



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda

ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main Street - 6:00 PM

To attend or view the meeting or to provide public testimony, see participation instructions.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Park Commission Special Meeting April 28, 2025
2. Park Commission Joint Session with City Council May 7, 2025
3. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting May 14, 2025

IV. ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

V. PUBLIC FORUM

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Recreation Division Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes November 21, 2024

VII. DIRECTORS REPORT

VIII. BUSINESS

1. Third Quarter FY25 Update (Information)
2. Oregon Parks Forever/Kids in Parks - Track Trails Partnership (Information)
3. Advisory Committee Charges (Action)
4. 1.01.001 - Policy Framework Adoption (Action)
5. Butler-Perozzi Fountain (Information)

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1.
 1. Park Commission Study Session July 2, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
 2. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting July 9, Council Chamber 6:00 PM
 3. Ashland Senior Advisory Committee July 14, Senior Center, 3:30 PM
 4. Trails Advisory Committee July 15, Lithia Cabin 4:30 PM
 5. Recreation Division Advisory Committee July 17, the Grove 4:00 PM

XI. ADJOURNMENT

If you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact Nancy Mero at nancy.mero@ashlandoregon.gov or 541.552.2256 (TTY phone number 1.800.735.2900). Notification at least three business days before the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Agenda

accessibility to the meeting in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Public Participation Instructions

This meeting will be held in-person in Council Chamber, 1175 E. Main St. Those who wish to provide oral testimony must attend the meeting, fill out a speaker request card, and give it to staff before the meeting begins. If you wish to provide testimony electronically, contact Nancy Mero at nancy.mero@ashlandoregon.gov before 10:00 AM the day of the meeting. Please include **"Public Testimony"** in the subject line of your message.

The public can view on Channel 9 or Channels 180 and 181 (for Charter Communications customers) or live stream via rvtv.sou.edu - select RVTV Prime.

Written testimony will be accepted via email to Nancy Mero at nancy.mero@ashlandoregon.gov. Please include **"Public Testimony"** in the subject line. Written testimony submitted on Tuesday before the meeting by 11:00 AM will be made available to the Park Commissioners before the meeting. All testimony will be included in the meeting minutes.

*Agendas and minutes for City of Ashland Council, Commission and Committee meetings can be found on the City website, ashlandoregon.gov.

**MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING****Park Commission****April 28, 2025****Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM**

Commissioners Present: Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman (Chair), Adams, Landt (Vice Chair)

Staff Present: Assistant City Attorney Zahran, Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Parks Superintendent Caldwell, Senior Services Superintendent Mettler, Senior Administrative Analyst Terry, Executive Assistant Mero, Eastern Parks Supervisor Miller, Recreation Manager Flora

Absent: Commissioner Adams left the meeting at 8:00 PM

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Gardiner, Weiner, Bachman, Adams, Landt – all present (Commissioner Adams left the meeting at 8:00 PM).
- III. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**
- IV. **PUBLIC FORUM**
- V. **BUSINESS**
 1. **Current Status of the APRD FY 26-27 Budget** – Director Houston

SITUATION – At the April 15, 2025 City Council meeting, the proposed park fee was not approved, resulting in a park operations budget of \$14,397,635. This means \$1.4 million in reductions for the FY 26-27 biennium budget.

BACKGROUND – Direction for the FY 26-27 budget was to have no increase from the current biennium due to general fund forecasts and increasing costs. The Park Commission recommended a budget that was higher to accommodate the additional facilities that the Department was taking on.

The budget review identified that an additional reduction was needed to ensure that there was sufficient general funding for the adopted budget. The City Manager requested a \$5 park fee be added to the utility meter rates. This fee is consistent with other Jackson County jurisdictions.



The Department presented reductions with the \$5 park fee and without the \$5 park fee. In addition, it identified a fee level to maintain the Park Commission recommended budget.

ASSESSMENT – The Department is currently reviewing each object code per program to estimate the additional savings (with impacts) to reduce the reductions proposed for restroom closures, pool operation, ice rink operation, and some programs traditionally managed by the environmental education program. The current information on this will be reviewed at the meeting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

- Is there a policy direction the Park Commission would like to make regarding programs?
- Are there alternative long-term funding solutions the Park Commission would like to explore?

Chair Bachman wants to focus on the first bullet. Asked his colleagues not to focus on the next bullet. Hold off until PROS Plan is complete, until this budget is complete.

PUBLIC FORUM

Ed Finklea Ashland: Spoke to the importance of the Ice Rink, keep it open, please.

Cathy McNeill Ashland: Spoke to the importance of the Senior Center.

Nancy Nelson Ashland: Spoke to the importance of gardens. Suggested that land could be sold like the golf course, and that utility fees can't be raised without a vote.

Kathy Stazny Ashland: Spoke to the importance of the community gardens. Said the Community Gardeners are self-sufficient, don't need much help. Free maintenance for Parks.

Susannah Perillat Phoenix: Spoke to the importance of community gardens, so much more than deer fences and vegetables.

Regina Boykins Ashland: Spoke to the importance of community gardens. Good for visitors. Good exercise. A great resource.

Cate Hartzell Ashland: Spoke to the importance of preserving programs especially community gardens. Need to be provided information on the budget for the community gardens to help cut costs, etc.

Carol Carlson Ashland: Spoke to the importance of community gardens, interaction with children at Ashland Creek Park. Teaches gardening through Olli. Questions how expensive the gardens are. Promotes self-management.



Steve Koskello Ashland: Spoke to the importance of Community Gardens. The gardens give meaning to the concept of community. Questions financial wisdom of closing the gardens. Invasive weeds will take over. Consider gardeners as resources.

Jane Hall Ashland: Spoke to the importance of Community Gardens. Waited two years to get a plot. Focused on the mental, stress reducing effects of gardening.

Gary Shaff Ashland: Spoke to the importance of Community Gardens. 75 gardeners provide thousands of user hours biennially. Remarked that the gardeners used to do maintenance that Parks staff has taken on.

Sharon Dohrman Ashland: Spoke on behalf of Ashland's children. Spoke to the importance of keeping splash pad, pool, and ice rink open. Suggested shutting down the golf course.

Eli Jackson Bear Ashland: Recommended taking the community garden as its own line item, not lumped in with Environmental Ed program. They are self-sufficient.

Barbara Schack Ashland: Spoke to the importance of community gardens. Noted that they pay fees. \$100 per year generating revenue. They share vegetables widely.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED - The budget follows prior practices, consistent with the City Charter and budget rules.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS - The proposed budget is \$1.4 million less than the recommended budget. If approved a park fee of \$5 would generate \$1.125 million and result in \$15.5 million funding for the FY 26-27 biennium Parks Department budget.

ATTACHMENTS - N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- Clarification on whether some numbers were yearly or biennial.
- Are the golf numbers being compared equally with the pool, rink, senior center, etc.
Yes, Rocky explained difference between running a facility and maintaining it. Having Cartograph will help us be able to compare apples to apples.

Motion: I move that the Commission approve a total operating budget for the fiscal biennial ending in 2027 of approximately 15.8 million and that a monthly fee of \$6.50 for Ashland Parks and Recreation Department, added to the monthly utility bill, be adopted by the City Council.

Motion: Bachman

Second: Gardiner

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>
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Adams	Yes	Landt	Yes	
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Discussion:

- Asking Council to fund Parks at the level they asked.
- Seconded to get it on the table. Their charge is to preserve programming and support the people who have come out. Trusts the numbers are right on the \$6.50 fee. Supports everything the City wants Parks to do. To let go of Main St Park would be a travesty.
- Discomfort with the dollar amount total part of the motion. We already approved it.
- Reference to the original motion that the Council has now deliberated on.
- Noted there is sufficient time to ask Council to consider a similar total with a different fee before the budget is approved.
- 13% rise in employee benefits shouldn't be a surprise. Concern that the ask won't be received well by Council. Questioned the numbers.
- Current process is a band-aid. Suggested that the fee be a one-time biennium fee while a sustainable funding source is identified.
- Council took exception to the last motion because the numbers didn't add up. Trust expressed that the numbers add up now. Ridiculous to ask for a fee that won't cover the costs of the things we want preserved.
- The Council was looking for the process used to select the items we identified to cut.

2. **Staff Recommendations for APRD Miscellaneous Fees and Charges** – Deputy Director Dials

Chair Bachman asked to postpone the action until the next meeting and keep it as an info item.

Bachman made a motion to delay action on the item until the 14 of May. No second.

Counsel recommended going forward with the presentation and waiting until the end of the presentation to decide whether to act or not.

SUMMARY – All Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) fees for programs and services are itemized in the City's Miscellaneous Fees and Charges document. The approval of miscellaneous fees will come before the City Council for approval on May 20, 2025. At the last Commission meeting on April 9, Commissioners directed staff to bring back two fees for further discussion and information:

- Sport Fields Rental Fees



- Exclusive Use/Site Fee for Park Use

BACKGROUND – Staff was directed to bring back information on sport fields rentals and the impact to user groups using fields at North Mountain Park, Briscoe and Hunter Park. The proposal is to increase fees from a per season charge to a per hour/per field model.

An example from the attached spreadsheet, the highest user in our system outside of Ashland High School is the Ashland Soccer Club at 576 hours and serving 350 Ashland youth. In the proposal, Ashland Soccer Club would go from paying \$500 per season to paying \$35 per hour/per field. This would result in an increase to \$20,000 per season. In that same example, if it was \$10 per hour/per field, the total cost to Ashland Soccer Club would be \$5760. Other examples are included on the spreadsheet.

For the Exclusive Use/Site Fee for Park Use at \$150, staff were asked for more information on the length of use of a site for that fee. Staff would recommend an 8-hour use per site. This fee would be for any non-reservable areas approved during the Special Event permitting process. For instance, in Lithia Park the site could include Butler Perozzi Fountain Lawn, Front Lawn of Litha Park and the Lower Duck Pond Lawn.

For other proposed fees on the Miscellaneous Fees and Charges spreadsheet in most cases, staff have looked at market rates and suggested a gradual increase in fees. Ideally, in two – three years, there will be more data to evaluate the actual costs of the many services that APRD provides to further inform development of a cost recovery policy.

ASSESSMENT – Although increases in fees could prove difficult for the users, under the current biennium budget scenario increasing fees is one of the tools in our toolbox to recover some of our costs.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS – Staff are recommending the fee increases attached to this memo.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – City of Ashland Miscellaneous Fees and Charges

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – Expenses have increased 15-17% and exceed revenues in all areas. These fee increases are proposed to help offset additional budget reductions.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – I move to recommend the APRD fee increases presented to the City Council for inclusion in the Miscellaneous Fees and Charges book.



ATTACHMENTS – Miscellaneous fees and charges spreadsheet; Sport Fields Rental Fees (see packet)

Questions/Discussion :

- How would the unusual area be signed and managed? To be determined.
- \$35 per hour wasn't approved by Commission.

Public Forum

Stephen Lanning Ashland: Wanted to speak to the budget, didn't understand the process. Too great of a financial burden with the proposed fees. The increases in both the utility fee and increase to field use could be a hardship.

Nathan Van De Graff Ashland: Spoke to the importance of youth sports. The Ashland soccer club offers free soccer to over 100 youth. The club pays for some maintenance. \$35 would mean no free soccer.

Keri Pennell Ashland: Spoke to what the Ashland Little League does. They basically take care of Hunter Park. Staff doesn't do much. Kids are getting the shaft.

Deanna Oakley Ashland: Spoke to the importance of Ashland's baseball program including Little League and the High School. Threatened to take their teams to other fields.

Anne Gaffney Ashland: Spoke to the importance of considering how increasing fees will impact all the groups that use the fields, including the School District. Shifting dollars around isn't solving problems. We must all work together.

Questions/Discussion:

- Are the proposed fees just for one year? Yes.
- Can't understand the quantum leap from undervalued to overpriced. Consider the impact if we do or don't raise the fees.
- Current fees are incredibly undervalued. \$5.00 per hour would be a good starting point without being burdensome to the users.
- When would the fee change start? July 1, 2025.

Motion: I move to approve the fee schedule as presented except that the field rental be \$5.00 per hour on all sport fields.

Motion: Landt Second: Gardiner

Vote:

<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Weiner</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Bachman</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Adams</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>		



VI. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

- a. Liaison Report

VII. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Park Commission Joint Study Session with City Council May 7, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
2. ASAC Meeting May 12, Senior Center, 3:30 PM
3. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting May 14, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
4. RDAC Meeting May 15, The Grove, 4:00 PM

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Bachman adjourned the meeting at 8:31 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero, Executive Assistant

Written Testimony Received:

I am deeply saddened by the reduction in services the parks department will be able to provide in the future. Our parks are the gem of Ashland and what fuel so much of our tourism economy. How can we attract visitors to our city without our parks or without the facilities needed to visit them (restrooms)? As it stands, I foresee families, who already have a difficult time moving to and living in Ashland, moving away to younger communities in our area where children have access to bike parks, splash pads and restrooms.

I believe in being financially responsible and sound. But what expenses have been taken on in the recent past that have caused these long-standing things to be out of budget? Can we look at those things and reduce them instead of reducing our long standing parks and services?

Concerned citizen

Sent from my iPhone
Melissa Cropper



Dear APRC,

Please see the attached letter requested to be read at the APRC Special Budget Meeting. Thank you in advance for the consideration of including as Public Testimony.

Kindly,

Stephen Lanning

04/28/2025

Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission
340 S Pioneer Street Ashland,
OR 97520

Dear Chair Gardiner and Parks Commissioners,

Subject: Recommendation to Sell or Lease Oak Knoll Golf Course and East Main Park to Preserve Essential Community Facilities and Ashland's Long-Term Stability

I am writing ahead of the Parks and Recreation Commission's upcoming budget deliberations to respectfully urge the Commission to take bold action to ensure the longterm sustainability of Ashland's treasured recreational assets. Specifically, I strongly encourage the Commission to actively pursue the sale or long-term lease of Oak Knoll Golf Course and East Main Park. Doing so would allow Ashland Parks and Recreation (APRC) to focus its limited financial resources on maintaining and strengthening the core facilities that serve the widest cross-section of the community — particularly families and youth.

The Oak Knoll Golf Course has operated at a financial deficit for many years. Despite best efforts, it continues to require significant subsidies. Similarly, the East Main Park property — though a valuable piece of land — remains undeveloped. In the current financial climate, the City simply cannot afford to add new parks if we cannot adequately sustain the parks and facilities we already operate.



