee
- Community vision and values communicated in other recent planning documents
- State and national recreation trends

PRIORITIES AND NEEDS BASED ON COMMUNITY INPUT

Public input gathered from the online survey, stakeholder interviews, and Advisory Committee was compiled and

analyzed. See Chapter 3 for descriptions of methods used for gathering public input. See [Appendix A](#) for full documentation of results. This section focuses on future needs and priorities identified by the outreach.

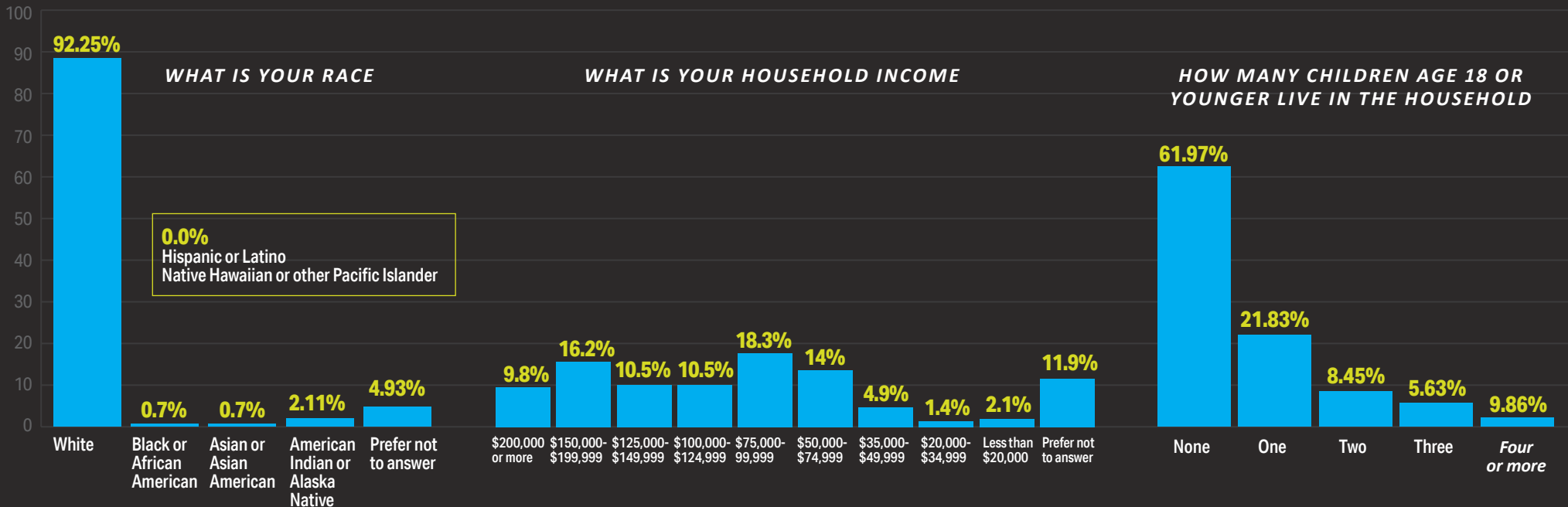
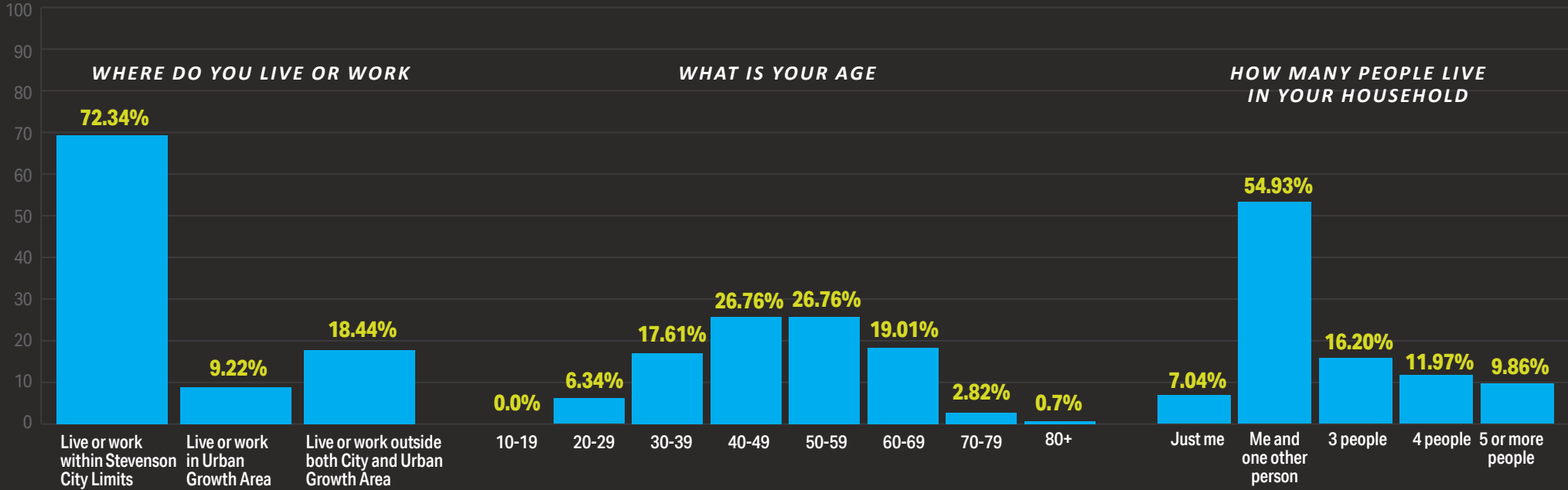
Online Public Survey

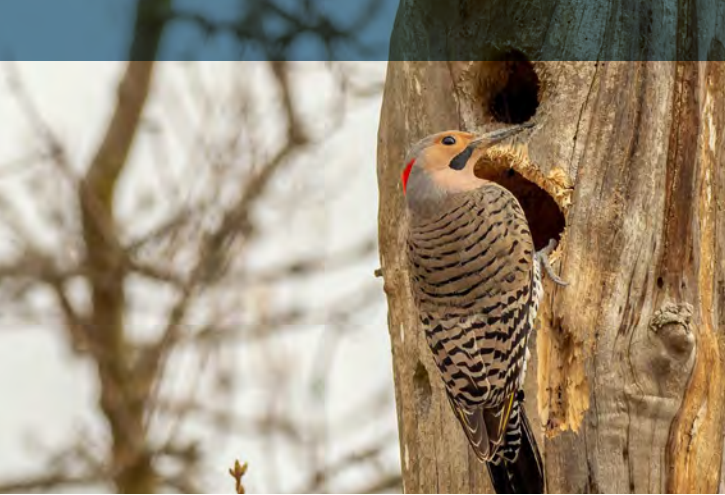
203 surveys of public opinion were completed for this project (200 online, three hard copies). While many of the survey questions were multiple choice or pre-scripted options, the survey also included many open-ended response questions that allowed respondents to elaborate on what new amenities or programs they desired, or other suggestions they had for park improvements.

Over 75 percent of respondents answered the optional demographic questions. Participant demographics can be viewed in the figure on the following page. In general, the respondents were representative of the community as summarized in the Chapter 1 community profile section using census data from 2021. Notable exceptions include an overrepresentation of white respondents (92% vs. 84%), an overrepresentation of high-income households (47% earn above the median-income vs. 31%), and an overrepresentation of adults in the 30-59 age range respondents.

Community Survey Responses

WHO DID WE HEAR FROM? 203 RESPONSES





PUBLIC SURVEY PRIORITIES FOR MISSION

The first two questions of the online survey focused on gaining insight into public support for what the Mission of the PROS Plan would be. Responses indicated what the public values in parks spaces and why they spend time outdoors. Results show that most respondents spend time outdoors to **connect with nature or observe wildlife, for fitness or exercise, or to enjoy solitude or peace and quiet.** However, a substantial 40% of respondents selected **fun, excitement or adventure** and 25% selected **discover new places** as one of the three most important reasons, respectively. Learning something new (i.e., a skill, natural history, or cultural history) and spiritual or cultural motivations ranked lowest on the list of options.

When asked “what do you look for in local facilities or recreation areas when choosing a place to spend time outdoors?” over 140 participants (72%) selected the **“views of nature, wildlife, or water”** option. This reinforced the earlier top response on what they valued in parks. The next most popular responses— **“Primitive trails or experience”** and **“Water access”** —were selected by 79 people (40%) and 75 people (38%) respectively. There was moderate support for facilities or areas that

are family friendly, easy to get to, and that have convenient parking. The least common responses were “interpretive displays or educational opportunities” and “large, flexible open space”.

In summary, the online survey conveyed a high priority for the parks Mission to focus on the natural experience, an individual experience, and an informal space.

PUBLIC SURVEY PRIORITIES FOR CURRENT PARK USE

The next section of the survey focused on existing and current park use and experiences. **The Port Waterfront, County Fairgrounds, and Rock Creek** are the most visited local recreational areas. Gropper Loop Park is the least visited of the sites on the list, with Gateway Park and Walnut Park receiving slightly more reported visitation.

When asked in an open response format “What do you usually do when you visit the areas you selected above?” the vast majority of respondents answered **“Hike/Walk”** (over 90 people selected this or 44%). Dog-walking was the next most common motivation for visiting the sites on the list (over 30 people selected this). Skating, feeding geese, and bird watching ranked lowest on the list.

When asked “What features do you like about the areas you selected?” the vast majority of respondents responses were able to be categorized under the theme of **“Nature/Scenery or Beauty,”** with **“Easy Access/Convenient/Nearby”** coming in second. These responses continue to enforce the Mission and values responses earlier in the survey by highlighting the importance of natural experiences and adding convenient location as an important factor.

Gropper Loop Park and several other sites are reported to NOT be visited often, mostly because respondents **“Didn’t know it was a park / don’t know where they are”** (over 60 people selected this reason or 30%). The second most common reason for the lack of visitation was that “There are **no park amenities** or reasons to be there / **not inviting.**” These responses indicate that if it were more apparent that these park spaces are available for public use, or if park amenities were present in these spaces, then visitation would increase.

Responses to questions about participation in existing programs and events in local recreational spaces reveal that in general, the community is actively attending local events.



PUBLIC SURVEY PRIORITIES FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

There were a wide range of responses to the question of what new facilities or amenities should be added to local parks, but the majority of respondents wanted **more restrooms** in local recreation areas. Respondents also expressed a strong interest in more **outdoor concerts and live music events**. Other answers reinforced earlier survey responses. Responses supporting the **value of natural character** included 'Consider sustainability and impacts on wildlife' and 'Keep it natural'. Responses that correlated the **presence of amenities** with visitation and use included: 'Basic park amenities need to be provided at parks - seating, trash, restrooms, landscaping, etc.', 'Need more year-round use covered spaces', 'Improve messaging about what parks are available to the

public', and 'Need to communicate with residents in close proximity to any proposed improvements.' Responses that supported **hikes/walks** as the most frequent park use included 'More trails', 'Improve pedestrian connections to parks- trails connecting parks, safety features like lighting and crossings', and 'More dog friendly.'

Increased **maintenance** was frequently suggested as a means of improving local parks and recreational areas. Notably, this suggestion was not prompted by any earlier survey questions. More frequent maintenance and upkeep, making parks clean and safe, and improvements to landscaping were all mentioned multiple times by respondents. Other responses related to **family-friendly improvements**—to provide opportunities for intergenerational audiences and for children of all ages and abilities.

EXISTING PROPOSED PROJECT RATINGS

The last section of the survey presented recent project proposals and asked respondents to rate them based on how well they responded to the needs and desires described earlier in the survey.

See [Appendix A](#) for complete results.

Stakeholder Interviews

14 virtual interviews were conducted with local Stakeholders throughout the parks planning process (between October 2023 and January 2024) in order to gather qualitative input that informed the plan’s goals, mission, and recommended priority projects. During these conversations, stakeholders discussed one or more sites or organizations that they were most familiar with. They described the ways in which local sites are already successful in providing the public with recreational opportunities, general ideas for improvement, and ideas for specific projects that align with each site’s mission (whether that mission be formal or more anecdotal) and that align with revenue interests.

Analysis of the collective interview results revealed several major themes related to **goals** for the Plan. These goals are categorized as: increase basic maintenance and updates; serve locals and tourists alike; create more gathering places; activate underutilized spaces; reinforce connections between parts of town; improve public communications; and increase the City’s support.

Analysis of interview results also revealed common themes for what the parks plan **mission** should include. Common priorities for the mission include: to provide the public with quality experiences; to create gathering spaces; to increase access to recreation; and to support the local economy.

