

# CITY OF MOLALLA PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN



DRAFT REPORT



July 27, 2007

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## City of Molalla Park, Recreation and Trails Master Plan July 2007

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*A special thanks to the citizens of Molalla who participated in this project by providing their time and support for the community, including those who took part in our public meetings.*

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CITY OF MOLALLA PARKS, RECREATION AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN - DRAFT REPORT • JULY 27, 2007



### Planning Process

This plan is a guide for future decisions and activities concerning how the City of Molalla will acquire, develop, operate and maintain land, facilities and programs related to parks, recreation and trails over a 20-year period. It should be updated approximately every five to ten years to ensure that goals, objectives and recommended actions continue to reflect the changing needs of City residents.

The plan is intended to meet the needs and reflect the desires of Molalla residents. Molalla is a fast-growing rural community located in the southwest section of Clackamas County. The City has a wealth of recreation opportunities available to its citizens and visitors. The City plans to promote the theme of a recreational community as it grows, ensuring adequate recreational opportunities to people who live and visit there.

This plan was developed through a participatory process that involved community members through the following activities:

- Meetings of a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) that met four times to provide guidance on plan goals, priorities and approaches to meeting future needs. This group reviewed and commented on all draft work products and assisted in informing other Molalla residents about the process.
- Two public meetings to review draft approaches, priorities, goals and strategies for meeting park, recreation and trail needs.
- Community survey distributed in the City's water bill to solicit opinions about priorities for different types of parks, recreation programs and facilities, and trail locations.
- Information about the project on the City's Web site and via notices and news articles in the Molalla Pioneer.
- Public work sessions and hearings with the City's Planning Commission and City Council.



## Overall Goals

This Plan includes the following overall goals for meeting future park, recreation and trail needs:

- Provide neighborhood and community parks to serve all residents of Molalla.
- Develop and maintain a city-wide system of trails to provide recreational opportunities such as walking, bicycling, jogging and horseback riding and to encourage safe alternative modes of transportation consistent with community priorities identified in this plan.
- Provide sports and recreation facilities and programs for city residents of all ages and abilities.
- Preserve open space throughout the city.
- Provide adequate funds to develop, improve, maintain and operate park and recreation facilities consistent with City goals, policies and standards.

Chapter 7 of the Plan includes detailed strategies recommended to implement each goal.

## Summary of Needs

To achieve the goals summarized above and provide park, recreation and trail facilities to the standards identified by city residents, the City has identified the following overall needs:

- **Acquire and develop approximately 33 acres of neighborhood parks and 26 acres of community parks** within existing and new portions of the City over the next twenty years. Neighborhood park needs are concentrated in the western portions of the City, particularly the northwestern



area and in potential future urban growth boundary expansion areas.

- **Create approximately 20 additional playing fields (soccer, softball/baseball and football/rugby/lacrosse), 22 basketball courts and eight tennis courts.**
- **Create a strong trail system that links parks, other community facilities and destinations throughout the City** and ultimately provides opportunities for connections to recreation areas outside the city. Priority trails include the Molalla Rail Trail, Bear Creek Corridor and on-street trail connections along Highways 211 and 214 and Toliver Road.
- **Build a new community recreation center.** The City will explore the feasibility of building a new multi-purpose, multi-generational community center. It could include a variety of facilities to meet community meeting and recreational needs. It could be built on a new site or possibly as an expansion of the Molalla Aquatic Center.
- **Improve existing facilities** at Fox, Clark and Ivor Davies Parks, as well as the Molalla Aquatic Center.
- **Expand recreational programming**, with an emphasis on health and wellness programs, and activities for youth and seniors.
- **Use a variety of funding sources and tools to acquire land and develop facilities**; establish adequate on-going funding for regular maintenance and operation of facilities as well as large-scale capital improvements.

## Overall Recommended Approach to Meeting Needs

The following approaches are recommended to meet specific needs:

- Acquire land adjacent to existing housing developments for new neighborhood parks whenever possible, including upon bringing additional land into the city limits.
  - Identify and pursue acquisition of park sites well before development occurs, including during the annexation process.
  - Consider joint development and maintenance of play equipment and picnic areas at one of the school sites on the west side of town to create a neighborhood park facility on an existing site.
  - Develop one new 10 to 15-acre community park inside the city limits in the western part of town, perhaps in conjunction with Timbertown Master Plan. Develop one new 10-15-acre community park outside the current city limits when additional land is brought into the urban area.
  - Develop playing fields in conjunction with development of new neighborhood and community parks, and as part of one or more playing fields complexes, if needed. Partner with local sports groups to develop and maintain these facilities.
- Consider the need for, and economic feasibility of, constructing a new community center based on a more specific assessment of community recreation needs and the cost-effectiveness and financial feasibility of building and operating the facility. Consider constructing the center adjacent to the Molalla Aquatic Center.
  - Update the City's system development charge methodology, rate and fees to reflect the needs identified in this Plan.
  - Assess the ability of grants, land dedications, voluntary donations and SDCs to cover the cost of needed facilities. If more funds are needed, consider use of bond measures or other funding tools to cover any identified funding shortfalls.
  - Conduct an analysis of needed operation and maintenance funding. Regularly update these assessments and adjust plans and standards as needed to ensure consistency between identified needs and available funding.

# 1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Molalla is a fast-growing rural community located in the southwest section of Clackamas County. Molalla is approximately 14 miles south of Oregon City via State Highway 213, approximately 25 miles northeast of Salem, and approximately 27 miles south of Portland. Molalla is generally surrounded by farmland and other agricultural land uses.

Molalla has always had a wealth of recreation opportunities available to its citizens and visitors. The City plans to promote the theme of a recreational community as it grows, ensuring adequate recreational opportunities to people who live and visit there.

The City of Molalla's Park, Recreation and Trails Master Plan is a guide for future decisions about how the City acquires, develops, maintains and operates parks, facilities and trails over a 20-year period.

This plan identifies service standards, park acreage, trails priorities and other recreational facilities needed to meet the city's need over the planning period. It also outlines goals

and strategies for meeting the needs and standards identified in the plan.

This plan establishes the planning framework for the city's park, recreation and trails system for the next 20 years. However, this is a living document that should be updated regularly. The City should continue to revisit this plan as the community grows and periodically survey residents about their preferences and priorities for parks and recreation facilities and programs.

## Park and Recreation Facilities

The City of Molalla currently owns a variety of park facilities. Some are used primarily for active recreation (e.g., neighborhood and community parks, playing fields), while others are designed more for passive uses (open spaces and natural areas such as Ivor Davies Park).

The City currently owns about 75 acres of park space, over half of which is in undeveloped parks or open space. In addition, about 37 acres of playing fields owned by the Molalla River School District are available for community use when not in use by the school district. Park conditions vary greatly by park and within parks. The condition of park facilities is closely related to age. Only about half of all public facilities are ADA accessible. Generally, playing fields are heavily used and many are reportedly in poor condition, including both tracks.



Tables 1 and 2 briefly describe different types of parks and recreation facilities and, where relevant, indicates the number of facilities and total acreage that the City currently owns. In addition to the facilities listed in Tables 1 and 2 that fall into typical categories, the City owns a Skate Park, playing fields at Sheets Field and undeveloped property at Bohlander Field. The school district owns playing fields at its elementary school, middle school, high school, Heckart Field and tennis courts at 5th and Swiegle, all of which are used in part for community use.

More specific information on each facility can be found in Table 3.

The city-owned Adult Center provides a range of recreational activities for Molalla area seniors including a lending library and group activities such as quilting. Meals are served at the senior center four days a week and are delivered from the center. Public meetings and events are also held in the cafeteria of the adult center in the evenings.

The Police Activities League (PAL) operates youth recreational programs at the city-owned Molalla Youth Center. A wide variety of programs are available to youth ages 8 to 14 after school during the school year and during the workday in summer. Activities include arts and music, games, science curriculum, sports and homework assistance. Students from four area middle schools and home-schooled students participate in the PAL programs. About 90 children are enrolled in the 2007 summer program.

Molalla Youth Services, funded in part by city grants, user fees and donations, provides youth sports opportunities for youth from kindergarten through eighth grade. The school district's community education program also provides recreational

**Table 1. City of Molalla Existing Facilities**

Type of Facility	Number	Total Existing Acreage
Neighborhood Park	2	3.3
Community Park	1	10.15
Aquatic Center	1	1.2
Natural Areas/Open Space	3	44.5
Other Parks and Facilities	4	18
<b>Total Acreage</b>		<b>77.5</b>

programs for both youth and adults and coordinates the use of school district facilities.

Most of the existing city-owned park and recreation facilities in the city are concentrated on the east side of town, while the west side of town is served primarily by school-district properties (see Map 1). Long Park and Fox Park are the two facilities that serve as neighborhood parks; both of these are located near downtown towards the east side of town (see Map 2). The northwestern part of the city, particularly where new, relatively dense housing development has occurred, is most in need of park land.

Major roads and other physical features act as barriers to some park facilities. For example, Oregon Highway 211 is an obstacle to people walking from areas to the south of the highway to city-owned parks north of the highway where most are located. Other roads that act as barriers to some degree include N. Molalla Avenue and N. Cole Street.

In addition to city-owned and school district facilities, recreational

**Table 2. Parks and Recreation Facility Descriptions**

Type of Facility and Examples	Description	Sample Facilities
Neighborhood Park • Long Park	Parks that meet the recreational needs of the surrounding residential neighborhood including informal play areas, green open space and opportunities for informal recreation. Typically 2-5 acres in size.	Children’s play areas; picnic areas; trails, open grass areas; outdoor basketball courts; pet areas; multi-use sports fields.
Community Park • Clark Park	Larger parks that provide active and passive recreation opportunities. Accommodates large group activities including facilities for organized recreation and programs.	Sports fields; group picnic areas; informal lay areas; walking paths; community gardens; skate or BMX facilities; pet areas; rest rooms and associated parking.
Aquatic Center • Molalla Aquatic Center	Indoor and/or outdoor swimming pools and associated facilities that provide opportunities for swimming and other aquatics classes, leisure pool activities, competitive swimming events and other water-related activities.	Swimming pools and associated facilities (e.g., restrooms, changing rooms) and instructional programs.
Community Center • None	Facilities that provide year-round, community social, cultural and recreational activities, including services and programs for children, adults, teens, seniors and families.	Community meeting rooms; gymnasium; multi-purpose classrooms; fitness room; performance spaces; parking and play areas.
Linear Park/Trails • Trails in Ivor Davies Park	Land following corridors such as abandoned railroad rights-of-way or power line corridors. Preserve open space and provide public access to trail-oriented activities such as walking, biking, hiking, etc.	Paved bikeways and walkways, directions and control signage; multi-purpose paved trails; soft-surface trails; boardwalks; gates; benches; overlooks; interpretive facilities; connections to the City sidewalk and street system.
Natural Areas/Open Space • Ivor Davies Park • Bear Creek Annex North • Aquatic Center open space	Relatively undeveloped areas that may incorporate wetlands or other water areas or be predominantly characterized by tree/forest cover. Greenways are relatively undeveloped lands that may follow stream corridors or other natural features and may provide trails.	Trails; signage; interpretive features and natural areas

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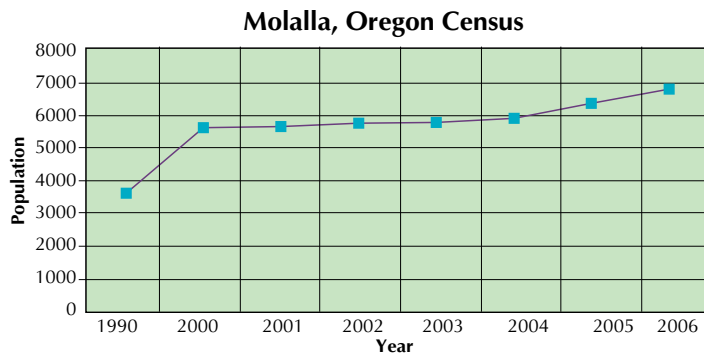
areas outside the city provide opportunities for city residents. Future trails within and outside the city ultimately could provide connections and access to these areas. They include Molalla River State Park in Canby, a multi-use natural area at the confluence of the Molalla, Willamette and Pudding Rivers as well as Hardy Creek mountain biking trails – a popular destination for mountain bikers from throughout the region.