Selling or leasing these two properties would generate funds that could be used to: -
Preserve and enhance existing facilities such as the Garfield Park splash pad, Daniel Meyer Pool, and the Rotary Ice Rink.
- Offset the financial need that is driving the proposed \$9 monthly Parks fee, potentially reducing the burden on Ashland residents.

I am fully supportive of a progressive Parks fee to stabilize the department's finances and safeguard Ashland's quality of life. However, it is only fair to first remove inefficient cost centers like Oak Knoll that only benefit a narrow demographic before asking residents to pay more.

Furthermore, there are broader demographic and economic factors at stake. Ashland's family population is declining, and the consequences of this shift are already visible in the declining enrollment numbers at the Ashland School District. If Ashland becomes increasingly unaffordable and unfriendly to young families — through the erosion of basic amenities like pools, splash pads, and recreational spaces — we will accelerate the demographic hollowing out of our city. This trend threatens the long-term health of our schools, local businesses, and community institutions.

Maintaining a welcoming, vibrant, and family-friendly environment is essential for Ashland's future. Selling or leasing underutilized properties like Oak Knoll Golf Course and East Main Park would provide immediate financial relief and allow APRC to focus on the facilities that best serve our residents.

I respectfully request that the Commission formally explore the disposition of these properties and seriously incorporate this strategy into your budgetary planning. Thank you for your thoughtful stewardship and for your commitment to preserving what makes Ashland a truly special place to live.

Sincerely,

Stephen M. Lanning

My name is Betsy Krausnick and I've been at Ashland Creek Community Garden since 2011. I'm so grateful for this space since I don't have adequate sun at my house and was able to finally grow vegetables and meet people I wouldn't have met otherwise. This space definitely helped me during the pandemic by having a place to go to. This also has helped me in the aftermath of my retirement when I was at a loss of what to do and who to see. I appreciate the ability to grow so much food that I share it with my neighbors and even people I pass on Oak street while walking home with buckets of onions.



I would hope that you honor the year contract that we have signed and paid for at least through the end of the year. I've put in time and money to ready my beds for new plants and already have onions, garlic, peas, kale, lettuce, and beets growing.

The garden has a steady stream of gardeners tending to their plots and I feel this helps deter vandalism.

We are responsible for 4 hours of work on the area, inside and outside besides our own plots. We weed the perimeter of the fence if needed and also take care of the lavender bushes in the front. If necessary that work could be expanded even though our hours are completed.

Keeping the garden open allows me to grow my own vegetables, have a place to go to everyday, and visit with the friends I've made.

I support the \$5 a month park fee, and also, if necessary an additional water fee based on our plot size.

I believe the gardeners in the ACCG are totally able to take care of everything that's needed to keep the space going.

Betsy Krausnick

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hi City Council,

My name is Scott Friend. I've lived here for 20 years. My two kids are 6 and 8. We love Ashland in large part because of its parks and amazing schools.

Ashland families are being hit hard right now with massive budget cuts to schools, and now we're getting news that some of our favorite parks programs will be shut down too. Please, either charge us a \$9+ fee or figure out how else these programs will get funded fully, but do not cut them. You have the power to keep this town awesome. Shutting down Daniel Meyer Pool would be terrible! So many kids learn to swim there. The fee to get in is so small, raise it if needed. Do not close down the pool. The ice rink? That place is amazing! Why would we decide to close that? We can afford to pay for it. It is so much harder to rebuild services like this from scratch once they are gone than it would be to raise the money to keep them going.

If we wanted to live in a community with lower fees and taxes we would not live in Ashland. There are plenty of towns who have made the choice to defund their parks and public pools. Families will leave this town if we continue to let the degradation of these public services continue.



Scott Friend

Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission members, Ashland Creek Community Garden (ACCG) is unique among the properties under the Commission's jurisdiction. If you haven't visited the ACCG, I invite you to come by. A quick visit will show why it should be sustained and not on the list of cuts.

The ACCG Leadership Team, four volunteer gardeners of which I am one, began exploring, in February of this year, alternatives to the Parks Department's approach to ACCG. We soon realized that most of the tasks that the Parks Department does could readily be done by volunteers and, in fact, had historically been done by volunteers.

By early April, we had finalized our proposal. We requested a meeting with the Parks Department to review our ideas. A meeting was scheduled for April 16th. Unfortunately, due to current circumstances, the Parks Department cancelled the meeting.

The tasks that we believe should be done by members of the volunteer Leadership Team, rather than Parks staff include:

- Providing orientation to all new gardeners with attention to current contract specifications
- Conducting monthly "walk-throughs" and provide feedback to individual ACCG gardeners.
- Advising gardeners on changes that are needed to adhere to Parks/gardener contract.
- Serving as advisors to gardeners who have deviated from the contract's performance standards.
- Monitoring and helping to ensure that individual gardeners perform four hours per year of required community service hours for the betterment and maintenance of the ACCG.

The Leadership Team is well trained in these duties and has performed them in the past.

If ACCG becomes self-managed, as proposed, it would unburden Parks staff. In fact, the proposed changes would alleviate most costs associated with the ACCG other than water which is more than covered by the annual garden fee paid to Parks by gardeners.

The Leadership Team has additional ideas to further reduce costs and would be happy to discuss our ideas with the Parks Department.

Needless to say, the ACCG community is committed to keeping the garden open. We look forward to rescheduling the "cancelled" meeting and exploring ways to make ACCG an all volunteer community garden. Further, we recommend that this same approach be undertaken at the Scenic, Garden Way, and Clay Street community gardens.



The Leadership Team are volunteers and would appreciate the Parks Department recognizing our contributions to the city, just as the Department does for other Park volunteers.

Gary Shaff

ACCG Leadership Team/Plot 15

EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear APRC Commisioners,

I have been a member of the Ashland Creek Community Garden since the original garden was created on Hersey Street in 2002 or 2003. We were the first community garden in Ashland.

We have not only created a beautiful space over the years for community members to enjoy, but a healthy space for garden members of diverse backgrounds to come together and share our life experiences and knowledge of gardening.

We created a pollinator garden that also benefited our neighbors. We have a Children's garden to teach the next generation about growing your own food. And, We give back to the community thru our donations of fresh produce to the Food Bank.

I would be greatly impacted if our garden was closed. I have invested a lot in purchasing soil amendments and plants already this season. And, I have crops in the ground. Eating organically keeps me healthy which I would not be able to do if I can't grow it myself. Gardening is a healthy activity. Please find a way to keep Ashland Creek garden open. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Zoe Ann Northcutt

Ashland Creek Community Garden

Plot #37

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

As a mom of two and a local preschool teacher of 18yrs, I strongly disagree with the closing of the Daniel Meyer Pool, splash pad and ice rink to make up for the parks budget crisis. Families look forward to these experiences every year. The pool and rink are consistent in bringing in revenue through the seasons which they are open. Can the fees of the pool and rink be raised by \$1-2 per person to help save this from happening? The splash pad is an accessible saving grace for families in the heat of the summer, closing it would be a disservice. Please reconsider your decision to close these amazing resources that our children look forward to.

Thank you,
Andrea Johnson

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello Commissioners, Council, and Mayor,

One of the enduring charms of Ashland is its stellar parks. I'm writing today about Ashland Creek Community Garden (ACCG). This is a working garden, akin to a small community farm, that produces hundreds and hundreds of pounds of vegetables every year, plus flowers and a habitat for pollinators, and the beginnings of a viable worm compost to offset carbon emissions from old produce.

I believe that saving ACCG is cost-effective and easily done; this makes perfect sense during a time of budget constraints.

ACCG already pays--Everyone in the garden pays a yearly "user fee" already (what other recreational community in Ashland pays for their privilege--such as use of mountain trails or pickleball or tennis courts, or enjoying tai chi on the lawn at Lithia Park?). My family pays property taxes **and** approximately \$16.00/month for the mid April-October growing season. (By the way, we **already signed** a contract for the 2025 growing season and gardeners have **already paid** their fees.)

ACCG can be self supporting--we can eliminate the need for Parks staff.

We have an effective Leadership Team in place and know how to manage. We are voted on by our peers and have established roles that will continue.

- We complete monthly inspections of plots for organic practices, weed control, water use, adherence to the contract. We communicate with our fellow gardeners.
- We plan work parties, identify maintenance needs and fix what's broken, all on our own! Examples of repairs: greenhouse door, tools, locks, benches, canopy, shed and greenhouse inspections/maintenance/adherence to standards).
- We coach and offer gardening advice.
- We maintain a pollinator habitat.

ACCG is diverse--we have elders and youngers; folks of differing backgrounds and income levels, we help provide food for the local food bank; we impart life skills

ACCG is vital to my family--we eat organic vegetables daily, we exercise, socialize, strategize, work, provide pollinator habitat, it is an integral part of our lifestyle. I have been gardening in ACCG for 7 years and part of Leadership and Co-Liaison for 4 years.

I sincerely hope that during these budget decisions, that access to fresh and organic food for our community will be sustained.

Respectfully,

Barbara Schack

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello all,

I write in support of continuing Ashland's community gardening program(s) as an incredibly healthy way to stimulate creation of a sense of community, production of healthy, organic produce, a lifestyle that embodies the best of what it means to nurture the Earth. As a newcomer to the program, After waiting a year for an available slot, I am deeply concerned that it will be terminated before I get to enrich my gardening experience through joining this group of gardeners. The garden is a vital source of shared experiences where we learn from each other as we till the soil.

Terminating this program would cut off a large chunk of my daily joy. I would lose the opportunity to contribute to Ashland's health and welfare. I would lose contact with a group I am just beginning to know. I will lose the benefits of all of the work I have already put into Plot #23, and it will be sad to see so many others feel the same loss.

I support looking for viable alternatives to closure, such as volunteer management combined with, if possible, paying an additional \$5-10 per month.

Please leave the door open.

Thank you very much.

Ted Susu-Mago

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Ron Demele

Re; budget-Priority One is,,, build out East Main Park as planned for 7+ years.
Area is fastest growing with kids. Now no Y park...kids and bike youth need this! Dog park.
Never return grant money....we will be on the bottom for next request. Also local credibility is
at risk here! We have planned, volunteered, waited and expect follow through!

Ashlanders will pay for these proposed cut areas. Do it and originate or find sources to
maintain. Consider new approaches. Contract labor? Supervised Inmate labor? volunteers?
Impact of cuts will really hurt Ashland in many ways. Defer maintenance. Prioritize parks...
and consider which are underutilized by public. Build out East Main Park!.... So. ashland resident.
thanks.



Hello Council Member

I am writing in hope the Daniel Meyer Pool will not close. My family and I depend on this excellent pool in the summer to swim and we are prepared to pay more to keep it open to the public for summer swimming. Thank you

Ariane Del

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Parks and Recreation Committee,

I am writing regarding the budget cuts specific to the Ashland Creek Community Garden. I am asking that you be creative problem solvers in order to keep this garden going.

In the 15 years we've had a plot there, my 2 boys and my extended family have benefited greatly from the year-round organic produce, flowers, friendships, community building, carpentry opportunities (I taught my younger son to use power tools during the pandemic by building garden structures to shade lettuce while supporting cucumbers and winter squash on top), and practical life skills (my older son now gardens at his house in Medford).

Since we all pay to garden there, do volunteer hours to keep it weeded and maintained, and have a knowledgeable Gardener-run Management Team, wouldn't it be possible to do this without a Parks employee coordinator?

If the annual cost for the water increased, I would be willing to pay more for the yearly contract. Also, we have signed a contract and have paid the Ashland Parks and Recreation for gardening there this calendar year and have invested in seeds, starts, irrigation equipment, soil amendments, and weeding hours.

Would our fees be refunded to us?

In addition, I would be in support of a \$5. monthly fee on our utility bills in order to keep the community garden, the city parks, and the amazing community opportunities that Ashland Parks and Rec has offered for so long up and running. These are some of the very best things about this town. Thank you for your time and service,

Ann Bass

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

From Carol Carlson 4-27-2025

I'm here to talk on behalf of the Ashland Creek Community Garden. In 2003, I was one of two Ashland residents who advocated before the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to establish community gardens. The APRC agreed. The Ashland Creek Community Garden (ACCG) came first and then another three smaller community gardens.

There is a harmony and beauty in the Ashland Creek garden that parents and children in the playground notice and all the dog walkers in the park feel. When we find little kids hanging on the fence looking curious, we invite them in to pick strawberries in the Children's Garden and sit in the little gazebo we've made for them. We share produce with the adults.

Learning to grow your own food is a life skill just like learning to swim as a kid. As a Master Gardener and member of the ACCG Volunteer Leadership Team, I'm committed to using this special place to teach organic gardening to the larger community. This season I have 3 teaching tours lined up for OLLI members.

Our Community Garden has 51 plots and about 70 gardeners. **It's popularity is reflected in the 3-year long Wait List for garden plots. It is thriving, inspirational and wellmanaged, in large part due to our Volunteer Leadership Team.**

Focusing in on budget matters, we feel that most tasks that are currently undertaken by Parks staff could be done just as efficiently by the Volunteer Leadership Team. These include: 1) new gardener Orientations, 2) walking through the garden monthly to observe any problems (like invasive plants in plots or weeds in the paths), 3) talking to gardeners to correct any problems, and 4) managing the Wait Lists to bring in new gardeners.

We already do our own repairs and buy items, like our shade canopy, through gardener donations.

I'll finish by addressing **Water Use** at ACCG. As a homeowner with a drip system on a 20x20 ft area comparable to my 20x20 plot at the ACCG, my records show that at home I pay \$50/year for irrigation above my household use. \$100 is the "user fee" that I pay to Parks for my plot. Consequently, **my user fee more than covers the cost of water that I use to water my Community Garden plot. In the future, as the city increases water rates, the fees for ACCG gardeners could increase at the same rate.**

A caution: To close ACCG might cost Parks more than keeping it open in terms of combatting invasive weeds and vandalism. Right now our constant presence takes care of those things.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello,

I would like to encourage the APRC to ask the city to move forward with the \$9/month utility fee to cover the budget deficit of the parks.

The Daniel Meyer Pool, Garfield Park Splash Pad and North Mountain Park visitors center are vital for Ashland families with young children. This would be a huge loss for the community to have them close or restrict their hours.

I would also like to add that restricting access to parks and amenities in them is simply not an option as they are essential to families and summer time sanitation. This is vital for the cleanliness of Ashland and would directly affect the tourism the city relies on.

Best regards,
Johanna Hobart Crane

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello and thanks for hearing my testimony, as I won't be able to be present tonight.

As a resident of Ashland, I'm very concerned about the rumours of Daniel Meyer Pool closing, losing the public restrooms in town, and shutting down the splashpads.