Finally, stakeholder interviews included a “Mission/Money Matrix” activity in which participants placed a sticky note describing a **priority project** idea on a matrix that indicated how well that project would serve both the Mission and the revenue interests of the organization they represented. These project ideas were very site-specific and ranged from trail design to public art implementation to maintenance updates.

Below is an expanded summary of interview findings related to the goals, Mission, and priority projects for the Plan. See **Appendix A** for full documentation of results.

See **Appendix A** for data received from stakeholders as a result of these interviews (data is related to a range of topics including demographics, sales, marketing, and downtown foot traffic).

Figure 4.2: Example of completed “Mission/Money Matrix” activity

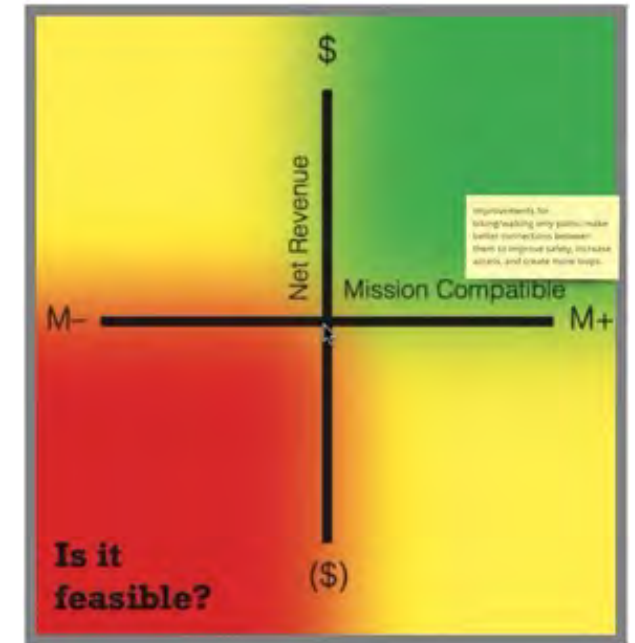
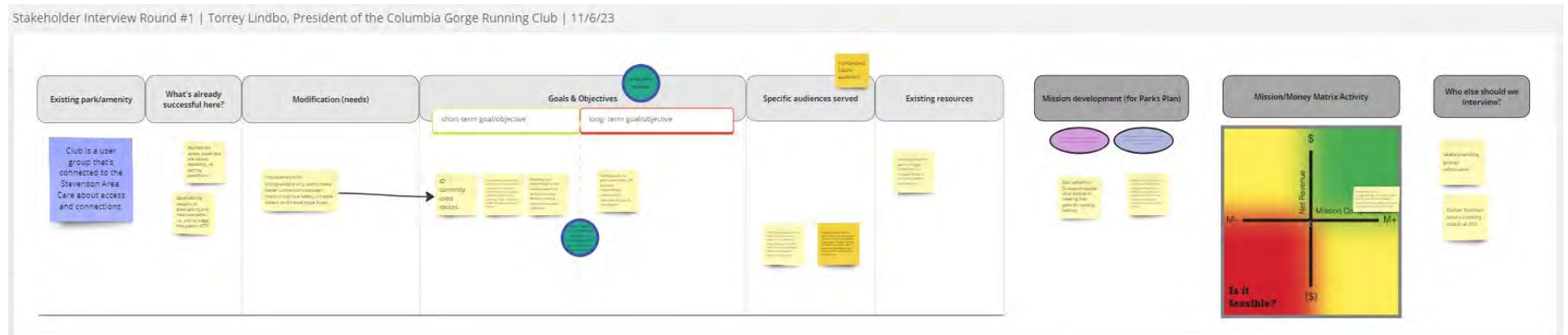


Figure 4.1: Example documentation from a completed Stakeholder Interview



STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES FOR GOALS

Increase basic maintenance and updates

Nearly every interviewee described the need for basic maintenance and updates. These include updated playground equipment, new gating, increased parking, more public restrooms, and funding to pay for maintenance of facilities such as restrooms.

Fairgrounds

- Leaks and mold were a former issue, maintenance crew has worked to fix.
- Need City's support for maintaining key fairgrounds buildings.

Serve locals and tourists Stakeholders expressed interest in enhancing recreational and gathering spaces for local people and tourists alike, with some individuals expressing a slight preference toward improving recreational experiences for one or the other of these groups. Stakeholders want to contribute to a strong sense of community, and they also recognize the economic benefits of sustaining tourism year-round.

Create gathering places

A number of stakeholders described an interest in developing more places for people to gather together for concerts, food and beverages, public programs, etc. Interviewees felt that more indoor gathering places would enable recreational

opportunities year-round, including during rainy and cold seasons. Specific ideas included pocket parks, implementing an area to serve food and drinks at the Pool, and nature play spaces at the Museum and school.

Public Works

- Basic mission is to create a great, safe, clean place to live, for the people who live here. Safe, fun, easily-accessed places to recreate, gather, and connect with neighbors.

Pool

- Create more of a gathering place - for coffee, etc. Create a place to serve food to groups- through an agreement with local restaurants?

Activate underutilized spaces

Multiple stakeholders described the abundance of underutilized "dead spaces" in town. There were numerous ideas for activating these, including implementation of public art, installation of pocket parks, and basic maintenance.

Gateway Park

- Need to activate/beautify, i.e. with public art or some kind of welcoming into the town.

Loop Park (Green space)

- Nobody knows that it's there; that it's the City's.

Reinforce connections between parts of town

Stakeholders described the need for increased physical and visual connections: throughout trail systems, between different areas of town (such as the Museum and the Fairgrounds), and—from a branding and wayfinding perspective—throughout the City as a whole.

Improve public communications

Stakeholders described the need to better communicate to the public about availability and locations of resources.

Increase the City's support

Stakeholders expressed a desire to have more support from the City for implementing priority projects and basic operational and maintenance needs at various sites. Stakeholders said that support could be given in the form of funding, as well as through consistent follow-up and clear communication.

STAKEHOLDER PRIORITIES FOR MISSION

Provide quality experiences

Throughout the various sites and organizations that stakeholders were associated with, it is clearly important to offer a quality, enjoyable, safe, fun experience to all visitors. “Quality” looks different at different sites: at the Museum, the intended experience includes free-choice learning; at the Pool, a quality experience may involve physical exercise.

Create gathering spaces

Multiple stakeholders mentioned that offering a place for people to come together is a main purpose of the site or organization they were associated with.

Increase access to recreation

Accessibility—for all ages and abilities, and to diverse kinds of recreation—was cited as a key purpose or component of the Mission of multiple sites and organizations. Basic physical access to amenities (such as convenient proximity to trails and access to the water via boat ramps) was included in these discussions.

Support the local economy

Supporting economic development, bringing socioeconomic benefits to the community, creating revenue streams with events, enabling economic vibrancy, and generating “year-round tourism dollars” were all cited by interviewees as a component of the mission of the group they represented.



Cascade Boat Launch



Walnut Park

Focus Group: Advisory Committee Meetings

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1

The first Advisory Committee Meeting took the form of a three-hour, in-person meeting held in Stevenson. Ten people attended.

An overview presentation by the consultant team described the plan and process. This was followed by a presentation by an RCO representative. That presentation described the grant award process and how this plan had the potential to be utilized by all committee members.” Discussions focused on the potential goals and vision of the plan. Participants described the interests of the governing bodies they represented. Key suggestions for the ultimate outcomes of the PROS Plan are below. In summary, these include

a desire for the plan to result in increased local revenue, strengthened partnerships and funding opportunities, clarity on how to balance active and passive recreation, improved local placemaking and an increased sense of welcoming, and enhanced experiences for local residents.

Representatives of the City discussed an interest in improved **placemaking** and the desire to develop a more cohesive, clear brand and identity for Stevenson (i.e. with a welcoming design). The importance of balancing **active and passive recreational needs** was also discussed. The City wanted to identify projects that multiple organizations had previously expressed interest in (including the County) in order to prioritize **partnerships and funding opportunities**.

Representatives of the County wanted to **increase revenue** by drawing more people into town to support businesses, implementing year-round

recreational opportunities, increasing parking and enhancing transportation, and building a new stage for concerts. The County also wanted to provide recreational **opportunities within existing natural resources**, by implementing systems such as water trails. They described an interest in **servicing local residents** through long-term opportunities, and to welcome people into the community and motivate people to get together by developing a clearer **sense of character** for the City.

The Pool expressed similar desires to increase the local sense of **welcoming**. Specifically, the Pool described ideas to turn its facilities into more of a **gathering place** by developing a space to serve coffee and food and to implement enhancements that make the pool more fun and accessible to more audiences.

See Appendix A for meeting notes from Advisory Committee Meeting #1.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #2

The second Advisory Committee Meeting took the form of a three-hour charrette that took place in person in the City of Stevenson. After the Consultant team gave a presentation about public survey results and findings from completed stakeholder interviews, participants brainstormed a variety of specific ideas about how to meet the needs and leverage the resources assessed during earlier stages of the Parks Planning effort. Two main methods were used to gather these ideas: the first was a simple open discussion of what each participant perceived as a priority project for the site or organization they were most familiar with. The second was a group activity in which participants collaborated at different stations to brainstorm, sketch, and describe project ideas in relation to specific geographic regions of the City, using a large map of that area as a basis for discussion. Common themes that arose during discussions and group exercises throughout this session. The findings are similar to those of the stakeholder interviews because most of the participants of the interviews and the charette were the same. There were three additions to the categories outlined in the stakeholder interview summaries:

- Increase accessibility and ADA improvements
- Strengthen partnerships and collective marketing efforts
- Engage with Tribes.

See [Appendix A](#) for documentation from Advisory Committee Meeting #2 (the charrette).

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #3

The final Advisory Committee meeting took the form of a 90-minute virtual meeting. All members were in attendance apart from one of the two county representatives who was out of town. The consultant team first presented a recap of the earlier results of the committee, stakeholder, and public outreach, then presented the draft recommendations as proposed to be included in the report. The first recommendations included the mission and goals. The mission was read out loud and shown on the slide, and time was given for any reactions. Each draft goal including objectives and strategies was presented to the committee on the slide and time was given to both read through them and to ask questions or discuss specific strategies. The committee used virtual reactions such as ‘thumbs up’ to indicate they had enough

time to read through each of the goals slides. Next, the six recommended capital improvement projects were presented including draft descriptions and costs. Each individual project was presented, and the committee was prompted for any reactions. Draft amenity projects and park planning projects were also shown, as well as the draft exhibit for how proposed projects could affect operations and maintenance. The presentation concluded with an overview of how funding options and opportunities would be presented in the report. There were comments from each advisory member throughout the presentation.

Following the presentation the consultant team sent each member a project list specific to their organization for review and requested any corrections or additions to include in this plan in a special appendix. They were also sent draft language for the appendix that described the adoption process. This language was also reviewed by the RCO representative. Then, each member was contacted by the city representative and asked if they had any other comments and if the recommendations were in line with what they expected. The consultant team received confirmation and / or comments back from the all the committee members that were in attendance.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIORITIES FOR GOALS

Increase basic maintenance and updates

There was substantial discussion around the need for maintenance and updates throughout existing sites. Specific needs that were brought up included updated playground equipment, new gating, increased parking, more public restrooms, and funding to pay for maintenance of facilities such as restrooms. Additional suggestions included maintenance and updates of the Port's boat ramp, developing a Parks Department to oversee maintenance efforts, and training people to maintain new facilities such as bathrooms.

Increase accessibility and ADA improvements

Ideas for improving access included ADA updates to the Pool parking lot, updating playground equipment to better fit user groups, flatter walking connections throughout town, and installing more benches and resting places.

Serve locals and tourists

There was more discussion around enhancing recreational and gathering spaces for local people and tourists alike. For example, physical barriers could be removed at the Museum so that the grounds become more accessible and more integrated with physical surroundings.

Create gathering places

Multiple suggestions were made regarding developing places for people to gather for concerts, food and beverages, public programs, etc. Specific

ideas that arose during this session included a permanent stage for concerts at the Fairgrounds, removing the bleachers at the Pool to create a gathering space, the general need to promote gathering, tourism, and spaces for locals, and creating an indoor athletics space at the School.

Activate underutilized spaces

Ideas for activating underutilized spaces were brought up during the charette, including implementation of public art, installation of pocket parks, and basic maintenance. There was discussion around the flat piece of land by the Museum becoming an RV park to generate revenue during large public events.

