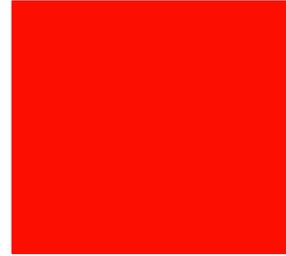




**DRAFT**

# PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



**DRAFT COPY FOR  
REVIEW & COMMENT  
FEBRUARY 2023**



**EPHRATA**  
Washington

# 2023-2028

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# ACRONYMS

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act  
CIP - Capital Improvement Plan  
DNR - Department of Natural Resources  
ECA – Evergreen Communities Act  
IAC – Washington State Interagency Committee  
LOS - Level of Service  
LTGO - Limited Tax General Obligation  
NOVA - Non-highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program  
NRPA – National Recreation and Park Association  
OFM - Office of Financial Management  
RCO - Recreation and Conservation Office  
REET - Real Estate Excise Tax  
USDA - United States Department of Agriculture  
UTGO - Unlimited Tax General Obligations

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*Photo Credits:*

- City of Ephrata's website
- Helen Stanton, AHBL Inc.
- Picture Yourself Active is a project by the Centre for Ageing Better and Get Yourself Active, at Disability Rights UK. It depicts older and Disabled people being active, in a positive and realistic light.

# GLOSSARY

**Active Recreation** – Active recreation means ball fields, hard surface courts, tracks, golf courses, swimming pools, and other intensive recreational use. Active recreation means leisure time activities of a more structured nature often requiring equipment and taking place at prescribed places, sites or fields.

**Bike Lane** – A portion of the roadway that has been designated by striping, signage, and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists.

**Capital Improvement Plan** (AKA Capital Facilities Plan) – A six or more-year plan of capital projects with estimated costs and proposed methods of financing that is updated annually.

**Development** – Construction or work resulting in new elements, including structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources.

**Maintain** – To keep areas and facilities in good condition through repairs and upkeep for the benefit of outdoor recreationist.

**NOVA** – The Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities grant program administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office. *As defined in RCW 46.09.310*

**Open Space** – Undeveloped (or minimally developed) land.

**Park** – Land or an area set aside for a special purpose, but particularly for leisure or recreation.

**Passive Recreation** – Activities usually conducted in place and requiring minimal physical exertion such as picnicking, watching a sports event, sunbathing, or relaxing.

**Recreation** – Activities of a voluntary and leisure time nature that aid in promoting entertainment, pleasure, play, relaxation, or instruction.

**Recreation and Conservation Office** – The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is a small Washington State agency that manages grant programs, creates outdoor recreation opportunities, and protects wildlife habitat, working farms and forests.

**Recreational Facilities** – Parks, playgrounds, gymnasiums, swimming pools, field houses, bathing beaches, stadiums, golf courses, automobile racetracks and drag strips, coliseums for the display of spectator sports, public campgrounds, boat ramps and launching sites, public hunting and fishing areas, arboretums, bicycle and bridle paths, senior citizen centers, and community centers, etc.

**Trail** – A route on department-managed land, other than a road which is suitable for travel by motorized or nonmotorized means.

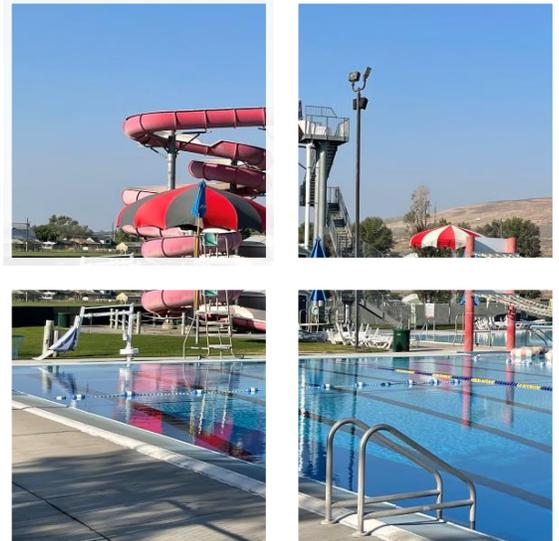
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TBD – to be completed last

# INTRODUCTION

## Plan Purpose

The **Ephrata Parks and Recreation Plan** serves as a guide for the preservation and development of the City's parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational amenities. The Parks and Recreation Plan is a standalone document that is intended to be a companion to the City's Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan. The plan is a road map to guide parks and recreation planning over the next six years and beyond. The Parks and Recreation Plan must be updated every six years in order for the City to remain eligible for grants administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).



The Ephrata Parks and Recreation Plan allows the city to do the following:

- Provide community-directed objectives for future parks, recreational facilities, and open space preservation, development and stewardship
- Establish eligibility for state funding
- Ensure consistency with county, state and local requirements and legislation
- Position the City to respond to opportunities when they arise, such as partnerships or volunteering prospects
- Provide guidance for effective park and facility management

## Plan Vision

An essential part of this Parks and Recreation Plan is an overall vision for the City's parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational amenities. The vision describes the desired future of the City's parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities now and into the future and is supported by the goals and policies described later in this plan.

The overall vision is for the creation and sustainable management of a system of parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities that preserves and enhances the City's landscapes and natural resources and provides recreational opportunities for all residents of the City of Ephrata.

# Plan Process and Organization

This Plan replaces the latest Parks and Recreation Plan that was published in June 2009. In 2022 the City of Ephrata began the process to update the Parks and Recreation Plan to create a clear direction for the future of the City’s parks and recreational facilities. City staff worked together with the consulting team from AHBL Inc., to help guide the research, public engagement, and overall planning process. The new 2023-2028 Ephrata Parks and Recreation Plan reflects the needs of a growing population with demographic shifts in age and ethnicity.