Project staff analyzed the existing street network and land uses to identify areas of greatest need and potential for trails. Improvements that connect to significant environmental features, schools, public facilities, local neighborhoods and business districts in Molalla and throughout the region are recommended.

## Population and Demographics

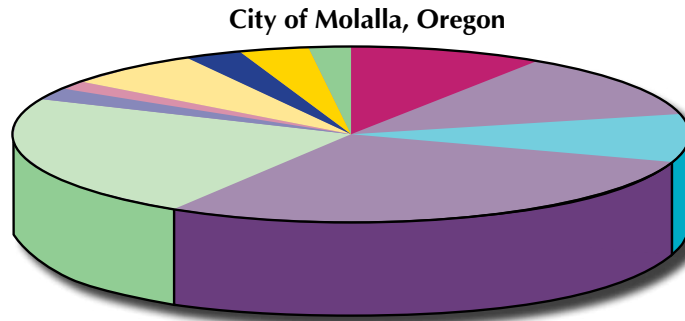
The population of Molalla was estimated to be 6,830 in July of 2006. According to the most recent decennial census (2000), the population is 90% white. Eight percent of the population was Hispanic in 2000. Molalla's population increased 54% between 1990 and 2000, and grew about 2% per year between 2001 and 2004. More recently, population estimates suggest that the city has been growing 7-8% annually. The non-white population increased from 6% in 1990 to 10% of the city in 2000.

In 2000, over half (56%) of households included a married couple, and thirty percent (31.8%) of the population of Molalla consisted of children under the age of 17, with approximately one-third (31.6%) of those being under the age of 5. An additional 10.6% of the population was people of age 65 or older.



### Current funding

During the last three years, the City has budgeted an average of \$325,000 per year for park and recreation costs, including about \$145,000 for materials and services and \$177,000 for personnel costs. The bulk of this funding covers operation of the



- 1-person male household
- 1-person female household
- Family household: married: with children under 18 years
- Family household: married: with no children under 18 years
- Family household: other: male householder, no wife present: with children under 18 years
- Family household: other: male householder, no wife present: no children under 18 years
- Family household: other: female householder, no husband present: with children under 18 years
- Family household: other: female householder, no husband present: no children under 18 years
- Nonfamily household: male householder
- Nonfamily household: female householder

City's Aquatic Center. The Aquatic Center also is funded in part through user fees.

The City and school district partner to maintain some school district and city facilities. Examples of this informal partnership include reduced city water fees for watering school playing fields. The two also shared resources to reline some playing fields – the city provided paint and the school district donated labor. There is no formal agreement between the school district and the city at this time.

**Table 3. Inventory of Parks, Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities**

Name	Size (acres)	Features	Accessibility	Condition	Other Comments
Long Park	1	Playground, shelter, restrooms	Not compliant	Newer playground structure. Facilities are in mixed condition	
Skatepark	0.25				
Fox Park	2.3	Basketball, restrooms, playground, splash pad	Fully compliant	New/Very Good	
Clark Park	10.15	Multiple playing fields, concession stand, restrooms	Not compliant	No sidewalks through park Facilities in mixed condition	Schools use playing fields
Sheets Field	3.4	BMX track, playing fields, concession stand, restrooms	Not compliant	Poor condition	BMX track attracts hundreds of people during state wide meets
Oddfellows Pocket Park	0.25	Picnic area	Fully compliant		
Ivor Davies Park	38	Picnic area, open space, trails	Fully compliant		Needs 2nd and 3rd phases finished to complete trail system loop
Bohlander Field	11.5		Fully compliant	Mixed condition	Will be added to natural area. Added restroom and parking are planned
Bear Creek North Annex	3				Will be added to natural area. Added restroom and parking are planned
Molalla Aquatic Center Park	3.5		Fully compliant	New/nearly new condition	
Molalla Elementary School	9.75	Playground, track, playing fields, playground		Track in poor condition	Fields used by Molalla Youth soccer about 25% of time
Molalla Middle School	9	Playground, baseball field, playground, shelter, splash pad			Soccer and Baseball fields used by Molalla Youth Sports about 60% of the Time. Fields used by M.Youth Football about 25%
Tennis Courts	0.14				
Heckard Field	18.62	Multiple playing fields, concession stand, restrooms		Track in poor condition	Fields used by M.Youth Football about 25%
Molalla Aquatic Center	1.2	Swimming pool, restrooms			Owned by school district with long-term lease

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During the last three years, the City has budgeted an average of \$9,000 per year for major capital improvements to park and recreational facilities.

The City also uses land dedication requirements and system development charges to help acquire and develop new park land and facilities.

## 2. FUTURE CONDITIONS AND PRIORITIES

### Future Population and Growth

The City of Molalla has experienced significant growth in recent years, including a significant amount of new housing development. According to population estimates, the city population grew 20% between 2001 and 2006 (from 5,690 to 6,830). These trends are projected to continue; the population estimate for 2027 is approximately 12,100.

The draft updated comprehensive plan for the City of Molalla includes a vision of the City as a complete recreation community with adequate recreational facilities for Molalla residents and outdoor attractions for regional visitors. The City hopes to exceed typical city recreation standards and establish Molalla as a recreation center for the region.

### Public Involvement and Community Priorities

Public participation was a key element of the master planning process and consisted of three approaches.

A project advisory committee (PAC) consisting of City employees, City Council members and representatives of Clackamas

**The City hopes to exceed typical city recreation standards and establish Molalla as a recreation center for the region.**

County, Molalla River School District, Molalla Youth Sports, Molalla Buckeroo, Molalla Area Chamber of Commerce and TEAM MolallaFirst provided guidance throughout the planning process.

The PAC met four times during the course of the planning process to advise city and consulting staff on priority park, recreation and trails needs, level of service standards, plan alternatives and to review the draft master plan.

Two public meetings hosted by the city were open to all interested community members and provided a variety of mechanisms for feedback. The meetings were held to solicit community input on park and recreation needs, plan alternatives and strategies. Both meetings included brief presentations from staff and consultants, a question and answer session and opportunities for written input through voting exercises and comment forms.

The city distributed a community questionnaire to all residents of Molalla in their water bills in March, 2007. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) asked residents to identify the greatest needs for parks, recreational programs and trails and to identify specific areas they would like to see the city focus on.

Public input from all three sources was fairly consistent and community members indicated very similar levels of support for most types of recreational facilities.

Figure 1: Molalla Parks and School Facilities

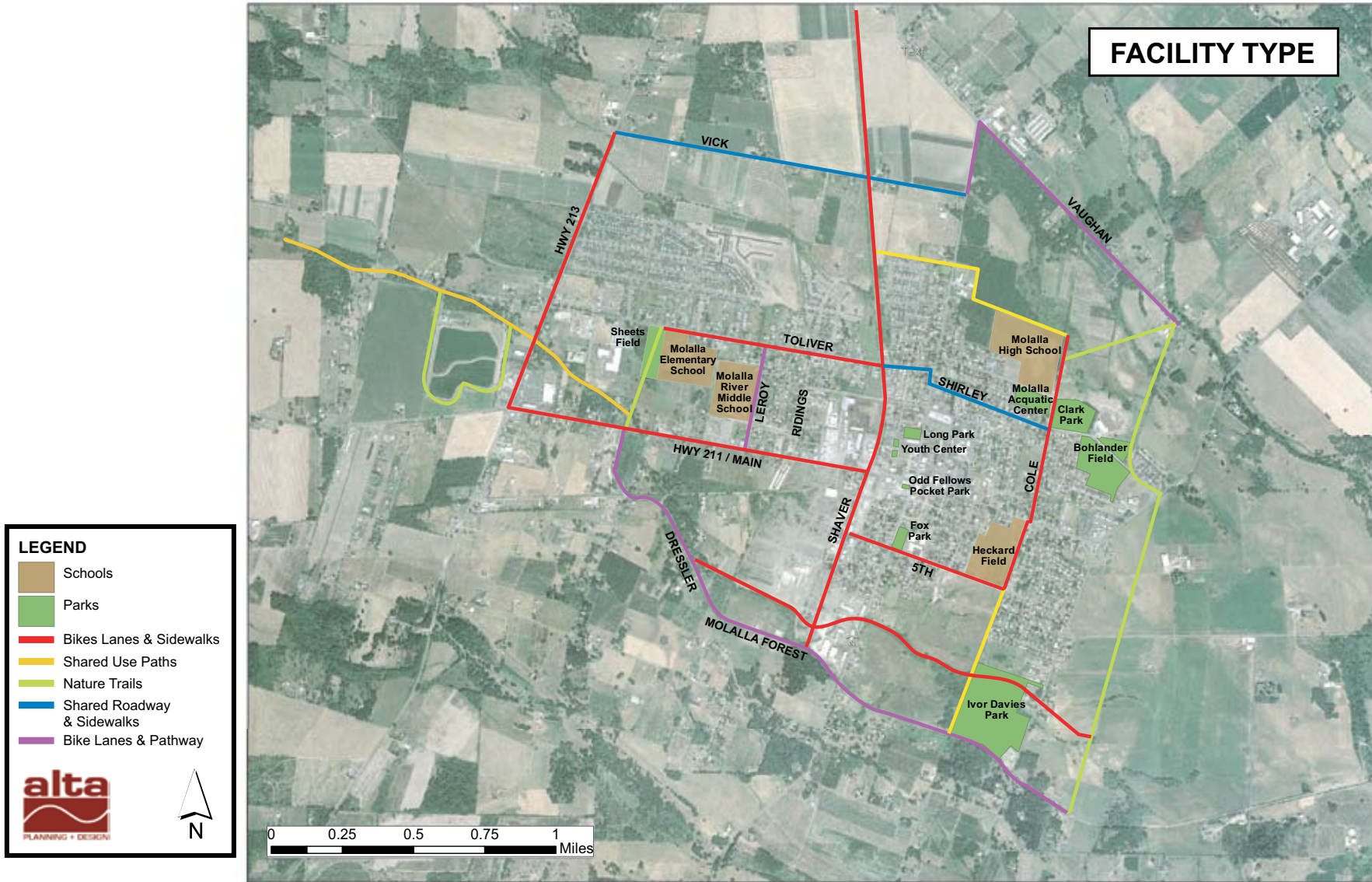
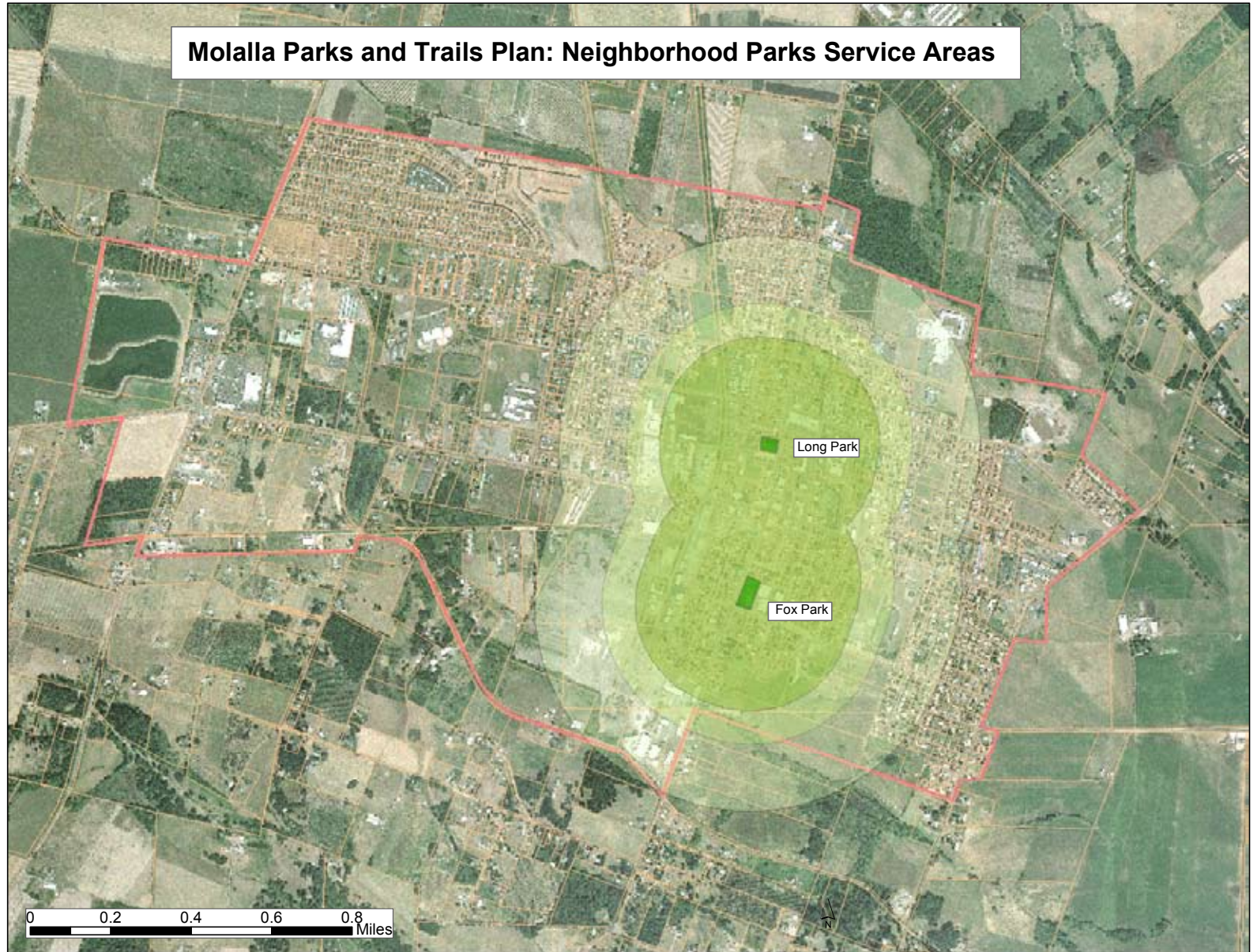