Reinforce connections between parts of town

Participants brainstormed options for increasing physical and visual connections throughout the City and beyond. Ideas included a public art walk between the Museum and Fairgrounds, bike paths, water trails, and connections between the Pacific Crest Trail, parks, and downtown.

Improve public communications

Stakeholders described the need to better communicate to the public about availability and locations of resources. Specific ideas included implementation of trail maps, developing a centralized location for parks information, and implementing a Parks Department.

Strengthen partnerships and collective marketing efforts

There was consensus that collective marketing

could be a way to leverage various stakeholders' expertise and momentum, share data and resources, and make the city more welcoming to both residents and tourists.

Engage with Tribes

The importance of engaging Tribes in the Parks Planning effort was discussed. As short- and long-term projects advance from this plan, local Tribes should be included in outreach to better understand how the cultural context and priorities and values of Tribes can be represented in these landscapes.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PRIORITIES FOR MISSION

Participants discussed the draft Mission for a few minutes at the end of the charette. Two variations were proposed (see figure below). Comments were that perhaps economics should not be a major focus of the Mission, as fulfilling community needs is equally important.

DRAFT MISSION STATEMENTS



To enhance Stevenson's recreational and gathering spaces in ways that increase access to the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage, for residents and visitors alike.



To enhance Stevenson's gathering and recreational spaces, strengthening local communities and the economy year-round.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The group’s discussion around each goal is summarized below.

Discussion of Goal 1 – Establish and sustain well-maintained parks

The group commented that this draft goal perhaps focused too much on strategies related to landscaping, and not enough on strategies for basic facilities maintenance. A suggested strategy related to facilities maintenance was to implement a master calendar that tracks which tasks are needed and by when. The group discussed including such a calendar in the “comprehensive resource database” proposed in Goal 1.3B. Another suggested strategy for addressing maintenance issues was to integrate methods of sharing expertise, for example in times when emergency support is needed. This could mitigate common capacity-based challenges associated with unionized entities.

Discussion of Goal 2 - Enhance community access to parks by increasing visibility and awareness

Feedback on this goal was positive. Participants appreciated the focus on pooled resources.

Discussion of Goal 3 – Improve proximities to and connectivity between parks

The group discussed the wording of this drafted goal, and potential issues with the way in which acquisition of land was described, especially

given the limitations on development in Skamania County. The consultant team explained that Goal 3 does mention acquisition, in reference to possible purchase of easements, and in consideration of longer-term increasing urban density and related needs for parks, playgrounds, walking distance standards, etc. Participants discussed who such acquisitions would serve, whether they would happen with local interests or tourism interests in mind. The opinion was raised that Stevenson should be the “trailhead” or entry point for county-wide recreation, rather than a place that gets developed for recreational purposes; that improving existing land should take priority over any land acquisition.

There was consensus that the Goal should be edited to indicate that alternate options should be considered prior to any plans for land acquisition, and to avoid communicating that the City intends to buy and develop new land.

Discussion of Goal 4 – Provide inclusive spaces to meet diverse community needs

Discussion revolved around this goal’s focus on the plaza at the Courthouse lawn, and current uncertainty about public opinion about that project. The consultant team advised, “everything we’ve heard from the community is reflected in elements of the Courthouse Plaza project, so maybe we need to make the recommendations within this goal less place-specific, and then down the road think about other places and projects for enacting some of these

goals.” There was consensus to edit this goal to describe a more general project type regardless of the Plaza project outcome, and to focus on multi-benefit projects which is key for grant eligibility.

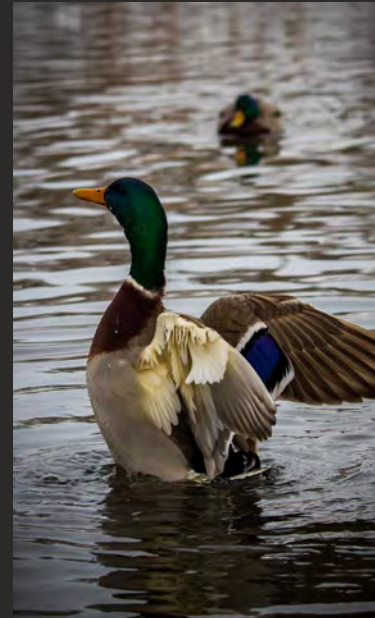
After discussing Goals, the group reviewed recommended Capital Improvement Projects. Participants confirmed that the draft document reflects all of the major capital improvement projects that they each intended to make on behalf of the entities they represent, within the next six years. There was agreement that more focus should be placed on indoor, year-round recreational opportunities, due to the amount of local rainfall. There was brief discussion, but no conclusion, about the best purpose for Gropper Loop Park. The group agreed that the Plan should better-reflect and document the community’s interests in improvements to the Fairgrounds, as well as outdoor nature play spaces and playgrounds, and that the Plan should describe more specific project possibilities in relation to these interests.

PRESENTATIONS

In addition to the above-described outreach efforts, the City and consultant team presented to the city Planning Commission and City Council throughout the project to give updates and receive feedback as the project progressed. The feedback was minor but positive and was incorporated into the final plan. The final plan was presented for adoption on February 15, 2024.

Figure 4.3: Stakeholders worked in groups to annotate maps with ideas for recreational enhancements.





TRENDS IN RECREATION

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) conducts a survey to assess the demand for outdoor recreation participation as part of its statewide planning efforts. Survey results for the top 20 outdoor activities, ranked by participation rate, are shown in Exhibit 6.

Walking is the top outdoor activity statewide, with 91% participation on sidewalks and 90% participation on trails. This preference is consistent across almost all demographic groups studied in the report. This emphasizes the importance of providing quality trail and sidewalk networks to encourage this most frequent form of recreation. All 6 top activities feature forms of passive recreation – walking on trails or sidewalks, nature viewing, scenic drives, leisure time in parks, and picnics.

The 5 most popular structured activities include visiting a farmer’s market or community garden, visiting outdoor cultural/historic facilities (including cultural events), swimming, paddle sports, and attending concerts. Residents of Stevenson have access to all of these more structured forms of recreation locally.

Responses to the community survey for this project confirm these core recreation priorities in Stevenson. Survey respondents rate walking and hiking as far and away the most popular activity at existing park sites. Similarly, when asked what they look for in local facilities or recreation areas, the top 3 responses are views of nature, wildlife, or water; trails; and water access.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT SUMMARY: CURRENT GAPS

Current gaps in Stevenson’s existing network are examined from four different perspectives: types of parks, location of parks, trail networks, and facilities. Summaries under each of these themes are captured below. Key takeaways for addressing existing gaps in Stevenson’s park network are:

- **Trails.** Existing trail access in Stevenson falls below national standards for levels of service. Walking and hiking remain the most universally popular outdoor activities, confirmed both by national surveys and local community feedback. **Expanding access to trails is likely to provide high community benefit, and in Stevenson soft-surface trails are in particularly low supply.**
- **Core amenities and maintenance efforts within the existing park system.** Stevenson would benefit from investment in passive facilities such as bathrooms, playgrounds, nature playgrounds, exercise equipment, water fountains, and seating. These features could attract greater use and enjoyment of existing park spaces. Engagement confirmed community support for increased maintenance efforts to ensure a high functioning park system and a desire for more of these core amenities that are enjoyed by a wide segment of the community.
- **Park space in areas of northeast Stevenson and to the north of Rock Creek Fairgrounds.** Walkshed analysis reveals these areas of the city as priority zones for potential system expansion, as they are more geographically isolated from existing access. **The City should examine opportunities for creating new**

neighborhood parks or opportunities for developing trail systems in these areas.

- **Neighborhood and community parks.** Stevenson’s existing inventory of neighborhood parks is limited. Community parks are owned by other entities and have limited hours of access to the general public. **Future expansion of Stevenson’s park areas could focus on the quality and accessibility of these smaller and mid-sized spaces in the city.**
- **Open space.** Stevenson’s inventory does not currently include any dedicated open space areas. At the moment, the community enjoys some open space areas preserved in private parks, proximity to the water, and overall lower density development that makes this park type less of an urgent need. **As the city grows, however, increased considerations for publicly preserved open space may be an important focus.**

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Stevenson’s 2045 growth target is a population of 2,338, reflecting 14% population growth from 2022. As the community grows, improvements and expansion of the existing park system can ensure high levels of service for everyone in Stevenson. The table in [Exhibit 4.4](#) details Stevenson’s current levels of service (LOS) and sets a target LOS for

Exhibit 4.4: Existing and Target LOS for Stevenson, 2022 and 2045

Type	Current Inventory	Existing LOS per 1,000 pop (2022)	Target LOS per 1,000 pop (2045)	Gap*
All Park Space (in acres)	63.5	31.0	31.0	9.0
Trail/Linear Park (in miles)	2.9 miles	1.5	4.0	6.45
Percent of households** within the park walkshed (city limits)		86% (city limits)	100% (city limits)	14%

*Gap acreage calculated assuming a 2045 population target of 2,338

**For purposes of walkshed LOS, households are defined by residential parcels

Sources: City of Stevenson, 2023; Seva Workshop, 2023.

the future. This analysis reveals a gap of 9-acres in overall park space, as well as 6.45 linear miles of trail. Addressing these gaps will maintain a consistent LOS for park acreage and an improved LOS for trail access, aligned with national standards. These broad figures can be further contextualized and better applied when considering factors such as geographic accessibility and a proper mix of the different classes of outdoor space. In recognition of this, Stevenson also developed a walkshed LOS. This LOS identifies that 14% of current residential parcels are outside the existing park walkshed boundary.

ADDRESSING GAPS

The project proposals presented in this Parks Plan address the gaps identified during project outreach and LOS analysis. There is no single project that will perfectly address the 3 LOS metrics presented in this report, but a combination of efforts and continued conversation with the community will result in a system that better serves community wellness. System expansion will be constrained by financial and operational resources in Stevenson, so a continued search for funding and partnership opportunities will enhance the impact of local resources. The Planning and Implementation chapter of this report outlines a set of project proposals, including an implementation plan, to advance this work.



05

**Mission,
Goals,
Objectives and
Strategies**



East Point

Guiding Framework

The City of Stevenson's vision and goals for parks, recreation, and open space form the foundation for the PROS Plan and create a guiding framework for planning and decision-making. Crafted through collaborative efforts between the city and the Advisory Committee, the mission statement reflects insights gathered from a comprehensive public survey and public comments, seamlessly integrating key elements extracted from the Comprehensive Plan. This mission statement serves as a forward-looking representation, articulating Stevenson's aspirations and strategic direction for the future of its parks and recreational spaces.

Mission

To enhance Stevenson's recreational and gathering spaces in ways that increase access to the area's natural beauty and cultural heritage, for residents and visitors of all ages. In crafting the mission, important discussions were held that reflect the community's values. Here are the key ideas that guided the process:

- Recognition of the need to strike a balance in park development that caters to both local residents and visitors.
- Emphasis on highlighting the area's natural beauty and environmental features in park enhancements.
- Recognition of Stevenson's rich history and diverse cultural influences, informing the mission to reflect the city's heritage.
- Desire for parks that serve as community hubs, fostering gatherings that strengthen social bonds and build a sense of community.
- Commitment to providing parks and recreational spaces that are accessible and enjoyable for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.
- Aim to capture the unique character and values of Stevenson as a small town nestled in the Gorge, ensuring that the mission aligns with the town's distinctive identity.

Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

This section outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies that have emerged from a collaborative process involving input from community members, stakeholders, and evaluations of existing conditions and needs. These goals and objectives embody a commitment to enhancing the quality of recreational facilities, promoting community well-being, and ensuring the effective and sustainable management of open spaces. Shaped by the collective vision for the city's parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces, these goals lay the foundation for the implementation of this Plan.

The Parks and Recreation goals outlined in the city's comprehensive plan for Stevenson prioritize enhancing the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Acknowledging the town's Gorge destination status, the plan seeks to balance diverse recreational opportunities, encompassing premier outdoor activities and more community-based events. Key objectives include establishing a comprehensive plan for grant eligibility, preserving open space, ensuring proper maintenance of existing facilities, exploring sustainable funding sources, developing pathways and trails, providing a balanced recreation infrastructure, and actively promoting Stevenson's diverse recreational offerings through various media channels. The following goals build upon the foundational from the comprehensive plan, aiming to amplify the community's well-being and connectivity while further enriching Stevenson's recreational appeal.