I have a young daughter, and the parks in Ashland, have been one of the driving forces keeping us here over the years, and those parks wouldn't be worth much if they didn't have public restrooms in them for various reasons, including the number of homeless people who use them--who would presumably use the rest of the park if they didn't have a restroom--as well as residents who simply need to use the restroom while they're enjoying a day at the park.

The splashpads and moreso, Daniel Meyer Pool, are critical for getting through our hot summers, as well as giving us access to important swimming lessons, and having the pool closed would be a huge loss for the community. I have heard some talk about the YMCA pool taking over for Daniel Meyer, but many of us can't afford to be members at the Y, and the outdoor pool is also just so much more pleasant as a place to go and spend time.

I consider the restrooms and pool to be critical infrastructure to the livability of the city, and as such, they are non-negotiable. If there has been budgetary mismanagement in the past and we're now having to deal with it, then we need to do that, but not at the expense of such important parts of our town. We need to find money--whether it's through new fees, moving money from other funds, or some other source--because these are critical to keeping Ashland a clean, fun place to live.

Thank you for your time,
Brendon Potts

--

Monsoons are magical

My name is Jane Hall. Don and I have been gardening in the Ashland Creek Community Garden for 1 year, after 2 years on the wait list.

We have found that gardening in the Community Garden has filled a void and has given us much joy! It is an important component in our daily lives for a variety of reasons...

As seniors, gardening is a easy and useful addition to our physical activities.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

It provides healthful fresh organic produce for 5 months+ with plenty to share with neighbors!

It is a connection to the natural world...hands in soil, seeding, caring for the plants and harvesting. Following the weather and breathing fresh air.

Garden actives are great for mental health, known for reducing daily stress, particularly needed in these difficult times.

Social connections established in a community garden are key for feeling less isolated and becoming connected to the larger community around us.

Having helped start the Yreka Community Garden in 2004, I have witnessed what an asset it can be. All "varieties" of folks garden there, lending to a broader community understanding between residents. People actually get off I-5 to visit it and to rest for a few minutes in the peaceful green garden space! It thrives to this day on volunteer members and is self supporting.

We would support a \$5 park fee to help continue the amazing community gardens of Ashland and would in fact, support a \$9 fee to guarantee continued operations off all Park and Rec programs.

Thank you, Jane and Don Hall

Hello Ashland Parks and Recreation,

I am writing in regards to the budget cuts proposed for APRC. We all know how valuable the parks are for the health of our citizens and visitors, as well as the general health of our community. Ashland is a vibrant and thriving city. Let's keep it that way.

As I understand it, the city recently voted against a \$9/month fee on our utility bill. I do not feel the council members were adequately representing Ashland citizens when they voted on this matter. The news of the proposed budget cuts has spread faster among Ashlanders than any other city news in the previous 20 years I've lived here. The community is outraged and devastated. I believe our community wants to keep the parks and facilities that accompany them open and accessible. It goes without saying that the employees that keep these operations going are also essential.

The community would easily support a \$9 fee. Another solution would be enforcing paid parking, with the revenue going to APRC. This would not only support the budget but incentivize people to use alternative transportation. Obviously this is not as easy to initiate as a utility fee, but something to think about in the long game.

Your devoted Ashland citizen,
Ariel Daniel

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello, Parks Commissioners,

I see in local media that the assistant director has called for changes in fees to those who use parks fields to practice sports. Was this person feeling well on the day she made these proposals, or was she having a 'twilight zone' moment and forgot she was on Earth in Ashland? To suggest that we would burden our local community with fees that used to be \$500 and would soar to the unacceptable level of \$10,000 can only be interpreted as some kind of mean-spirited joke and surely not intended to be a real proposal that you would give the dignity of even considering.

Also on the chopping block, the community gardens that myself and others had a lot to do with many years back. We attended your hearings and as a result of a commissioner motion, the PC voted to allow community gardens on any parks' property '... where it is appropriate.' This has been a highly successful partnership between Parks and Ashland citizens — all your community gardens are full and have waiting lists. As a former citizen volunteer who worked with Linda Chesney as the coordinator, I know from experience that running these gardens does not require a huge time commitment and is also seasonal with little staff work in the winter months. The assistant director should know this and should be advocating to keep the gardens open, as should the director, who obviously does not know any of this history as I do.

The real question for us citizens is whether the current slate of Parks Commissioners and Parks' staff have any idea how to run a parks system. The aging commissioners who are beyond their expiration date should just resign, as they would in a parliamentary system when the public has lost confidence in them. Your decision making for years has placed you in this budget predicament; it is clear you are not very efficient as an organization; and stale ideas from stale commissioners means you spent money on destroying a Japanese historic garden and replaced it with a walled fort (and have no money now to maintain it) and are obsessed with one little fountain in Lithia Park while your whole system is collapsing around you.

Go ahead, raise your fees on sporting fields and close the community gardens. That will be the legacy of two decades of mismanagement and poor decisions made by emperors who don't realize they have no clothes.

Bryan Holley

To: Ashland Parks Commission

This letter is to acknowledge the proposed cuts in parks services starting July 1 in Ashland, OR. I am a mother of two elementary-aged children who attend school in Ashland. We frequent Ashland parks during all seasons of the year. The services at these parks including restrooms, Daniel Meyer pool, the splash pad and the ice rink have been essential for my kids' comfort and enjoyment in this community. There are so many of my kids' friends and their families that utilize these same services throughout Ashland. The recreational opportunities the Ashland parks, Garfield park splash pad, Daniel Meyer pool, the nature center and centennial ice rink provide contribute largely to the health and well-being of a vast swath of our community. Please rethink your options and do not cut funding to these services that provide for increased wellness in our community. In these confusing and chaotic times we so vitally

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

need opportunities that increase the health and wellness of Ashland community members. Please do not take them away.

Sincerely,

Casey Corbett
Ashland, OR

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello Ashland Parks and Recreation,

I am writing in regards to the budget cuts proposed for APRC. We all know how valuable the parks are for the health of our citizens and visitors, as well as the general health of our community. Ashland is a vibrant and thriving city. Let's keep it that way. As I understand it, the city recently voted against a \$9/month fee on our utility bill. I do not feel the council members were adequately representing Ashland citizens when they voted on this matter. The news of the proposed budget cuts has spread faster among Ashlanders than any other city news in the previous 6 years I've lived here. As an active user of those parks and facilities, I am outraged and devastated. I believe our community wants to keep the parks and facilities open and accessible. It goes without saying that the employees that keep these operations going are also essential. Myself and other members of the community support a \$9 fee. Another solution would be enforcing paid parking, with the revenue going to APRC. This would not only support the budget but incentivize people to use alternative transportation. Obviously this is not as easy to initiate as a utility fee, but something to think about in the long game.

Best regards,
Caitlin Guthrie
Ashland citizen since 2019

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Hello. I'm an Ashland resident, a parent, and a licensed clinical social worker. My husband and I are shocked and deeply disturbed by the proposal to close the Daniel Meyer pool, Garfield splash pad, and the ice rink. My time is limited to write so I will keep this brief. The public health and social issues that will absolutely be impacted by this proposal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *childhood obesity (a national epidemic. Rates of obesity increase when recreational opportunities decrease)
- *teen drug and alcohol use (this will increase, as the pool and the ice rink both provide employment and recreation opportunities for youth)
- *domestic violence (this increases when you take away low cost / free recreation outlets)
- *mental health (mental health is improved with more, not less, opportunities for youth and parents to gather, exercise, socialize and spend time outdoors)
- *socio economic inequity (this disproportionately impacts lower income families, as private recreational opportunities like camps and privately run extracurricular activities are more often than not financially out of reach)
- *tourism and population (the ice rink, pool and parks attract visitors and residents. Taking these things away will reduce both, furthering the budgetary crisis)

Thank you so much for your time and attention.

Best,

Melinda Lanning, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

To Whom It May Concern,

The parks budget seems pretty opaque and the cuts in services given the budget cuts don't make sense.

I know a 5% or 10% budget cut cannot result in a commensurate cut in services across the board, but I do not understand how they can result in the complete closure of popular programs like the Daniel Meyer Pool, the Garfield Park splashpad and the ice rink. These should serve our town's children and families and should be kept open no matter what. I don't approve of prioritizing the golf course over the pool and splash pad.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I would be OK with cuts in services at all of our parks (like trash, landscaping and park maintenance, etc.) in order to keep services open for kids.

Thank you,
Victor Chang

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Dear Ashland Parks, Ashland Council, Parks Commissioners, and Mayor -

How odd it is for Ashland to be considering cutting funding to Parks even more than it already has in the past. This is the point in history where youth need to learn about respect nature.

Ashland without its parks, and specifically North Mountain Park and the Nature Center doesn't focus on the future. North Mountain Park has been providing invaluable space and educational and recreational opportunities to this city and in fact the county for decades.

What is this town about anyway? Nature and youth have no voice. I am an outdoor teacher and the more young people who can be in nature, the better. PLEASE make decisions for the next seven generations, please.

Computers are moving in on education and nature needs its space and place to influence our future's youth ALSO!! Less screens, more outdoor nature spaces!!!

Please send me the Zoom link so I may attend.

Deep gratitude and appreciation,
Christine Brautigam
Outdoor Educator MSIT, MAT

We pay taxes that should go to parks They are more important then most things. Basic parks off the water parks no need Daniel Mayer pool serves many. Go back to basics but keep the parks! Thanks

Karen Potts

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I'm Ann Cramer, a gardener at the Ashland Creek Community Garden (ACCG) since 2006 as well as part of the Leadership Team. I believe that the ACCG is a bright star, a model of a working, thriving community of gardeners. ACCG is made up of 51 garden plots where singles, couples and families enjoy growing organic vegetables, herbs & flowers. We garden amongst the good bugs & not so good ones, we're thrilled when the Monarch butterflies come to play and the various birds that sing to us on a quiet Sunday morning. And if this sounds all so idyllic, yea, we are challenged sometimes dealing with those pesky critters that like to create havoc.

ACCG was founded in 2003 by a passing neighbor who saw an empty field, recognized the growing potential and approached APR with the proposal to build a community garden. Cofounder Carol Carlson is still involved 22 years later. She was awarded Volunteer of the Year last year. ACCG is the oldest and largest community garden in Southern Oregon!

We've had Volunteer Garden Managers til COVID hit when we gardeners created a Leadership Team to address needs & provide solutions that APR had neither the staff or resources to deal with. Our LT team are a talented foursome who work well together, are passionate about ACCG, have years of experience with guiding, coordinating work parties, organizing social events, solving garden issues, building projects, maintenance issues & fund raising. We communicate well, respect and value diverse opinions, suggestions and input and we keep transparent and open communication with all the gardeners.

We recognize that APR is dealing with ways to reduce the budget. ACCG Leadership Team is offering a proposal that we believe will be a win-win for both ACCG & APR. We respectfully ask that ACCG continue to be open for this growing season through November 30th. The LT will self-manage ACCG as we have the skills & years of experience ie, doing the New Gardener Orientations, do the monthly walk-throughs, address & mediate gardener issues/conflicts, etc. You could consider this year to be a trial run to be evaluated after Nov. 30th.

Please keep in mind the following:

- Gardeners have already paid the fees for this year
- Many gardeners have already invested in amendments for the soil and bought/planted starts & seeds.
- Our greenhouse is full of summer veggie starts due to be planted mid- May
- ACCG is a year round garden with many gardens already producing veggies and herbs.

If ACCG was to be shut down, this would be a huge loss of time & expense for our gardeners. Many gardeners have chosen to garden at ACCG because they don't have either the space or the proper gardening conditions at home or they rent, live in apartments, etc.

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

We can foresee that APR would want an APR staff person to check in periodically. Since the LT team are volunteers, perhaps we could be under the purview of APR's Volunteer Coordinator.

ACCG's Leadership Team thanks you for your consideration with the opportunity for us to continue. Our reward is a vibrant, thriving community of gardeners enjoying the satisfaction of working the soil and growing their own food. Our reward is enjoying each other's creative, delicious dishes at our monthly potlucks. Our reward is working side by side at our work parties, sharing stories, laughing together, feeling the accomplishment of how many hands can get so much done while enjoying ourselves in the process.

I think we can speak for all the gardeners that we are very proud of ACCG and so appreciate the opportunity to garden here. Thank You!

Ann Cramer
Ashland Creek Community Garden
Leadership Team Member

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

I'm writing this email to support Community Gardens in Ashland, Oregon. My name is Linda Thomas and I have been gardening at Ashland Community Garden for more than 5 years; I was on the waiting list for 3 years before a plot became available.

Community Gardens are important to me because they enable me to grow my own organic vegetables which my family enjoys very much. I need the community space because I am unable to garden at home as my neighbors have large trees which shade my yard. When I have extra produce from my community garden plot, I give it to my neighbors, the Food Bank, or a Ukrainian refugee family who lives here in Ashland.

I love the sight and feel of a community garden; it provides a much needed sense of community for me and other gardeners and allows us to exercise our bodies and our creativity. I feel I am contributing to the beauty of Ashland by maintaining a lovely green area.

In good faith, I paid the fee and signed a contract with the City of Ashland for my plot for 2025. I have already spent many hours preparing the soil and planting vegetables. I have also spent considerable money on soil amendments, seeds, and plants for this year.

I fully support a \$9.00/ monthly fee for Ashland Parks and to keep community gardens open.

Thank you for your attention to this matter!

Linda Thomas
Ashland, OR 97520

> I am a member of the Ashland Creek Community Garden. I have been gardening there for at least five years and waited three years to be able to be included. There is always a long waiting list because there is so much interested in gardening. Some of us are unable to garden at our own homes because of lack of space or lack of enough sunshine. Also, deer are a deterrent too many gardeners. The Ashland Creek Community Garden has excellent protection from deer and other critters with our high fence. > The Community Garden is so important to me because I have been in gardener all my life and the activity keeps me healthy and happy. I was a gardener by profession for 35 years and now, as an elder, wish to continue to work with the soil and make things grow. Just last fall I planted a winter garden for the first time and was very successful in producing enough kale and other greens to add to my green smoothie in the mornings. It was so much fun to be able to collect my own produce during the late winter season. I saved a lot of money by not having to buy food items at the store.

>

> I have just replenished the beds in my 20'x20' plot with expensive soil amendments and more chicken manure and other products. I have paid a fellow to help me as I am still recovering from a broken leg. So I've paid out a lot of money for help and for supplies. It is so important to me to get very fresh produce which is abundant in the late summer and fall from my own Garden plot at Ashland Creek

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

community garden. I also have a trellis where I plant sweet peas and like for bees and other pollinators to enjoy. I share these other flowers with many people and children in the playground next to the garden who come ask about the flowers in my plot.