This Plan was created with the assistance of local knowledge, City staff and consultant expertise, and national best practices. The Plan is based on:

- Community input;
- RCO and City records;
- Ephrata Parks and Recreation Commission discussion and input;
- Parks and Recreation staff knowledge and expertise
- RCO Planning Guidelines

The general planning process used to develop this plan follows the minimum elements noted in the RCO Manual 2 Planning Guidelines (dated July 2021). The minimum elements covered in this plan as well as additional elements included are as follows.

- **Community Profile and Regional Recreational Trends** – Details of the planning service area and its place in the wider regional context. Details include physical settings and conditions, relevant demographic information, and regional recreation trends.
- **Public Involvement** - Summary of the public engagement that provided members of the community the opportunity to be involved in the Parks and Recreation Plan development and adoption.
- **Inventoried Existing Conditions** – Details of the parks and recreational facilities in the planning service area, including key features of each park and opportunities for improvements. .
- **Goals and policies** – Broad range of goals and listed policies that support the vision of the plan. Goals are aspirational and describe desired outcomes and polies set out actions that support goal attainment.
- **Demand and Needs Assessment** - Analyzed the current and future needs for the City’s existing parks, trails, and open spaces.
- **Capital Improvement Program** - Recommended capital projects to be updated and officially adopted into the City’s 6-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as funding and implementation plans are further developed.
- **Developed Strategies and Recommended Actions** - Developed recommendations for the City’s regional parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, open spaces, and trails.
- **Prepared Plan** - Developed goals and policies, level of service standards, and implementation strategies including identifying potential funding sources.
- **Adopted Plan** – City Council approval and adoption process.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## Community Context

### *Regional Location*

The City of Ephrata, known as the “Gateway to the Columbia Basin Area,” is the county seat of Grant County. The City is located in the arid region of central Washington, roughly 100 miles west of Spokane and 130 miles east of Seattle. Nearby geographic markers include the Columbia River and Beezley Hills to the west, and Soap Lake and Moses Lake to the north and south, respectively.

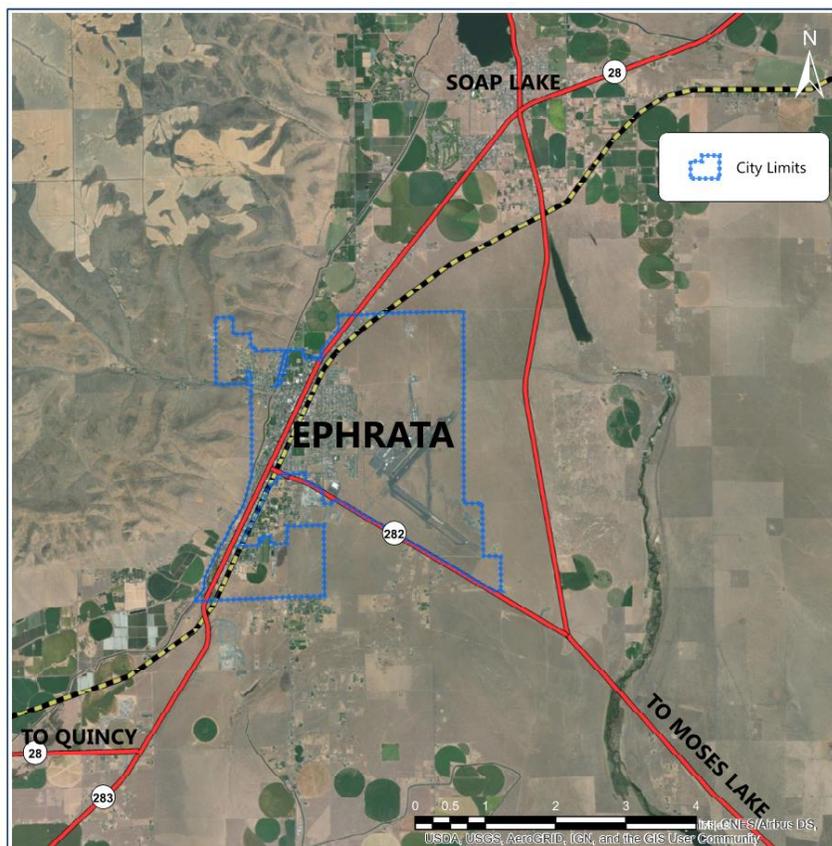


Figure 1: The City of Ephrata and the Regional Location (Map)

Beezley Hills provides a natural border along the City’s western perimeter. Ephrata citizens enjoy views of the hills in addition to recreation opportunities including hiking and biking throughout

the geographic amenity. Although there are no natural water bodies within City limits, opportunities for recreational trout fishing are available at Rocky Ford Creek near the eastern city limits.

The City is situated on State Route 28 and City limits encompass the intersection of State Routes 28 and 282. The City is located at the north central boundary of the US Bureau of Reclamation's Columbia Basin Irrigation Project. The areas surrounding the City limits are primarily zoned as rural and agricultural. Figure 1 depicts Ephrata in the region.

### ***Planning Area***

The planning area includes the area within Ephrata City limits. As of November 2022, the City's incorporation boundary encompasses 10.4 square miles. The City does not border any other incorporated areas and is surrounded on all sides by unincorporated Grant County.

The City's estimated 2022 population was 8,639 residents. Given the rural nature of the surrounding area, it is not anticipated the parks and recreation amenities in the City will serve a large population living outside the city limits. However, there are a small number of Grant County residents living near the southern and northern boundaries of the City that may make use of the City's parks and recreational facilities. The likely exception to this is use of Splash Zone, where visitors from outside City limits are likely to visit as Splash Zone is one of only three outdoor community pools in Grant County.

### ***Natural and Physical Features***

The City of Ephrata hosts a semi-arid climate, characterized by hot summers and generally mild winters. The climate is greatly affected by the rain shadow cast by the Cascade Mountain Range. Annual precipitation is low with around 7.6 inches of rain per year.

The most distinctive natural feature of the City and its immediate surroundings are the Beezley Hills located along the western border of Ephrata city limits. There are no major water bodies located within the city bounds (shorelines, lakes, etc.), aside from fishing ponds. The topography of the City is generally flat, ranging from 1,230 feet to about 1,330 feet above mean sea level.