Figure 2: Molalla Neighborhood Parks



## Park Facilities

Overall, community members expressed strongest support for: walking, hiking and biking trails; community parks and neighborhood parks – in that order. The PAC recommended that more emphasis be placed on providing neighborhood parks than community parks, in contrast to the questionnaire responses. Priorities for neighborhood parks were not as high among public meeting participants.

Improvement of existing facilities is a higher priority for most respondents (61%), in comparison to acquisition or development of new recreational facilities. Clark Park was most often cited by questionnaire respondents as needing improvements and/or additional facilities.

PAC members and questionnaire respondents note that the area most in need of additional park space and facilities is in the northwest part of the City, specifically in and near Big Meadows, Lexington Estates and other new housing developments. Some questionnaire respondents also indicate a need for more neighborhood parks on the east end of town and to the south.

## Recreational Programs

The most popular recreational needs identified are before- and after-school programs for youth and senior programs. Public meeting participants also indicate strong support for health and wellness programs.

## Trails

Trails are a key element of Molalla's desired recreation vision. The Molalla Transportation System Plan (TSP) provides a

framework for transportation improvements in the future. It recognizes the importance of multi-modal travel options and strives to improve the bicycle and pedestrian environment over time.

Trails offer numerous aesthetic and recreational opportunities, as well as commuter options for traveling to and from destinations in Molalla. Residents who want to bicycle or walk to work, go for a family bicycle ride to the park, library, or aquatic center, or experience an undeveloped natural area will benefit from safe, connecting trails. Trails often help raise property values, provide common space for social interactions, improve overall community safety and encourage healthy lifestyles. They can also improve over-use conditions in sensitive environmental areas when designed properly. Molalla residents rate trails as one of the community amenities they desire most.

A high-quality trail system is a marker of a community that is truly great to live, work and play in. This plan uses the term 'trail' to describe shared use paths, multi-use trails, sidewalks and pedestrian accessways designed for non-motorized usage. Sidewalks or paths directly adjacent to roadways are included when they provide a link

**Improvement of existing facilities is a higher priority for most respondents (61%).**



between trails or between a trail and a destination. Trail users may include but are not limited to: bicyclists, non-motorized scooters, in-line skaters, users of other wheeled devices, roller skaters, wheelchair users, walkers, runners, and, in some cases, equestrians.

Molalla has numerous opportunities to develop a quality trail system. The region is relatively flat, and several linear corridors present significant trails opportunities (rail corridor and Bear Creek). Many streets in newer developments and the older historic core have sidewalks. The growing city is in the process of extensive planning for future growth. As the urban growth boundary expands, the City has a unique opportunity to integrate trails into future development and connect newer parts of the city to the historic core.

As part of the development of the Plan, project staff analyzed the existing street network and land uses to identify areas of greatest need and potential for trails. The Plan recommends improvements

that connect to significant environmental features, schools, public facilities, local neighborhoods and business districts in Molalla and throughout the region.

There is strong community support for walking, hiking and biking trails throughout the City, both for recreation and pedestrian safety. The railroad corridor and Molalla Forest Road trail corridor are the top two trail priorities of questionnaire respondents while PAC members also favor a Bear Creek trail.

The Safeway shopping center was frequently cited as a desirable trail destination by questionnaire respondents, many of whom also support trails or pedestrian/bike paths along Highway 211 and Toliver Road and routes from Big Meadows. Public meeting participants also favor trails along Highways 211 and 213 as well as Vick Road.

# 3. PROPOSED PARK, RECREATION AND TRAIL STANDARDS

Level of service standards are used by communities to evaluate current conditions and determine future park and recreation needs. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends standards for several types of parks, playing fields and other facilities. Recently, the NRPA has moved away from recommending specific standards at the national level towards suggesting general guidelines that allow greater flexibility at the local community level. Following is a summary of proposed level of service standards for the City of Molalla. These standards are based on an analysis of existing conditions and on input from the PAC.

## Overall Standard

The City of Molalla's Comprehensive Plan recommends an overall standard of 12.5 acres of parks and open space per 1,000 people, including approximately 10 acres of developed park land and 2.5 acres of open space. This Plan assumes this overall standard for all planning alternatives.

## Parks and Playing Fields

The proposed standard for neighborhood parks is towards the higher end of the scale suggested by the National Park and Recreation Association (NPRA). This relatively high standard is consistent with community and PAC input that places a relatively high priority on neighborhood parks and on locating parks within

relatively close proximity to residents (approximately ¼ mile). Implementing this standard would require the creation of several more neighborhood parks, particularly on the west side of the City.

City staff and PAC members also have recommended relatively high standards for playing fields which exceed NPRA guidelines. Preliminary proposed city standards are 25% to 50% higher than NPRA guidelines. While public meeting participants suggested even higher standard for baseball and softball fields, those increased measures are not recommended in this Plan at this time, given the resulting cost and significant differential between existing and future standards. The City may choose to increase standards for those facilities at a later time, depending on its progress in implementing the recommendations in this Plan.

## Open Space

The City currently has a significant amount of passive open space and exceeds recommended standards for natural areas based on the current supply. Community members have expressed support for preserving these spaces and acquiring additional open space throughout the City as new development occurs.

## Trails Standards

A typical standard for trails is that each household should be within one half-mile of a walking, hiking or biking trail. The



City of Molalla has many opportunities for trail development, as described in the following section of the Plan.

One goal of this plan is to create an integrated system of trail loops. The **backbone** of this integrated loop system is formed by two off-street multi-use paths: a north-south trail connected to an east-west trail. A large **primary ring trail** connects to the trail backbone, allowing users to form loops of differing lengths. **Local micropaths** to the trail allow residents to access the trail system from their homes, and help them to connect to destinations throughout the city. Finally, **radial connections** are planned to connect the trail system to other communities.

This integrated system of trails – explained in more detail in the *Design Guidelines and Recommendations* sections – gives community members a wide variety of trail options throughout the city.

### Other Facilities

Other facilities may include the following:

- Skateparks and skatespots
- Aquatic Centers
- Senior Centers
- Youth Centers
- Community Centers

Skateparks are becoming increasingly popular with park and recreation departments and districts throughout Oregon and the country. Skatespots are smaller facilities for youth that can be incorporated into neighborhood parks and which may provide recreational opportunities for younger children. The City of Molalla has a popular skatepark and may wish to consider



incorporating skatespots into new or existing neighborhood or community parks in the future.

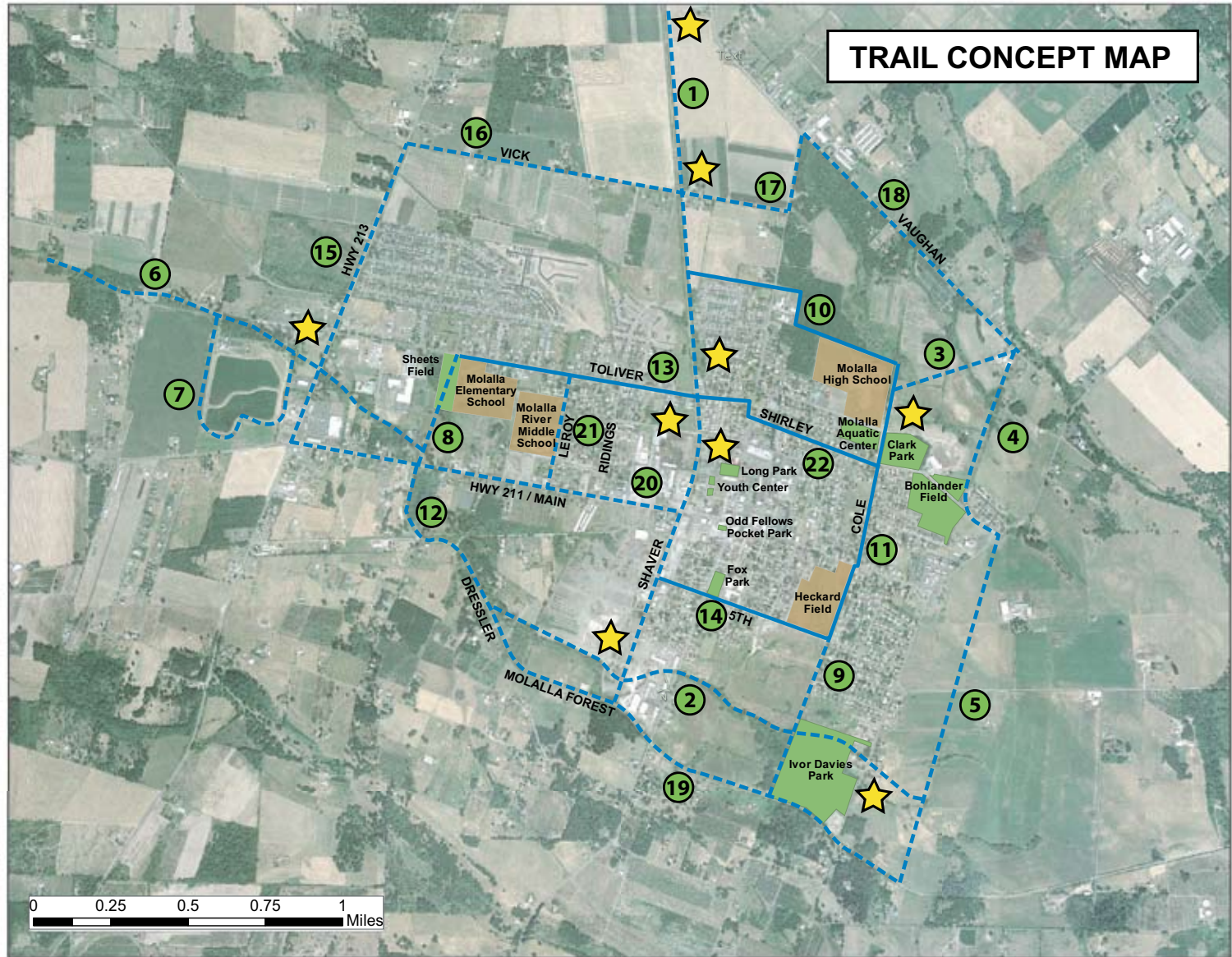
Molalla also has a well-used aquatic facility, as well as senior and youth centers. No additional stand-alone facilities of these types are recommended to be built during the planning period. With one of each of these facilities, the City will continue to meet general guidelines for these types of facilities. In addition, most communities are moving towards building more multi-purpose, multi-generational community or recreational centers rather than stand-alone facilities.