>

> Because I am recovering from an injury, the garden is a place of sanctuary as well as a place to heal. I can move around the plot without having to walk far whilst "getting back on my feet" (literally). I am unable to walk even a block at one go, but gardening has been 'just the thing'! It gives me some exercise and connects me with nature and my spiritual center. It is also my only chance to socialize with others as I am home alone most of the time. I have been friends with some of the folks at ashland community garden for several years and I am making new friends there all the time.

>

> Each of the gardeners donates time for the community by doing any number of necessary tasks such as weeding or conducting tours of the garden etc.

>

> I have already signed a contract with the city of Ashland and paid \$100 for my plot use this year. As I mentioned before I have already invested quite a bit of time and money to begin my summer garden.

>

> If you do not want to support our Ashland Creek Community Garden we

> are ready and able to assume duties ourselves as other community gardens in other cities have done cross the nation. They do not have to be part of the park system. But I am willing and able to pay five dollars a month for the parks fee to keep our community garden open.

Please consider the large Ashland Creek Community Center as an essential part of life in Ashland. As a senior in Ashland who pays a lot of taxes, I am requesting that you keep us in your plans or let us continue to thrive under our own supervision.

Thank you Elodie
Bergmann



MINUTES FOR JOINT SESSION WITH CITY COUNCIL

PARK COMMISSION

May 7, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners/Councilors Present: Adams, Hansen, Gardiner, DuQuenne, Weiner, Mayor Graham, Bachman (Chair), Dahle, Landt (Vice Chair), Kaplan

Staff Present: City Manager Cotta, Parks Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Assistant City Attorney Zahran, Senior Services Superintendent Mettler, Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: Councilor Bloom

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Bachman called the meeting to order at 6:09
- II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioner Adams, Councilor Hansen, Commissioner Gardiner, Councilor DuQuenne, Commissioner Weiner, Mayor Graham, Commissioner Bachman, Councilor Dahle, Commissioner Landt, Councilor Kaplan all present
- III. **PARKS & RECREATION SERVICE LEVELS AND BUDGET CHALLENGES WITHIN THE CITY'S GENERAL FUND** – Director Houston, City Manager Cotta

Questions/Discussion on Cotta's portion of the presentation:

- Clarification on Enterprise Admin Services Slide 5 of presentation. What spurred the ask for a 5% reduction? A: Given uncertain economy, at budget retreat it was decided to leave the budget flat, in part because of information that personnel costs were coming in higher than expected. Then when revenues were clearly going to be short, the ask went out for a 5% cut to all GF departments
- Suggestion to increase TLT and Food and Beveridge taxes so that rate payers don't get hit. TLT expenditure is regulated. Stop buying and purchasing land and look at selling land.
- Revenue from sold park land can only go to capital budget.
- Why such a severe reduction? Not just because of measures 5 and 50. A: We can do better at forecasting. Haven't been good at funding the general fund.
- Question about Food and Beveridge tax and how it is utilized. The tax brings in about \$4 MIL per biennium and Parks budget is \$14 MIL so not a long-term solution.



A review of Ashland Parks and Recreation Department (APRD) service levels and the challenges to meet these levels.

BACKGROUND – The APRD was established in December 1908, with the formation of the Park Commission. Over the last 116 years, APRD has developed a park and recreation system of 811 acres, with 20 developed parks, a senior center, a recreation center, a community center, a pool, a golf course, multiple sport courts, and 53 miles of trails.

Community expectations are high, given the level of historically stable funding and level of service APRD provided. Since the 1990s, state laws and other community constraints have reduced the funding to general fund programs and services. The City is at a point where reductions in levels of service or alternative resources need to be implemented. APRD has made reductions in levels of services and reduced its budget, consistent with City budget direction, for well over the last decade. However, there is no end to this process. We need to continue to ensure that City programs and services are effective, meet the needs of the community, and are sustainable.

ASSESSMENT – Department Capacity Analysis

The Department completed an analysis of the historical staffing levels and number of acres managed. This identified that staffing levels peaked in 2008 and have been steadily reduced to the current level of 35 FTE. During this time the Department (with direction from the Park Commission and City Council), acquired additional property, developed new parks, added recreational assets to existing parks, and increased the number of miles of trails. This has resulted in an increase in assets of approximately 25%



and a reduction in staff of 36%. During this same period, our funding resources has been reduced by 42% (in 2025 dollars).

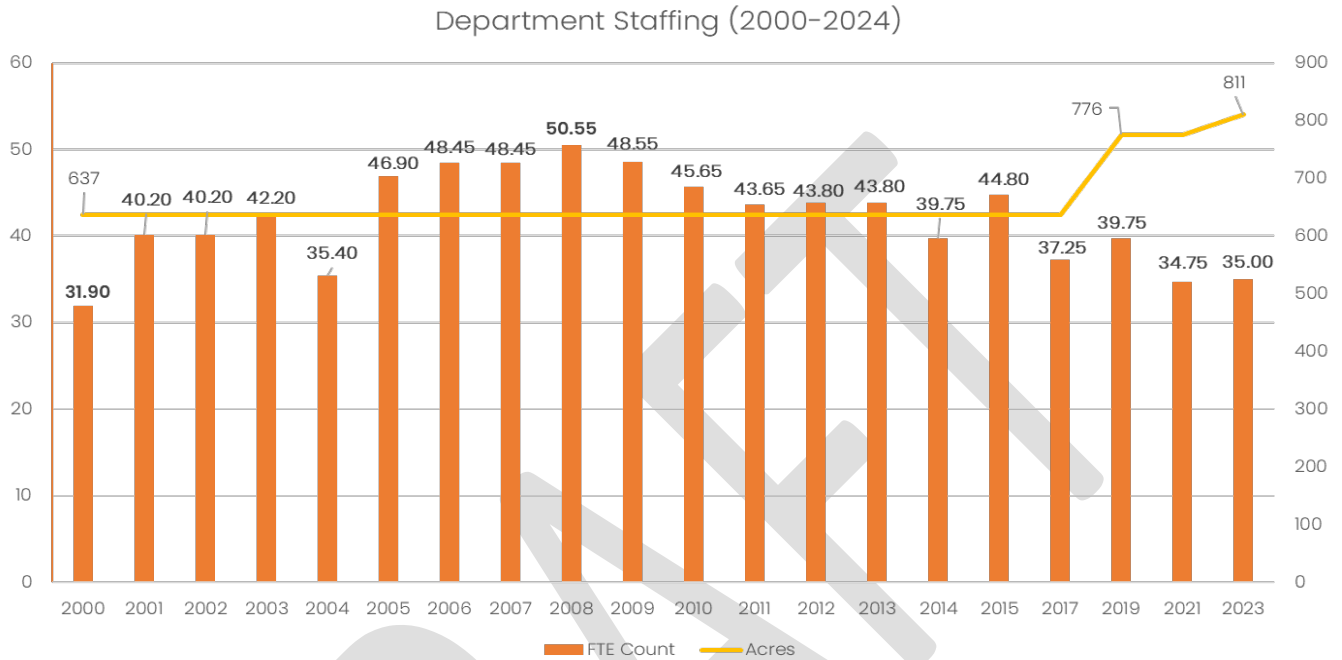


Figure 1 - APRD Staffing & Acreage 2000-2023



Budget History:					
30 yrs ago, 20 yrs ago, 10 yrs ago to present					
BIENNIUM	1997-1999*	2007-2009*	2015-2017	2023-2025	2025-2027
FTE COUNT	35.8	50.55	44.80	37.00	35.00
ADOPTED OPERATIONS TOTAL	\$ 11,153,674	\$ 16,346,131	\$ 12,165,057	\$ 14,155,312	\$ 14,397,635
AVERAGE COST PER FTE	\$ 85,502	\$ 128,407	\$ 172,282	\$ 252,219	\$ 263,620
Adopted Operations (2025 Dollars)	\$22,223,886	\$ 25,211,854	\$ 16,699,962	\$ 14,856,661	
AVERAGE COST PER FTE (2025 dollars)	\$ 171,863	\$ 202,871	\$ 235,747	\$ 269,611	
* These are (2) fiscal years combined. The budget was on an annual basis during this period.					

Figure 2 - Parks & Recreation Budget History

APRD programs and services require staff to complete the work. We have assessed our operational capacity. This was completed utilizing a Maintenance Management Plan (MMP). An MMP identifies the resources needed to complete routine maintenance. Routine maintenance includes tasks like mowing, cleaning restrooms, and emptying trash cans.

We used the MMP tool used by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department that is taught to NW Parks and Recreation departments at the Pacific Northwest Resource Management School in Port Townsend, WA. An MMP starts with an inventory of assets (acres, buildings, etc.). The maintenance level of service (tasks to complete and frequency) was based on the 2012 level of service standards for the Department.

The MMP identified that we have 45,760 hours of staff time dedicated to park maintenance. That is supplemented by contracted services, temporary employees, and volunteerism. All resources combine to just under 70,000 hours per year available to complete routine maintenance.

The MMP identified that there are 139,343 hours of routine maintenance tasks to accomplish. This results in the Department having 33% of the staff required to complete the routine maintenance tasks at our current level of service. With all resources, we are still at 50% of the capacity needed.



Maintenance Management Plan: Current Resources vs Need

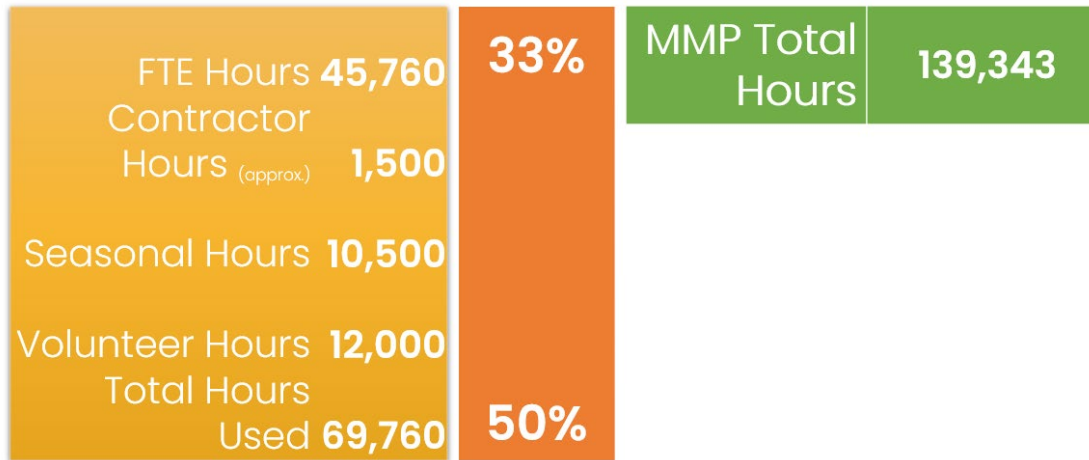


Figure 3 - Maintenance Management Plan Data

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

1. Are there any questions on this historical summary?

Questions/Discussion:

- Are there different levels of maintenance for different parks/assets? A: Yes.
- What else was going on in the City over history resulting in such a dramatic reduction in Parks' portion of the GF? A: Reclassification of internal services (Enterprise).
- Is the tool used for the MMP a tool for fine tuning how to make future reductions in staffing/maintenance? A: Yes, especially when used with Cartegraph. Good for forecasting tasks.
- Volunteerism is huge.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Biannual budget process

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – N/A



IV. CURRENT ACTIONS TO STREAMLINE THE CITY OPERATIONS AND POTENTIAL LONGER-TERM STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS GENERAL FUND CHALLENGES – Director Houston

A review of current streamlining actions and long-term strategies.

BACKGROUND – Agenda item III is foundational to work that occurred prior to this fiscal year on the Department's status. The ten-year strategic plan (PROS) will provide community wide input on long-term goals and priorities for the Department.

ASSESSMENT – Department Efficiency Examination

Staff are currently reviewing reductions in operational activities to determine if the potential savings can minimize some recreational programming reductions. Here are some examples of items we are investigating:

- Assessment of workflow and team structures to assure teams are in alignment with current work priorities (awaiting class and compensation study results).
- Relocating program staff to consolidate customer service location and improve level of service with reduced resources.
- Reducing irrigation to reduce the cost of water and reduce property maintenance requirements.
- Nature scaping model (non-manicured) at appropriate sites to reduce maintenance requirements.
- Hardscaping medians and other areas to reduce workload and improve staff safety.
- Reduction in trash cans and mutt mitts to reduce trash collection and disposal costs.
- Assessing partnerships for the operation of some programs.
- Fleet inventory assessment to determine the necessity of items and reduce items to minimize future fleet costs.
- Assessment of programs to determine the minimum level of services to reduce operating costs.
- Implementation of task management program to allow better data on tasks assigned, completed, and not completed. In addition, the program would assist in better evaluating location and program costs.
- Establishment of cost recovery policy to assist in setting fees for programs.



Future Funding Work

The structure deficiencies placed upon the general fund by Measure 5's tax limits and the permanent tax rate set at the 1997 level by Measure 50 are real. Looking beyond the park fee's needed assistance to maintain next biennium's programming needs for parks, the Department is developing and exploring other ideas. There are only a handful of core revenue sources available to the city.

Revenue Type	
Taxes of Goods & Services	Food & Beverage , General, fuel, TLT , Construction
Taxes on Income	Personal, Business, Payroll
Taxes on Property	Levy, Special District, Bonds
Fees and Charges	Franchise fee, Municipal service fees, Fee for services, SDCs, Fines
Sponsorships/Partnerships	Events , Naming rights, Services, Private/Public partnerships
Bold text = Existing resource used by City	

Specific concepts identified through brainstorming efforts to date include:

- Citywide Facilities Assessment Plan – goal is to determine right size and number of facilities and properties.
- Parking Fees
- Business Plan for Golf Course to improve utilization and reduce general fund support
- Review of non-general fund sources to operate the Parks & Recreation Department
- RFPs for private/public partnerships
- Naming rights/sponsorships
- Park Foundation utilization to improve equity and inclusion (as fees increase)
- Food & Beverage re-authorization
- Transient Lodging tax increase
- Levy or District concepts

Many of these ideas require engagement with community members, other departments, and both elected bodies. Some would require a vote of community members to enact.



We look forward to the ongoing discussion and actions to ensure stable funding to support general fund programs and services.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

2. Are there additional ideas to streamline the Parks & Recreation Department?
3. What other funding concepts need to be explored?