### ***Area History***

Records show the first permanent settlement in the area now known as Ephrata did not occur until the early 1880s. Prior to the establishment of a permanent settlement the land was often used as a camping site by the region's Indian tribes who would visit the springs in the area during the warmer months, replenishing food supplies by collecting camas roots and hunting animals found in the area.



Figure 2: Planning Area (Map of City Limits and Urban Growth Area)

The first official land deed near present-day Ephrata was dedicated to the Egbert brothers in 1882. In 1886 a horse rancher named Frank Beezley purchased the land from the Egbert brothers and developed the land around the spring. Among the first residents of the area were stockmen who lived near today's high school. The area was given several names; "Tukta-hyospum" was the Native name, later called "Indian Graves" by the first white settlers. The spring between the two hills took on the name of different landowners, "Beezley Springs" being the longest lived.

The climate and topography of the area were in some ways unappealing to early settlers and as such the entire region remained sparsely populated until the arrival of the Great Northern Railway in 1892. The station was named *Ephrata*, a variation on the biblical name meaning 'fruitful'. For almost a decade Ephrata was little more than a remote train stop for travelers

between Walla Walla and the north Okanogan region. The settlement was officially platted in 1901 and in 1902 a school district was established, and a schoolhouse built at what is now B Street and Division Ave. In the years following, the settlement grew with construction of houses, stores, a hotel, and several fruit orchards.

The Washington State Legislature officially created Grant County (formerly a part of Douglas County) in February 1909 and Ephrata was established as the County Seat. Ephrata consisted of only a few hundred residents then, however, it was the biggest settlement in the County at the time. Six months later, in June 1909 the City of Ephrata was officially incorporated.

The town continued growing in the following decades creating the need for sufficient water irrigation to support the town and surrounding agricultural areas. Fortunately, the Grand Coulee Dam project, a part of Roosevelt's "New Deal" government programs package was approved in 1933 and completed in 1941. President Roosevelt himself visited Ephrata in 1934.

The delivery of irrigation water was however kept to a minimum due to the shift in labor and production capabilities shifting to supporting the Ephrata Army Air Base in 1942. The Air Base was used for heavy bomber training and then for fighter pilot training; the airport's long runways and good flying weather made for excellent conditions in supporting the war effort.

After the war, parts of the air base were converted and used as the headquarters for the Columbia Basin Project which delivered water from the Grand Coulee Dam to over 600,000 acres of fertile, but otherwise dry, agricultural land. At the same time the Grant County Utility District was created, construction of two more dams on the Columbia River began: the Priest Rapids Dam and Wanapum Dam.

Since the completion of the Columbia Basin Project and the additional dams on the Columbia River, the City's population has experienced both growths and declines. By 1957 the population was estimated to be 7,423 people. From this peak the population gradually declined. While the nearby City of Moses Lake experienced rapid growth Ephrata's estimated population dropped to 6,548 in 1960 and further decreased to 5,255 in 1970.<sup>1</sup> The population remained steady during the 1980s and 1990s and began to increase again during the 2000s.



Figure 3: Ephrata in the 1950s

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<sup>1</sup> Kent, J., 'Ephrata – Thumbnail History', <https://www.historylink.org/file/9285#:~:text=The%20Great%20Northern%20Railroad%20arrived,the%20newly%20formed%20Grant%20County>, accessed December 29, 2022

As of 2022, Ephrata has a record high estimated population of 8,693 people. The City is the gateway to the Columbia Basin area and continues to attract new residents with its comparatively lower cost of living, appealing climate, and abundant recreational amenities.

## Population Characteristics and Demographics

It is important to explore the demographic characteristics of Ephrata and the relevant trends that are affecting the use and demand of the City's parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities. As demographics shift, the demand and preferences for recreational opportunities also transform. Considering social values, cultural preferences, and traditions of diverse populations helps to ensure equity and maintain policies and programs catered to the local needs.

The Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) states, "not all Washingtonians participate in the same outdoor recreation activities at the same rate. Culture, along with other factors, may help explain the differences. For example, the Hispanic population is more likely to go running, play soccer, or go to a park for leisure activities like family gatherings, picnicking, or attending an outdoor event. The white population is more likely to go to motorboating or do nature-based activities such as visiting a river or beach<sup>2</sup>."

The demand for parks and open space is affected by factors such as the number of people that are predicted to reside in and around Ephrata and therefore make use of various facilities; where and how the majority of the population lives and works; and the predominant ages of the population. The following statistics begin to provide information about the population.



- The City's estimated 2022 population was 8,639, an 11.2 percent increase over the estimated population from 10 years ago (7,672 people in 2012).
- Based on the Office of Financial Management (OFM) population forecasts, and the reported medium series found within the City of Ephrata Comprehensive Plan,

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rco.wa.gov/StateRecPlans/scorp/address-changing-demographics/> (Accessed 7/21/2021)

Ephrata should plan to have as many as 9,981 residents by 2030 and 11,218 residents by 2040<sup>3</sup>. Each of these projections follow a steady 1% annual growth.

- The gender balance of Ephrata residents displays a pronounced male majority within the population (54.8% / 45.2%).
- The City's population generally identifies as being one race (82.5%) of which 79.3% identify as white, 0.8% as Black, 1.6% as Asian, and 0.8% as American Indian and Alaska Native, while 11.1% identifies as being two or more races. 17.8% of the Ephrata population identify as being Hispanic or Latina/Latino<sup>4</sup>.

Census data indicates that there are 2,909 households in Ephrata, and there is an average of 2.72 persons per household. The average family size is 3.12 people.

It is valuable to examine the age distribution in the community, as each age group tends to have different needs and expectations for parks, open spaces, trails, and related amenities. There are many youths in the community; 31.2 percent of Ephrata's population is under 18 years old. Ephrata has a high proportion of youth as state-wide only 22.4 percent of the population is under 18. Likewise, the median age of Ephrata residents is rather low at 34.2 years of age which is below that of Washington state residents (37.8 years) and U.S. residents (38.1 years). Figure 4 shows the population distribution by age.