Community centers are large facilities that provide recreational spaces such as gymnasiums, sports fields or fitness centers as well as classroom and meeting space for public use and recreational programs. There is strong support for a new community center in Molalla.

Table 4 summarizes proposed City standards in comparison to NPRA guidelines.

**One goal of this plan is to create an integrated system of trail loops.**

Figure 3 - Trail System Concepts



**Table 4. Inventory of Parks, Open Spaces and Recreational Facilities**

Type of Amenity	Size	NPRA Guideline (acres per 1,000 residents)	Proposed Molalla Standard
Neighborhood Parks	2-5 acres	2-4	3 acres/1,000 residents; within ¼ to ½ mile of all city households
Community Parks	10-25 acres	3-5	3 acres/1,000 residents; within 1 to 1 ½ mile of all city households
Natural/Open Space	NA	NA	4 acres/1,000 residents
Other Facilities (e.g., community center, aquatic center, etc.)	NA	NA	2.5 acres/1,000 residents
Trails	NA	NA	Within ½ mile of all residents
Baseball/Softball Fields	NA	1 per 2,000	1 per 1,500 residents
Soccer Fields	NA	1 per 1,500	1 per 1,000 residents
Football/Rugby/Lacrosse Fields	NA	1 per 5,000	1 per 4,000 residents
Basketball Courts	NA	1 per 500	1 per 500 residents
Tennis Courts	NA	1 per 2,000	1 per 1,500 residents

**Recreational Programs**

Currently, the Molalla Adult Center provides a range of activities and recreational options for local seniors. As the population of the City ages and many new families move into the City, there is expected to be a need for continuing this type of programming as well as adding programs for youth including before- and after-school programs. Community survey and open house respondents strongly supported these two types of programs, among others.



## 4. PLANNING ALTERNATIVES

Two alternative scenarios were created with input from the PAC and were presented at the second public meeting. **Alternative A** assumes that the City's parks and recreation department will meet community needs independent of facilities owned by the school district. Currently, school and community members jointly use school playing fields. Community users (including Molalla Youth Sports and other organizations) use school district facilities approximately 40% of the time.

**Alternative B** assumes that joint use of these facilities will continue and the school district will help meet some of the overall community recreation needs. This alternative assumes community use of school district facilities 30% of the time. This somewhat lower figure reflects school district growth and associated demand on these facilities. This alternative also assumes that the City and school district would enter into a more formal shared use agreement that would incorporate cost-sharing of maintenance and operation responsibilities and potential joint development of new facilities in the future.

The following tables identify the proposed level of service standards, resulting acreage and numbers of parks and fields needed to meet these standards over the next 20 years.

Both alternatives will require development of several new neighborhood parks, which is consistent with community

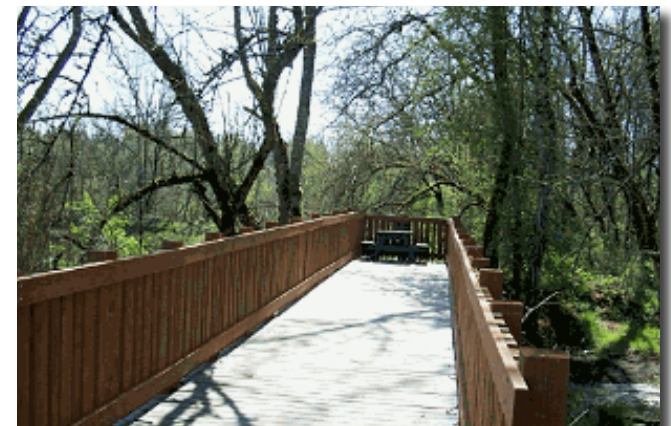
priorities. These parks should be located throughout the City to reach the proposed distance standard of ¼ to ½ mile.

There is currently a shortage of parks in the western and northwestern part of the City, particularly near the newer housing developments. Without the use of school facilities which are located west of Molalla Ave, the entire western half of Molalla would be severely under-served by parks space. Overall, the most acute need is for additional neighborhood parks in this area.

Alternative A also would entail the development of one or two new community parks. This type of park is also needed on the west side of town. Without relying on the use of school district facilities, the number of sports fields and resulting acreage are greater than under Alternative B.

Both alternatives allow for the development of a community center, playing field complexes or other facilities under "other parks and facilities."

There is no generally accepted acreage standard for trails in a community. Instead, a distance standard of ½ mile from City households is often employed.



**Table 5. Alternative A: City-owned Facilities Only, Future Land and Facility Needs**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Proposed Level of Service (Acres per 100 residents)</b>	<b>Acres Needed by 2027</b>	<b>New Parks</b>
Neighborhood Parks (2-5 acres)	3	33	6-10
Community Park (10-15 acres)	3	26	1-2
Natural Areas/Open Space	4	4	Open spaces throughout city
Other Parks and Facilities	2.5	15.5	Community center and associated open spaces and/or playing fields complexes
<b>Fields</b>	<b>Fields per number of residents</b>	<b>Facilities Needed by 2027</b>	<b>New Fields or Courts</b>
Baseball/Softball	1 per 1,500	8.1	6.1
Soccer	1 per 1,000	12.1	11.1
Football/Rugby/Lacrosse	1 per 4,000	3.0	3.0
Tennis Courts	1 per 1,500	8.1	8.1
Basketball	1 per 500	24.2	23.2

**Table 6. Alternative B: Community Use of School District Properties Facilities (30%)**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Proposed Level of Service (Acres per 100 residents)</b>	<b>Acres Needed by 2027</b>	<b>New Parks</b>
Neighborhood Parks (2-5 acres)	3	33	6-10
Community Park (10-15 acres)	3	26	2
Natural Areas/Open Space	4	4	Throughout city
Other Parks and Facilities	2.5	4	Community center and associated open spaces and/or playing fields complexes
<b>Fields</b>	<b>Fields per number of residents</b>	<b>Facilities Needed by 2027</b>	<b>New Fields or Courts</b>
Baseball/ Softball	1 per 1,500	8.1	4.9
Soccer	1 per 1,000	12.1	10.2
Football/Rugby/Lacrosse	1 per 4,000	3.0	2.4
Tennis Courts	1 per 1,500	8.1	7.8
Basketball	1 per 500	24.2	22.3

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The level of service standard for sports facilities is the same as under Alternative A. However, relying in part on school district lands results in fewer acres needed under Alternative B, particularly for other parks and facilities, as well as needed playing fields. In this scenario, the school district and city would likely enter into an intergovernmental agreement outlining some form of compensation to the district for public use of their facilities.

## 5. RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Based on input from the PAC and the community, this plan generally recommends Alternative A as the preferred alternative for the City. In this alternative, the City meets its overall park, recreation and trail needs on its own, without relying on school-district owned properties to help meet its long-term needs for playing fields. However, given the aggressive standards for playing fields and the expense associated with acquiring and operating those and other facilities, it is recommended that the City continue or pursue its relationship with the school district for joint use of some school district-owned facilities where there are opportunities to do so. Following is a suggested approach for meeting park, recreation and trail needs in Molalla. Additional recommended goals and strategies are incorporated in the Strategic Planning Element in the following section of the Plan.

### Parks

#### Neighborhood Parks

An acreage standard of three to five acres is recommended for new neighborhood parks. Size of neighborhood parks will be determined in part by the availability of land. As such, new parks outside the existing city limits may be somewhat larger than those within the city limits.

This is likely to result in

- 18 acres in five new parks within the 2007 city boundaries

- 15 acres in three to four new parks outside the current city limits

The most significant need for neighborhood parks is in the northwest part of the city. However, this area is relatively densely developed, restricting the potential to develop new parks. Strategies to overcome this shortage include:

- Develop and jointly maintain play equipment and picnic areas at one of the school sites on the west side of town
- Acquire land adjacent to existing housing developments for new neighborhood parks whenever possible, including upon bringing additional land into the city limits
- Identify and pursue acquisition of park sites well before development occurs, including during the annexation process. This will help the city reduce land costs and improve the chances of identifying and acquiring sites before they are programmed for development.