Questions/Discussion:

- Items on Current Actions to Streamline Operations slide will take time. Reasonable timeframe to see some results? A: Depends on the item.
- Are you considering increased volunteer use? A: Yes, with a trail boss, or trained volunteer lead running groups so that it doesn't involve increased staff time
- RVMBA, DEVO, AWTa do a ton of work on trails.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Biannual budget process

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

V. NEAR-TERM FUNDING OPTIONS FOR PARKS & RECREATION'S OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL BIENNIUM ENDING 6/30/2027 – Director Houston

A review of future funding options and impacts for the Ashland Parks & Recreation Department (APRD).

BACKGROUND – The general fund has struggled to provide the funding resources to address the programs and services that the community wants. The FY25-27 biennium budget direction was to hold a flat budget from the FY23-25 biennium budget. However, an updated forecast from Finance identified that an additional 5% reduction for general funds departments was needed to reduce about \$8.4 million in general fund expenditures.

The City Manager has discussed the need to consider utility meter fees and/or fee increases to address the gap between general fund resources and service expenditures.



On March 30, 2025, a park fee was proposed by the City Manager at a City Council study session. City Council directed staff to bring the item back for consideration at the April 15, 2025 City Council meeting. At that meeting, City Council decided not to approve the park utility meter fee. Key takeaways for staff on the decision made were that it was a surprise, the desire to determine if all other avenues were explored, the level of engagement with the Park Commission, and the process being used to consider the park utility fee.

ASSESSMENT – Budget Reductions Process

Parks staff developed a budget consistent with budget direction, with the exception of the resources needed to manage new responsibilities for the Department (Community Center, Pioneer Hall, and East Main Park) and to meet the needs of the Senior Center. To reduce the budget request, staff utilized existing funding sources to reduce the funding request. For example, recreation programming funds were used from the ice rink and pool to offset the increased cost of hiring a recreation coordinator to assist with the addition of the Community Center and Pioneer Hall.

After reviewing the proposed budget with Finance and the City Manager, staff received revised budget direction to make an additional 5% in reductions for all general fund departments. The revised proposed budget for APRD was \$15.2 million with the addition of a \$5 monthly utility meter fee for parks. Without the fee, it would be \$14.4 million.

Staff developed two reduction targets: \$600,000 and \$1.4 million, based on the two budget alternatives. Staff began the review by determining what the required or mandated programs, services and/or operational requirements are for the department. Those include the management of wildfire fuels, invasive weeds, and ensuring that our barrier free recreation (parks) are open and safe for community use. The next identified reductions to reduce impacts to the least number of users.

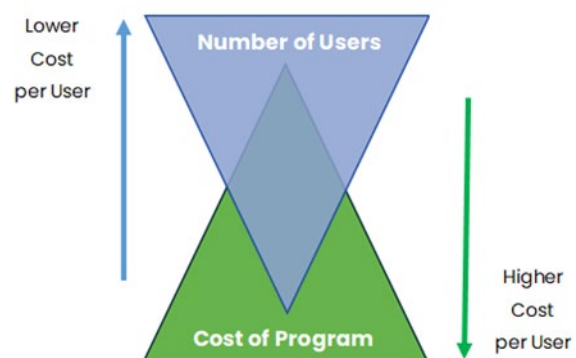


Figure 1 - Utilization vs Costs



Staff identified that the lowest barrier (no fee) recreational program is our parks and trails. These align with mandates for maintenance of these properties. As such, staff prioritized keeping the developed parks open for the community.

A rubric was developed to assist in informing additional reductions for recreational assets. It reviewed the expenses, revenues, and annual utilization of each program and assessed the operational impact (how much work it takes). The results are below:

Program	Pool	Ice Rink	Golf	Env. Ed.	Seniors
General Fund Need	100-200k	under \$100k	under \$100k	Over \$500k	Over \$500k
Number Served (Utilization)	10,000	20,000	30,000	5,000	20,000
Park Operations Impact	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium

Figure 2 - Program Analysis Rubric

Staff initially reduced new asset items (Community Center, Pioneer Hall, & East Main Park). This reduction, due to the combining of existing funding resources, led to a reduction in service to the pool and ice rink. To ensure that the Senior Center services were not reduced, we reduced seasonal employees to a minimal level along with other contracted services. This led to reductions in restrooms and other operational reductions. This still did not address the budget reduction initial target of \$600,000.

The environmental education program has the next highest level of need from the general fund, has the lowest utilization level identified, and the program is in a transition phase, as the historical model of service of being a school educational destination is broken, and we are in a period of developing a new model. This led to the decision to reduce the environmental education program by 50%, which resulted in laying off an employee.

As the reduction targets went from \$600,000 to \$1.4 million, it became clear that more would be needed. We chose to reduce the new position for the Senior Center and make no additional reductions there. To meet the reduction target, we made further reductions to the environmental education program (layoff of another staff member), reductions to the pool and ice rink, and elimination of the East Main Park development project. We had to further reduce operational tasks to meet the \$1.4 million target.

FY25-27 Biennium Budget Update



Staff have received significant input regarding the potential reductions and the proposed increases in fees. The comments consistently identify that the park system is a vital part of their experience as a citizen of Ashland. Each program and service is critical to many community members. A park fee is supported in a majority of the comments received.

Since the April 15, 2025, City Council meeting, staff have been working with the City Manager's office and Finance to review the data presented. The data has been updated to determine that the amount of revenue generated over 18 months is different than presented and that the budget with or without a park fee has changed. The figure below outlines those changes:

Item	April 15, 2025	As of today
Park Fee Revenue (\$5) ^{18 months}	\$750,000	\$1,125,000
Park Budget with Park Fee	\$15,219,635	\$15,522,647
Park Budget without Park Fee	\$14,450,000	\$14,397,635

Figure 3 - Budget Numbers Update

Based on these revised numbers, the park fee required to ensure that programs and services are maintained at the proposed budget of \$15.8 million has been reduced to \$6.50.

Comparables for the different park fees are shown below:

Park Fee	Revenue	Revised Budget
\$5	\$1,125,000 ^{18 months}	\$15,522,647
\$6	\$1,350,000 ^{18 months}	\$15,747,647
\$7	\$1,575,000 ^{18 months}	\$15,972,647

Option #1 – General Fund & User Fees (current strategy)

Figure 4 - Park Utility Fee Revenue



Park Commission



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541.488.5340

This option is outlined in detail earlier in the agenda report. This option would ensure that the general fund expenditure is balanced to revenue projections. This option will result in the reduction of the level of service for programs, services, and park maintenance.

Staff are developing a season-by-season approach to determine if the savings projected in reductions result in the Department maintaining some programming for the pool, ice rink, and restrooms. Based on budget year 1, we would increase or decrease program service levels.

Staff would continue to complete the strategic plan, restructure the Department, and implement streamlining efforts to improve efficiencies for the programs and services it provides.

No Park Fee

Revenue(18 months)*:	\$0
Park O&M budget**:	\$14,397,635
Reductions:	\$1.4 million

Impacts:

- Layoff 2 staff
- Eliminate Environmental Education Program
- Recreation Programming Reductions
 - Pool, Ice Rink
 - Community Center and Pioneer Hall not opened
- Reduction in Park Operations
 - Restrooms
 - Maintenance of parks
- East Main Park not developed
- Senior Center services reduction

Option #2 – \$5 Park Utility Fee

\$5 Park Fee

Revenue(18 months)*:	\$1,125,000
Park O&M budget**:	\$15,522,647
Reductions:	\$273,278

Impacts:

- Recreation Programming Reductions
- Community Center and Pioneer Hall not opened

This option is consistent with the proposal submitted by the City Manager on March 30th and April 15th, 2025. This option would permit the Department to reduce the number of layoffs and operate most restrooms, the splashpad, the pool, and ice rink. The Department would move forward with East Main Park to replace the recreational services to the southeastern portion of the City that were reduced when the YMCA park was sold.



Much like option #1, the Department would continue to develop a season-by-season approach to monitor savings, costs, and revenues to ensure it is in compliance with the adopted budget.

Staff would continue to complete the strategic plan, restructure the Department, and implement streamlining efforts to improve efficiencies for the programs and services it provides.

Option #3 – \$6.50 Park Fee

This option is consistent with the budget recommended by the Park Commission. It results in cost reductions, consistent with the budget direction, and allows the Department to take on additional work requested by City Council and the Park Commission for the new and newly rehabilitated assets.

Staff would continue to complete the strategic plan, restructure the Department, and implement streamlining efforts to improve efficiencies for the programs and services it provides.

This option would also address the community's feedback on minimizing park program and service reductions.

\$6.50 Park Fee

Revenue(18 months)*:	\$1,462,500
Park O&M budget**:	\$15,860,135
Reductions:	\$0

Impacts:

- All programs would be consistent with current operations, open Community Center and Pioneer Hall, and develop East Main Park.
- Consistent with budget direction and inclusion of new responsibilities

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

1. What additional information is needed for the review of funding options for the Parks & Recreation O&M Budget for FY25-27?

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – Biannual budget process

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – The Parks O&M budget for FY 25-27, as presented to the Citizen Budget Committee, will result in \$1.4 million in reductions. This will result in the layoff of (2) staff, eliminating the environmental education program, will have significant



reductions to the recreation program, reduce park operation's level of service, and terminate the East Main Park development project.

Questions/Discussion:

- Do the number of users (Program – Reductions Rubric slide) represent unique users. A: No.
- Comment about how golf course only has 30,000 users in 365 days of being open while pool and ice rink have many more in a short period of time. PROS Plan survey said get rid of the golf course.
- We can't have the informed discussion needed until the PROS Plan is complete. What does that process look like? A: Complete PROS, first. Any reduction is going to be devastating to someone. Intend to have the PROS plan complete by end of '25.
- Not pretending business as usual. Can't keep using band aids. Need to transition to some other revenue enhancement solutions and/or more reduction(s) in levels of service and move away from the fee. Process could take two to five years.
- If the PROS plan is completed at the end of 2025, will we have the information so that in two more years we will be having a fundamentally different conversation? A: Hopefully. Not sure what might get in our way.
- Is there money budgeted for the PROS Plan implementation? A: There is not a specific line item.
- Cotta: there is money in the CM's office for strategic plans. Director Houston and she have talked about partnering. PROS Plan fits neatly into the City's overall strategic plan. Parks Department is ahead of the game. Other departments will have to come up with their own strategic plans.
- The Council and Commission as a group need to work together. Have to make cost reductions. Change the services rather than reduce them.
- Need innovation. Events, drawing people to visit and then hopefully move to Ashland. This will drive economic growth and thereby the general fund.
- Expand the TLT possibly. Has to be a better way than to put the fees on the backs of the people.

Mayor Graham: Council has to give direction to the Department tonight about how to move forward with a fee.

Council Only Discussion



Park Commission



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- Will a \$5.00 fee relieve stress on Little League, etc.? A: It would significantly reduce the number of reductions Parks has to make, including field use rates.
- If a park fee is passed will that allow the Commission to work with the field users (and others) on a different increase to their costs? A: Yes, though it would need Park Commission motion to change adopted fees/misc. charges.
- Accept the band aid. Pass the fee. Do the work to avoid being in this position again.
- The fee is not equitable. Once you go down this rabbit hole, there's no going back. There has to be a better way.

Mayor Graham: Council can only provide recommendation to staff as this is a study session. No formal decision can be made tonight.

Graham called for three rounds to garner Councilor's opinions/feelings.

- 1. Do you support a fee? Which fee. \$5 for 24 months, or \$6.50 for 18 months.**
- 2. Do we cap the fee at some point?**
- 3. Are we attaching it to a process, like a strategic plan?**

Round 1. Dahle \$5; Kaplan \$5; Hansen \$6.50 first choice, either is fine; DuQuenne no fee; Graham fine with either, prefers \$5

Round 2. Dahle no more than 24 months; Kaplan favors no cap; Hansen no time cap and a continued fee; DuQuenne doesn't support the fee at all; Graham 24-month cap that is extendable

Round 3. Kaplan attach some metrics provided by staff; Graham that will take time outside the budget deadline. Suggested a broad-brush outline for the short term; Kaplan, understood, suggested bringing it to the October 21 joint meeting; Dahle wants a sense of urgency attached. Asked that the Commission give Rocky direction to get things in order with expediency to satisfy, inform the public, report to Council four times a month, and avoid being in this situation again; DuQuenne suggested the Council meet with the Commissioners every four months; Cotta asked for clarification: Are we asking Rocky to report to Council quarterly, or having the two elected bodies meet quarterly? Graham, that is maybe a bigger Council discussion.



Graham's summary: Direction to Parks – carry forward a \$5 park fee for 24 months (or TBD). The Council needs to do its own General Fund work concurrently.

Discussion/Questions:

- Parks is taking the brunt of the lack of money in the General Fund. All the departments need to do their work.
- The 1.4 MIL for Parks for the next biennium budget will need a Council resolution, yes? A: Yes, a draft will be brought to the May 20 Council meeting. The budget can be amended. The budget committee has asked the City to allocate more funding to the Parks Department which would entail taking away funding from other GF departments.
- Clarification that if the Council adopts the \$5 fee for Parks, the City would not have to take funding away from other GF departments.
- Ultimately the Council will be adopting the amended budget rather than the presented budget. Changes are anticipated.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT** – Chair Bachman adjourned the meeting at 8:45 PM

Written Testimony:

Esteemed councilors and commissioners,

It was brought to my attention that KDRV recently aired two segments about the "\$1.4 million in budget cuts" that Ashland Parks and Recreation was facing, including an interview with Director Houston in which a misrepresentation was made.

https://www.kdrv.com/news/ashland-parks-faces-1-4m-in-cuts-youth-sports-feesrise/article_3a0d0f4c-8ac4-4ff3-ae21-c456c7246812.html

The City Manager's proposed APRD budget of \$14,397,635 as noted in the current online budget (<https://ashlandoregon.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/501> p.149) is actually HIGHER than the 23-25 biennial budget of \$13,360,519. It would appear that APRD 25-27 budget is realizing an INCREASE of \$1,037,116. Certainly not a 5% cut, nor a 10% cut.



APRC was proposing a 25-27 budget of \$15,795,925, an 18% INCREASE of \$2,435,406 over the 23-25 budget, not the 5% city administration was requesting of all departments. The public deserves to see what that increase was intended for.

The "cut" APRD continues to cite compares its PROPOSED budget to the City Manager's proposed budget in the APRD "general fund", NOT to the previous biennial budget.

