



# PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

## 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 11,700 acres making it one of the largest urban park systems in the northwest.\*

Portland's population is projected to grow from 613,355 – as reported by PSU Center for Population Research in 2015– to between 750,000-880,000 by 2035, as estimated in the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. 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. Diversity and equity are vital to Portland Parks & Recreation's ideals and values, and for all potential acquisitions consideration will be given to how the acquisition does, or does not, further the Bureau's equity goals.

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, and the park system consisted of 10,072 acres. Since that time, 1,640 acres have been added to the system.

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 equitably 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:

- Recreational Trail Corridors
- In-holdings and Adjacent Properties
- Natural Areas
- Outdoor Recreational Opportunities (developed parks and other outdoor recreation)
- Indoor Recreational Opportunities
- Significant Cultural Resource Properties
- 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.

## RECREATIONAL TRAIL CORRIDOR ACQUISITIONS

### Program Objectives

- To provide people with the opportunity to participate in activities including walking, cycling, and jogging 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.
- Create a network of trails that act as catalyst for the building of community through the involvement of individuals and groups as volunteers in its 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 Acquisition/Easement Characteristics**

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

- The Bureau is seeking additional trail corridor opportunities within the city to facilitate the realization of its trail master plan, 2006 Trails Strategy, and completed specific trail plans which are designed to ensure all citizens have the opportunity to participate in trail related recreational opportunities such as walking, cycling, jogging, and hiking.
- 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.
- The Bureau is seeking opportunities that offer the greatest degree of connectivity and that:
  - Complete the 40-Mile Loop and Willamette Greenway Trails.
  - Connect with neighborhood centers and with PBOT's neighborhood greenways and extended bicycle and pedestrian network
  - Link existing and proposed state, regional, and local parks, natural areas, and trails.
  - Connect scenic, historic, natural or educational resources, and recreational attractions.
  - Link natural areas to facilitate the movement of wildlife, and improve watershed health.

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Close gaps to provide the greatest overall connectivity and usability of partially completed trails, for human and wildlife use.
- Are identified on the City's comprehensive plan, zoning maps, the 2006 PP&R Trails Strategy, and other relevant City and PP&R trail plans
- Involve the threat of property development that would preclude future trail development.
- Improve safety for trail users.
- Provide or link public lands and/or lands with outstanding scenic views, historic, natural or interpretive/educational values.
- Offer the greatest possibility of accommodating shared use.

- Connect to existing regional and local trails, major parks and natural areas, and neighborhood centers.
- Improve usability of existing trails through support facilities such as restrooms, parking, and access points.
- Serve culturally and economically diverse communities and/or communities that have historically been under-served.
- Are located in or near areas under-served by trails or other bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Offer the greatest probability of supportive involvement by the public and interest groups that advocate for and maintain trails.
- Are located in higher-density areas and in areas where high numbers of existing or planned households can access the trail.

## **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 Acquisition Characteristics**

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

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Will improve operations of an existing park and eliminate potential and/or existing management problems associated with the in-holding or adjacent properties.
- Contain important natural, cultural and/or recreational values, and/or provide a significant buffer for a park or natural area.

## **NATURAL AREAS**

### **Program Objectives**

- Establish an interconnected system of natural areas within the region.

- 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.
- Increase Natural Area land within the City as identified in the Natural Area Acquisition Strategy, 2006

### **Preferred Acquisition Characteristics**

- The Bureau is seeking properties adjacent to or within close proximity of existing parks, natural areas and protected properties or those that provide connectivity for humans or wildlife between protected areas.
- The Bureau is seeking properties representing biological communities and habitats uncommon or under-protected within the region as identified in the Terrestrial Ecological Enhancement Strategy (TEES).
- The Bureau is seeking streams, wetland and riparian areas, especially those associated with fish-bearing waterways.
- 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.
- Potential properties should possess the potential for nature-based recreation and/or interpretation of a natural resource message unique to the site or region.

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Contain 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 and/or TEES Special Status Species or Special Status Habitat.
- Have existing functioning habitats and have not been degraded over time. Sites with a high restoration potential will be given priority, especially where they offer connections between sites with high habitat values, or provide a buffer to protect a site with high functioning habitat or restoration value.
- Are strategically located to provide complete or potential habitat connectivity to other federal, state, regional, city or protected lands will be given a high priority.
- Contain 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.
- Contribute to priority conservation needs identified in a regional/city resource conservation plan, especially properties identified in a City natural resource inventory or plan.
- Possess the potential for more formal outdoor interpretation of a natural resource message unique to the site
- Are accessible to the local or regional trail system.

