

# **RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**



## RECREATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

The full Mountlake Terrace Recreation, Parks and Open Space (RPOS) Master Plan was adopted by reference in December 2009 to be an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. It is available online from the City's web site. The information below is the Executive Summary of the full RPOS Plan. For the complete element, see the RPOS Plan.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2009 Mountlake Terrace Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan is the result of an extensive community process to update the priorities, projects and content of the previous version of the plan adopted in 2003. This RPOS Master Plan is intended to guide the community's efforts with an extensive analysis of community needs as well as the decision making and funding tools needed to move forward.

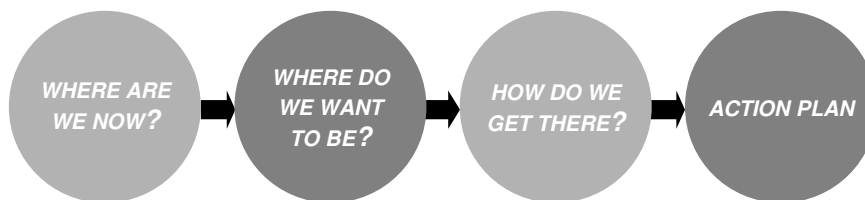
### PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan was designed to serve three main purposes:

- Provide an opportunity for the community of Mountlake Terrace to express its needs and ideas for creating opportunities to interact and enjoy healthy, active lives within the beautiful setting that the city and its people provide.
- Establish a relevant, analytical approach and clear standards and guidelines to help planners and service providers in the Recreation and Parks Department serve this evolving community.
- Meet the Washington state eligibility requirements for state and local funding and grant programs.

The planning process began in 2007 and included four major stages, identified in the figure below.

**Figure 1: Planning Process**



Throughout the process, the planning team received guidance from City Staff and the Recreation and Park Advisory Commission. In addition, direct public input was gathered at a series of small and large in-person meetings and through a scientific survey effort.

This was the basis for analyzing needs and developing recommendations tailored to the Mountlake Terrace community.

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**COMMUNITY NEEDS**

One of the key steps in the plan update process was to reassess community needs to identify changes in direction from the previous plan. The analysis of community needs utilized both direct community input and quantitative models to evaluate the standards adopted in the 2003-2008 plan and make adjustments based on changes in the community.

**Park Land**



As a basis for analyzing the community’s recreation, park and facilities needs, a geographic analysis illustrated the areas of the City served within a ¼ mile walking distance of existing park sites. With this information and an understanding of the desires of the community, land use and limited land availability, the existing standards for park land were modified. The recommended standards result in the land needs listed by park category below.

**Table RPOS-1  
Summary of Additional Park Land Needs**

Park Type	Current Acres	Current Need	Net Need 2014	Net Need 2030
Mini Parks	1.66	(0.21)	(0.13)	0.00
Neighborhood Parks	25.04	26.8	29.5	36.0
Community Parks	21.13	13.5	15.4	20.0
Natural Area/Greenway	60.02	12.2	15.9	25.0
Linear Park	15.70	N/A	N/A	N/A
Special Use Areas	59.50	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>183.05</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>81.0</b>

The majority of the need for new park land is created by existing neighborhoods with no park access. This current need will grow over time, as population increases the need for park land will increase and be more difficult to meet.

**Outdoor Facilities**

Existing major outdoor facilities, such as baseball and soccer fields, are showing their age and are not able to stand up to the level of use of residents and users from the larger region. With limited land available, the needs of the community have less to do with adding new fields than finding ways to maximize the use of both City and School District owned existing facilities.



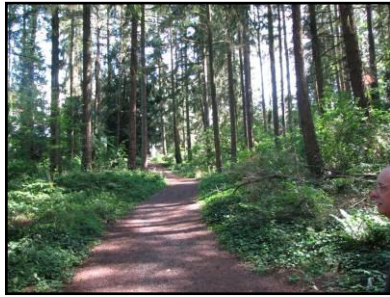
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In addition to competitive fields, other outdoor facilities should be added to increase the variety of recreation opportunities in Mountlake Terrace. Athletic courts, such as tennis and basketball, play features, ranging from playgrounds to game areas for bocce, and a wide variety of other features should be considered for addition to existing and future parks.

### **Trails and Pathways**

Mountlake Terrace residents clearly value the Inter-Urban and Lyon Creek Greenway trails which are the major off-street trail corridors in the city. Community needs around these facilities include improved access points, user amenities and points of interest along trail routes.

In addition to the off-street trails, the City should continue to work on safe connections between neighborhoods, accessing schools and parks and linking all of the above to key community locations such as the Civic Center and the emerging Town Center.