Continuing to disseminate this narrative could be misleading to the public and be construed as a PR effort to influence public opinion regarding a new Parks fee.

Is it possible that the extreme cuts proposed by APRD in the absence of a \$6.50/mo/ratepayer might actually not be necessary? It is equally distressing to see City Manager Cotta endorse the the narrative of budget "cuts", the need for extreme service cuts, and the need for a new fee by her statements at the 4/9 Commission meeting. Her support of the fee appears to be tacit approval of an 18% budget increase for Parks when at the same time states all other departments are taking 5% cuts.

I'm sure you would agree that honesty and transparency are critical for public trust in the institutions created to serve Ashland residents. Ashland residents deserve a line item expense and revenue statement to appropriately respond to this potential imposition of a new fee. I continue to believe a re-evaluation is needed of the number of parks, riparian areas and other open space that Ashland residents are being asked to increasingly support.

Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,
Barb Magee

For last evenings study session I spoke specifically to a slide from the packet that was prepared for the session.

The slide mentioned 5 pathways to increase revenue. All of which will take time except for the easiest is to create a fee. I would appreciate council and parks to consider there might be other ways to lead to more sustainable solutions that don't put all the burden on the citizens.

Reduce management/supervisor costs by 10% across all city departments.

Design EQUAL reduction to all parks programs.



Halt professional training, travel and E. Main Park development Consider

including more 'adopt a park' options.

Sell assets. Oak Knoll being at the top of the list for many reasons: foremost compared to other parks the usage in number of golfers is small, water usage is concerning and I'm told the golf course costs \$200,000,00 over and above the income.

I attended a meeting to see if data was available on number of users. I was told SS# are not collected but tee times are. I wanted to know number of golfers so I decided to do my own collection study. I combined Hersey St., Railroad and Garfield parks (assuming close to property of the golf course). On multiple occasions I drove by the three parks then Oak Knoll to do an approximate head count. My findings were close to 50% more individuals were at the small parks compared to the golf course.

I have nothing against the sport of golf but in these it just doesn't make sense. I would like to learn more about the Golf Course management advisory committee. On another note the field usage fee chart is unfair and I hope it is voted down.

know the community has many more ideas but these are a few I would like you to consider.

Thank you for your time and consideration Sharon Bryson Ashland resident over 35 years

Dear Nancy:

My wife and I were actively involved in the preliminary stages of planning for the new Ashland Parks and Rec Dog Park about 4 years ago.

Our house borders the Park property by the Wetland, on the South East corner. We thought the initial offering and plan was brilliant, with the generous donation of land from a local resident, combined with a land swap with the City (or County) for the property south of Dollarhide and another property in town. And as we understood it, the deal would only go through if a Designated Park was in the Plan. Walking away from that offer would just be irresponsible.

We worked with our community to help design the Park and all its amenities. We sincerely hope you will follow through with this plan! Abandoning it would be a huge mistake! We understood that the need for a Park at this end of town was desired by City and County planners, as well as statewide goals.



If the issue is money, you could restructure the design and eliminate some of the amenities that are not as popular with the public, or that are costly. We would be happy to work on a committee that helps design this "back-up plan." My wife and I are retired, so we have time to contribute to this cause. And we think it's a good one!

Sincerely,
Michael and Victoria Miller Ashland,
Or. 97520

Dear Members of the Ashland City Council:

The Rogue Valley Audubon Society (RVAS) is writing to strongly support continued funding for the North Mountain Park Nature Center and the critical staff who manage and coordinate this local treasure. This vital community resource plays an important role in environmental education, conservation, and wildlife preservation in Ashland and Jackson County.

Over the past year, our organization has been devoted to supporting the Nature Center through substantial volunteer efforts and financial contributions. Our members have dedicated more than 750 volunteer hours to various programs, including bird walks, bird surveys, educational initiatives, and cleanup efforts. RVAS has also made nearly \$2,000 in financial contributions to fund ProjectFeeder at the Park, making it possible to keep the feeders full and allowing for community members to borrow quality binoculars, and awarding prizes for the annual Bird Day.

The North Mountain Park Nature Center is an extraordinary ecological asset to our community. More than 175 bird species have been identified in this area, making it a premier birding hotspot in Ashland. The Nature Center plays a crucial role in protecting critical habitat, including ponds, creeks, and riparian areas, which are especially important during nesting seasons.

The Nature Center serves as a focal point for environmental and conservation learning, attracting school groups, families, nature lovers, and tourists. It hosts popular events like the annual Bird Day and Salmon Festival, providing invaluable educational experiences for our community.

We urge you to maintain full funding for the North Mountain Park Nature Center. This facility is not just a park, but a critical environmental education center that connects our community with the natural world.

Sincerely,



Rogue Valley Audubon Society Board
Rebekah Bergkoetter (Interim President)
George Peterson (Vice President)
Mary (Kay) Simmons (Treasurer)
Kate Halstead
Dr. Jamie Trammell
Erich Reeder

DRAFT

Written
testimony

Stacia Stimac
5/7/25

Good evening, ~~Parks & Rec Commissioners~~. My name is Stacia Stimac. I serve on the Ashland Little League Board, coach tee-ball, and am a parent of two young children.

Parks
&
Rec

~~You~~ gave us three days' notice that a vote was happening to change our field rental fee structure. We showed up — with little time to prepare — because we care. And despite several commissioners admitting during that meeting that ~~you~~ ^{they} were unfamiliar with the condition of the fields or how Little League operates, the vote still passed.

In response, we rallied. We put together a field tour so ~~you~~ ^{they} could see firsthand what goes into running this program — the hours of unpaid labor volunteers put in to drag, line, prep, clean, and maintain the fields. That's on top of coaching, umpiring, and organizing games for 176 kids — all to keep this program affordable for Ashland families.

And yet, despite that effort, we still haven't seen any meaningful partnership or follow-up from Parks & Rec. No attempt to revisit the vote. No questions about our operations. No engagement to work toward a solution together.

So I have to ask — what is going on here? Help me — help us — understand why a decision that directly affects only one program at Hunter Park was made with no collaboration, no consultation, and no transparency.

We're not asking for special treatment. We're asking for a fair process and a flat, predictable fee that reflects the reality of how Little League works. But more than that — we're asking to be treated like partners in the community, not an afterthought.



We're here. We've shown up. We're asking you to do the same.

Thank you.

Stacia Stimac
~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Presentation to Ashland City Council

Good evening, Mayor and Council Members.

I'm Eli Jaxon-Bear, a gardener at the Ashland Creek Community Garden.

Thank you sincerely for your service to our community. I recognize these are largely volunteer positions requiring significant personal sacrifice.

I come before you not as someone politically active, but as a concerned citizen who believes transparent governance is essential for our community's wellbeing.

I believe we all share the same goal: a community characterized by goodness, kindness, and responsible stewardship of our resources.

Recently, I attended the April 28th Parks and Recreation Commission meeting and observed concerning gaps in budget transparency.

These observations prompted me to write a piece that several community members encouraged me to share with you directly.

KEY CONCERN #1: LIMITED BUDGET TRANSPARENCY

At the APROC meeting, Director Houston presented only macro-level budget categories without specific program details.

Our community gardens were lumped into a general "Environment" category alongside unrelated programs.

When I requested basic profit/loss information for the community gardens, this information wasn't available.

Question: Without program-specific accounting, how can we evaluate which programs are self-sustaining? Our garden offered a specific remedy of removing a layer of management and letting our volunteer team run the garden as we already are doing that. That suggestion was ignored.

KEY CONCERN # 2: UNEXPLAINED BUDGET CORRECTION

After the City Council voted down the proposed \$9 utility bill increase, a multi-million dollar "mistake" in the previous budget was mentioned.

This correction reduced the proposed fee from \$9 to \$6.50 monthly. This negotiation between the committee and Director Huston: Would five dollars cover it? Six? Six fifty? There was no mention of how much actual revenue would be generated at each level, not what costs were covered. Six Fifty was decided without any reference to real numbers in the budget.

Not a single commissioner asked

accounting error of millions of dollars, nor how much would be generated at five dollars or six. This numbers were all decided without any reference to real numbers.

Question: Does this create the appearance that the revised budget was simply an accommodation to secure approval rather than a careful examination of priorities?

KEY CONCERN # 3: CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS

The sequence of statements raised serious questions:

First, the director stated all programs could continue without cuts with the newfee structure.

Then, after budget approval, he mentioned plans for new hires—something not previously disclosed. Later still, he announced plans to close certain public restrooms early.

Question: If the budget allows all programs to continue and supports new paid positions, why are we cutting essential public services? How many dollars would be saved by cutting hours of public access?

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS

How can commissioners approve a budget without seeing line-item details?

What was the nature of the multi-million dollar accounting error?

Could maintaining current staffing levels prevent restroom closures?

Without clear mapping of cash flows, what criteria are used to make budget cuts?

CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

I'm not suggesting impropriety, but I believe we can do better:

Request APRC provide detailed program-level budget information to the Council and public.

Establish a policy requiring explanation of significant budget adjustments on a line item basis.

Create a transparent process for evaluating which programs to cut when funding is tight

CLOSING

I believe full transparency will heal much of the negative energy surrounding our local politics.

I trust in your commitment to govern
with clarity and compassion.
Thank you for your time and
attention to these concerns.

I'm happy to answer any questions or provide further information.

Ashleigh Cropper


1 TO 2 MINUTE TALK

Hello Parks and Rec Department along with Mayor and City Councilors. I attended Monday's meeting but want to introduce myself to Parks department. I am Ashleigh Cropper, a working mother of two little boys who are 3 and 6 years old. I was born and raised in Ashland then moved back 4 years ago from Colorado, to raise my children here because I could not think of a better place to be as a family with an amazing community.

I am coming here again today to provide another statement of my concerns with the Parks budget and asking AGAIN for you to vote NO because we as a community need you to ask the hard questions.

WHY HAS THERE NOT BEEN CHANGES IN THE PAST TO PREPARE FOR THIS MOMENT? To prepare for inflation, rising costs that inevitability always exist.

WHY has accountability for an essential job to forecast, prepare and be ready for what the future of a town may come to, not be addressed?

Why are we discussing closing park bathrooms, community gardens, senior centers, and ice rinks without even considering options for Oak Knoll first, as it's one our largest single costs?

Parks, you are being very clear: Ashland is not the place for families!

When looking at the budget on Monday, we could not see line items broken down into exact costs for areas like running the splash pad or the community garden. That is basic housekeeping with a budget and surely something you would have wanted to know before making these decisions. These are places that are busy and used which hopefully are a smaller cost to the community, yet we cannot see this transparency with numbers!

Parks and Rec, why are YOU targeting certain groups, especially families in Ashland? WHY Ashland Soccer Club, Little League, the Community Garden who already pay fees and handle their fields and gardens with little to no support from Parks to be asked for more money, or be shut down! WHAT IS THE END GOAL HERE? As my 6 year old would say, "THE MATH DOES NOT MATH!"

Why are tennis courts and pickle ball courts not being charged for their usage time but the places our children use are and the youth activities?

I moved here for wonderful amenities, which I have always had provided since I grew up here 30 plus years ago. When you close these amenities, you are showing where your

priorities are at. You are pushing families out of town and not encouraging others to move here.

There is NO community when families are gone!

So here is what voting yes will do: It will keep bathrooms open, utilities fees added and our families with our activities. BUT voting No will demonstrate to Parks they must figure out their budget. We want the commissioners to put in the hard work, find solutions, and present a different budget.

✓ Please again I am asking you to vote NO, to ask Parks to go back and look at their budget again. To find strategic ways to keep such valued and used amenities open!

I WILL SAY THIS AGAIN AND AGAIN: Do you want to walk by the parks and see no one playing there? See another school closed? That is the direction we are headed and I do not believe that is who Ashland is.

Thank you again for your time!



DRAFT



MINUTES FOR REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING

PARK COMMISSION

May 14, 2025

Council Chamber, 1175 E Main – 6:00 PM

Commissioners Present: Gardiner, Weiner, Landt (Vice Chair – ran the meeting), Adams

Staff Present: Director Houston, Deputy Director Dials, Assistant City Attorney Zahran,
Executive Assistant Mero

Absent: Commissioner Bachman (Chair)

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Vice Chair Landt called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

II. **ROLL CALL** – Commissioners Gardiner, Weiner, Landt, and Adams all present.

III. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting March 12, 2025

2. Park Commission Regular Business Meeting April 9, 2025

Gardiner asked to have his name removed from “Commissioners Present” on the minutes from the March 12, 2025 meeting as he was not present.

Motion: I move to approve the minutes for the March 12 meeting with the above correction.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>				

Landt asked for approval of the April 9 meeting minutes for unanimous consent.
Unanimous consent given.

IV. **ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Vice Chair Landt moved the fees item to the first item of business out of deference to the audience members who signed up to give public comment.

V. **PUBLIC FORUM**

Jack Opgenorth, Ashland: Spoke to the importance of keeping the pool open seven days a week from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

VI. **CONSENT AGENDA** – None

VII. **DIRECTORS REPORT**

- Pool will open June 10
- \$25,000 brought in at April's successful Bike Swap
- Painting at North Mountain Park underway, last painted in the 1990s
- Senior Center reroofed; there was a classical guitar performance in April; presentation on supplements.
- Golf course active; men's league up and running on Thursday nights; staff busy keeping up with the mowing and weeding.
- Interviews finishing Thursday May 15 for three Park Tech I positions.
- Seasonal jobs available

VIII. **BUSINESS**

1. **Park Fees** – Director Houston

SUMMARY – A review of sport field fees has been requested.

On April 28, 2025, with a unanimous vote of Park Commissioners, a \$5 per hour sport field fee was adopted. The previous fee was \$150 to \$250 per season, as a flat fee.

Comparable rates in the Rogue Valley vary but are generally \$20 – \$35 per hour. The adopted rate is 25% of the low end of the comparable rates in the Rogue Valley.

The Ashland Little League voiced concerns about the rate and the potential fee increase for their players. The change would result in a \$11.61 increase per player in sport field fees, based on participant numbers provided by Ashland Little League. Communications from the Ashland Little League identified a \$20 per player fee increase due to the sport field fee change.