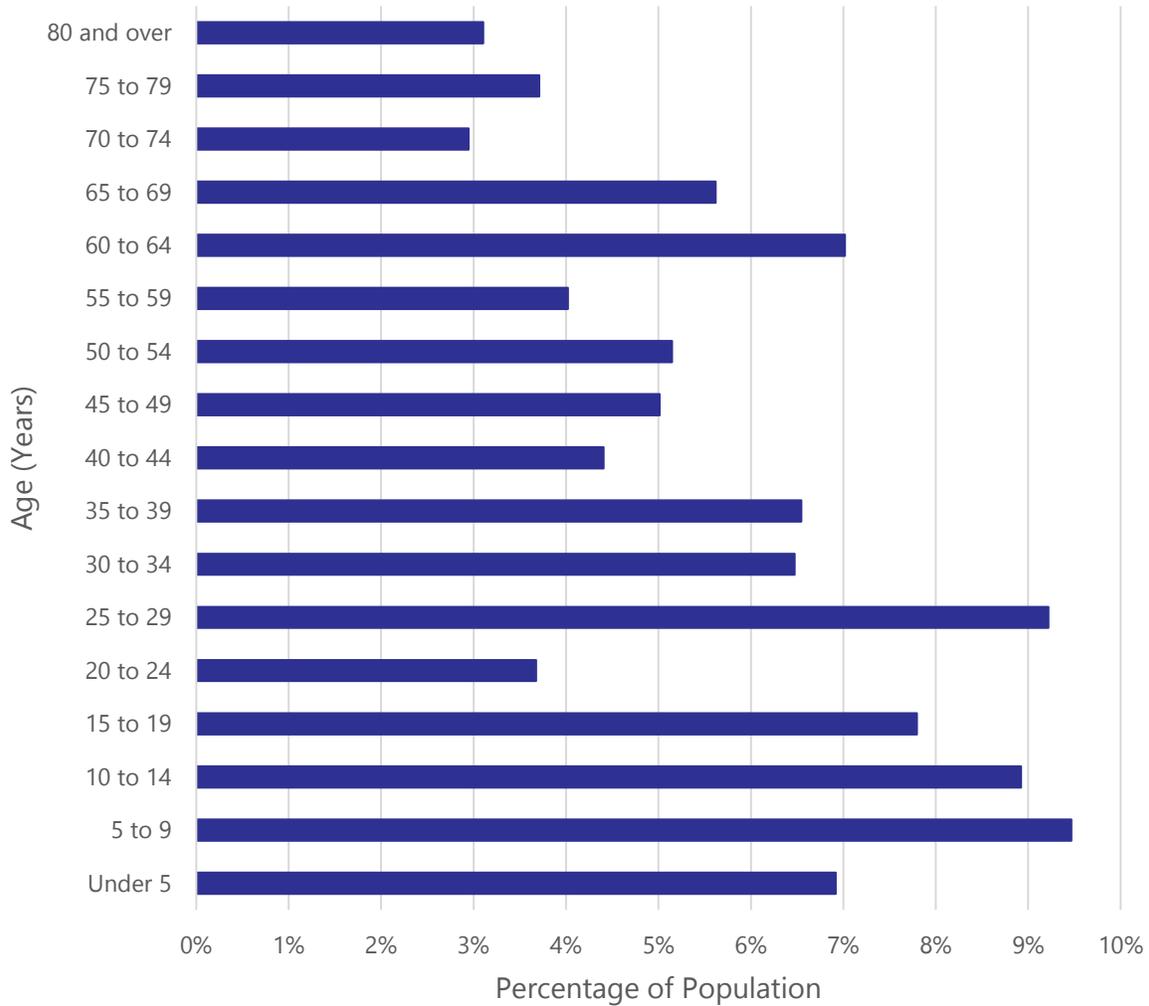
Youth tend to be more physically active than older groups and more frequently participate in competitive sports and activities such as baseball, soccer, basketball, football, etc. Young adults (ages 18-35) are also an active age group and form the core of adult competitive sports. It is interesting to note that there is a disproportionately small number of people in Ephrata aged 20 through 24 years of age, revealing that there appears to be a trend of early-career or college-aged young adults living elsewhere during that period of their lives.

Seniors (age 55+) are increasingly participating in active recreation programs and activities. Parks and recreation planning should respond to an aging population while also providing the facilities and programming that are attractive to families, particularly as Ephrata has a large share of the population in this age cohort (24.7 percent).

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<sup>3</sup> The City of Ephrata uses the "Medium series" population projection for Grant County

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021 data table



**Figure 4: Ephrata's population distribution by age**

State-wide, the RCO office notes “the increase in the active senior population will bring changes as well as demand for activities that seniors enjoy increases. Recreation providers can adapt park design and program more senior-friendly open spaces to fulfill unmet needs. Creating space and opportunities for elders promotes health and reduces social isolation. Examples of senior friendly outdoor recreation activities are accessible walking trails, outdoor exercise equipment stations, senior sport zones, and outdoor exercise classes such as yoga and tai chi. In general, seniors are most interested in walking and hiking, sightseeing, and nature-based activities.”

Where, and how, people live help determine where parks, open space, and trails are in demand and should be located or enhanced. In Ephrata, 77 percent<sup>5</sup> of housing structures are single-family units.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2016-2020). Tenure by Units in Structure American Community Survey 5-year estimates. Retrieved from <<https://censusreporter.org>>

# Regional Recreation Trends

A comprehensive assessment of “demands” for outdoor recreational opportunities was conducted out of Eastern Washington University in July 2017. The assessment was based upon a survey that used random sampling. The report found that the top ten outdoor recreation activities in the Columbia Plateau Region which encompasses Douglas, Grant, Adams, and Lincoln County are as shown in Figure 5 and summarized in Table 1.