**The most significant need for neighborhood parks is in the northwest part of the city.**

Figure 4: Neighborhood Park Site Opportunity Areas

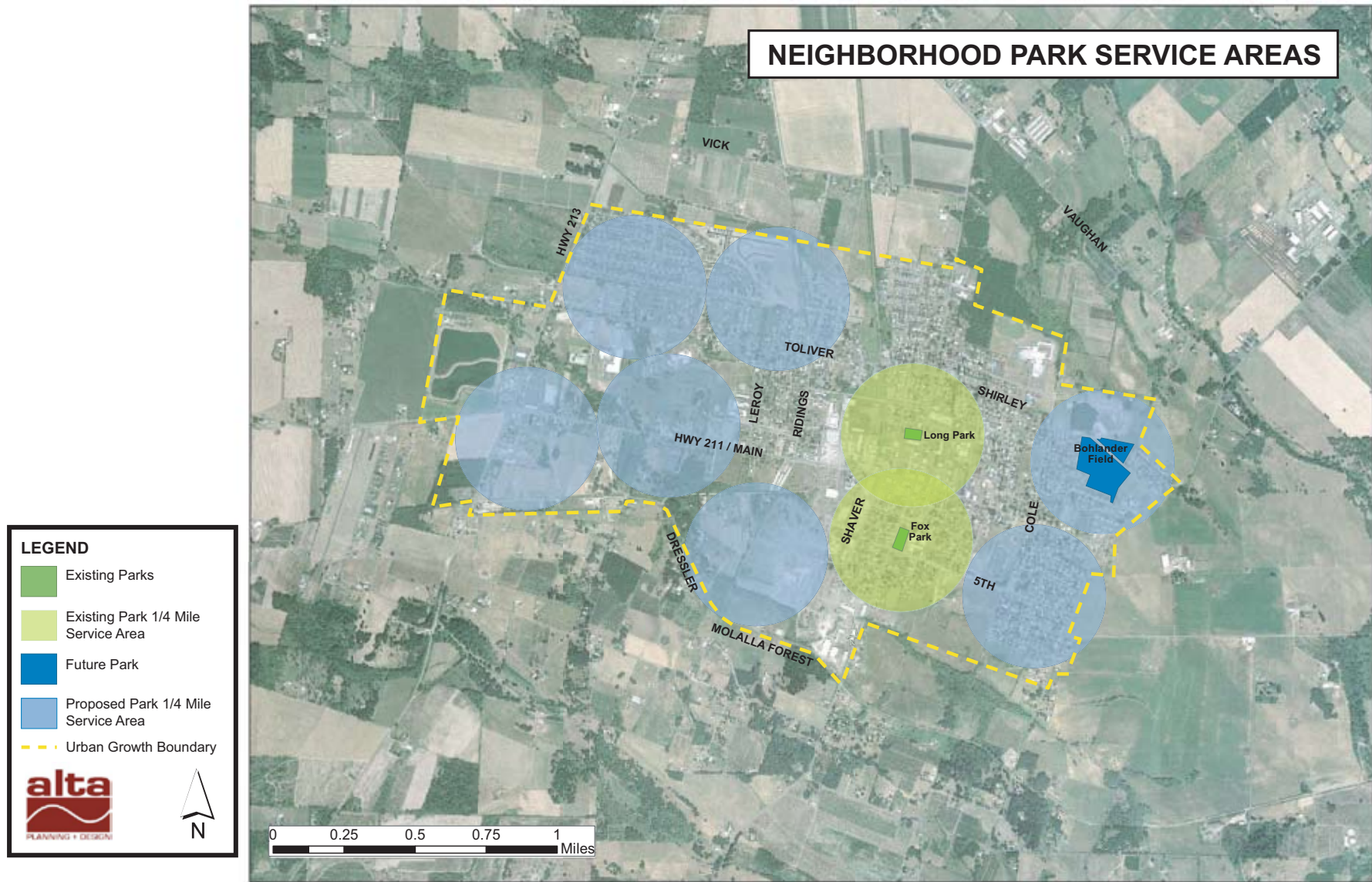
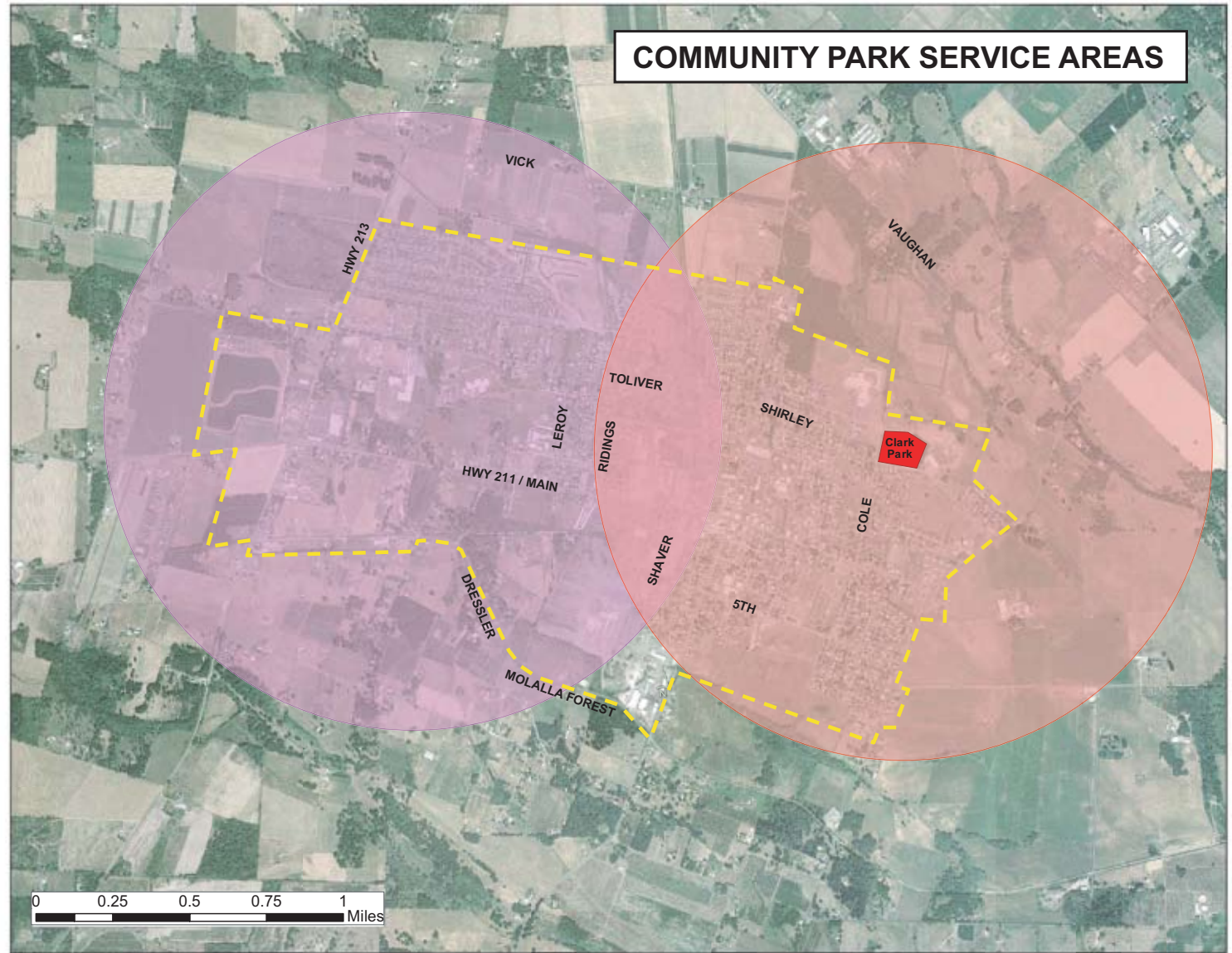



Figure 5: Community Park Site Opportunity Areas



**LEGEND**

- Existing Community Park
- Existing Park 1 Mile Service Area
- Proposed Park 1 Mile Service Area
- Urban Growth Boundary


Other new neighborhood parks should be distributed throughout the city to best meet the 1/2- to 1/3-acre distance standard, including within the new Timbertown Master Plan area and towards the southern and eastern city boundaries.

## Community Parks

The recommended approach calls for one to two new community parks during the planning period, including:

- One new 10-acre community park inside the city limits in the western part of town, perhaps in conjunction with Timbertown Master Plan
- One community park outside the current city limits when additional land is brought into the urban area.

Community parks may include playing fields, group event areas and other amenities according to community preferences. Similar to neighborhood parks, identification and acquisition of community park sites well in advance of development is very important, particularly given the relatively large needed site size and limited availability of such sites. The City should begin to identify sites as part of UGB amendment and annexation processes for new community parks that may be located outside the current city boundaries.

## Recreational Facilities

### Playing Fields

The city will continue to develop new playing fields to meet current needs and growing demand. New playing fields will be located in neighborhood and community parks. The city may also develop a playing field complex in which many types of facilities

are co-located along with basic amenities such as restrooms and concession stands. While this Plan calls for the City to create its own system of playing fields and recreation facilities (independent of school-district owned facilities), it is recommended that the City continue to partner with the city in the short term regarding joint use and maintenance of school playing fields where possible. This will help meet immediate and short-term needs for these facilities. Additional strategies to meet current and future needs for playing fields are the foundation of the following chapter of this Plan.

Completing planned improvements to Bohlander field also will help meet a significant portion of the City's current need for more playing fields. Improvements there include the following:

- Three softball fields with fences
- Bathrooms, concession stand and a viewing booth between the 3 fields
- Batting cage
- Two football fields, three soccer fields and six basketball courts
- Eight sand volleyball pits (tentative plans only)

Softball fields, bathrooms and a concession stand are expected to be completed within the next two years through a cooperative grant program with the Army National Guard. This work also may include grading for the football and soccer fields. Remaining improvements will be completed over time and funds are available.

### Community Center

The feasibility of developing a new community center will be

explored as one of the steps in implementing this plan. A multi-purpose community center of approximately 30,000 – 60,000 square feet could include a variety of amenities including:

- Indoor sports fields and courts
- Party/community meeting rooms
- Group fitness rooms
- Weight and cardiovascular equipment
- After-school and other recreational programs

A variety of issues should be considered in the design of a new community center, including the following:

- The components of the facility and the overall design should reflect the needs and demands of the community. A public process should be utilized to guide center development.
- The facility must meet the capital and operational requirements of the project.
- The facility should emphasize flexible use spaces and have a strong multi-purpose orientation.
- Both local and national recreation trends should be reviewed to determine future facility needs and expectations.
- Spaces dedicated to a single use or purpose should be minimized.
- The facility should be designed for a realistic, consistent level of use and not specifically for a unique special event or activity.
- Partnerships with the school district, library and other organizations should be considered for the development of a recreation center.
- The building should have an open design concept with



a minimal number of hallways. This will enhance the marketability of the center as well as contribute to easier building supervision.

- As much natural light as possible should be introduced into the building.
- The center should be constructed of materials that have a strong lifecycle costs. A budget item should be developed that allows for capital replacement on an ongoing basis.
- The facility should be constructed using “green building” methods and a commitment to energy efficiency.
- The building should be designed for the expansion of the center in the future.
- Components in the building must be arranged by active use (pay for use amenities) and passive use areas (open use). The building should also be laid out with appropriate adjacencies between amenities that are compatible. Ideally the facility should be constructed with key elements surrounding a central access point.
- The facility should have one public entrance and exit that directs the user to the front control desk. This allows for control of who is coming and going in the center.
- The facility should incorporate the latest technology for its management, operation and ultimately services for the public.
- All lighting systems should have the flexibility to adjust to the demand for different levels of light.
- A comprehensive marketing plan should be developed and put into operation before the center opens.

One strategy for building a community center would be to

construct it on the same site as the Molalla Aquatic Center to create a combined aquatic/community center. This would be consistent with trends in many communities and recreation districts which tend toward construction of multi-purpose, multi-generational facilities, including combined recreation and aquatic centers.

## Open Space

Ivor Davies Park contributes to most of the existing open space in the City. To meet city standards for open space, it is recommended that the city maintain and potentially expand Ivor Davies Park. In addition, the City should incorporate the following types of areas in establishing a city-wide open space system:

- Continue to require dedication of a specific percentage of open space as part of the subdivision and residential development review processes.
- Combine designation of open space with protection of environmentally sensitive or natural areas.
- In targeting specific areas for open space acquisition, dedication or protection, prioritize natural area and open space protection and management to maximize natural resource values.
- Identify, acquire and conserve key open space areas adjacent to proposed trail corridors or linear parks, including the Bear Creek corridor. Use these to enhance the trail system and provide for well-connected pockets of open space throughout the community.

## Trails

In order to determine the appropriate location for trails, existing opportunities and constraints to trail development were analyzed. Specific information is presented in the following tables.

### Trails Concept

Different trail types can be used throughout the trail network to respond to the environment and urban context and meet the trail plan’s major goals of trail connectivity, access, community linkages and trail loops.

Trail types recommended in the Molalla Trails Plan include:

Off-Street facilities	On-Street Facilities
Shared Use Paths	Sidewalks/Pathways
Natural Trails	Bicycle Lanes
	Shared Roadways
	City Trails
Accessways	Accessways

### Backbone Trails

Molalla’s “backbone trails” form the heart of the trail network. One north-south trail and one east-west trail provide residents with corridors with outstanding scenic value and outstanding community connectivity. Both trails have the potential for future expansion as the city grows and/or opportunities arise. Both are off-street shared use paths.

There are two planned backbone trails in Molalla:

- Molalla Rail Trail: this is a north-south rail-to-trail project along the historic rail alignment that runs through the heart of Molalla.

- Bear Creek Greenway: this is an east-west trail following Bear Creek, which runs along the south edge of Molalla.

These two backbone trails should have their own right-of-way and minimize conflict between users and automobile traffic. These trails should be designed to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) standards and other State

and Federal guidelines. These backbone trails serve bicyclists, pedestrians, wheelchair users, skaters and others.

### Primary Ring Trail Network

Molalla's two backbone trails are connected with a primary ring trail network, creating a large loop around the city. This trail network is made up of several different trail types (covered in the design guidelines section). The ring network provides community linkages to schools and parks, as well as providing opportunities for user-defined trail loops.

**Table 7. Site Specific Opportunities**

#	Location	Description of Issue
<b>Opportunities</b>		
1	Abandoned Rail corridor	Former rail corridor runs north-south through the center of Molalla, providing an excellent rail-to-trail conversion opportunity. The corridor is already well used as an informal trail.
2	Molalla River State Park	Eventual opportunity may exist to connect to Molalla River State Park in Canby.
3	Long Park, Adult Center, Skate Park	Potential destinations of trail users and residents of all ages. Adult Center may have trailhead potential.
4	Toliver Road	A recent project provided bike lanes on both sides and a continuous south-side sidewalk on Toliver Road, making this route a good on-street connector between trails. Toliver is used by both elementary and high school students as a primary school access route for walking and biking.
5	Heintz Street path	Informal, well-used pathway already exists between Ridings Ave. and the rail corridor.
6	Molalla Elementary School	Major attractor and generator for trail users: about 400 children. Toliver Rd. right-of-way can provide access to the trail.
7	Sheets Field	Connection to well-used sports fields and BMX park.
8	Public lands	Public land may facilitate trail planning and construction.
9	Existing trail	Existing substandard trail from Highway 213 to elementary school
10	Highway 213	Existing bike lanes and sidewalks provide on-street connection to potential trails.

