

LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY

Introduction

Since 1852 Portland's residents have planned, protected, and treasured its parks and recreation facilities. Today Portland's park system comprises more than 10,000 acres making it one of the largest urban park systems in the northwest.*

On the basis of the 2000 census, Portland's population is projected to grow from 597,050 – as reported in the *Parks 2020 Vision* plan – to 650,689 by 2020. Responding to the diverse and changing recreational needs of a growing population poses a major challenge. A key factor in meeting this challenge is the provision of an adequate supply of parkland.

Using the City's adopted service provision standard of 20 acres per thousand, Portland Parks and Recreation required an additional 3,000 acres when the 2020 Vision plan was adopted in 2001. Since that time, 427 acres have been added to the system. An additional 2,573 acres are necessary in order to provide sufficient and equitable services into the future.

While the use of a standards-based methodology has some limitations, it provides at this time the most reliable baseline we have for establishing acquisition goals. In time it is the intention of Portland Parks and Recreation to move to a needs-based methodology that could provide a more reliable and finely delineated acquisition target.

* Note: Half of this acreage is in Forest Park

Strategy Components

To ensure Portland's park system will meet the recreational needs of its community while also ensuring the protection of its unique natural and cultural resources, the Bureau has formulated a comprehensive acquisitions strategy which comprises seven program areas. Namely:

- Trail Corridors and Connections
- In-holdings and Adjacent Properties
- Expanded Outdoor Recreational Opportunities
- Expanded Indoor Recreational Opportunities
- Significant Cultural Resource Properties
- Natural Areas
- Maintenance and Administrative Facilities

The following guidelines are designed to assist staff in evaluating property acquisitions in relation to each of the program areas and the Bureau's mission are outlined below.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL CORRIDOR ACQUISITIONS

Program Objectives

- To provide people with the opportunity to participate in activities such as walking for pleasure, cycling, jogging, and the like by providing a network of recreational trails.
- To establish a network of trails that will connect parks, while also providing where appropriate an opportunity for interpretive and educational programs.

- To create a network of trails that will also serve as wildlife corridors and a catalyst for the building of
 community through the involvement of individuals and groups as volunteers in their building and
 maintenance.
- To provide safe, primarily off-street routes suitable for use by all ages and abilities, some of which may
 also serve as alternative transportation routes and links to the City's on-street bicycle and pedestrian
 system.

Preferred Property/Easement Characteristics

In seeking potential easements/ properties for acquisition, the following characteristics should be considered:

- 1. The Bureau is seeking additional trail corridor opportunities within the city to facilitate the realization of its trail master plan which is designed to ensure all citizens have the opportunity to participate in trail related recreational opportunities such as walking, cycling, jogging.
- 2. Preferred acquisition of properties and easements for trail corridor purposes are those that will accommodate with minimal conflicts as many types of single and multi-use trail interests and abilities as are possible.
- 3. The Bureau is seeking opportunities that offer the greatest degree of connectivity:
 - Complete the 40-Mile Loop and Willamette Greenway Trails.
 - Connect with neighborhood centers.
 - Link existing and proposed state, regional, and local parks.
 - Provide a link to other state, regional, and local trails.
 - Connect scenic, historic, natural or educational resources, and recreational attractions.
 - Link natural areas to facilitate the movement of wildlife.

Acquisition Ranking Criteria

- Highest priority will be given to acquisitions that close gaps to provide the greatest overall connectivity and usability of partially completed trails.
- High priority will be given to acquisitions where property development threatens to preclude future trail development.
- High priority will be given to acquisitions that provide needed safety for trail users.
- High priority will be given to trail corridors that provide or link public lands and/or lands with outstanding scenic, historic, natural or interpretive/educational values.
- High priority will be given to acquisition proposals that offer the greatest probability of being funded from a non-city source.
- Priority will be given to acquisitions that offer the possibility of accommodating the widest variety of single or shared use trail interests.
- Priority will be given to acquisition where connections to existing regional and local trails, major parks and natural areas, and neighborhood centers can be made.
- Priority will be given to acquisitions that improve usability of existing trails through support facilities such as restrooms, parking, and access points.

- Priority will be given to acquisitions in or near areas under-served by trails or other facilities to walk, jog
 or bicycle.
- Priority will be given to proposals that offer the greatest probability of supportive involvement by the public and interest groups that develop and maintain trails.

IN-HOLDINGS AND ADJACENT PROPERTIES

Program Objectives

• To address operational, resource management, and/or land use issues associated with privately owned lands located within or adjacent to certain parks within the City's park system.

Preferred Property Characteristics

- 1. The Bureau is seeking various in-holding and adjacent lands that will assist in the resolution of operational, resource management, and land-use issues.
- 2. Potential properties for in-holding status must be at least 50 percent surrounded by an existing park.
- 3. Potential properties for adjacent land status must have at least one contiguous boundary with an existing park.