In support of the City's goals for parks and recreation, the Plan identifies systemwide objectives and strategies that will guide the investment in parks, recreation, and related services. These elements are numbered for ease of reference; they do not appear in priority order. They are structured in the following format:

Goal X:

X.1. Objective

– a. Strategies

The strategies represent a mix of recommendations that should be taken to enhance the park and recreation system and achieve the City's vision for the future.



Goal 1: Maintain What We Have

Ensure that parks are well-maintained, aesthetically pleasing, and safe for community use. Enhance the quality of park facilities and maximize the lifespan of park infrastructure. Fund, support, and implement site-specific maintenance projects, tailoring efforts to address the unique needs of individual park facilities.

1.1 Provide high quality routine and preventative park and facility maintenance at existing parks and recreation areas.

- a. Provide enhanced maintenance at highly visible and heavily used parks.
- b. Develop a comprehensive maintenance management plan focused on landscape (independent of utility maintenance).

1.2 Increase maintenance of parks and recreation areas.

- a. Increase City staff hours dedicated to landscape management and maintenance.
- b. Increase specialized training in landscape management.
- c. Hire a staff person dedicated to parks/streetscape maintenance.

1.3 Facilitate partnerships with other agencies and organizations to share maintenance resources and costs.

- a. Each agency or organization quantifies and shares the costs associated with maintenance practices, including staffing, equipment, materials, and contracted services. Utilize standardized metrics and

reporting systems to track and evaluate the effectiveness and costs of maintenance practices.

- b. Research and determine the feasibility of implementing pilot programs for cost-sharing initiatives, such as shared equipment, joint contracts, and collaborative staffing arrangements, to optimize resources and enhance the sustainability of park maintenance efforts.
- c. Coordinate joint capital project planning and investments with other public and private agencies where feasible.
- d. Maintain a joint list of park, recreation, and open space grant programs for improvement projects that are updated as new opportunities arise.

1.4 Ensure adequate maintenance resources are available when parks or recreation areas are expanded or renovated.

- a. As new facility types are planned or developed, implement specialized training programs for maintenance staff to equip them with the skills and knowledge to manage new park facility types, including bathrooms and other updated amenities.
- b. Create a comprehensive documentation and resource database that maintenance staff can access for reference, including manuals, guides, and video tutorials related to new facility types.

- c. Establish a schedule for regular training updates to keep maintenance staff informed about evolving technologies, industry standards, and best practices relevant to new facility types.
- d. Purchase equipment necessary to maintain park facilities.

1.5 Explore alternative maintenance practices or management approaches that emphasize sustainability.

- a. Determine landscape planting types to implement based on criteria that consider aesthetic preferences, low-maintenance requirements, and support local ecosystems and sustainable practices (i.e. Converting regularly mowed lawn areas to low-mow meadow).
 - I. Introduce one demonstration area of landscape planting type to provide an opportunity to educate the public and train maintenance staff on best practices.
 - II. Select demonstration area for implementation based on current maintenance demand, visibility, and opportunities to engage the public.

Goal 2: Let People Know What We Have

Establish a community-focused approach to parks and recreation to create a more prominent presence of parks within the community, integrate parks planning with city planning, and build organizational capacity for effective program management.

2.1 Develop a comprehensive interactive online platform to provide detailed information on each park, open space, or trail within the City, including parks and open spaces maintained and operated by agencies and organizations other than the City. This information should include amenities, operating hours, upcoming events, and reservation options for facilities.

- a. Develop a comprehensive parks, recreation, and trails map for the City of Stevenson.
- b. Implement a centralized event calendar highlighting upcoming activities in parks and open spaces.
- c. Integrate a reservation system allowing users to book facilities or spaces for events.
- d. Establish a routine for updating and maintaining the online platform to ensure accuracy and relevance.

2.2 Assess the need and financial feasibility for establishing a dedicated staff position or Parks Department to manage parks projects, assets, and resources.

- a. Conduct a comparative analysis of similar-sized cities or municipalities that have successfully implemented dedicated parks management positions or established Parks and Recreation Departments to identify efficient organizational structures, staffing models, and budgeting strategies for long-term viability.
- b. Undertake a financial feasibility study to evaluate the costs and potential funding sources needed to establish a dedicated staff position or a full Parks and Recreation Department.

2.3 Integrate parks planning with city branding, marketing, and placemaking efforts, and coordinate with other agencies and organizations to leverage shared resources for broader reach.

- a. Develop a cohesive brand identity for parks and open space that aligns with the overall city brand. Develop consistent messaging across marketing materials.
- b. Establish partnerships with other city agencies, local organizations, and community groups to pool resources and collaborate on joint campaigns that highlight the interconnectedness of parks with broader community initiatives and events.
- c. Create a comprehensive signage and wayfinding plan that encompasses the entire city, outlining a unified strategy for guiding residents and visitors to parks and other key destinations.

Goal 3: Fill in the Gaps and Connect People to What We Have

Improve access and connectivity to parks, ensuring equitable distribution, legible and accessible pathways, and inclusive amenities. Identify and address gaps in park coverage and create a connected sidewalk and trail network.

3.1 Develop a pathways and trails plan to highlight Stevenson’s recreational, historical, and commercial sites, and to connect to existing parks and open spaces.

- a. Prioritize opportunities to connect existing pathways and trails.
- b. Include connections among the parks and trails of the City, its partner agencies, and private entities.
- c. Encourage private enterprise and intergovernmental agreements that will provide trail and pathway connections to parks and recreational areas.
- d. Include nature walks, scenic vistas, and connections to forests in the plan.
- e. Include wayfinding, signage, and placemaking so that routes to parks and open spaces are identifiable and recognizable as part of the larger trail network within Stevenson.

3.2 Develop trails that provide access to existing parks, water access points, and scenic areas.

- a. Partner with other landowners to develop formalized and accessible trails and viewpoints at the Piper Road landslide site and upper Rock Creek area.

- b. Continue to advocate for the construction of a multi-use trail along the Rock Cove shoreline connecting the Columbia Gorge Museum to the County Fairgrounds using existing easements.
- c. Purchase an easement from private landowners to expand the waterfront trail and establish public access to the water at the west end of the waterfront.

3.3 Explore opportunities for new park developments or expansions in areas with identified parks gaps.

- a. Initiate a feasibility analysis focusing on the acquisition of new park land by the City (e.g. evaluating land division guidance).
- b. Engage with the community to understand specific needs and preferences for new park land and amenities in gap areas.
- c. Target new development areas to reserve land for park space.
- d. Develop criteria, encompassing factors such as acquisition cost, natural setting, compatibility with park amenities, parking adequacy and proximity to user groups, to systematically identify opportunities for park land acquisition.
- e. Establish a permanent funding source for the acquisition and development of new park and recreation lands and facilities.

3.4 Explore Opportunities to Enhance Open Space Preservation and Recreational Opportunities within Open Spaces.

- a. Review critical areas and zoning codes and evaluate market-based open space preservation strategies for effective implementation.
- b. Consider using stream corridors and shorelines of the state as part of a parkway or greenway concept.
- c. Secure dedications and easements adequate for stream channel maintenance, trails, public open space, and future recreational use along all natural, permanent stream corridors.
- d. Utilize growth targets to identify and address risks to different open space types.
- e. Research regional tree codes and best practices to enhance tree canopy preservation within open spaces.

Goal 4:

Improve and Expand What we Have to Meet Diverse Community Needs

Develop a balanced system of recreational facilities, lands and programs. Provide vibrant, accessible, and inclusive community spaces catering to the recreation needs of residents and visitors of all ages. Offer year-round recreational opportunities, activate underutilized spaces, address community desires, and ensure inclusivity for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

4.1 Engage the community regularly to understand current needs and desires for park spaces in the community.

- a. Establish a parks related community advisory group that is comprised of community members that represent the diverse user groups in Stevenson.
- b. Conduct community engagement for parks capital investments.

4.2 Support parks and recreation projects that have public support and provide a geographically central, flexible space for year-round public use.

- a. Secure funding and develop the Park Plaza at the Courthouse lawn.
- b. Review community feedback from this plan and identify and roll-out program opportunities for flexible spaces.

4.3 Identify opportunities for local groups and/or public-private partnerships to become shared stewards and caretakers of city owned property.

- a. Collaborate with local artists to develop a public art plan that highlights the

opportunities for permanent and seasonal public art installations in underutilized city spaces.

- b. Partner with landowners of undeveloped properties to develop a pop-up dog park that will serve as a temporary space that will allow the City to determine a need for a more permanent off-leash dog area in the City.
- c. Partner with other local agencies and organizations to allow existing festivals and events to use and program underutilized spaces for small pop-up exhibits or concerts.
- d. Identify and collaborate with a community advisory group made up of adjacent neighbors, representatives from the High School, and youth groups to define long-term goals and a vision for Gropper Loop Park.

4.4 Provide public restrooms at existing facilities where feasible and invest in new public restroom facilities when parks and open spaces are upgraded.

- a. Provide a public restroom facility in conjunction with the proposed improvements at the Park Plaza.

4.5 Develop play areas that are current, accessible, provide opportunities for all weather play, and meet the needs of users of all ages.

- a. Support and encourage the development of plans to upgrade existing playground facilities at Stevenson Elementary School and Rock Creek Park. Develop an agreement for public use of facilities during non-school hours.
- b. Integrate formal and informal play features into the Park Plaza project.

4.6 Enhance accessibility and provide inclusive environments across all parks.

- a. Conduct an accessibility audit for parks that evaluates parking, pathways, entrances, amenities, and facilities to identify potential barriers and areas for improvement, ensuring that the park environment is inclusive and accessible to individuals of all abilities. Develop a prioritized action plan based on audit findings, addressing immediate needs, and setting a roadmap for long-term enhancements.
- b. Prioritize the incorporation of universally designed features such as inclusive playgrounds, seating, and facilities across all parks.

4.7 Determine the community need for a permanent skate park in Stevenson.

- a. After the new skate park in North Bonneville is complete, conduct a survey within Stevenson to determine if a new skate park is still desired in Stevenson or if the skate park in North Bonneville meets their current needs.

Goal 4 (continued):

Improve and Expand What we Have to Meet Diverse Community Needs

4.8 Establish new and enhance existing access to Rock Creek, Rock Cove and the Columbia River.

- a. Purchase an easement from private landowners to establish public access to the water from downtown. Develop water-based facilities such as an access point, viewing deck, or non-motorized boat launch.
- b. Support and encourage the development of plans to add water access points, docks and non-motorized boat launches at the Columbia Gorge Museum and the County Fairgrounds.
- c. Develop a water trail map in partnership with the Port of Skamania, the County, and the Columbia Gorge Museum.

4.9 Develop community gateways along Highway 14 that celebrate the character of Stevenson and welcome residents and visitors to the community.

- a. Determine what the most appropriate location is to install gateway features. Consider: east end and west end couplets, gateway park, and other city-owned underutilized spaces.
- b. Develop a landscape style and master plant list for use at all gateway sites to create a consistent look and feel.

- c. Engage the community to determine the most appropriate sign or monument to install at the gateways that best represents the character of the city.
- d. Create and implement the publicly supported plan.

4.10 Facilitate and support the development of major community recreation facilities for citizens, such as expanding the pool activity center, providing covered pavilion spaces, developing a youth center, and other spaces for recreation, physical fitness, and wellness classes.

- a. Explore feasibility of a centralized versus de-centralized approach to providing diverse indoor recreation opportunities to the community.
 - I. One centralized approach would be to consider the construction of a new community center. The city would consider what the minimum needs and size of the center would be, and what the minimum population, funding, and other support would be needed to move the idea forward.
 - II. An alternative centralized approach would be to look at existing recreation centers or facilities and opportunities to expand them to meet community needs.

III. A de-centralized approach would be to unify the existing facilities through the use of a common organization or management system. For example they could be managed by a new parks district or staff position that focuses on centralizing information for the community, including the ability to see programs, hours of operation, or make reservations.



06

Planning and Implementation



Projects and Planning Recommendations

The PROS Plan goals and objectives can be achieved through sustained, committed implementation over the next 20 years. The following is a summary of project recommendations that vary from site specific projects to overarching policies. Each recommendation is based on the assimilation of input from previous planning efforts, public outreach, existing condition, feasibility, and

alignment with the mission, goals and objectives described in this document. This chapter outlines project proposals for a 20-year planning horizon, capital and operational planning details for a 6-year implementation period, an acquisition/disposal plan, and an exploration of potential funding sources for Stevenson to pursue.