**Table 7. Site Specific Opportunities (continued)**

#	Location	Description of Issue
<b>Opportunities</b>		
11	Highway 211	ODOT is currently developing a plan for OR 211 that will upgrade most of the corridor to bike lanes and sidewalks, significantly improving this route for pedestrians and cyclists.
12	Downtown Molalla	A major destination for many residents and visitors. Provides parking, shopping, and dining opportunities in addition to numerous services.
13	Existing trail near Buckaroo Grounds	Existing substandard trail across from Molalla Buckaroo Grounds.
14	Molalla High School, school fields, Clark Park, Bohlander Fields, Molalla Buckaroo Grounds	Major hub of potential destinations for trail users. Trail would serve high school students biking and walking to school as well.
15	Playing fields	Connection to well-used playing field.
16	Fifth Street	A recent project upgraded Fifth Street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, providing bike lanes and sidewalks. Good on-street connection.
17	Bear Creek wetlands	Wetlands provide a possible trail interpretive site.
18	Ivor Davies Park and Trail	Connection to park facility and on-site trails.
19	Hardy Creek mountain biking trails	Possible eventual on-street connection to trails at Hardy Creek, approximately 10 miles southeast of Molalla at the Molalla River. Trails are open to both mountain bike and equestrian uses.
20	Molalla Forest Road	Currently closed to auto access. Potential trail corridor. Alternately, if community desire to convert to a truck bypass route is realized, there is an opportunity to locate a trail paralleling the roadway.
21	Molalla River Middle School, Fox park	On-street connection from potential rail-trail to middle school (with approximately 700 students) and well-used community park.
22	Timbertown Community Planning Area	Likely site of future master-planned residential / mixed-use development, which provides an opportunity to integrate trail segments, access and trailhead(s) into new residential area.
23	Bear Creek	Stream corridor may be good candidate for trail development, which provides an opportunity to improve the stream conditions.
24	Bear Creek Wetlands	Wetlands provide a possible trail interpretive site.
25 26 27 28	Potential Trailheads	Potential trailhead locations at Vick Rd (25), Heintz Rd (26), Main St./OR 211 (27), South Molalla Ave. (28)
29	Potential Trail Access Points	Possible access to rail trail at Creamery Creek Ln. (29) and Toliver Rd. (30)

### Table 8. Site Specific Constraints

#	Location	Description of Issue
<b>Constraints</b>		
1	Heintz Street wetlands	Wetlands may limit where trails may be placed and/or require special construction techniques (such as boardwalks).
2	Wetlands near rail corridor	Wetlands may limit where trails may be placed and/or require special construction techniques (such as boardwalks).
3	S. Vick Road	No pedestrian facilities on S. Vick Rd.
4	Rail line in active use	Rail corridor is in active use north of South Molalla Rd., potentially limiting northward expansion of rail-trail.
5	Bear Creek wetlands	Wetlands may limit where trails may be placed and/or require special construction techniques (such as boardwalks).
6	Wetlands near S. Hezzie Lane and Highway 211	Wetlands may limit where trails may be placed and/or require special construction techniques (such as boardwalks).
7	Highway 211	Pedestrian and bicycling conditions are poor on Highway 211, with many segments lacking sidewalks or served only by a substandard sidepath. No bike lanes are present on Hwy 211.
8	Highway 211 trail crossing	Potential rail-trail alignment will have to cross Hwy 211 at this unsignalized location. Traffic speeds and volumes will make an untreated crossing difficult.
9	Existing industrial use	Former rail alignment is in active industrial use. Easement or acquisition may be challenging.
10	Main Street (Hwy 211)	Main St. through historic downtown has extremely limited right-of-way, which may result in poor connections for bicyclists and pedestrians.
11	Highway 211 crossing	Trail or on-street connection at N. Cole Ave. must to cross Hwy 211 at this unsignalized location. Traffic speeds and volumes will make an untreated crossing difficult.
12		
13	Bear Creek wetlands	Wetlands may limit where trails may be placed and/or require special construction techniques (such as boardwalks).
14	S. Molalla Avenue trail crossings	Any trails at Bear Creek or Molalla Forest Rd. must to cross S. Molalla Ave at an unsignalized location. Traffic speeds and volumes may make an untreated crossing difficult.
15	Ivor Davies Park and Trail	No parking or trailhead facilities limit use of this facility.
16	Residential development	Completed residential development in northwest area of city limits corridors available for trail development

Most trails in the primary ring trail network are either off-street shared use paths or separate facilities (i.e., a sidewalk or pathway for pedestrians and on-street bike lanes for bicyclists) that meet State and Federal standards. Safety for bicyclists and pedestrians on these routes is paramount, especially as they parallel Highway 213, a busy roadway.

However, some primary ring network trails follow neighborhood streets, in which case pedestrians are accommodated with a sidewalk or shared use path and bicyclists share the roadway with vehicles. Primary ring network trails on arterial and collector streets will be implemented when the roadway is widened or improved.

### Local Micropaths

Local micropaths primarily serve pedestrians with safe and direct connections to and within local features, such as schools, parks, natural areas, waterways, and community centers. Some micropaths may also be appropriate for bicycling, skating and equestrians. Micropaths may either be off-street (shared use paths or nature trails) or on-street (Accessways).

### City Trails

City trails are typically paved or made of a smooth surface to accommodate most trail users. These trails are typically found in developed parks and recreational areas, like Fox Park and Clark Park. Some city trails may not be able to maintain a 5% grade to accommodate disabled users due to topographical constraints (steep grades, constrained widths, etc.). At least one trail in the park should be constructed to ADA standards to provide for all trail users.

### Natural Trails

Natural trails are soft-surface trails typically found in undeveloped parks and natural areas and aim to provide a natural outdoor experience. These trails are usually for pedestrians only, but some trails could be open to mountain bikes and/or equestrians. Trails in Ivor Davies Park are natural trails and future trails through defined wetlands may be natural trails as well.

### Accessways

Accessways are any off-street path or way which is intended for the primary use of pedestrians and bicyclists. Accessways provide direct routes between residential areas, retail and office areas, institutional facilities, industrial parks, transit streets and neighborhood activity centers, where such routes are not otherwise provided by the street system. These routes are intended to provide safe, direct and convenient connections to reduce out-of-direction travel and make walking and bicycling easier.

Accessways can also be sidewalks or pedestrian alleys (as well as less common facilities such as stairs, an elevator, bridge, or passage connecting gardens, courtyards, or other urban spaces.) Molalla has a number of opportunities to create new accessways, particularly in the historic downtown area.

### Recommended Strategy

The recommended trail network provides a comprehensive network of trails that connect to schools, parks, community centers, the downtown business district and natural areas. It sets the stage for future trail connections to Canby and other parts of Clackamas County. It serves multiple users, multiple interests,



and improves access for residents of varying physical capabilities, ages and skill levels.

The following details of the network should be noted:

- The Conceptual Trails Plan Map shows all proposed trails, including all trail design types detailed in the design guidelines in Appendix L. Many trail projects call for improvements to existing but substandard facilities.
- “Accessways” – those providing a direct connection from cul-de-sacs and other disconnected developments – will be determined through development review and permitting processes. Since accessway locations cannot be known until the development applicant provides a site plan, accessways are not shown on the map.
- The trails shown are largely conceptual. Most need to be further studied and designed. The location of the trail may change as a result.
- Some sidewalks are shown as local trails because they fulfill the needs of local pedestrian circulation and connections.

#### **Trailheads and Trail Access**

Good access to the trail system is a key element to its future success. Trailheads (formalized parking areas) serve the local and regional population arriving to the pathway and trail system by car. Neighborhood trail access points do not require a parking lot, and primarily serve residents who live near the trail.

As seen on the Conceptual Trails Map, this Plan identifies several potential trailhead and/or trail access locations. Trailheads provide essential access to the trail system and provide amenities

like parking, restrooms, and signage for trail users. Additional trailhead siting will occur with further planning processes for individual projects.

#### **Development**

Many of the trails shown on the Conceptual Trails Map, particularly local trails located along roadways or intended as accessways, will be developed over time by Molalla property owners and new development, much like the sidewalk system has been developed. In some cases, the City will be able to require the property owner to construct the trail as part of the development review process. In other cases, the City will work with the property owner to ensure the City can develop the trail itself in the future.

#### **Goals and Objectives**

This Plan aims to develop a comprehensive network of multi-purpose trails that link important pedestrian generators, environmental features, historic landmarks, public facilities, Town Centers and businesses districts. The following goals were derived from existing plans and input from Project Advisory Committee members, public workshop participants, city staff and elected officials, and citizens of Molalla.

#### **Goal 1: Trail Connectivity**

Provide a trail system within Molalla that, when fully implemented, will permit residents to travel around the community entirely using the trail network. Ensure that new development and subdivisions connect to this system. Establish future potential trails connections to the adjacent

communities of Canby, unincorporated Clackamas County and the greater Portland metropolitan region, as well as providing a nonmotorized connection to the natural areas southeast of the city.

**Goal 2: Access**

Develop a trail system for people of all abilities, pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and other non-motorized trail users. Connect to a complementary system of on-road bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities.

**Goal 3: Community Linkages**

Link trails to residential neighborhoods, community facilities such as the library and city hall, parks, schools, the aquatic center, downtown, as well as other commercial and retail activity centers in Molalla. Support and enhance existing and future parks and recreation facilities.

**Goal 4: Trail Loops**

Provide a trail system that creates integrated loops of various distances to provide residents with opportunities to travel different distances and experience varied scenery.

**Project Priorities and Phasing**

The projects in each category were ranked based on a consideration of feasibility and community priorities, and the priorities were vetted with the Project Advisory Committee and at Public Meeting #2. As a result, the projects have been grouped by trail type (on-street and off-street) into Tier 1 and Tier 2 project priorities (Tables 9 and 10).

**Tier 1** projects are the top priority trail projects for short-term project implementation and are targeted for completion in the next five to fifteen years.

**Tier 2** projects are long-term projects recommended for implementation between the next 15 and 50 years from Plan adoption.

The near and long-term schedule may change according to available funds, changing priorities, new roadway projects, new development and redevelopment opportunities, or other factors.

It should be noted that the purpose of this exercise is to understand the relative priority of the projects so that the City may apportion available funding to the highest priority projects. Long-term projects also are important, and may be implemented at any point in time as part of a development or public works project. The ranked lists should be considered a “living document” and should be frequently reviewed to ensure they reflect current Molalla priorities.

**Table 9: Molalla Trail Priorities: Off-Street Facilities**

Tier 1: 5-15 years	Tier 2: 15-50 years
Molalla Rail Trail	Buckeroo to Land Lab
Bear Creek Greenway	Buckeroo Equestrian Trail
Land Lab Trail	Bear Creek West Trail
Cole Avenue Trail	Water Treatment Trails
Rail to High School Connector	OR 211 to Toliver Connector

**Table 10: Molalla Trail Priorities: On-Street Facilities**

Tier 1: 5-15 years	Tier 2: 15-50 years
Cole Avenue	OR 213
Molalla Forest Road: OR 211 to Bear Creek Connector	Vick Road
Toliver Road	Molalla Rd. (Vick to Vaughan) Connector
Fifth Street	Vaughan Road
Shirley Street	Molalla Forest Road
	OR 211
	Leroy Avenue

### Trail Safety

Trail safety is a major concern of both trail users and those whose property is adjacent to the trail. Creating a safe trail environment goes beyond design and law enforcement and should involve the entire community. The most effective and most visible deterrent to illegal activity on Molalla trails will be the presence of legitimate trail users. Getting as many “eyes on the corridor” as possible is a key deterrent to undesirable activity on area trails. There are several components to accomplishing this:

#### Provide good access to the trail

Access ranges from providing conveniently located trailheads along the trail, to encouraging the construction of sidewalks to accommodate access from private developments adjacent to the trail. Access points should be inviting and signed so as to welcome the public onto the trail.