Property Ranking Criteria

- High priority will be given to properties that would improve operations of an existing park and eliminate potential and/or existing management problems associated with the in-holding or adjacent properties.
- Priority will be given to potential properties that contain important natural, cultural and/or recreational values, and/or provide a significant buffer for a park.

NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

Program Objectives

- To establish an interconnected system of green spaces within the region.
- To protect the City's natural areas from the pressures associated with an increasing population by acquiring properties that preserve examples of its natural landscapes and in particular environmentally sensitive habitat types.

Preferred Property Characteristics

- 1. The Bureau is seeking properties adjacent to or within close proximity of existing parks and protected properties or those that provide connections between protected areas.
- 2. The Bureau is seeking properties representing biological communities and habitats uncommon or under-protected within the region.
- 3. The Bureau is seeking wetland and riparian areas, especially those associated with fish-bearing waterways.

- 4. Potential properties or eventual holdings should be of a sufficient scale and configuration to conserve ecological functions and values and to provide a buffer from urban encroachment or other off-site threats to their sustainability.
- 5. Potential properties should possess the potential for nature-based recreation and/or interpretation of a natural resource message unique to the site or region.

- Highest priority will be given to habitat types that are under-protected and/or under-represented in the City's/region's park system, or with a presence of identified species of concern.
- Properties with intact functioning habitats will be given a higher priority than degraded sites. Sites with a
 high restoration potential will be given priority, especially where they offer connections between sites with
 high habitat values.
- Properties strategically located to provide a complete or potential habitat linkage to other federal, state, regional, city or protected lands will be given a high priority.
- High priority will be give to environmentally sensitive habitat types such as wetland and/or riparian areas linked or capable of being linked with other protected wetland/riparian areas which possess unique habitats, rare plant communities, and habitat supporting animal species of concern.
- High priority will be given to acquisitions that contribute to priority conservation needs identified in a regional/city resource conservation plan, especially properties identified in a City natural resource inventory or plan.
- Properties possessing historic cultural values that can be protected without great expense to the Bureau or possessing the potential for high-valued outdoor recreational opportunities will be considered for this category, but these factors will not be counted towards their priority.
- Properties possessing the potential for more formal outdoor interpretation of a natural resource message unique to the site or accessible to the local or regional trail system will be given a higher priority than those proposed properties without such potential.
- Properties with an imminent threat to natural resources by potential development or current management will be given priority over properties with similar resources but not under threat. Lack of threat to high value resources does not lower the priority of a property.

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACQUISITIONS

Program Objectives

- To expand and upgrade the City's park system's recreational opportunities to meet the City's present and diverse recreational needs.
- To increase the capacity of the City's park system to meet future demands for outdoor recreation and to
 accommodate new kinds of opportunities to serve the needs of a city whose population continues to grow
 both in numbers and diversity.

Preferred Property Characteristics

In seeking potential properties for acquisition, the following characteristics should be considered:

- 1. The Bureau is seeking properties adjacent to existing parks/schools that can be readily developed to increase the number and variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 2. The Bureau is seeking properties strategically located within the city that can provide a large number and variety of outdoor recreation settings in which a diversity of active and passive recreational opportunities can be undertaken.
- 3. Potential properties should be of a sufficient scale and character to allow for the development of recreation facilities such as picnic facilities, sports fields, courts, playgrounds, etc. Projects involving smaller acreage will be considered if these lands will offer the opportunity to significantly enhance the recreational facilities and opportunities of an adjacent/nearby park.

- High priority will be given to properties located within a reasonable travel distance of urban centers, with a particular emphasis on under-served populations.
- High priority will be given to properties that are of sufficient scale and character so as to be readily developed for significant numbers and variety of recreation opportunities.
- Priority will be given to properties that are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Priority will be given to acquisitions that are immediately adjacent to existing parks.
- Priority will be given to proposed acquisitions that include or offer potential linkages to other parks, trails, greenways, waterways, wildlife corridors, cultural features, landscapes or corridors.

INDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACQUISITIONS

Program Objectives

To acquire strategically located properties to provide for the expansion of the Bureau's range of community centers to:

- meet both the existing and future indoor recreational needs of a city whose population continues to grow both in numbers and diversity as identified in *Parks 2020 Vision* plan.
- accommodate new kinds of opportunities to serve the needs of existing and new users.

Preferred Property Characteristics

In seeking potential properties for acquisition, the following characteristics should be considered:

- 1. The Bureau is seeking within under-served areas strategically located properties preferably adjacent to existing parks/schools/retail centers that can be readily developed for indoor recreational purposes.
- 2. Potential properties should be of a sufficient scale and character to allow for the development of indoor recreational recreation facilities such as gymnasiums, aquatic centers, arts, fitness facilities, etc.
- 3. Potential properties should be easily accessible via public transport.