- Are imminently threatened by potential development or current management will be given priority over properties with similar resources but not under threat.
- Are adjacent to existing PP&R owned or managed natural areas identified as medium or high priority for restoration investments in the 2010 Natural Area Restoration Plan.
- Have little or no nearby access to nature, and where PP&R would like to establish new or re-create natural area experiences for the nearby residents.
- Improve access to existing natural areas.
- Include a unique or significant scenic vantage point or points.

## **OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES / DEVELOPED PARKS ACQUISITIONS**

### **Program Objectives**

- Expand and upgrade the City's park system's outdoor recreational opportunities to meet the City's diverse recreational needs.
- 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 size and diversity.

### **Preferred Acquisition Characteristics**

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

- The Bureau is seeking properties adjacent to existing parks/schools, or in an area that will provide an entirely new service to fill a level of service gap, that can be readily developed to increase the number and variety of outdoor recreation opportunities in the City.
- 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, including sites that are uniquely positioned to offer specific kinds of recreation opportunities.
- 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, or if they provide river access.

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Are located beyond a ½-mile walk from an existing park or natural area with public access.
- Serve a large number of unserved households, or are in high density areas with limited recreational opportunity.

- Has a park service area with a higher percentage than City average of vulnerable or culturally and economically diverse households.
- Are located within a half mile of urban centers.
- Are of sufficient scale and character so as to be readily developed for a variety of recreation opportunities.
- Have available street parking and/or are accessible by transit. Priority will be given to sites that may not require significant or large investments in street improvements or off-street parking .
- Are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Are immediately adjacent to existing parks.
- Include or offer potential linkages to other parks, trails, natural areas, greenways, waterways, wildlife corridors, cultural features, landscapes or corridors.
- Are strategically positioned to offer a recreation experience that is not readily available, or which cannot be offered as easily at other parks, including a unique or significant scenic vantage point or points.

## **INDOOR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES ACQUISITIONS**

### **Program Objectives**

To acquire strategically located properties to provide for the expansion of the Bureau’s range of community centers and indoor recreation facilities (tennis, soccer, and other activities)to:

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

### **Preferred Acquisition Characteristics**

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

- 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.
- 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, tennis courts, soccer fields, etc.
- Potential properties should be easily accessible via public transport.

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Are located within under-served areas identified in *Parks 2020 Vision* plan, and subsequent equity and GIS analyses.

- Are of sufficient scale and character so as to be readily developed for a variety of indoor recreation opportunities.
- Are located in areas which are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Are immediately adjacent to existing parks, schools, and retail centers.
- Offer the greatest probability of being funded from a non-city source.
- Offer the greatest probability of ongoing financial and operational involvement in the development and management of indoor recreational opportunities by organizations other than the bureau.
- Meet City and PP&R equity objectives aimed at increasing service to under-represented and diverse neighborhoods.

## **SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES PROPERTIES**

### **Program Objectives**

- 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. The Bureau identified top tier cultural resources in the *Cultural Resource Management Plan, July 2007*, but more extensive work is still needed.

### **Preferred Acquisition Characteristics**

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Bureau is seeking properties that will complete intended cultural acquisitions to encompass the whole context, theme, and property or resource type.

- 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.
- Potential properties could possess the potential for passive outdoor recreation that would not compromise the integrity or destroy the character of the resource.

### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:

- Exhibit 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.
- Can be linked to significant themes and property types in the history of Portland which are deficient or under-represented in the system.
- Document the diversity and antiquity of human achievement and have potential for effective management and interpretation.
- Are threatened with destruction by development.
- Involve undisturbed complexes of historic sites/properties where there is substantial preservation of the view shed, open space, and context setting.
- Will complete intended original cultural acquisition to encompass the whole theme or resource.
- Can be historically and/or physically linked to other protected cultural areas within the City or Metro region.
- Are not represented within federal, state or local protected lands.
- Can be protected without great expense to the Bureau and possess potential for highly-valued, compatible passive outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Are physically located so as to provide buffer space from urban areas.
- Are located in areas of the city with no or few parks.

## **MAINTENANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES**

### **Program Objectives**

- 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 Acquisition Characteristics**

- Properties must be easily accessible to major transportation corridors.



- Potential properties should be of a sufficient size to allow for the development of facilities that will meet the Bureau's operational needs.
- Properties must be easily accessible via public transportation.

#### **Acquisition Ranking Criteria**

**Acquisitions which meet the following criteria will be prioritized, with prioritization increasing in importance as more of the following criteria are met. In general, prioritization will be given to acquiring properties that:**

- Are of sufficient scale and character so as to meet both current and long-term operational needs within the area.
- Are easily accessible from well-traveled transportation corridors.
- Offer the greatest probability of partnership which could leverage funding from a non-city source.
- Have the least amount of potential negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhood, and where potential negative impacts can be effectively mitigated. Examples of negative impacts include equipment operation noise or vehicle traffic.

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