CAPITAL PROJECT PROFILES







This plan identifies six priority capital projects that align with the vision and goals outlined in this PROS Plan. These six projects are described in this section, with additional detail for the projects prioritized for the shorter-term implementation period. Each project addresses one or more gaps identified in the Needs Assessment:

- Expand the trail network
- Add core amenities
- Improve the existing system of parks
- Expands walkshed access
- New neighborhood or community park
- Addresses LOS gaps for 2045 growth targets

Some projects enhance existing sites, while others expand the system by purchasing new properties or easements for trails. The projects are counted in **Exhibit 6.1**, and then described with greater detail in the project profiles. These projects are supported by the community, address gaps identified in the needs assessment, and improve Stevenson’s LOS metrics.



Exhibit 6.1: Proposed Capital Improvement Projects

								BUILD			ADD	RENOVATE, REPLACE, OR ENHANCE	
		Expand Trail Network	Add Core Amenities	Improve Existing System	Expands Walkshed Access	Neighborhood or Community Park	Add LOS Gaps for 2045 Targets	Purchase Land	Build on Existing Parcel	Purchase Easement	Add New Feature(s)	Specialized	Natural Features / Trails
1st Street Sidewalk Trail Connection	Trail	X					X				X		X
Stevenson Park Plaza	Special Use Site		X	X		X			X		X		
County Fairgrounds Kayak Launch	Community Park		X	X					X		X	X	
West Waterfront Trails	Trail	X					X			X			X
Gateway Landscape Improvements	Neighborhood Park			X					X		X		
Piper Road Trails	Trail	X			X		X	X					X
TOTAL		3	2	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	4	1	3

Capital Improvement Project Ranking Methodology

To determine which projects should be included as capital improvement projects, and how to rank them, the team considered four categories. The first category was community support, the second category was needs and gaps, the third category was existing investment, and the last category was community costs and benefits.

EXISTING INVESTMENT

The score for existing investment is based on the level of prior planning or investment of money, staff resources, or community groundwork that has already been contributed to the project. This also includes how advanced the project is on its path towards implementation. This category assumes that a project in progress has existing community support and investment, and/or stems from prior investment in a planning level analysis that justifies its advancement towards becoming a project. This category had an added influence on community support in that most existing projects were included in the public survey.

The other dimension to this category is time sensitivity. Time sensitivity recognizes the efficiencies gained by adding to an existing effort versus starting one from the beginning. Some of the proposed projects are prioritized based on the benefit a more immediate implementation would provide by leveraging existing efforts or progress currently in place. If those projects were not underway, the proposed project would not be as high of a priority.

NEEDS AND GAPS

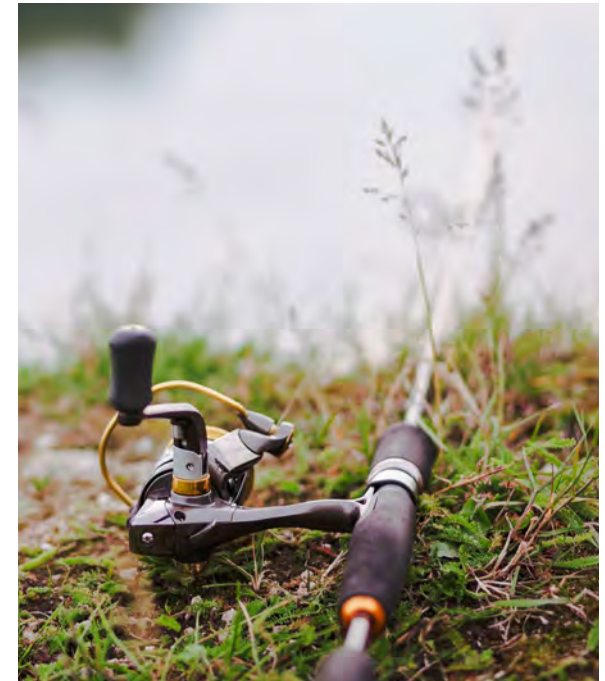
The second category was the degree to which the project addressed the plan's needs or gaps. The needs and gaps were identified in both the level of service analysis as well as the survey questions targeting amenity needs. These include a deficit in total trail length, as well as a need for wider park distribution and improvements to trail network connectivity. Gaps or needs for specific amenities or programs were determined based on community input. These included: playgrounds or general play spaces (such as a splash pad), bathrooms, non-motorized boat launches, and year-round use spaces, and space for more programs such as live music events.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Community support is represented by direct community comments, survey results, and whether the projects meet the plan mission, goals, objectives, and strategies that were created through community input. Community input had the overarching message to maintain and improve what the city already has, and to improve the experience of doing the activities the community loves most, in the places they love. While most of the support focused on existing spaces, there were still consistent requests for new amenities that would cater to different ages and abilities. The input has been distilled into four key priorities. The more priorities a project meets, the higher it scores.

Four Key Priorities

- **Walking and Trails.** The most popular activity is walking, with priorities for trail improvements or connections.
- **Water.** Connect to nature on the water, provide views of and access to the water. There was consistent priority given to projects on the water, and the parks and recreation areas the community loved most were along the water: at the Port waterfront, the County Fairgrounds, and Rock Creek.
- **Fix it Up.** Prioritize the improvement and upgrade of existing spaces and amenities as well as their routine maintenance and care.
- **Keep it Fresh.** A significant level of desire was still expressed for new amenities or program spaces (not currently existing) that serve a diverse population.

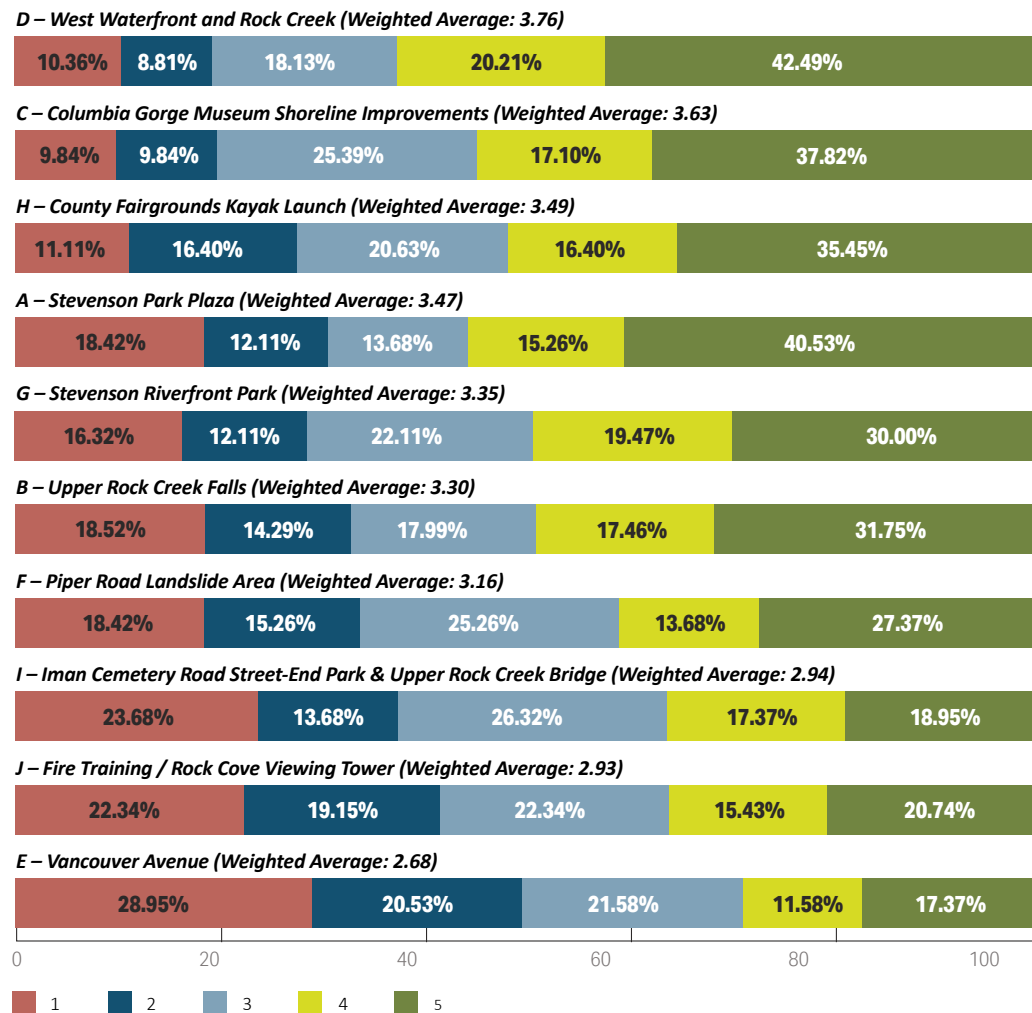




Four of the six projects were presented to the public in a community survey. The Gateway Landscape Improvements project emerged from stakeholder feedback conducted during project outreach and the stakeholder design charrette. The 1st Street sidewalk trail connection project developed as part of the Shoreline Public Access Plan, taking advantage of existing investments to the pedestrian network. Community members who took the online survey were asked to rank each project from 1 – 5, where 5 indicates the “best fit” for Stevenson. The results of this survey are presented in **Exhibit 6.2**. Projects that scored less than 3 were not prioritized (projects ‘I’, ‘J’, and ‘E’).

Exhibit 6.2: Community Survey Ratings of Park Project Proposals

Using a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 indicates the best fit) please indicate how strongly each of these projects align with your needs and desire for local parks and recreation areas.



COMMUNITY COSTS AND BENEFITS

The last measure was that of community costs and benefits. This category was an evaluation that contrasted the perceived immediacy and directness of the benefit to the community, should the project be installed, weighed against the cost and maintenance investment that would result. This measure of benefit was based on how soon the project could be used by the public, how often the project could be used, how large the user group would be, and how diverse the user group would be. Project cost estimates and maintenance were then estimated for each project to represent costs. For benefit, projects that are expected to immediately serve a multitude of diverse users on a year-round basis would score highly, while projects that are building the foundation for future phases

of projects would score lower. For costs, projects that have a high investment and will result in a high level of maintenance and upkeep will score lower, while projects with a low investment and low or no maintenance will score higher.

CUMULATIVE SCORING FOR RANK

Exhibit 6.3 is a summary table of the scores and ranking based on the established methodology. An expanded description of each category for each project, as well as a more detailed cost break down is included in **Appendix C**.

Exhibit 6.3: Capital Improvement Project Scores and Ranking

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT NAME	PRIORITY	EXISTING INVESTMENT (HIGH 3, MEDIUM 2, LOW 1)	EXISTING INVESTMENT: TIME SENSITIVITY (YES 1, NO 0)	NEEDS AND GAPS (HIGH 3, MEDIUM 2, LOW 1)	COMMUNITY SUPPORT: FOUR KEY PRIORITIES	COMMUNITY COSTS (HIGH 1, MEDIUM 2, LOW 3)	COMMUNITY BENEFIT (HIGH 3, MEDIUM 2, LOW 1)	TOTAL
1ST STREET SIDEWALK TRAIL CONNECTION	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	13
STEVENSON PARK PLAZA (AT THE COURTHOUSE)	2	3	1	2	2	1	3	12
COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS KAYAK LAUNCH	3	1	0	2	3	3	3	12
WEST WATERFRONT TRAILS (PHASE 1)	4	1	0	3	3	3	1	11
GATEWAY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS	5	2	0	1	2	3	2	10
PIPER ROAD TRAILS (PHASE 1)	6	1	0	2	2	3	1	9