Four alternatives to the adopted sport field rate to consider:

- No change.
 - Develop agreements for leagues to do field maintenance tasks in lieu of a fee to reduce operational costs for the department.
- Hourly rate revision.
- Flat rate revision.
- Maintain existing rates for sport fields, pending PROS Plan completion.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – City of Ashland Miscellaneous Fees and Charges

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – These fee increases are proposed to help offset general fund support and assist in managing the limited general fund resources.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – No proposed action or motion.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- How were the different fees from the current fee schedule derived? A: Per season per facility, not park. For example, Little league uses two fields which is considered one facility.
- Will the PROS plan potentially lower the fees? A: Not likely. Need an additional resource to offset costs.
- Keeping fees status quo – why is that even an alternative if completion of the PROS plan won't change anything? A: It was in the staff report.
- Ashland Park Foundation scholarships a possibility.
- Users doing more maintenance reducing park staff hours might lower fees.
- What about games that run overtime? A: We would have to attempt to collect additional fees.
- PROS plan will also involve a cost recovery policy. Our costs currently exceed what we take in. This would be true even with the \$5 per hour charge for fields.
- Transitioning from per field use to per hour will be complicated. It's not apples to apples.
- How much money does Parks spend on maintenance at NMP? A: Approximately \$600,000.00. Hunter Park? A: \$250,000 – \$300,000.00

Public Forum

Keri Pernell, Ashland: Little League is the single user at the fields they use. Should be treated differently than other users, i.e. a flat fee makes sense for them not necessarily other users. Sports necessary to keep kids out of trouble, stay in school.

Stacia Stimac, Ashland: Per hour fee negatively impacts volunteer nonprofit users. Spoke to the importance of youth sports for community and growth. Their volunteers pay for all of the equipment, the chalk, and do the cleaning. Need a stable predictable flat fee.

DeAnna Oakley, Ashland: North Mountain Park fields are amicably shared by high school and AYB. Spoke to the importance of a flat fee. Prioritize kids.

Emily Trivette, Ashland: City Parks and School District don't talk together enough. Spoke to the lack of support for children. Spoke to the importance of nonprofit sports teams and the volunteers that support them.

Ellie Lenhardt, Ashland: Spoke to how much time she spends at parks. Claimed children in Ashland are being thrown under the bus. Supports pausing raising field fees to gather more information.

Commissioner Landt allowed further discussion prior to having a motion.

Questions/Discussion:

- Very difficult to not support all users of programs. Alt. 2 seems reasonable.
- Other providers are backing out of offering field use. Fields are expensive to maintain. Nothing Parks does makes money. Something needs to change. Though Youth sports users are at the bottom, Parks needs to implement a per hour fee for a smidge more cost recovery.
- Looking for balance. Can't do different for each user group.
- Referenced motion passing \$5 per hour fee use. Recognized it was too big of a jump. (pointed out by many citizens' feedback). with Alt #2, Little League would be paying just about the same as before.

Motion: I move to amend the approved fee schedule to \$2.50 per facility per hour starting July 1, 2025.

- July 1 is consistent with the fee schedule. Moving to an hourly rate for all users is important for cost recovery and future building of new fields.
- City Attorney Zahran suggested considering rewording/amending the motion to clarify if the fee is per field or per facility.
- Gardiner withdrew his motion.

Motion : I move to amend the approved Park fee schedule to \$2.50 per hour per field for seasonal use of the APRD fields starting July 1, 2025.

- This is an appropriate time to move in this direction. This is what is expected of the Commission to move to reasonable cost recovery.
- Point of order: public is not allowed to participate in deliberation (Response to hand waving in the audience).
- Fees will probably need to go up in the future.
- Fees are looked at yearly. Commission/staff take public feedback into consideration. Fees are in line with other communities' practice.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>				

2. Park Map and Naming – Director Houston

SUMMARY – The current park map has identified 42 “Parks”. Several of these parcels have not been officially named. The Department has used the prior owner and/or location as a temporary identifier. As part of the PROS Plan planning process, a review of the current parks and classifications has led to a review of the park map and park naming.

The review of the parks was completed with consideration of proximity of parcels to each other and/or existing parks, with the intent of the purchase, character of the parcel, and long-term planning. The attached map identifies 23 proposed parks based on the current property portfolio and park classifications.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This aligns with the Draft Department Work Plan item to complete the PROS Plan.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – Move to adopt the change from 42 park/parcel names to the 23 park/property names, as presented today.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – There is no financial impact to this agenda item or direction from the Commission.

ATTACHMENTS – Proposed Park Map (see packet)

Questions/Discussion:

- What’s the point of reducing the number of parks from 43 to 23? A: The process parlay into the PROS plan, parks classifications, levels of service, etc. and makes that a little easier.
- Does Ashland Ponds – a separate park – lose its designation if it’s incorporated into the Bear Creek Greenway? A: Example The Grand Canyon is one National Park but has many separate entrances. Different names for sub areas.
- For Hald Strawberry and Siskiyou Mtn. did you consider calling them Parks rather than Park? Talking about separate entities and making the name plural might make it more clear. A: No. Looking at them separately.
- Trails connect everything in Hald-Strawberry and Siskiyou Mtn. Focusing on the whole, not the parts.

Motion: I move to adopt the change from 42 parks/parcels names to 23 parks/property names as presented in the report today.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Weiner

- Makes sense.
- Simplifies things

- Going to vote against it. It will be confusing to people. Ashland's park system is not like the Grand Canyon. Disparate areas sometimes separated by private property. Not compelled by the need for the change, doesn't see how it makes things demonstrably better.
- Have some reservations - needs some refinement.

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>No</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>No</u>				

3. Park Specific Classifications – Director Houston

SUMMARY – In February 2025 the Park Commission established a park classification system to assist in developing levels of service for parks by classification. Each classification has unique recreational development and experiences for the community. The adopted City Comprehensive Plan identified community parks, neighborhood parks, and open spaces. However, the parks and open spaces are typically only identified by the Department.

In reviewing the current properties, the following recommendations are proposed:

Park Classification	Park(s)
Regional Park	Lithia (all parcels approx. 100 acres)
Community Park	Ashland Creek (including Skatepark, parcels downstream to Nevada St including Keener.) Bear Creek Greenway (includes Ashland Ponds, BMX area, Dog Park, Riverwalk, Kestrel, Greenway OS, Michelle Ave WL, and other parcels along Bear Creek) Garfield Hunter North Mountain (includes Lord property) Oak Knoll East Main (undeveloped)
Neighborhood Park	Briscoe Clay Creek Garden Way Glenwood Railroad Scenic Chitwood (undeveloped)
Pocket Park	Bluebird Calle Guanajuato Evergreen Sherwood

	Triangle
Natural Area	Acid Castle (includes all parcels Granite Street OS, Burnson OS, Lawrence OS) Hald Strawberry (includes Piedmont, South Laurel St Access) Siskiyou Mountain (including Alice in Wonderland OS, Liberty Street OS, Terrace Pines OS, Cottle-Phillips OS)
Special Use	

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This aligns with the draft Department Work Plan item to complete the PROS Plan.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTIONS – Move to adopt the park classifications outlined by park, as presented today.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – N/A

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion:

- Based on the failed motion for park naming, are the classifications relevant? The classification list includes the groupings from the prior item.
- Great point. Maybe the item should be tabled.

Motion: I move to table item VII2. Park Specific Classifications until a later date.

Motion: Gardiner

Second: Adams

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>				

4. Bandersnatch Trail Re-Route – Director Houston

SUMMARY – In 2015 this proposal was made and reviewed by the City and USFS. As I understand it, the USFS has re-approved their portion of the project. This allows the City to consider completing a roughly 130 yard re-route. This is on property acquired by the Department for this project. This project has been reviewed by the Park Commission in the past.

The USFS section is planned to be built this month, and the Ashland Trails and Woodlands Association would like to complete this re-route at the same time.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED – This action supports the USFS adopted plan and prior Park Commission approved plan for this trail re-route.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS – This re-route is being done by a trail adopter group, with minimal budgeted operations or Parks maintenance staff engagement.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(S) – Motion to approve the re-route of Bandersnatch.

ATTACHMENTS – N/A

Questions/Discussion: None

Motion: I move to approve the re-route of Bandersnatch Trail.

- Discussed and generally approved at a previous trails advisory subcommittee meeting. The reroute was formally approved in 2015. Current Trails Advisory Committee members all in favor. Noted this is a pedestrian trail.

Motion: Adams

Second: Weiner

Vote:

<u>Weiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Gardiner</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adams</u>	<u>Yes</u>
<u>Landt</u>	<u>Yes</u>				

IX. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS/STAFF

a. Liaison Report

- Gardiner on ASAC. Some changes happening. Moving to meeting quarterly. They had been meeting every other month. (Houston interjected that we are moving away from having a meeting just to have a meeting, tasking committees with charges.
- Gardiner: Winburn Way Subcommittee has met several times
- Weiner: Forestlands MAC. Did some burning over the weekend got a lot done. BLM donated a bunch of pine seedlings for South Mountain Park Ashland adaptation plan II. (get correct verbiage from recording).

X. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

1. Recreation Division Advisory Committee May 15, The Grove, 4:00 PM
2. Park Commission Study Session June 4, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM

3. Park Commission Business Meeting June 11, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM
4. Park Commission Study Session July 2, Council Chamber, 6:00 PM

XI. **ADJOURNMENT** – Vice Chair Landt adjourned the meeting at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Mero Executive Assistant



**ASHLAND PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Recreation Division Advisory Committee (R-DAC)
November 21, 2024; 4– 5:30pm
In-person Meeting at 340 S. Pioneer St. Ashland, OR 97520**

Present:

Commissioners: Jim Lewis and Jim Bachman.

RDAC Advisory Committee Members: Risa Buck, Cori Grimm, Sopia Blanton, Michael Dotson

Recreation Manager; Lonny Flora, Deputy Director; Rachel Dials, Parks and Recreation Director; Rocky Houston

4:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chair Grimm at 4:01 pm

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes from September 19, 2024, Meeting. Buck moved to approve. Blanton 2nd. Dotson abstained. All yes.

ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

- NONE

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- NONE

STANDING REPORTS

- **Recreation Division Updates: Lonny Flora, Recreation Manager**
 - Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink is opening this Saturday November 23rd.
 - Staff are finalizing the Winter/Spring 2025 program guide. Will to print in early December
 - UB staff are moving out of the grove in Mid-December. This means that APR will be able to program the Otte-Peterson Conference room for classes and city meetings starting in mid to late January 2025.
- **Admin Updates: Rachel Dials, Deputy Director:**
 - CIP Public Feedback: APR is taking feedback on the Capital Improvement Project 6-year plan. Available on the Website
 - Staff is working on the preliminary budget for next biennium
 - Kirsten Came is the new EE Program Manager that will start work on December 9th.

- Salmon festival on October 12th saw over 1000 people in attendance
- Japanese Garden visitors have increased during the month of November.
- **APRC Liaison Report: Jim Bachman**
 - Updated the committee on the process of both of the Ordinances. #3244 and
 - Gave brief budget update

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Lonny Flora gave a presentation on the Lithia Park Pickleball Survey Results ([link here](#))
- Lonny Flora gave a presentation on the Daniel Meyer Pool Survey Results ([link here](#))
- **Update on Commissions and Committees:** Rachel Dials discussed the current draft ordinance 3244.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Community Center Management Advisory Committee(MAC) Update:** Cori Grimm gave an update on her involvement on the MAC and that the goal is to make a recommendation to council on the construction of the Community Center Building. She asked that APR staff follow up with Public Works to ensure that the rooms labeled “staff offices” are hardwood instead of carpet to allow flexibility for programming options.
- **RDAC Chair/Vice Chair selection 2025:** This will be an action item in January.
- **RDAC Committee Member Recruitment:** The committee discussed how to recruit new members. RDAC has 3 spots to fill in order to get to 7 voting members. There will be an open application process for 30 days beginning in January. Staff will send out information to the Committee on RDAC so that the committee can recruit on their own.

Next Meeting January 16, 2025

Meeting adjourned at 5:15pm

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING****AGENDA BRIEF****June 11, 2025**

Agenda Item	VIII. Q3 FY25 Financial Update	
Presenter	Brandon Terry	Sr. Administrative Analyst
Item Type	Action ☐ Information ☒	

BACKGROUND

The Finance Department provides a quarterly review of financial statements. On May 19, 2025, Finance Director Mariane Berry presented to City Council the statements ending in Quarter 3 (Q3) of Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). The Parks and Recreation Department now presents specific Department details for the same period.

ASSESSMENT

The third quarter of FY25 ended on March 31, 2025. Of the \$8,443,046 allocated in General Funds (GF) for FY25, \$5,497,080 or 65.10% of the total has been expended. An additional \$445,159 is encumbered.

The Parks Capital Improvement (CIP) Fund had a balance of \$3,973,971 at the beginning of the current biennium. At the end of Q3 FY25, the balance was \$3,311,958 with \$492,686 encumbered.

The Parks System Development Charges (SDC) Fund ended FY24 with a balance of \$417,860. As of the end of Q3 2025, the fund stands at \$462,060.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Goal #1 Best Management Practices

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Staff continue to collaborate on Departmental priorities and project goals to best execute the appropriated funds. In addition, the Parks Department has communicated to the Finance Department an estimated end-of-biennium GF balance of \$457,356.49.