Figure 5: Columbia Plateau Region top outdoor recreational activities

\*Day Hiking was tied in 10<sup>th</sup> place with Walking with a Pet

Table 1: Top-10 Activities and Participation Rate for the Columbia Plateau Region

| Ranking | Activity   | Category                     | Participation Rate |
|---------|--|------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1       | Walking in a park or trail setting   | Walking                      | 82%                |
| 2       | Visiting rivers or streams   | Nature activities            | 66%                |
| 3       | Swimming/wading at a beach – freshwater  | Swimming                     | 60%                |
| 4       | Attendings an outdoor concert or event (e.g., farmer’s market, fairs, sporting events) | Leisure activities at a park | 59%                |
| 5       | Wildlife or nature viewing   | Nature activities            | 53%                |
| 6       | Gather or collect things in a nature setting (e.g., rocks, shells, plants)             | Nature activities            | 50%                |
| 7       | Scenic or wilderness area  | Sightseeing                  | 48%                |
| 8       | Family gathering   | Leisure activities at a park | 48%                |
| 9       | Playing  | Leisure activities at a park | 48%                |
| 10      | Day-hiking   | Hiking                       | 47%                |
| 10      | Walking with pet   | Walking                      | 47%                |

With the exception of the water-based activities, all of the top 10 activities in the Columbia Plateau Region are readily available in Ephrata. The most popular activity of walking in a park or trail setting had 82% of survey respondents say they participated in this activity. This is widely available in Ephrata in the City's many parks. While not available within City limits due to the natural landscapes of the City, water-based activities are available nearby at Soap Lake, Rocky Ford Creek, and Moses Lake.

# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public involvement was an important part of the development of this plan. In April 2022 AHBL staff visited Ephrata to meet with Parks and Recreation staff and take inventory of the existing City parks and recreation facilities. Following this visit AHBL and the Parks and Recreation staff formed a public engagement plan that included a community survey, youth survey, community open house, and stakeholder interviews.

## **Public Surveys**

The purpose of the public surveys is to provide an opportunity for all members of the public to provide input to and help guide the development of the Parks and Recreation Plan update. There were two surveys distributed to elicit public feedback. The first was a general community survey for all members of the public, the second was a survey targeted specifically at Ephrata's youth population.

## **Community Survey**

The community survey was administered to the general public. The community was encouraged to participate in the survey with posters (containing a QR link to the survey) distributed throughout various locations including parks, recreation centers, and other public facilities such as libraries and schools. The survey was also advertised and distributed electronically via email and on the City's Facebook pages. A paper copy of the survey was also available at City Hall, although no paper surveys were returned.

The community survey was 18 questions and was expected to take participants less than 10 minutes to complete. Participants were asked questions about their use of parks, recreation facilities, and recreation programs in the City and nearby areas, general impressions of the City's parks and recreation facilities, recreational activities undertaken in Ephrata's parks, parks funding, and general demographics. The survey was open June 22, 2022 through July 29, 2022. The community survey received 292 responses from the community.

Survey results showed the top four most visited parks and recreational facilities in



the past 12 months were Beezley Hill (which was listed in the survey although it is located outside City limits/planning area), Oasis Park, Splash Zone, and Lions Park. All four had over 40 percent of survey respondents visit these parks/facilities.

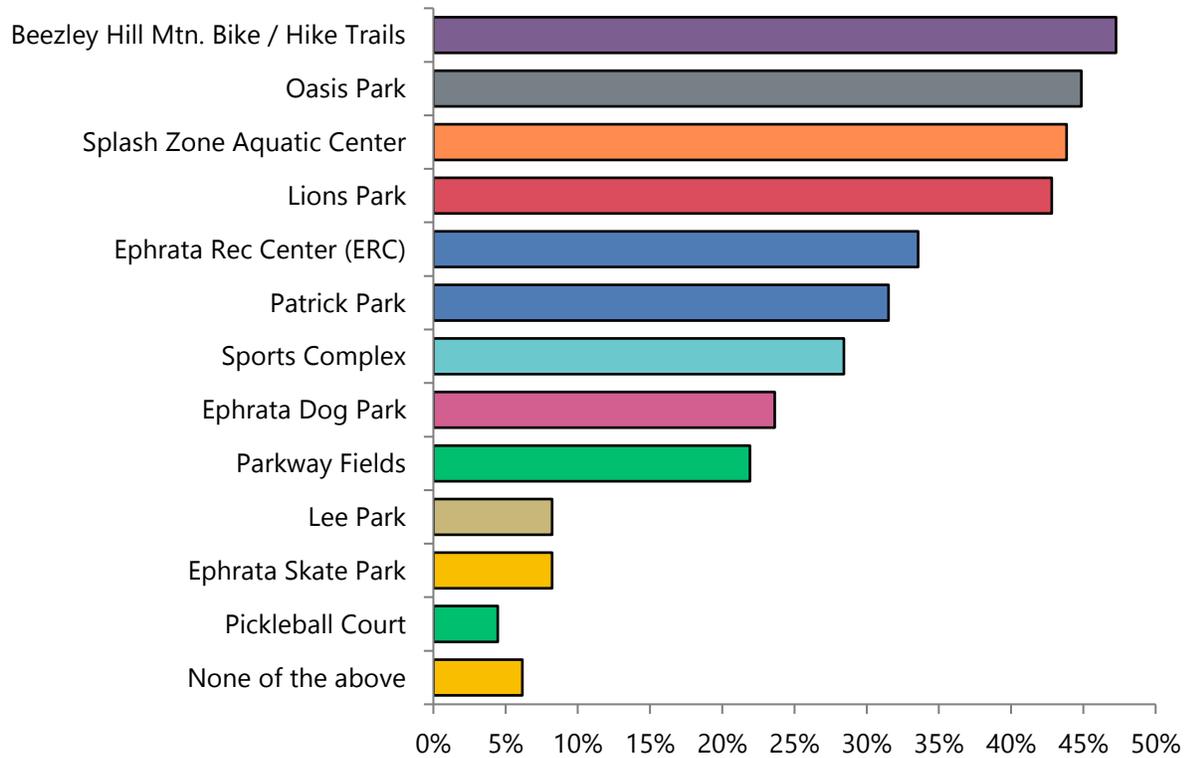


Figure 6: Parks and recreation facilities visited in the last 12 months

Of the programs or classes offered through the City the two most popular were fitness and wellness programs, and team/individual sports where 53 percent and 50 percent (respectively) of respondents participated or were interested in participating in these programs/classes. The most popular activity to participate in while visiting Ephrata’s parks was leisure based such as walking, relaxing, taking kids to the playground, etc.