CAPITAL PROJECT 1:
**1ST STREET SIDEWALK
 TRAIL CONNECTION**

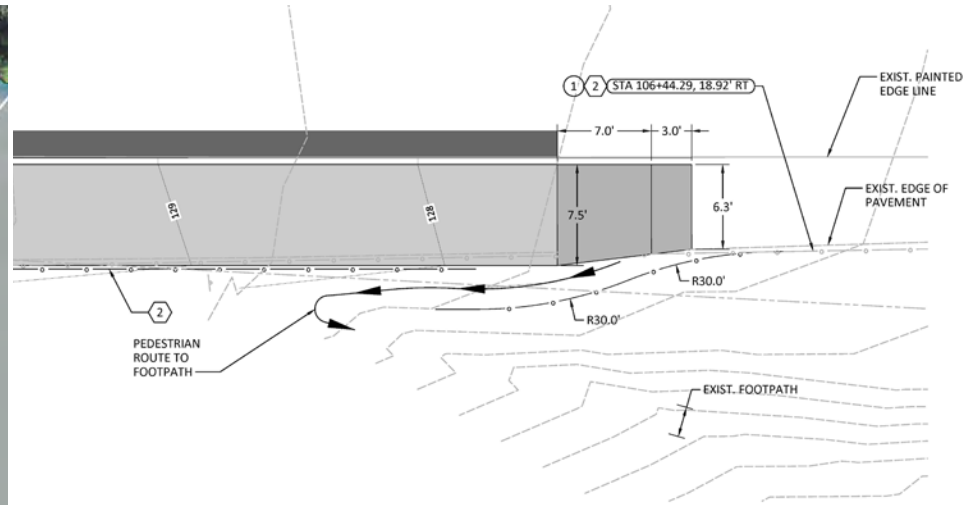
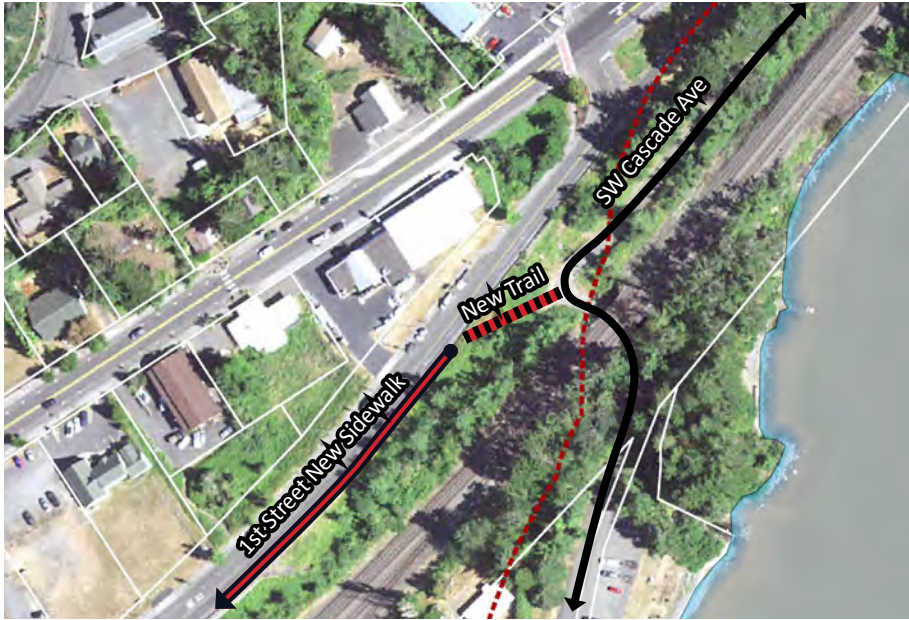


Exhibit 6.4: An excerpt from current draft plans by WSP USA acknowledge existing trailhead by allowing for a gap in the guardrail.

Description: The sidewalk expansion project has been under development since the creation of the city Comprehensive Plan in 2013. Studies and planning efforts discussed paving this trail segment in the future. The sidewalk project has been awarded funding and approved to move forward in the 2024 city budget. The current plan sidewalk expansion ends where this proposed trail would begin (see Exhibit 6.4). The project was also identified in the recent Public Shoreline Access Plan (2023) as a key link for pedestrians to access the east end of the waterfront safely. This project proposes to formalize a gravel footpath installed in 2018 with PCTA & WTA volunteers. This project was not included in the survey but leverages existing investment plans to improve waterfront access for the community.

- Existing Investment: Extensive coordination with WSDOT and over \$160,000 has been spent on design drawings for the sidewalk project. Another over \$800,000 has been approved to finish design and install the project this year, in 2024.
- Needs and Gaps: This project would add trail length and expand the network, as well as fill community identified gaps of safer water access.
- Community Support: This project supports the key priorities ‘Walking and trails’ and ‘Fix it up’.
- Costs and Benefits: The estimated cost to design and install this trail is \$18,000, assuming efficiencies by joining the existing effort. The benefit to walkers would be immediate, with minimal additional maintenance.

Justification: This project improves upon Stevenson’s existing pedestrian network and waterfront parks. The proposal is to join the newly extended 1st Street sidewalk to a trail leading to the eastern waterfront. This is a low-cost opportunity to leverage existing investments and add another point of connection to the waterfront.

CAPITAL PROJECT 2: STEVENSON PARK PLAZA



Exhibit 6.5: Design concept ‘Looking Towards the Future’ created by Rock Cove Design that was shared in the public survey.

Description: Today, the Skamania County Courthouse sits on a 1.07-acre site that is primarily open lawn, with some benches and picnic tables. The lawn slopes down starting level with the building but is above and separated by grade from the sidewalk level. The benches and tables are at sidewalk level. This site is walkable to Stevenson’s waterfront and central business district. This central park space is frequently used for community events and gathering.

Since the city kicked off the construction document phase for this project in 2023, the original concept created in 2016, and shown in **Exhibit 6.5**, has been modified to meet construction cost targets. However the goals of the project remain constant: to develop the site into an attractive park to act as a central gathering space in the city. Desired features include a water play feature, event space, seating, and a restroom.

- Existing Investment: Concept design development in 2016, \$275,000 investment in design fee for construction documentation in 2023-2024.
- Needs and Gaps: This project proposes the addition of community identified gaps in amenities, and provides space for programming.
- Community Support: Two key priorities are represented. ‘Fix it Up’, improving an existing space, and ‘Keep it Fresh’, providing new amenities that serve a more diverse community. Survey Ranking: #4
- Costs and Benefits: Estimated construction cost is \$3.2 million development, and a significant increase and diversification of future maintenance demands from city staff.

Justification: This project proposal received strong community support and aligns with the engagement findings that residents wish to continue improvements upon existing community assets. The Stevenson Park Plaza would transform an existing space from an open lawn into an engaging park, with unique features and amenities. The space connects nicely to Stevenson’s business district and waterfront park space. It could host public events with high community support, such as concerts and holiday celebrations. Programs could be hosted year-round and serve both locals and tourists alike. The water feature and other elements would serve also as informal play features for children of all ages.



Image: Community members gather on the lawn for the annual performance by the high school band.



Exhibit 6.6: Design concept ‘Community Terraces’ created by Understory Landscape Architecture, is one of three updated plaza design options presented to the community in a recent survey in December 2024.

CAPITAL PROJECT 3: COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS KAYAK LAUNCH



Description: This project would implement a formalized hand-carry boat launch and boat wash station along the shoreline at the fairgrounds, including shoreline restoration. For many years there has been public demand for a kayak launch on Rock Cove. The 2023 Public Shoreline Access Plan identified this as a project based on community input and the degraded condition of the shoreline from trampling and informal launching due to the lack of a formal facility.

- Existing investment: Relationship building and discussions with the county have been cultivated recently, beginning with the Public Shoreline Access Plan outreach process.
- Needs and Gaps: Improves existing system. Increase shoreline access. Community identified gap in need for specific amenities and programs: non-motorized boat launch.

- Community Support: This project represents ‘Water’, ‘Fix it Up’, and ‘Keep it Fresh’. It’s survey Ranking was #3.
- Costs and Benefits: The estimated cost for design, permitting and installation is \$107,000, however the city proposes to match funding by providing half this amount, \$53,000. The benefit would be immediate, year-round, and for a diverse community group. There would be no maintenance impacts for the city.

Justification: These improvements received high community support on the project survey. The result would be stronger waterfront connection and an improved experience for locals, visitors and event attendees. This project addresses the request to continue improving the existing parks system and would leverage shared investments and cross-agency collaboration promoted throughout this plan.



CAPITAL PROJECT 4: WEST WATERFRONT TRAIL: PHASE 1



Exhibit 6.7: Design concept of trails and shoreline access from the Public Shoreline Access Plan 2023.

Description: Phase one of this project seeks to take advantage of an opportunity to be a part of the future vision in this space by investing in public easements that would provide water access to the community. The city would purchase easements around the parcel perimeter including the future potential for public water access to Rock Creek and Rock Cove in a future phase of the project. The easement would be purchased from a private landowner. Future phases would include the build out of a permanent paved trail and formalized water access. The project would add 400 LF of trail. The cost estimate represents the purchase of two easement segments in this first phase, with a longer-term vision of adding the trail and water access in coordination with the development of the property.

- **Existing Investment:** Schematic plans to develop the private land at the west end of the waterfront have been explored in recent years with a focus on high-density residential development (Downtown Plan for Success! Adopted October 2022). The recent Public Shoreline Access Plan (2023) provided an evaluation by an assessor of the potential easements.
- **Needs and Gaps:** Future phases would add trail length and expand the network, as well as fill community identified gaps of safe water access.
- **Community Support:** Three key priorities are represented. ‘Walking and Trails’, ‘Water’, and ‘Keep it Fresh’. Survey Ranking: #1
- **Costs and Benefits:** Phase one of this project requires minimal maintenance, but the initial cost estimate to purchase the easements is on the high end at \$585,000. The benefit to the community is not immediate.

Justification: This project proposal received the strongest community support on the public survey. It expands the City’s trail network and adds public access to the waterfront. Waterfront activities rank highly in Stevenson. The overall cost and maintenance needs of this project are low and the result offers positive community benefit.

CAPITAL PROJECT 5: GATEWAY LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS



Image: A rendering of the east couplet imagines a new style and landscape at the city gateways.

Description: This project would enhance the landscaping at three locations: Gateway Park, and the east and west end couplets of Highway 14. Landscape improvements would focus on local and low-maintenance plantings, with wayfinding and a parks system kiosk located at Gateway Park. As a part of this effort, a landscape plant palette and character would be developed to be repeated throughout the city as a unifying aesthetic. In addition to planting improvements, these spaces offer a unique setting to highlight local public art integrated into the landscape.

- **Existing Investment:** The idea for an informational kiosk at Gateway Park was proposed in the city's Wayfinding Master Plan, dated 2012. Both couplets have within them or nearby 'Entering Stevenson' type signage, and some degree of landscaping or decorative lighting.



Image: A rendering of Gateway Park depicts a new aesthetic and maintenance standard at the city gateways.

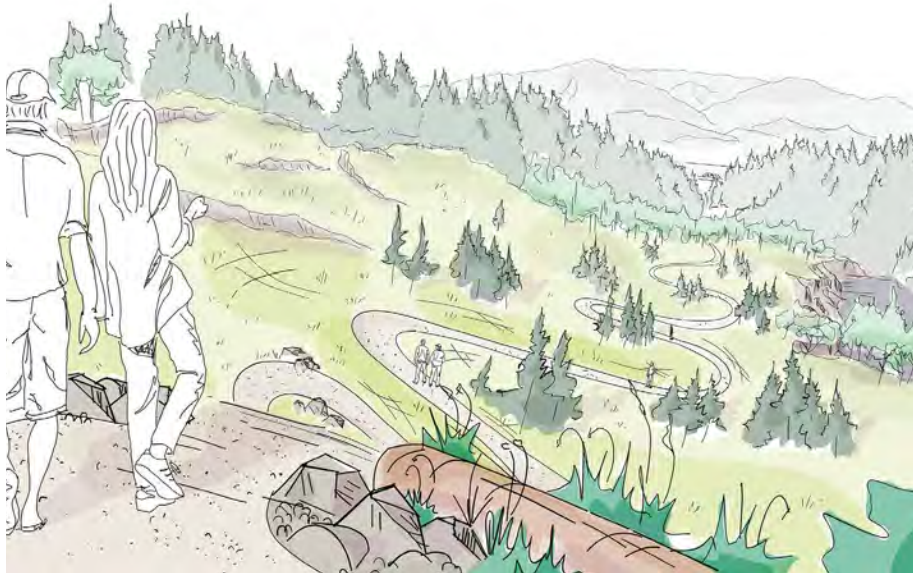
- **Needs and Gaps:** This project represents both 'Fix it Up' and 'Keep it Fresh' by improving existing spaces and adding new elements to them.
- **Community Support:** This project was not surveyed, but the desire for a more distinct gateway experience along SR-14 at each end of town was recorded in all community outreach methods.
- **Costs and Benefits:** The cost to implement this project is moderate at \$68,800. This may also require additional coordination with WSDOT. The affect on maintenance would not be significant when measuring total hours, however, the type of maintenance would be more diverse and more specialized. Training and equipment may be required. The benefit would be immediate and visually pleasing to residents and visitors looking for signs of more highly maintained spaces.



Image: A rendering of the west couplet reimagines the sense of arrival using natural elements and public art at the city gateways.

Justification: This project improves upon Stevenson's existing park network, turning Gateway Park into an identifiable gateway into town, celebrating Stevenson's natural setting, history and culture through public art and signage. The proposed concept emerged from stakeholder discussions in the design charrette, reflecting support from individuals with strong connections to the park network in Stevenson. It also addresses the public support for improving maintenance by developing a landscape that can be used by staff to develop maintenance techniques and explore lower maintenance practices in a small area.