ATTACHMENTS

Q3 2025 GF Operations Expenses/Balances Table

PREPARED BY: Brandon Terry, Sr. Administrative Analyst



Q3 2025 GENERAL FUND OPERATIONS EXPENSE/BALANCE TABLE

DIVISION	EXPENSE TYPE	ADOPTED BUDGET	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	Q3 EXPENDED	AVAILABLE BUDGET	ENCUMBRANCES	% SPENT*
* Does Not Include Encumbrance Balance								
ADMINISTRATION	PERSONNEL	\$ 1,058,254	\$ 1,370,108	\$ 683,346	\$ 221,952	\$ 686,762	\$ -	49.88%
	M/S	\$ 246,428	\$ 241,042	\$ 248,941	\$ 102,890	\$ (7,899)	\$ 79,638	103.28%
	Total	\$ 1,304,682	\$ 1,611,150	\$ 932,287	\$ 324,842	\$ 678,863	\$ 79,638	57.86%
OPERATIONS	PERSONNEL	\$ 1,762,724	\$ 1,982,370	\$ 1,338,631	\$ 422,682	\$ 643,739	\$ -	67.53%
	M/S + CO	\$ 1,645,163	\$ 1,726,926	\$ 1,544,033	\$ 616,462	\$ 182,893	\$ 314,577	89.41%
	Total	\$ 3,407,887	\$ 3,709,296	\$ 2,882,665	\$ 1,039,145	\$ 826,631	\$ 314,577	77.71%
OPEN SPACE	PERSONNEL	\$ 771,641	\$ 912,692	\$ 485,357	\$ 155,950	\$ 427,335	\$ -	53.18%
	M/S	\$ 128,850	\$ 171,716	\$ 75,294	\$ 48,139	\$ 96,422	\$ 48,946	43.85%
	Total	\$ 900,491	\$ 1,084,408	\$ 560,651	\$ 204,089	\$ 523,757	\$ 48,946	51.70%
RECREATION PROGRAMS	PERSONNEL	\$ 160,068	\$ 174,223	\$ 114,006	\$ 35,871	\$ 60,217	\$ -	65.44%
	M/S	\$ 333,337	\$ 267,202	\$ 300,234	\$ 82,453	\$ (33,032)	\$ 901	112.36%
	Total	\$ 493,405	\$ 441,425	\$ 414,240	\$ 118,324	\$ 27,185	\$ 901	93.84%
NATURE CENTER	PERSONNEL	\$ 275,881	\$ 439,800	\$ 108,724	\$ 44,937	\$ 331,076	\$ -	24.72%
	M/S	\$ 32,216	\$ 61,115	\$ 19,785	\$ 9,915	\$ 41,330	\$ 901	32.37%
	Total	\$ 308,097	\$ 500,915	\$ 128,510	\$ 54,853	\$ 372,405	\$ 901	25.66%
SENIOR SERVICES	PERSONNEL	\$ 314,093	\$ 321,425	\$ 191,619	\$ 63,162	\$ 129,806	\$ -	59.62%
	M/S	\$ 59,926	\$ 88,542	\$ 84,354	\$ 25,684	\$ 4,188	\$ 98	95.27%
	Total	\$ 374,019	\$ 409,967	\$ 275,973	\$ 88,846	\$ 133,994	\$ 98	67.32%
RECREATION GOLF	PERSONNEL	\$ 376,190	\$ 558,374	\$ 200,572	\$ 67,267	\$ 357,802	\$ -	35.92%
	M/S	\$ 128,913	\$ 127,511	\$ 102,182	\$ 20,232	\$ 25,329	\$ 98	80.14%
	Total	\$ 505,103	\$ 685,885	\$ 302,754	\$ 87,499	\$ 383,131	\$ 98	44.14%
APRD TOTALS		\$ 7,293,684	\$ 8,443,046	\$ 5,497,080	\$ 1,917,597	\$ 2,945,966	\$ 445,159	65.11%



REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA BRIEF

June 11, 2025

Agenda Item	VIII2. Oregon Parks Forever/Kids in Parks – Track Trails Partnership	
Presenter	Kirsten Came	Environmental Ed Manager
Item Type	Action ☐ Information ☒	

SUMMARY

Kids in Parks has created a national network of trails that engage kids and families in activities that get them outdoors and connected to nature. Ashland Parks and Recreation has partnered with Kids in Parks, joining more than 30 other TRACK Trail locations throughout Oregon, including trail sites established in Portland, Salem, Estacada, Dallas, LaGrande, Newport, Trail, Medford, and more.

TRACK Trails are a type of environmental scavenger hunt for young children and their families to get unplugged and active outdoors. At the new trailhead in Lithia Park, families will find a series of self-guided brochures and smartphone activities. Kids who participate in the program can register their TRACK Trail adventures at www.KidsInParks.com to earn a series of prizes. With their first hike, kids will earn a Passport Booklet, custom sticker from the trail they visited, and a collectible prize card. In addition, kids can keep an online dashboard to track their outdoor adventures, earn badges, log miles walked, and more.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Creating partnerships and expanding interpretive programming to more Ashland parks.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oregon Parks Forever is supporting an effort by the Kids In Parks program at the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation to bring at least 50 TRACK Trails to Oregon parks. They are funding:

1. Development and manufacturing of a trailhead sign for each trail chosen.

2. Printing of the first 8,000 brochures for each trail.
3. Webpage, prize acquisition, custom sticker, and fulfillment by Kids In Parks for three years.

For future years, the agency will be responsible for printing additional brochures as needed. Printing currently ranges \$300-\$500 per 2,000. Replacement costs are dependent upon whether the topic is a “standard” or custom brochure.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s)

Not applicable

ATTACHMENTS –

Not applicable

PREPARED BY: Kirsten Came, Environmental Education Program Manager

**REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING****AGENDA BRIEF****June 11, 2025**

Agenda Item	VIII3. Advisory Committee Charges	
Presenter	Natalie Mettler	Superintendent
Item Type	Action ☒ Information ☐	

SUMMARY

The Park Commission tasked staff with developing a charge for the advisory committees. With input from the advisory committee officers, staff are proposing the following charges for Ashland Senior Advisory Committee (ASAC) and Recreation Division Advisory Committee:

- ASAC
 - Work with staff to interpret and implement PROS Plan Senior Services related items.
 - Advise staff on policies related to Senior Services.
- RDAC:
 - Work with staff on the PROS Plan Recreation Division related items.
 - Advise staff on policies related to the Recreation Division.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Consistent with City Ordinance on advisory committees and Park Commission Policies.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not Applicable

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s)

Move to adopt the charges for ASAC and RDAC.

ATTACHMENTS

Not Applicable

PREPARED BY: Rocky Houston



REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA BRIEF

June 11, 2025

Agenda Item	VIII4. 1.01.001 – Policy Framework Adoption	
Presenter	Rocky Houston	Director
Item Type	Action ☒ Information ☐	

SUMMARY

The Department is establishing a new format and process for developing and adopting Department policies. This policy establishes the framework for this new format and process. At the April 9, 2025 Park Commission regular business meeting, Park Commissioners directed staff to put this draft policy out for public review/comment.

Public review occurred from May 28 to June 6, 2025. The Department received zero public comments on the draft policy.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

This policy establishes the framework for policies, directing the Department on how to develop and adopt policies, procedures, and protocols, collectively called Direction.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The policy will require staff time to implement. This staff time is within the current budget.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s)

Move to adopt policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework.

ATTACHMENTS

Policy 1.01.001 – Policy Framework

PREPARED BY: Rocky Houston, Director



POLICY

POLICY:	1.01.001	EFFECTIVE:	June 11, 2025
POLICY NAME:	Policy Framework	CANCELS:	N/A
DIVISION(S):	All	NEXT REVIEW:	02/2030
KEY TERMS:	Policy, Protocol, Procedure, Direction		
APPROVED:	_____ Name, PC Chair	_____ Name, City Attorney	

I. PURPOSE

- A. Define the reason for this policy.

This policy establishes the framework and process for establishing policies, protocols, and procedures (Direction) for the Parks and Recreation Department (Department). The Department formally approves, issues, and maintains in a consistent format all Direction for the Department. The Department must follow the requirements outlined in this document for drafting, approving, revising, and withdrawing Department Direction(s). This policy will allow for Direction documents to be thoroughly reviewed, maintained, and made available to the community to promote compliance, accountability, consistency, and fairness.

II. SCOPE

- A. This policy applies to all Park Commissioners and Department staff.

III. REFERENCES

- A. TBD

IV. DEFINITIONS



- A. Effective date: the date on which the earliest version of the Direction went into effect.
- B. Policy: a written statement that provides direction or a set of rules for staff and/or the public on how the Department conducts business.
- C. Direction name: the official title of the Direction.
- D. Procedure: a written statement that provides for the implementation of an established policy or protocol.
- E. Protocol: a written statement that provides direction on the operation of the Department's programs and services.
- F. Purpose: a statement describing why the Direction exists.
- G. Scope: to whom a policy applies.

V. DIRECTION STATEMENT

A. Introduction

- 1. Department Direction(s) align operations, set behavioral expectations, and communicate Direction roles, and responsibilities. Direction(s) have the important task of reaching the intended audience with clear, easy to read, information for the individuals specifically affected by the content. If users understand a Direction, they are more likely to follow it.
- 2. The Department uses a standard Direction template that organizes the information in a consistent manner across all Department Directions/

B. Direction Types

- 1. There are (3) types of Directions:
 - a. Policy
 - i. A policy is broad in its application and is used to implement or manage a park, a program, or a service.
 - b. Protocol
 - i. A protocol is to assist in the operation of the Department.
 - c. Procedure
 - i. A procedure provides instruction on how to implement a policy or protocol.
- 2. Each Direction type will be assigned a numerical number to assist in the organization of Directions.
 - a. Policy – 1.
 - b. Protocol – 2.
 - c. Procedure – 3.

C. Direction Organization

- 1. All types of Directions will be organized into Direction sections. These Direction sections will be established to keep Department division or



- programming Direction(s) organized together to make them easier to find. The Direction sections will be:
- a. Administration

This section will encompass all Direction(s) associated with the administration of the Department. This could include uniforms, use of parks, capital planning process, or similar items.
 - b. Park Planning & Development

This section will encompass all Direction(s) related to the planning for parks, capital improvements, or similar items.
 - c. Park Operations

This section will encompass all Direction(s) on the operation and maintenance of park properties, buildings, and facilities.
 - d. Recreation Programs

This section will encompass all Direction(s) on recreation programming or recreational use, including fees, refunds, special use permits, or similar items.
 - e. Senior Services

This section will encompass all Direction(s) on senior services programming including fees, refunds, or similar items.
2. Each Direction section will be assigned a numerical number to assist in the development of Direction numbers and to manage the organization of the Direction(s)
 - a. Administration – 1.
 - b. Park Planning & Development – 2.
 - c. Park Operations – 3.
 - d. Recreation Programs – 4.
 - e. Senior Services – 5.
 3. Each Direction will be assigned a Direction name that is clear, concise, and consistent with the primary purpose of the Direction.
 4. Each Direction will be assigned a numerical number associated with the order of adoption of the Direction.
 5. The numerical naming convention for the Direction will be:
 - a. Direction Section Number
 - b. Direction Type Number
 - c. Direction Number
 6. The Direction name will follow the Direction number
 - a. 1.1.001 – Policy on Policies
 7. Forms
 - a. Each Direction type will have a unique form that will assist in identifying it as a policy, protocol, or procedure.



- b. Each form will include information in this section (C) from 1 to 6 and the following elements
 - i. Division(s) – to identify which Department division the Direction is applicable to
 - ii. Adoption Date – to identify when it was adopted
 - (1) This date will change if a Direction is changed.
 - iii. Review Date – the date when the Direction will be reviewed to ensure it is legally sufficient and consistent with the Department's business needs.
 - iv. Key Terms – Meta data analysis to assist users on the Direction
 - v. Signature Lines
 - (1) A line for the entity that has approval authority and one for the city attorney
- D. Establishing Directions
 - 1. Directions will be established to meet Department business needs. Staff are encouraged to propose Directions to the director for consideration. The Direction type will direct the process to follow for review and adoption.
 - 2. Park Commission Approval
 - a. All policies will be approved by the Park Commission and the city attorney.
 - b. Approval Process
 - i. Department staff will prepare a draft policy for review by the director and city attorney.
 - ii. Director or designee will present the draft policy at a Park Commission Study Session.
 - iii. Department will provide a minimum of 15 days public review on their website to seek public comment.
 - iv. Park Commission will review public comments and receive public testimony at a Park Commission business meeting.
 - v. If approved, the policy would become effective 30 days after approval, unless otherwise specified by the Park Commission.
 - vi. All approved policies will be signed by the Park Commission chair and the city attorney.
 - 3. Director Approval
 - a. All protocols and procedures will be approved by the director and the city attorney.
 - b. Approval Process
 - i. Department staff will prepare a draft protocol or procedure for review by the director and city attorney.
 - ii. Director or designee will present the draft protocol or procedure at a Park Commission Study Session.



iii. The final protocol or procedure will be reviewed and signed off by the city attorney and signed by the director.

iv. Unless otherwise specified, the protocol or procedure will be effective on the date signed.

E. Policy (only) Review

1. Each policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. The standard will be a five-year interval. However, changes in municipal code, Oregon Revised Statutes, or other regulations may require more frequent reviews.

2. Review process

- a. Department staff will maintain a list of policies and review dates.
- b. 90 days before the policy is due for a review, staff will review the policy to determine if there are any Department business needs that will require an update.
 - i. If there are updates required, staff will make those proposed changes.
- c. After staff reviews the policy, it will be forwarded to the City Attorney for review of staff proposed changes and review of other regulations to determine if additional changes are needed.
- d. Staff will present the policy to the Park Commission at a Study Session to review the proposed changes (if applicable) and review any additional suggested changes.
- e. Staff will review the policy and any proposed changes with the City Attorney. The City Attorney will review and sign off on the policy prior to submitting it to the Park Commission.
- f. Staff will bring the reviewed policy to a Park Commission business meeting for review and approval of the policy.

3. Prior adopted policies will be archived per City policy.

F. Policy Withdrawal

1. A Department policy may be determined to no longer be applicable or needed to meet the business needs of the Department.

2. Withdrawal process

- a. The withdrawal process will follow the approval process authority identified in Section D – Establishing Directions
- b. Upon withdrawal, the policy will be removed from the policy section.

3. Withdrawn policies will be archived per City policy.



REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA BRIEF

June 11, 2025

Agenda Item	VIII5. Butler-Perozzi Fountain	
Presenter	Rocky Houston	Director
Item Type	Action ☐ Information ☒	

SUMMARY

The Ashland Parks Foundation (Foundation) brought forward the project to restore the Butler-Perozzi Fountain. At the initial proposal, the Foundation committed to raising the funds to do the restoration. Due to insufficient Foundation capacity at the time, they asked the Department to be the project manager.

Since then, the Foundation has successfully raised \$600,000 for the restoration work (with an additional \$200,000 endowment for future repairs) and the Department has a 100% plan set and specifications to restore the fountain. Due to engineering cost estimate increases, the Department and Foundation have been exploring alternatives to ensure the work is completed as planned and within resource limits.

This exploration has resulted in the Foundation identifying local resources to support the project and construction management of the restoration work. The Department and the City attorney's office have reviewed the proposal. It offers a path forward that aligns with the history of the fountain's creation (local resources), would meet the specifications outlined for the restoration, and is within the available resources.

Staff is supportive of developing an agreement with the Foundation to authorize the Foundation to manage the construction phase of the fountain restoration project. This agreement is a Department operational action, as such the agreement would not be signed or approved by the Park Commission.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

This project is identified on the current Department Work Plan and the adopted Capital Improvement Plan.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This proposal would reduce the capital expenditure for the FY 26-27 budget. This agreement would prohibit any city funds from being used on the project.

PROPOSED ACTIONS OR MOTION(s)

No action is requested. Staff are seeking input on the proposed agreement.

ATTACHMENTS

None

PREPARED BY: Rocky Houston