Thirty-two percent of respondents reported participation in leisure

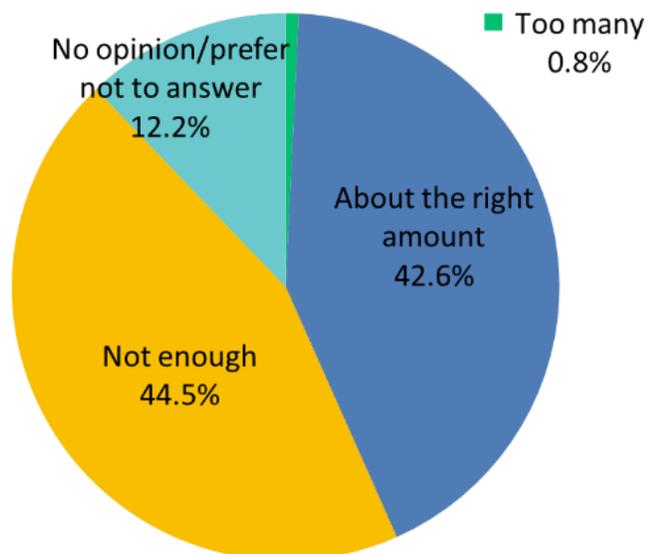
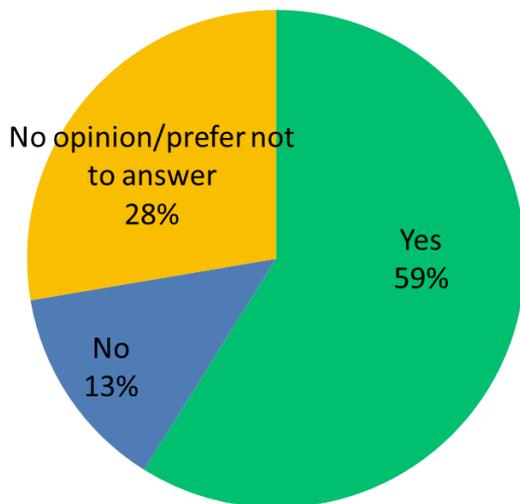


Figure 7: Community survey rating of Ephrata's parks and recreational facilities

activities at Ephrata’s parks very frequently (more than once a month), and 17 percent participated frequently (about once a month).

With regards to the number of parks and recreational facilities, 42.6 percent of survey respondents said the City had ‘about the right amount’ of parks and recreation facilities and 44.5



**Figure 8: Community survey responses for park improvements and maintenance taxes**

percent said there were ‘not enough’. The general response to park maintenance was positive with 36.9 percent of respondents saying Ephrata’s parks and recreation facilities were ‘well maintained’ and 49.8 percent saying they were ‘somewhat maintained’. Only a small percent (7.2 percent) said the parks were ‘poorly maintained’.

The community survey also asked respondents if they would be willing to pay higher taxes for parks improvements and maintenance. 59 percent of respondents said ‘yes’, 28 percent responded ‘no opinion/prefer not to answer’, and 13 percent responded ‘no’. The most popular additional amount respondents were willing to pay each year was \$50 (26 percent) followed by \$100 (18 percent).

### Youth Survey

The youth survey was designed to specifically target Ephrata’s youth population (grades 9-12). The youth population was encouraged to participate in the survey with posters (containing a QR link to the survey) that were distributed district wide to all schools in Ephrata. It is possible that some of the surveys intended to be completed by students were instead done by their parents, guardians or other individuals.

The youth survey was 13 questions and was expected to take less than 10 minutes to complete. Youth participants were asked questions about their use of parks and recreation facilities and programs in the City and nearby areas, recreational activities undertaken in Ephrata’s parks, park facilitates funding focuses, and general demographics including asking what grade the participant is in. The survey was open September 7 through September 16, 2022. The youth survey received 200 responses, however, only 68 responses came from participants who indicated they were in grades 7 through 12.

Survey results showed the most popular parks and recreational facilities to visit for youth were Lions Park, with 67.7 percent of respondents having visited in the past 12 months and Splash Zone Aquatic Center, with 66.2 percent having visited during the past 12 months. Aside from this statistic, the other responses from the youth survey were generally consistent with the community-wide survey.

### ***Community Open House***

This is a placeholder, to be written after the event

### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

This is a placeholder, to be written

#### **Preliminary Recommendations:**

- Ex-officio representative from the School District on the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Update documentation regarding reciprocal agreement or MOU for facility use
- Recognize the school district annually at a City Council meeting and find other ways to foster a collaborative relationship

# PARK PROFILES

Ephrata has a wide variety of parks of various sizes which are in various parts of the City, as shown in Figure 9: Parks in Ephrata (Map). For the most part the largest facilities are situated near the state highway which run through the city (Basin Street). On the following page, a summary of the parks “at a glance” is provided, followed by profiles of each city park.