CAPITAL PROJECT 6: PIPER ROAD TRAIL



Description: This project involves the purchase of easement agreements from a private landowner in the area affected by the landslide in 2007. The purchase of the easements would allow for the development of pedestrian trails, providing the public visual and potentially physical access to Rock Creek Lower Falls. This project was initiated during the development of the Shoreline Public Access Plan as an option to provide public access (visual and potentially physically) to Rock Creek and one of the waterfalls.

- **Existing Investment:** The Public Shoreline Access Plan included the investment in an official assessor report that evaluated the cost estimate to purchase easements on this property for this project.

- **Needs and Gaps:** This project represents ‘Walking and Trails’, and ‘Water’. It expands the existing trail network and park access watershed.
- **Community Support:** The community desire a public option to access Rock Creek. The project survey Ranking was #7.
- **Costs and Benefits:** The estimated cost to both purchase an easement as well as finance the development of design documents advanced enough to be used for a grant application is \$106,000. The benefit would not be immediate. Once a trail is eventually installed the city would maintain it.

Justification: This project adds to Stevenson’s trail network and addresses the lack of walkable park space in northern parts of the city, as well as lack of public access to Rock Creek. The private landowner has expressed initial willingness to participate in the agreement if the City pursues.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP) COST SUMMARY

The CIP focuses on a 6-year horizon for implementation of proposed park improvements. The six projects selected for prioritization in this time horizon are detailed in the project profile section above. These projects received strong community support, address needs and gaps in the existing system, and have some existing momentum and promise that they could be achieved in a shorter timeframe.

A total of \$3,808,146 across six years is needed to complete these projects. The result would be the creation of a new community park (on an existing site), the addition of three new trails, two additional waterfront access sites, and improvements to the city gateways including one of the City’s existing neighborhood parks. Half of the estimated \$107,000 for the County Fairgrounds Kayak Launch project is included in this estimate with the assumption of a match-fund approach, but no formal agreement is in place.

Exhibit 6.8: Cost Estimates for Project Proposals in 6-year Implementation Plan

PROJECTS	2025-2030 EXPENDITURES
1st Street Sidewalk Trail Connection	\$55,000
Stevenson Park Plaza	\$3,200,000
County Fairgrounds Kayak Launch	\$53,500
West Waterfront Trails	\$585,000
Gateway Landscape Improvements	\$68,800
Piper Road Trails	\$105,673
	\$3,808,146



MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

Currently, Stevenson maintains five physical spaces; three neighborhood parks Gateway, Walnut, and Gropper Loop, and two large landscape medians, the West End Couplet and the East End Couplet. These spaces total 16,200 square feet and cost about \$100,000 annually to maintain. This accounts for about 7% of the current General Fund budget in Stevenson. A consistent theme during outreach for this project was the desire for improved maintenance of existing park spaces.

The ‘Improvements on Existing’ in [Exhibit 6.9](#) details a maintenance schedule that could improve site conditions by doubling waste removal and integrating more landscaping services such as weed removal and landscaping services, including seasonal displays of flowering plants. Implementing this maintenance plan would increase annual costs by 9%. This would take maintenance costs from 7% of the 2023 General Fund total to 8%.

The right-hand column in [Exhibit 6.9](#) builds upon the improved maintenance to the current system plan, adding anticipated maintenance to the sites proposed in the 6-year CIP. These projects, if completed, would introduce some new categories such as bathrooms and splash pad maintenance. In total, the changes increase the maintenance budget by 27% over the existing. This would increase the maintenance fund to 10% of the 2023 General Fund budget.

Exhibit 6.9: Proposed Changes for Improved Maintenance of Existing Parks Network.

TASKS	HOURS (ANNUAL)	IMPROVEMENTS ON EXISTING	IMPROVEMENTS + CIP PROJECTS
Waste Removal	52	104	200
Christmas décor	300	300	350
Tree planting	100	100	100
Tree trimming/limbing	300	300	300
Mowing/Brush Removal	800	800	400
Irrigation repair	2	2	2
Fountain maintenance	10	10	10
Bathroom maintenance			500
Splash Pad Maintenance			100
Weed Removal/Landscaping		100	170
Total Hours	1,564	1,716	2,132
ESTIMATED COST	\$100,000	\$109,719	\$136,317



Cascade boat launch

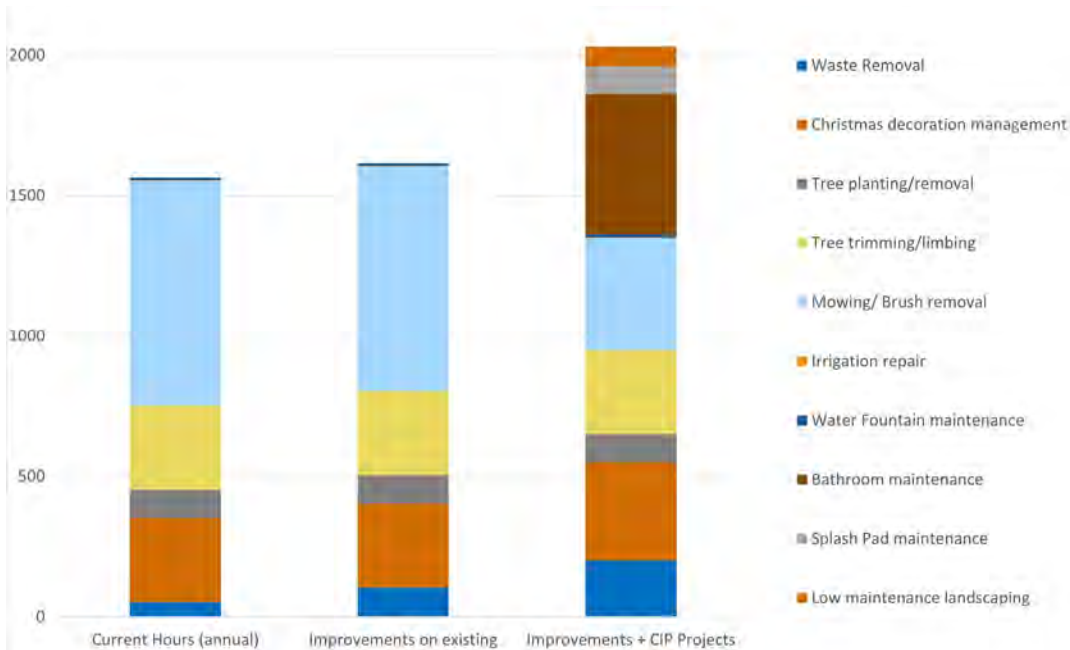


Exhibit 6.10: Projected Maintenance Budget Scenarios. Sources: City of Stevenson, 2023 for current conditions; DCG/Watershed, 2024 for estimated changes; Seva Workshop, 2024.

The weed removal/landscaping estimates assume City maintenance staff install seasons displays in existing parks or streetscapes. These will be rotated four times a year and areas will be weeded every two months. Soil will be amended and mulched every two years. New proposed projects will convert lawn to planting to achieve lowered mowing hours.

In general the proposed changes to maintenance may not greatly increase the city’s need to increase their annual commitment in spending, they do however propose to diversify the type of maintenance activities that would be needed to be performed by city maintenance staff. Currently the majority of time is spent mowing. A more diversified approach to maintenance may require additional training and equipment needs.

PLANNING PROPOSALS: 20-YEAR HORIZON

This section summarizes potential planning and feasibility projects for Stevenson to consider for the expansion and improvement of its parks system. These are called planning projects because they represent park project ideas in an early stage of exploration. More time needs to be spent considering each of these projects before a capital project could be created. Recommendations on how to address the needs identified related to Operations and Maintenance and Organization and Communication are described in the lists of strategies in Chapter 5. The descriptions below will include Amenity Focused Projects which consider different approaches to how to create a new project that includes the select amenity that was prioritized by the public. Master Plan projects similarly describe recommendations to move forward longer-term projects that were identified as a priority by the public.

AMENITY FOCUSED PROJECTS

Goal 4 articulates among other things the desire for amenities or facilities that meet diverse community needs. Specific park features were repeatedly requested during the public outreach process without association to any specific location. These requests were supported by the inventory which reflected an absence of these features. The following project pages describe each amenity or feature and provide possible options for how the city may move the project forward. Projects are numbered AP.1 through AP.12.

The project descriptions will use the following format:

APPROACH (1-3):

(Description).

Capital Cost: Low (\$ - \$\$),

Mid (\$\$ - \$\$\$), High (\$\$\$+);

Administrative Commitment:

Low (0-.01 FTE), Mid (0.01-0.05 FTE),

High (0.05-0.5 FTE)





Image Credit ©Earthscape

NEED:

Playground: AP.1

AMENITIES:

- Universal / accessible play equipment
- Nature Play
- Support broad age range

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.5
- 4.6

APPROACH 1:

The city partners with the School District to fund and create a playground master plan to replace the aging elementary school playground. The playground design could be expanded to meet city identified needs beyond the school needs. The city could expand the funding available beyond what the school district could have secured on its own.

Capital Cost: Low; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 2:

The city partners with the Downtown Association to fund and create a playground master plan. The goal would be to pursue a public-private partnership with a downtown developer to provide a public amenity to the city. In return the city could provide funding, incentives or allowances to compensate the developer.

Capital Cost: Low; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 3:

The city includes a playground as one of the primary amenities driving a future acquisition if/when they develop an acquisition/disposal plan. The goal of providing a playground will influence the size, location, and features of a future acquisition.

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: High



NEED:

Dog Park: AP.2

AMENITIES:

- Dog-friendly
- Family friendly
- Flexible and natural space
- Easy to get to
- Benches and trash cans

OBJECTIVES:

- 4.1
- 4.2
- 4.3

APPROACH 1:

The city works with the Downtown association to identify a developer who owns vacant land and is willing to partner with the city to create a temporary dog park location. The city and Downtown association can partner to fund construction and maintenance. The city can work with the developer to identify incentives to use the land. The otherwise vacant space is now activated for both tourists and locals.

Capital Cost: Mid; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 2:

The city includes a dog park as one of the primary amenities driving a future acquisition if/when they develop an acquisition/disposal plan. The goal of providing a dog park will influence the size, location, and features of a future acquisition.

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 3:

The city can work with Advisory Committee members to explore options to add a dog park to an existing park or publically accessible space. The city can offer to support the project though matching funding and/or maintenance support. The project design would be led by the landowner.

Capital Cost: Mid; Administrative Commitment: Mid



NEED:

Trail Connections: AP.3

AMENITIES:

- Family friendly
- Flexible and natural space
- Easy to get to

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.1
- 3.2
- 4.8

APPROACH 1:

Move forward the proposed Rock Creek Drive streetscape improvements to connect downtown to county fairgrounds as proposed in project SA.1 in the Shoreline Public Access Plan (2023). The project could be timed with utility improvements or commence independently. Any landscape palette developed from the Gateway Landscape Improvements project could be extended to the plant median on this street.

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 2:

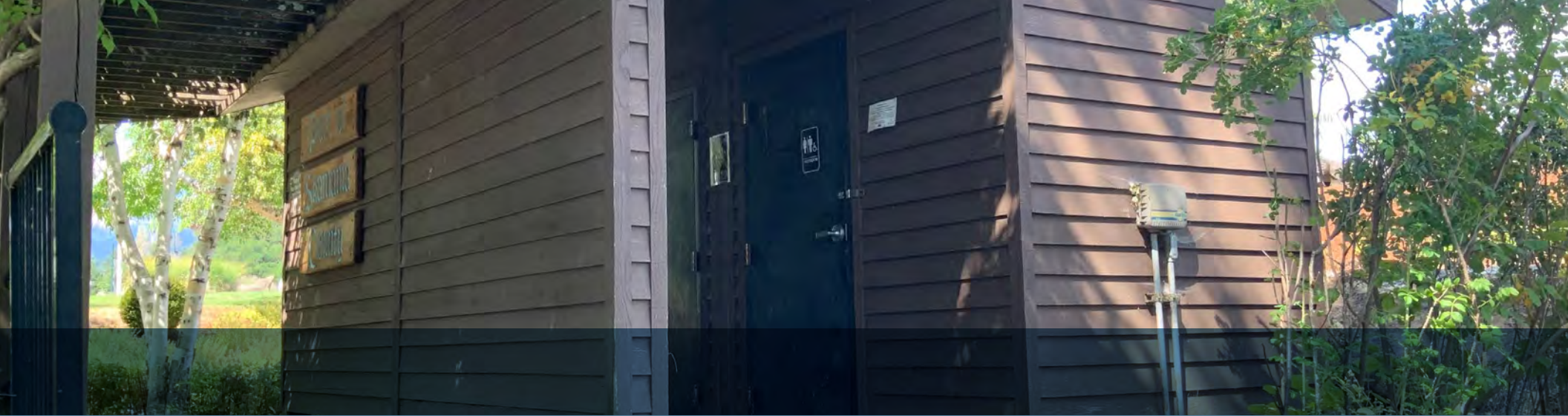
If/when the city develops a policy for pursuing acquisitions, create a plan and approach for delegated staff to monitor purchase opportunities and outreach to landowners in areas where there are gaps between existing trails. Consider acquisition or purchase of easements to prioritize connecting and extending existing trails.