#### Good visibility from adjacent neighbors

Neighbors adjacent to the trail can potentially provide 24-hour surveillance of the trail and can become an ally to the cities’ police

departments. Though some screening and setback of the trail may be needed for privacy of adjacent neighbors, complete blocking out of the trail from neighborhood view should be discouraged. This eliminates the potential of neighbors’ “eyes on the trail,” and could result in a “tunnel effect” on the trail.

#### High level of maintenance

A well-maintained trail sends a message that the community cares about the public space. This message alone will discourage undesirable activity along the trail.

#### Programmed events

Community events along Molalla trails will help increase public awareness and thereby attract more people to use the trail. Various civic organizations can help organize public events along the trail, which will increase support for the trail. Events might include a trail clean-up day or a series of short interpretive walks led by long-time residents, a local historian, or a naturalist.

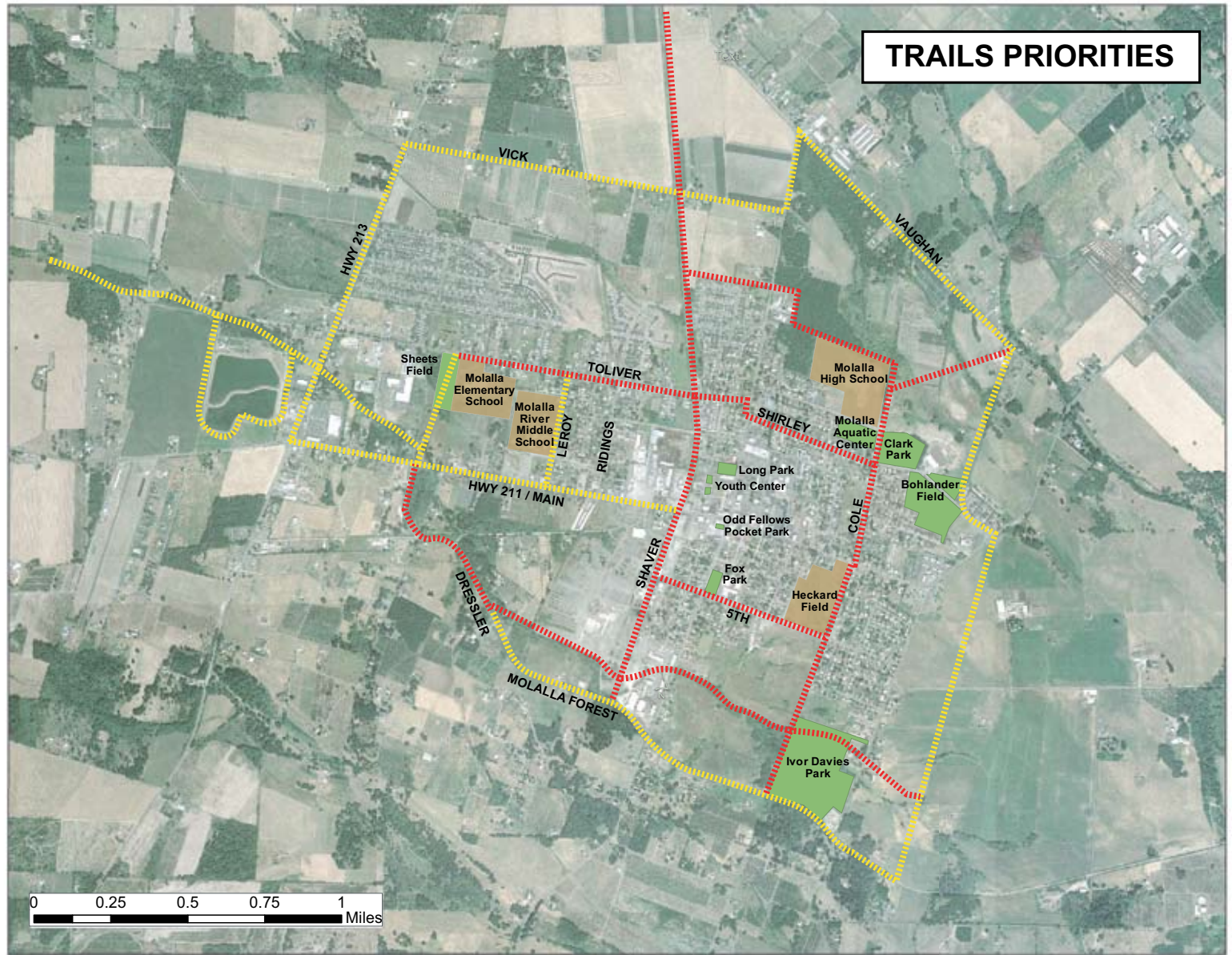
#### Community projects

The support generated by trails in Molalla could be further capitalized by involving neighbors and friends trails in a community project. Ideas for community projects include volunteer planting events, art projects, interpretive research projects, or even bridge building events. These community projects are the strongest means of creating a sense of ownership along the trail that is perhaps the strongest single deterrent to undesirable activity along the trail.

#### Adopt-a-Trail Program

Nearby businesses, community institutions, and residential

Figure 6: Molalla Trails Planning Priorities



**LEGEND**

- Schools
- Parks
- Tier 1 Trails
- Tier 2 Trails

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neighbors often see the benefit of their involvement in the trail development and maintenance. Businesses and developers may view the trail as an integral piece of their site planning and be willing to take on some level of responsibility for the trail. Creation of an adopt-a-trail program should be explored to capitalize on this opportunity and foster civic pride.

### **Trail Watch Program**

A trail watch program would provide an opportunity for local residents to become actively involved in crime prevention along the trail. Similar to Neighborhood Watch programs, residents are brought together to get to know their neighbors, and are educated on how to recognize and report suspicious activity.

Additional information on how specific design elements address common safety concerns is included in Appendix H.

### **Intergovernmental and Other Community Partnerships and Agreements**

The City expects to work formally and informally with a variety of groups to help meet future park, recreation and trail needs. Strategies and criteria to consider in developing formal and informal agreements include the following:

- Where possible, memorialize agreements in writing. While informal arrangements have been and continue to be successful, more formal agreements will help avoid any potential problems caused by changes in personnel, elected officials or institutional memory.

- Seek to establish agreements that are mutually beneficial and build on the strengths and resources of each party.
- Look for opportunities to exchange in-kind services or resources. For example, the current practice of exchanging city water for use of school district maintenance personnel is cost-effective and mutually beneficial to both organizations.
- Exchange technical assistance and knowledge in ways that expand the benefits of unique knowledge or resources.
- Jointly pursue grants or funding sources that may benefit multiple parties but for which only one party may apply. Ensure that both parties may benefit from the grant.
- Negotiate agreements in good faith with an eye towards the following:
  - Be solution-oriented; look for answers not obstacles.
  - Achieve common goals with multiple benefits.
  - Meet both agency-specific and community-wide goals, with a focus on broad goals and objectives.
  - Make efficient use of scarce resources.

## 6. COST AND FUNDING SOURCES

The cost of implementing the recommended approach alternative will include both capital costs for new facilities (land acquisition and facility development), capital improvements to existing facilities and annual maintenance and operation costs. These costs are summarized in Table 11. Capital improvements described in Table 12 are those identified in the City's Park System Development Charge methodology prepared in 2004. That document also identifies a community center and the railroad right-of-way linear park which are included as new capital facilities in Table 11.

These costs are based on the following assumptions:

- Facility development, operation and maintenance costs are based on unit costs (per acre) from other park and recreation service providers.
- Land costs are based on local current local land prices per acre.
- Costs should be considered for planning purposes only and viewed in total. Costs for individual facilities may vary significantly.
- Costs for playing fields assume construction of grass fields. The cost for synthetic fields would be significantly higher. However, the capacity of synthetic fields is also higher and annual average maintenance costs are much lower. At the same time, replacement costs are also higher.
- Costs for baseball and soccer fields have been reduced

somewhat to reflect the fact that most fields are expected to be multi-purpose fields (i.e., used for different sports during different times of the year). A 20% shared-use reduction has been applied to these costs.

### Funding Sources

#### Acquisition and Development

The City expects to use the following funding sources to help pay for the acquisition and development of future park and recreation land and facilities:

- System development charges
- Land dedication
- State, federal and local grants
- Voluntary land donations or fundraising
- Bond measures

Each of these sources and their relative ability to help meet the need for new and expanded facilities is described below.

#### System Development Charges (SDCs)

This tool can be used to pay for acquisition, development and improvement of land and facilities needed to serve new growth. This can include land or facilities in newly developing areas and/or improvements to existing facilities required to serve new residents. The City of Molalla currently assesses a parks SDC



**Table 11. Projected Future Costs – Land Acquisition and New Capital Facilities**

Facility Type	Capital Improvement and Land Acquisition Costs	Annual Maintenance and Operations Costs
Community Park	\$7,920,000	\$154,094
Neighborhood Park	\$5,491,500	\$154,094
Open Space	\$702,000	\$121,000
Other Facilities	\$3,530,500	\$105,875
Trails	\$1,075,000	\$26,875
Baseball\softball field	\$1,334,666	\$36,300
Soccer field	\$3,774,000	\$54,450
Football/rugby/lacrosse field	\$1,512,500	\$13,613
Tennis Court	\$1,160,000	---
Multi-purpose court	\$403,333	\$9,898
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$26,903,667</b>	<b>\$676,197</b>

**Table 12. Projected Capital Improvement Costs for Existing Facilities**

Capital Improvement	Cost	Description
Fox Park improvements	\$350,227	Water feature, restroom, basketball court, playground equipment, sidewalk
Linear park with Ivor Davies Park	\$237,713	Multi-use trail, elevated boardwalk, benches
Ivor Davies Park improvements	\$189,410	Parking areas, driveways, restrooms, playground equipment
Clark Park improvements	\$474,778	R.V. spaces, play equipment, paths, lighting, pavilion improvement, parking and sidewalks
Aquatic Center improvements	\$1,820,000	Water slide, wave machine and outdoor play area
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$3,072,128</b>	

of just under \$1,000. Typically SDC rates are based on plans to provide a certain level of service, either for a community as a whole and/or for specific types of facilities. SDCs also are based on the projected costs to meet these levels-of-service as described in a capital improvements plan. A local jurisdiction may charge the full SDC rate calculated or a smaller portion of the rate. The portion of the rate assessed is called the fee. SDCs may be assessed on residential and/or commercial development. Differential rates must be calculated for these different types of land uses.

The City of Molalla's current SDC rate is based on a list of proposed capital improvements to existing facilities, as well as a new community center proposed for Molalla. The SDC assumes that a certain percentage of use of these existing and new facilities will be by new residents. The existing SDC rate is based on these assumptions. The current SDC rate of approximately \$1,000 per household will be adequate to cover only a portion of the capital improvements costs identified in this plan. In today's dollars, the City's existing SDCs would cover approximately \$2 million dollars of acquisition and improvement costs or a little less than 10% of the total.

In order to cover a larger portion of these costs, the City will need to update its SDC methodology, rate and fee to more accurately incorporate future acquisition and facility costs. If the City does this and is able to assess the full rate allowed under the new methodology, SDCs could be expected to cover a larger share of the cost (20-40%) but still not the entire portion. This is due in part to the fact that use of some new and/or existing facilities

that require development or improvement will be used by the city's existing residents.

### **Land Dedication**

The city currently requires developers to dedicate a certain percentage of land for use as future parks, recreation facilities or open space. Continued use of this tool will help reduce the land costs identified in Table 11. Currently, the city requires dedication of 1.25 acres per 100 people. Over the 20-year planning period, this theoretically could meet nearly 100% of the land acquisition portion of the costs identified in Table 11. For conservative purposes we have assumed it will cover 65% of land costs or 30% of total costs.