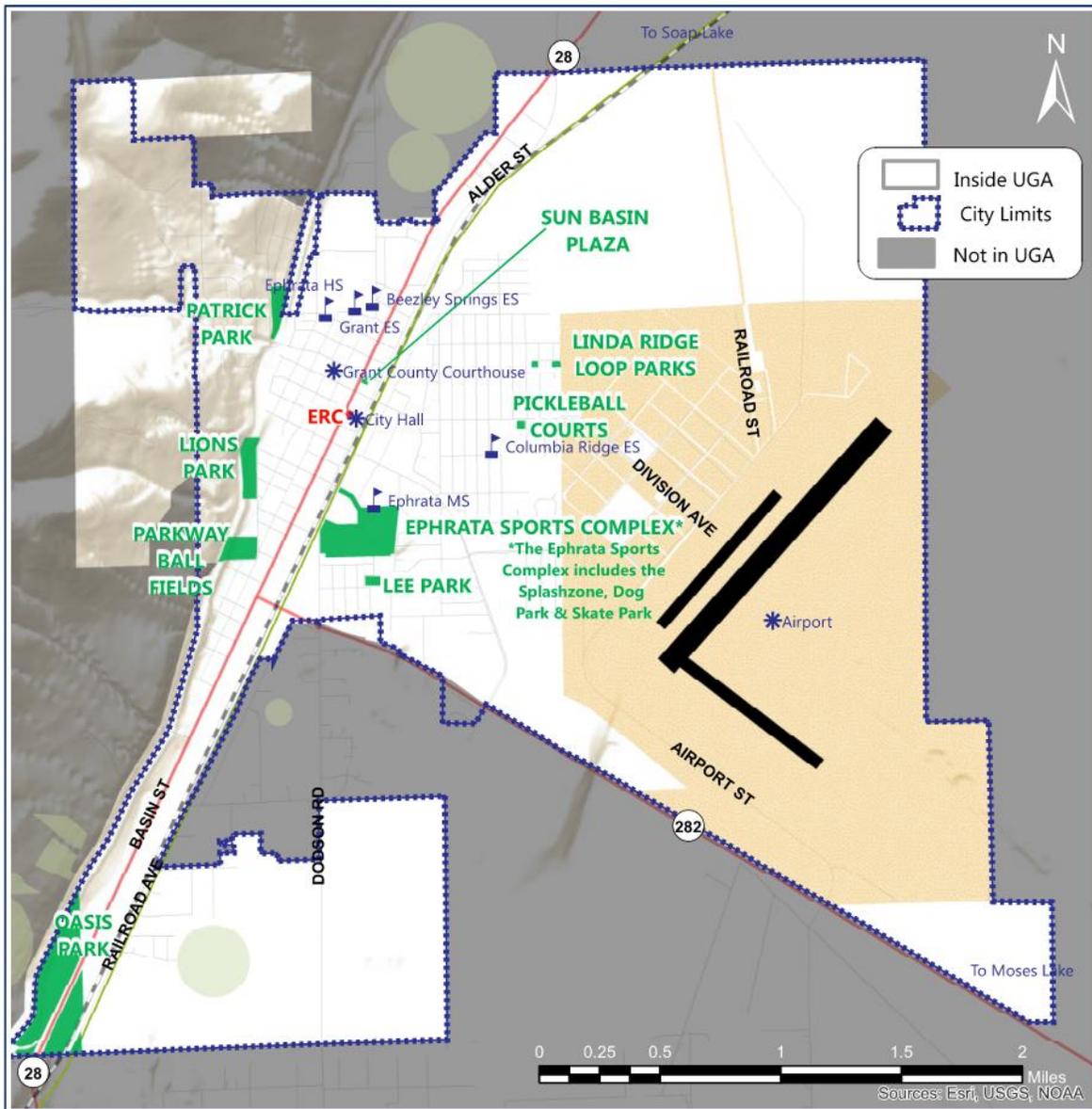


Figure 9: Parks in Ephrata (Map)

# EPHRATA'S PARKS SYSTEM AT A GLANCE

| PARK  | DESCRIPTION & KEY FEATURES   | ADDITIONAL AMENITIES  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Parkway Ball Fields</b><br>459 11th Ave. SW  | The Parkway Ball Fields is a large <b>baseball and softball complex</b> with fields and batting cages. Adjacent to Parkway Middle School, the Park accommodates local events like Thursday Nights Under the Lights.  |     |
| <b>Ephrata Sports Complex</b><br>700 Block, SE A St.<br><i>(Entrance: north of the Fire Department)</i> | The Ephrata Sports Complex features several <b>soccer fields, used for both league and recreational play.</b> There is a playground in the southeast corner.   |     |
| <b>Lions Park</b><br>598 Parkway Blvd.  | Lions Park stretches between a canal and Parkway Boulevard offering a <b>covered picnic area, communal BBQ's, volleyball and basketball courts, a playground,</b> and more. There is also ample green space for any other recreational activities or play. |      |
| <b>Patrick Park</b><br>Intersection of Roosevelt Blvd. and Patrick Rd.                                  | The northwest portion of Ephrata is home to Patrick Park which lies west of a canal and has <b>basketball courts, a playground, covered picnic area,</b> and communal BBQ's. The Summer Movie Series is held here annually.                                |      |
| <b>Oasis Park</b><br>2541 Basin St. SW  | Oasis Park includes a <b>covered picnic area, basketball court, green space, a fishing pond,</b> and a pedestrian bridge. In addition to the public areas, Oasis Park also has an RV park and mini golf course.  |     |
| <b>Ephrata Dog Park</b><br>1086 Pioneer Ave. SE   | Ephrata Dog Park is within the Sports Complex and has two fenced <b>off-leash areas for dogs.</b> The park also has picnic tables and dog watering stations.   |   <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Restroom nearby, at Sports Complex</p>  |
| <b>Lee Park</b><br>276 SE Smith Ave.  | Lee Park is situated one block south of the Sports Complex and features a <b>playground, basketball court,</b> and <b>open greenspace.</b>   |     |
| <b>Ephrata Skate Park</b><br>700 Block, SE A St.<br><i>(Entrance: north of the Fire Department)</i>     | Ephrata Skate Park is in the northeast corner of the Sports Complex and has a variety of ramps and rails. The park is for the use of <b>skateboards and inline skates</b> only.  |  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Restroom nearby, at Sports Complex</p>  |
| <b>Sun Basin Plaza</b><br>(Rock Park Plaza)<br>32 Basin St. NW  | Sun Basin Plaza is near the Ephrata Public Library in downtown Ephrata. This pocket park features rock gardens, picnic tables, sculptures, and murals. The plaza is also used for many <b>community events.</b>  |    <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">* Restroom nearby, at Public Library</p>  |
| <b>Linda Ridge Loop Parks</b><br>35 & 64 Linda Ridge Loop   | The Linda Ridge Loop Parks are two small <b>neighborhood parks</b> situated close together. Both parks have open green space, benches, and community notice boards.  |    |
| <b>KEY:</b>   |  |   |
|  Picnic Table        |  Public Restroom  |  Playground  |
|  Basketball Hoop     |  Volleyball Net   |  Community Notice board  |