Capital Cost: TBD; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 3:

Work with county to provide safe and well-maintained access to Upper Rock Creek. The county owns a large area of land north of the creek near the falls. Explore opportunities to partner with the county or purchase easements to develop safe public trail access to the creek.

Capital Cost: TBD; Administrative Commitment: High



NEED:

Bathrooms

AP.4

AMENITIES:

- Family friendly
- Flexible and natural space
- Easy to get to

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.3
- 4.4

APPROACH 1:

Provide a public restroom facility in conjunction with the proposed improvements at the Park Plaza project.

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: Low

APPROACH 2:

Partner with Advisory Board members to explore opportunities to expand existing restroom facilities. Work with partners to increase access to, awareness of, and accessible features of existing infrastructure.

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 3:

As potential projects arise over the next twenty years, analyze whether each opportunity should include a bathroom based on location and proximity to other bathrooms. For trail projects that will serve both locals and tourists, consider the seasonal use of a portable toilet if the trail is in a residential area (for example if a trail to Upper Rock Creek is developed).

Capital Cost: High; Administrative Commitment: High



NEED:

Shoreline Improvements: AP.5

AMENITIES:

- Family friendly
- Flexible and natural space
- Easy to get to

OBJECTIVES:

- 3.2
- 4.8

APPROACH 1:

Support and encourage the development of plans to add water access and a dock at the Columbia Gorge Museum shoreline. The city could support a museum led project through matching grants or fund matching for the capitol project components.

Capital Cost: Low; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 2:

Prioritize water access opportunities that arise with future park projects. For example, for the west waterfront trail project, the city should explore options for creating safe visual or physical shoreline access in phase two.

Capital Cost: Low; Administrative Commitment: High

APPROACH 3:

Continue to explore with the community any opportunities to develop the city-owned Vancouver Avenue property located adjacent to Rock Creek. Identify why the community response has been lackluster and whether an alternative approach would be more successful, or if not, whether the property could be considered for a disposal plan.

Capital Cost: Low; Administrative Commitment: High

ADDITIONAL AMENITY PROJECTS

Other preferences emerged from the public outreach efforts. While they did not make it into the 6-year CIP, it is good to be aware of these preferences for future plan updates, or if applicable grant funding is available. They include:

- AP.6: Improve access to community pool.
- AP.7: Add shade, through trees or structures, to parks.
- AP.8: Increase indoor recreation opportunities.
- AP.9: Create a safe swim beach.
- AP.10: Provide year-round flexible spaces for programs serving both locals and tourists.
- AP.11: Preserve the experience of quiet and views of natural scenery in parks.
- AP.12: Add exercise equipment to parks or trails.



PARK PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Several park planning activities were identified during the plan creation process. These planning activities are recommended to provide the information necessary to take the next steps in developing future parks and facilities. Planning projects are labeled PP.1 through PP.10.

- PP.1: Skate Park – a need for a skate park was expressed. It was also reported that a skate park is expected to be built in North Bonneville.
 - Once built, conduct a survey to see if a new skate park is still desired, or if the skate park in North Bonneville meets the community’s current needs.
 - If not built, then add to list of future desired capital projects.
- PP.2: Access to Upper Rock Creek – continue conversations with the county, or explore feasibility of acquisition of land to provide safe access to Upper Rock creek.
- PP.3: Identify locations for future parks in underserved and UGA areas to fill park system gaps.
- PP.4: Community Center – investigate options to provide a community center. Explore how existing facilities could be better connected to serve the functions of a community center. Alternatively, research what factors or requirements would need to be met to consider a larger capital improvement project to build a new community center. A new or restored building, such as the Grange building, might replace other aging facilities and physically centralize indoor recreation and gathering spaces.
- PP.5: Develop water trail master plan with the Columbia Gorge Museum. Continue conversations with the museum to explore ideas for providing more water focused amenities to the public including shoreline access and upland amenities that would support a water trail.
- PP.6: Develop master plan for Gropper Loop Park; engage local neighborhood.
- PP.7: Develop a master plan for Walnut Park.
- PP.8: Develop a master plan for the County Fairgrounds.
- PP.9: Develop a public art plan. Inventory areas that could host art installations, form an art advisory council, engage the public and create a plan.
- PP.10: Create a community-wide comprehensive trail, streetscape and utility improvement plan.

ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Over the next two decades, the City may want to proactively pursue property purchase to expand its parks network along with population growth. To achieve LOS targets for 2045, another 9.0-acres of park space and 6.45 linear miles of trails need to be added. The existing list of potential projects includes several acquisition and easement purchase agreements:

- West Waterfront trail easement
- Piper Road trail easement
- Upper Rock Creek Falls park site

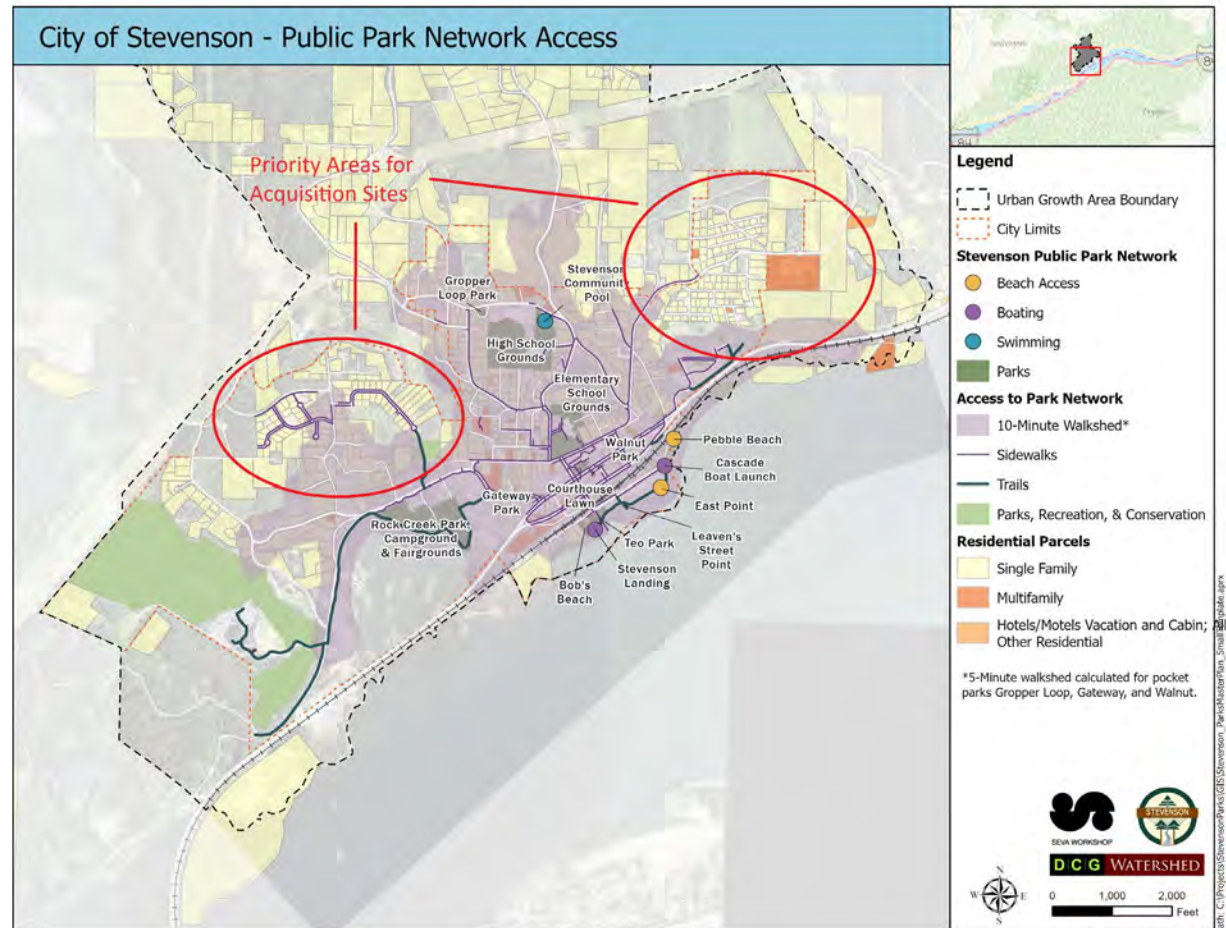
Other opportunities for acquisition could follow these strategic guidelines:

1. Continuing to purchase easements for trail development, particularly when segments can connect with existing pedestrian networks or other trails.
2. Explore neighborhood park opportunities, particularly in areas with residential parcels outside the existing walkshed. See map in [Exhibit 6.11](#).
3. If Stevenson considers annexation of any areas in its UGA, it is likely that additional park space for these residential areas would be an important consideration.

The current cost of land acquisition in Stevenson varies widely across the community, depending on location, zoning, and other features. Ranges from \$5- \$25 per square foot could be expected within residential areas.¹ To acquire 9-acres, a range from \$2- \$10 million might be anticipated for budgeting purposes. Existing easement

agreements greatly range from \$25,000 per linear mile of trail in non-developable sites to \$2.5M per linear mile of trail in more highly desired commercial or shoreline areas. An additional 6.45 linear miles of trail, if not part of acquired park land, could range from \$160K to over \$2M.

Exhibit 6.11: Stevenson Park Network Access Map



Sources: Skamania County Assessorm 2023; Seva Workshop, 2024

¹ - Estimate based on Redfin property sales, January 2024

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

In Stevenson, the existing capital improvement fund uses a real estate excise tax (REET) as its primary source to fund construction of major capital facilities. Revenue varies from year to year, but in 2021 the REET generated \$53,950.² There is, however, competition from a range of projects intended to benefit from this fund. In 2022, other projects supported by this fund included the Kanaka Creek and Gropper Sidewalk project, the Russell Avenue project, and the Joint Emergency Facilities project.

Intergovernmental Grants are another important way to identify funding for capital projects. In 2024, Stevenson is anticipating receiving \$382,252 from a combination of the Department of Commerce and a transfer from the Tourism Fund. The hope is that this cash infusion can create a ‘shovel ready’ project by the end of the year.³ Additional state and federal grant programs could provide funding to support the feasibility of the PROS Plan implementation. These sources are competitive, however, and many of the grants require matching funds or are restricted to specific types of expenditures.

With an adopted PROS Plan, the City is eligible to submit grant applications to the Washington Recreation and Conservation (RCO) Office. There are many different grant programs to consider, with some of the largest being the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP-Recreation).⁴ The adoption of this plan will help Stevenson qualify for many more state recreation resources.

Development agreements are an important tool for ensuring that new residential development considers the open space needs of its future residents. With these agreements, master planned developments must provide a designated ratio of park space to households. This is an impactful way for additional park space to be provided without direct City financing resources being required. However, the resulting park space is often managed by a private homeowners association (HOA) and access is restricted to residents of the community.

Additional Funding Options and Opportunities

- Enhanced local funding
 - Create a Parks and Recreation Bond
- Volunteer Efforts and Donations – Volunteers can be quite effective in terms of contributing cash, materials and labor. City may need to update their policy to support additional options for sponsorships and donations.
- Public-private partnership
 - Explore revenue sharing agreements with concessionaires and vendors at parks and recreation facilities. Revenue can be used to pay for capital improvements.
 - Explore corporate sponsorships, health organization grants and conservation stewardship programs.
- Explore formation of a Park District – A junior taxing district formed for the purpose of providing permanent dedicated parks, recreation, and open space funding. May be within the City or also include areas outside the City.



2 - 2022 Stevenson Budget Document

3 - Stevenson Budget Book 2024

4 - <https://rco.wa.gov/recreation-and-conservation-office-grants/find-a-grant/>