### **State, federal and local grants**

The city has used grants in the past for construction of other park and recreational facilities, including the Molalla Aquatic Center, the new planned baseball/softball complex at Bohlander Field, and other facilities. Grants are a viable source of funding for trails projects. Grants also may be used to fund planning processes for new facilities. Between 2004 and 2007, grants were used to cover approximately 10% of capital improvements costs for park and recreation facilities in Molalla. Assuming that grants are available and obtained to cover a similar percentage of costs over the next 20 years, they would pay for approximately \$3 million in capital improvement costs. A list of state, federal and local grant programs is included in Appendix J.

### **Voluntary Donations**

The City may be able to obtain land or monetary donations from local residents, business owners or other organizations. The City

**Table 13. Projected Funding Sources**

Funding Source	Percent Cost	Estimated Cost
System development charges	30%	\$8,992,688
Land dedications	30%	\$8,992,688
Grants	10%	\$2,997,563
Voluntary donations	10%	\$2,997,563
Other sources/unallocated	20%	\$5,995,126

also may be able to use city or other publicly-owned land, acquired at a reduce cost to develop selected facilities. For example, Ivor Davies Park is on land donated to the City by Ivor Davies. Donations such as this could significantly

reduce future capital costs, particularly land acquisition costs. It is very difficult to estimate the possible extent of such donations. However, for planning purposes, we project that donations could cover approximately 10% of total capital costs.

**Bond Measures or Other Financing Tools**

If the funding sources described above are not adequate to cover long-term capital costs, the City may consider the following options to address any funding shortfalls:

- Seek public approval of one or more bond measures to fund capital improvements. Many local governments and park and recreation districts use this approach to pay for needed park and recreation facilities. While not all such initiatives are successful, if the public supports and values the improvements proposed and believes the city will faithfully and efficiently implement them, bond measures for park and recreation facilities often are approved.
- Create a separate park and recreation district. Creation of a new district would allow for a separate, dedicated tax rate

to fund long-term maintenance and operation of park and recreation facilities. A portion of the rate also could be used to fund acquisition, development and major improvements. A local district could structure the rate to assess the full amount only until the capital improvements are paid off.

- Establish one or more local improvement districts to pay for facilities in specific areas. Local improvement districts can be used to pay for facilities that benefit residents of specific areas and must be approved by a majority of property owners in the subject area. This tool could potentially be used to pay for neighborhood park or local trail facilities.

The following table summarizes the portion of land acquisition and capital improvement costs estimated to be covered by the funding sources described above, with the exception of bond measures, LIDs and/or a separate district. That portion of total costs are included within an “other/unallocated” cost item.

**Maintenance and Operation**

Relatively fewer sources of revenue are available to pay for operation and maintenance of facilities in comparison to capital costs. The two main sources are general fund revenues and user fees. Community partnerships and donations also may be used to help pay for these costs. In addition, communities sometimes form special districts to establish a dedicated source of revenue to finance operation and maintenance, particularly when existing local tax rates are not adequate to meet community needs.

Currently, the City dedicates an average of approximately \$300,000 to operations and annual maintenance out of a total city budget of approximately \$20 million. In addition, the City

partners with the school district on some maintenance activities and expenses. The City also collects fees from local sports organizations to help pay for maintenance of playing fields. In total, funds available for operation and maintenance of park and recreation in 2006 were approximately \$60,000, excluding Aquatic Center costs. This is a relatively small percentage of the costs calculated for maintenance of future facilities at the end of the 20-year planning period when a much more robust system of facilities would be in place. Allocating adequate funds for annual maintenance and operation of facilities will be a challenge. Following are several recommended approaches to meet these needs.

- **Increase the annual city budget for maintenance and operations** and the percentage of the city’s general funds allocated for this purpose. This will involve hard choices and tradeoffs between allocating funding for parks and other services. The City will need to consider the relative importance and priority of parks and recreation services and its overall goal of creating a “recreation-themed” community as it makes these decisions.
- **Increase revenues from user fees.** Some types of facilities better lend themselves to this funding mechanism than others, with the cost recovery percentage varying significantly for different types of programs and facilities. In making decisions about how to set user fees to best capture costs through them, the city should consider the following general approach:
  - Set relatively low cost-recovery goals for basic facilities and services, including those that are problematic in terms of assessing user fees (e.g., use of play equipment, walking

trails, etc.).

- Set higher cost recovery targets for more value-added facilities and programs such as the aquatic center, organizational use of playing fields and recreation classes and program.
- Establish the highest goals for services or facilities which are also available from the private sector (e.g., facility rentals for wedding and parties).
- **Actively explore opportunities for joint use and maintenance agreements with local sports and community groups.** The City should seek to recover costs for field use to the greatest extent reasonable and/or establish cooperative agreements with local sports groups to maintain fields in exchange for their use. The city could explore similar agreements with other community groups, including homeowner associations.
- **Continue to partner with the school district in a targeted manner** for joint use and maintenance of selected facilities. Where there are clear advantages for shared use and maintenance of city or school district facilities, the city should seek out these opportunities to reduce its costs and maximize efficiencies even if it generally seeks to establish its own park and recreation system.
- **Consider establishing a separate park and recreation district.** The passage of property tax measures 5, 47 and 50 in Oregon in the last two decades have limited local jurisdictions’ abilities to increase tax rates even if citizens request and are willing to financially support a higher level of service. Local “permanent tax rates” cannot be increased and local



governments have a tax rate cap of \$10 per \$1,000 of assessed property. As a result, creating a new taxing district is one of the few options available to cover ongoing costs for increased levels of service. If the City finds itself unable to cover the annual costs needed to achieve this Plan and citizens support the levels of service within the Plan, the city should explore opportunities to create a special district to allow for collection of increased revenues to cover needed costs.

- **Annexation to an existing Park and Recreation District.** Annexing to an established district could provide a stable funding source for operation and maintenance funds as well as additional staff resources and experience.

## Trail Funding Sources

### Public Funding for Trails

There are a variety of potential funding sources including local, State, regional, and Federal funding programs that can be used to construct or augment the proposed trail improvements. Most of these are competitive, and involve the completion of extensive applications with clear documentation of the project need, costs and benefits. Local funding for these projects would typically come from Molalla and/or potential future bonds or other local revenues.

Table 1 in Appendix K summarizes public funding sources for Molalla trails.

### Other Funding Opportunities

Residents and other community members are excellent resources for garnering support and enthusiasm for a trail and the City should work with volunteers to substantially reduce trail implementation and maintenance costs. Local schools, community groups, or a group of dedicated neighbors may use the project as a project for the year, possibly working with a local designer or engineer. Work parties can be formed to help clear the right-of-way where needed. A local construction company can donate or discount services. Other opportunities for implementation will appear over time, such as grants and private funds. The City should look to its residents for additional funding ideas to expedite the completion of the trail system.

## 7. STRATEGIC PLANNING ELEMENTS

The following goals, objectives and actions are intended to help the city meet park, recreation and trails needs over the next 20 years as identified in this plan.

### **Goal: Provide neighborhood and community parks to serve all residents of Molalla.**

- Provide neighborhood parks at a standards of 3 acres/1000 and within ¼ to ½ mile of all city households
- Provide community parks at a standard of 3 acres/1,000 residents and within 1 to 1 ½ mile of all city households.
- In planning for new parks, consider the impact of arterial roads and state highways as barriers to nearby parks and locate parks to minimize and or take into account such barriers.
- Provide other parks and facilities (such as community center, skatespots and others) consistent with this plan.
- Work with neighboring residents to design parks and park amenities to meet local community needs.
- Regularly maintain neighborhood and community parks and amenities within them.
- Work with local community groups and neighboring residents to develop partnerships for maintaining neighborhood parks.
- Make targeted improvements to existing parks and recreational facilities, consistent with community priorities.

### **Goal: Develop and maintain a city-wide system of trails to provide recreational opportunities such as walking, bicycling, jogging and horseback riding and to encourage safe alternative modes of transportation, consistent with community priorities identified in this plan.**

- Attempt to make some trails fully accessible to people of all abilities.
- Link trails to community destinations such as parks, schools and shopping areas.
- Furnish trails with amenities such as interpretive and directional signage, benches, parking and other services.
- Link trails to on-road bicycle lanes and sidewalks/pedestrian routes; use on-street facilities to provide links between off-street trails.
- Designate selected trails for equestrian uses.
- Establish easements for trails in developing areas as part of the development approval process, consistent with proposed trail corridors identified in this plan.

### **Goal: Provide sports and recreation facilities and programs for city residents of all ages and abilities.**

- Offer recreational options to meet a range of community needs including continuing to offer programs for seniors at the Adult Center and create before- and after-school programs for city youth.



- Regularly assess the programming needs and priorities of residents in establishing and refining program offerings.
- Improve ADA accessibility for city parks and facilities.
- Explore the possibility of developing a community center.
- Increase the number of sports fields of all types throughout the city, consistent with level-of-service standards identified in this plan.
- Explore partnerships with the school district, Molalla Buckeroo or other entities for joint development, use, maintenance and operation of facilities; formalize such partnerships in intergovernmental agreements (IGAs).
- Ensure the safety of park users and provide adequate policing of parks and trails; explore opportunities to co-locate park or trail facilities near public safety offices (e.g., police or emergency service offices).

Complete phase one improvements to Bohlander field, including softball/baseball fields and associated facilities; address and mitigate impacts of Bohlander Field improvements on use of Buckeroo facility.

#### **Goal: Preserve open space throughout the city**

- Continue to maintain and improve Ivor Davies Park as the city's primary community open space facility. Explore opportunities to expand the park, and/or facilities within it, to better utilize it as open space.
- Acquire open spaces to serve as buffers between developed areas.
- Require dedication of open spaces/parks in housing

developments, consistent with zoning and subdivision ordinance requirements.

#### **Goal: Provide adequate funds to develop, improve, maintain and operate park and recreation facilities, consistent with city goals, policies and standards.**

- Use a variety of funding sources and tools to acquire land in order to develop park and recreational facilities, including system development charges (SDCs), grants, bond measures, private donations and other mechanisms.
- Consider increasing the SDC methodology and rate to aid in funding the park improvements identified in this plan; incorporate information from this plan related to levels of service and capital improvement needs in the update process.
- Establish adequate on-going funding for regular maintenance and operation of facilities as well as large-scale capital improvements. Options may include dedication of general funds, use of a special district, community partnerships and other means.
- Establish user fees, where appropriate to recover costs for use of recreational facilities to the greatest extent reasonably possible.
- Investigate a partnership with the North Clackamas Park and Recreation District to provide future funding and associated maintenance, operations and improvements.
- Prioritize maintenance and improvement of existing facilities over construction of new facilities.

#### **Implementation Priorities**

The following priorities should be used to help guide and

prioritize use of resources, particularly in the short term. Other actions also may be identified as priorities, depending on specific opportunity areas, funding sources or other factors.

- Determine whether the City has adequate funding within its projected and/or anticipated general, grant, user fee and land dedication projections to meet capital and long-term operation and maintenance needs for existing and new facilities. If not, explore one or more of the additional options identified, particularly for meeting maintenance and operation needs.
- Refine and implement the City's Capital Improvement Plan for existing park, recreation and trail facilities, including identifying specific funding sources and a schedule for making needed improvements.
- Identify future urban growth areas and identify appropriate sites within these areas for acquisition and improvement for park, recreation and/or playing facilities.
- Develop a short-term implementation plan for acquiring the right-of-way or an easement for the rail corridor trail and establish a schedule and approach for implementation.
- Review and update the City's methodology, rates and fees for system development charges consistent with the needs and levels of service identified in this plan.
- Identify potential grant programs that may be used to meet specific park, trail or other facility needs and identify an approach and schedule for pursuing the most viable opportunities.
- Work with the North Clackamas Park District to assess the potential feasibility of annexing into or otherwise partnering with the District to help meet future park, recreation and trail needs.
- Complete planned improvements to Bohlander field to help meet playing field needs.
- Identify priority opportunities for and an approach to collaboration with the Molalla School District, Molalla Youth Sports, the Molalla Buckeroo and other community groups to meet specific goals, objectives or strategies in this plan.