- High priority will be given to properties located within under-served areas identified in *Parks 2020 Vision* plan.
- High priority will be given to properties that are of sufficient scale and character so as to be readily developed for a variety of indoor recreation opportunities.
- Priority will be given to properties that are located in areas which are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Priority will be given to acquisitions that are immediately adjacent to existing parks, schools, and retail centers.
- Priority will be given to proposed acquisitions that offer the greatest probability of being funded from a non-city source.
- Priority will be given to acquisitions that offer the greatest probability of ongoing financial and
 operational involvement by organizations other than the bureau in the development and management of
 indoor recreational opportunities.

SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES PROPERTIES

Program Objectives

• To preserve the City's rich, diverse cultural heritage by acquiring examples of irreplaceable cultural landscapes and properties which exhibit this diversity for current and future generations.

Recognized Cultural Resource Deficiencies

The first stage in understanding the Bureau's cultural resource deficiencies will be to complete a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of existing park properties. This survey and evaluation will be conducted under criteria established in context of a system-wide historic developmental history that includes the physical and temporal boundaries of the system. The context survey, inventory, and evaluation will set the criteria for the identification of landscapes and property types that need to be acquired to complete, augment or enhance the current cultural resource asset portfolio.

Preferred Property Characteristics

- 1. The Bureau is seeking cultural landscape and corridor properties that may or may not contain structures that are under-represented within the City's park system. Cultural landscapes are defined as designed landscapes, rural or vernacular landscapes or landscapes significant for their association with the broad patterns of historic events, persons, design or construction or sites that may yield significant information about the historic patterns of civilization such as potential archeological sites.
- 2. With regard to corridors, these consist of linear cultural systems and associated features that cross the City's landscape in a contiguous or non contiguous system. These might include prehistoric trails and trade routes, and early military, trade, and fur trapping expedition routes. Significant features and structures associated with these linear systems would also be part of these corridors.
- 3. Potential properties will be of a sufficient scale and character to provide an accurate representation of the cultural area, time period, and human achievement for which they are being considered. In addition, these properties should have good contexts and buffer zones for protection from modern developments.

- 4. The Bureau is seeking properties that will complete intended cultural acquisitions to encompass the whole context, theme, and property or resource type.
- 5. The Bureau is seeking cultural properties that are strategically located to provide a complete or potential linkage to other public properties, federal, state, regional or local protected lands or private holdings that allow for public access.
- 6. Potential properties could possess the potential for passive outdoor recreation that would not compromise the integrity or destroy the character of the resource.

- Highest priority will be given to properties exhibiting unique cultural values that are not currently protected or are not found in the City's park system. The significance of these sites should be such that they are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Properties must be at least 45 years of age, and maintain the integrity of the site, place, and context.
- High priority will be given to cultural resource types that can be linked to significant themes and property types in the history of Portland which are deficient or under-represented in the system.
- High priority will be given to properties that document the diversity and antiquity of human achievement and have potential for effective management and interpretation.
- High priority will be given to cultural resource properties that are threatened with destruction by development.
- High priority will be given to undisturbed complexes of historic sites/properties where there is substantial preservation of the view shed, open space, and context setting.
- High priority will be given to the acquisition of properties that will complete intended original cultural acquisition to encompass the whole theme or resource.
- Priority will be given to individual properties that can be historically and/or physically linked to other protected cultural areas within the City or Metro region.
- Priority will be given to cultural resource properties that are not represented within federal, state or local protected lands.
- Properties possessing significant historic cultural values that can be protected without great expense to the Bureau and possess potential for highly-valued, compatible passive outdoor recreational opportunities will be considered for this category. However, these factors will not be counted towards their priority.
- Properties physically located so as to provide buffer space from urban areas will be given higher priority as long as they meet integrity criteria.
- Properties located in areas of the city with no or few parks will be given priority.

MAINTENANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES

Program Objectives

• To acquire strategically located properties from where the bureau can protect, develop, and maintain the City's park and recreation system in a timely, responsive, and cost-effective manner.

Preferred Property Characteristics

- 1. Properties must be easily accessible to major road transport corridors.
- 2. Potential properties should be of a sufficient size to allow for the development of facilities that will meet the Bureau's operational needs.
- 3. Properties must be easily accessible via public transport.

Property Ranking Criteria

- High priority will be given to properties that are of sufficient scale and character so as to meet both current and long-term operational needs within the area.
- Priority will be given to properties that are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Priority will be given to proposed acquisitions that offer the greatest probability of being funded from a non-city source.
- Priority will be given to those properties where impacts on the surrounding neighborhood can be effectively mitigated.