### **Indoor Recreation Facilities**

The existing Mountlake Terrace Recreation Pavilion is a well-used facility that has been adapted to suit many of the needs of the community. However, site and building limitations will continue to affect the casual recreation and programming options available to residents and visitors from beyond the City. The types of indoor opportunities that are needed include:

- Pool with a variety of features; designed for simultaneous multiple activities,
- Gymnasium space,
- Purpose-built fitness/dance studios,
- Classrooms/meeting rooms,
- Informal community gathering space,
- Large community gathering space, and
- Performance and cultural arts spaces.

## **VISION AND GOALS**

The following vision for recreation and parks in Mountlake Terrace is derived from the community input and needs analysis.

Mountlake Terraces' Recreation, Parks and Open Space system is well-connected, vibrant, and regionally important, and encourages interaction and understanding amongst its residents.

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From this vision four community goals have been developed to guide decision making during the implementation of this plan.

- Goal 1: Ensure that all parks and recreation facilities in Mountlake Terrace are safe, clean, and green.
- Goal 2: Provide fun and diverse recreational opportunities that support the health, wellness and engagement of all community members.
- Goal 3: Promote connections between parks, schools and other key community destinations.
- Goal 4: Strengthen the local communities of Mountlake Terrace by providing places & opportunities for people and local businesses to connect with one another and thrive.

### **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan includes recommendations on management, operations and capital projects in both existing and new park sites. The key recommendations from each of these areas are summarized below.

#### **Management and Operations**

The most critical management recommendation is the need for park site master planning prior to major renovation. Site design will allow major projects to efficiently move forward in phases and ensure that the limited land resources are maximized. To expand the park system in a built-out situation, the plan recommends an opportunity based property acquisition policy. The needs analysis identifies underserved areas in the community that should be monitored for any potential park sites. To increase the awareness and use of the existing park system, Mountlake Terrace should expand its signage and public information material about the park system. Starting with a simple park map, this effort should include wayfinding signage and potentially even programming to introduce people to the range of park sites and opportunities in the city.

The park system, including both the developed, active spaces and the natural areas, is a highly valued aspect of the quality of life Mountlake Terrace residents enjoy. In addition to the aesthetic and recreational value, the creeks, trees and green spaces provide many valuable services such as air purification and storm water processing. Maintaining this system should take on the importance of maintaining any other form of infrastructure. The City should plan for maximum efficiency in maintaining developed parks and in proactively protecting investments in facilities and the natural elements of the system such as the tree canopy and wetlands.

#### **Parks and Facilities**



The plan includes a description of the role of each site in the current Mountlake Terrace park system, along with detailed recommendations for improvements. The largest project amongst these is the redevelopment of the Evergreen Park and Recreation Pavilion complex. This plan recommends considering these sites, along with the park portion of the Terrace K-8 School site, as one large park site, while

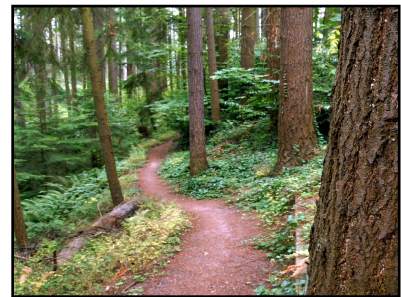
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master planning and developing it as such. The recommendations also include a proposed expansion of the existing partnership with the Edmonds School District to include more schools as a way to improve local park access and to potentially improve sports fields to ensure community access.

The park system recommendations lay out strategies for improving sports fields, upgrading access to key trails and redeveloping the Recreation Pavilion in conjunction with the site planning of Evergreen Park and the Recreation Pavilion site.

Recommendations for new parks focus on the Town Center Plaza Park originally described in the Town Center Plan. Other additions include new facilities at the Civic Center Campus and Fire Fighters Memorial Park.



**IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING**

The Recreation, Parks and Open Space Master Plan concludes with the critical action steps that will put the recommendations into action. The implementation of this plan is the responsibility of not just City staff, but the Recreation and Park Advisory Commission and the citizens of Mountlake Terrace. The plan establishes a process to regularly prioritize the current list of park projects into a work plan for the RPAC and staff to pursue.

The initial focus of the implementation of this plan should be on projects connected to major in-progress community efforts. The two big projects underway in Mountlake Terrace are the redevelopment of the Civic Center Campus and the implementation of the Town Center Plan. Both of these projects have recreation and park projects included, as well as funding sources identified.

Longer-term planning efforts include the preparation of a site master plan for Evergreen Park and the Recreation Pavilion in preparation for a major capital request which could coincide with the expiration of the current Recreation Pavilion bond levy. At the same time, the City should continue to invest in local parks, and work to increase the annual budget as capital resources can be made available.