# Parkway Ball Fields

## Park Information:

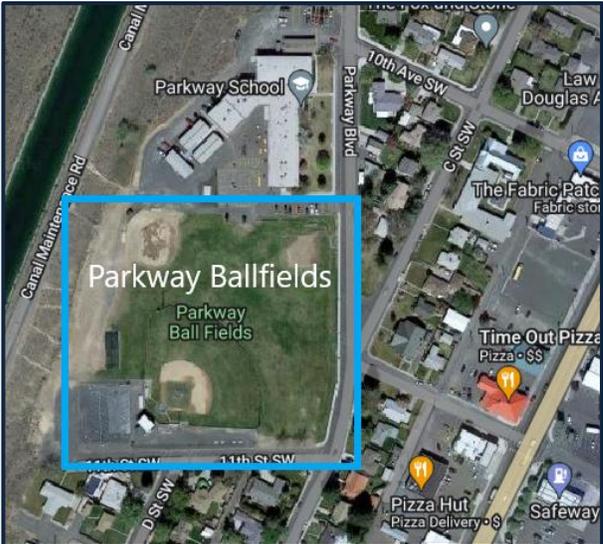
- 459 11th Ave SW
- 8.48 Acres
- Parcel No. 130432001

## Key Features:

- Baseball field
- Batting cages
- Flood lighting
- Locker rooms

## Other Features:

- Restrooms
- Spectator stand
- Dugouts
- Small parking lot
- Picnic tables
- Dedicated parking area (available after school hours and weekends)



Parkway Ball Fields Aerial

## Park Character and Context

The Parkway Ball Fields is a City-owned baseball facility adjacent to Parkway Middle School. The park contains a baseball field, softball field, practice field, a batting cage, locker rooms, restrooms, dugouts, spectator stands, off street parking, and a maintenance/storage building. The main baseball field, in the southwest corner, adjacent to the parking area, has a fence surrounding the field area, a spectator stand, and dugouts. The main field is also lit by flood lighting for use after daylight hours.



Baseball practice at Parkway Ball Fields

The fields are used by members of the public as well as Parkway Middle School who relies on this park for the physical education and outdoor activities. This use has created a partnership between the School District and the Ephrata Parks Department. The Ephrata Youth Baseball organization which provides organized baseball opportunities for Ephrata’s youth, ranging in age from four to fifteen also uses the facility. The organization regularly uses the facility for practice as well as events such as Thursday Nights Under the Lights, where there are food trucks and opportunities for youth to play social baseball during the spring.

## ***Park Issues***

- No shaded areas
- Softball field surface is suffering wear and tear

## ***Park Potential***

The Parkway Baseball field and accompanying facilities is an excellent asset to the City's parks inventory. The park is well used, and the flood lighting provides opportunity for use of the park after daylight hours as well as added security. The park is lacking shade for spectators and those using the park for passive recreation. This could be provided by planting trees in the southeast corner of the park and investing in a more permanent spectator stand with a roof/cover. Park facilities such as field surfaces and fencing should also be monitored and upgraded as needed.



*Batting Cages*

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Planting of trees in southeast corner to provide shade
- Resurfacing of softball field
- Add bike racks
- Monitor facilities and provide maintenance as needed

### **Long Term**

- Construct a permanent covered spectator stand
- Add additional parking spaces
- Frontage improvements along 11<sup>th</sup> St SW to provide sidewalk connection from parking area to existing sidewalk on C St SW.

# Ephrata Sports Complex

## Park Information:

- 700 - 900 SE A ST
- Approx. 12-acre portion of 36-acre parcel (Splash Zone, Sports Complex, Skate Park & Dog Park)
- Parcel No. 130085400

## Key Features:

- Soccer fields
- Play equipment

## Other Features:

- Off-street parking
- Public restroom

## Park Character and Context

The Ephrata Sports Complex is part of a large City owned parcel that encompasses Splash Zone, the Ephrata Skate and Dog Park. The park is shielded from adjacent uses to the north and west by a line of mature trees. To the south of the park is primarily single-family housing and to the east is the slope leading up to Hilltop Dr.

The primary use of the park is for soccer fields of which there are several on the site. The fields are mostly used for youth soccer clinics, adult soccer leagues, youth soccer leagues, kinder flag football and informal/recreational play. There is also a small playground in the southeast corner of the park, near the Ephrata Dog Park.

## Park Issues

- No seating area for spectators and or resting players
- Public restrooms are showing signs of age and depletion



Ephrata Sports Complex Aerial



Sports Complex Soccer Field



Sports Complex Playground

## ***Park Potential***

The soccer fields are generally well maintained and the large number of goals available for public use mean even with league games and trainings there is space available for recreational and informal play too. The area is fenced off around the perimeter, so balls don't go astray. This fence should be maintained and upgraded as needed going forward. In the center of the park is a restroom facility however it is showing signs of age and should be refurbished and upgraded. The park could also be enhanced by adding park benches between the soccer fields, or around the park perimeter for spectators and players to rest.

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Monitor and maintain the fields to ensure there is healthy grass growth
- Monitor and upgrade the play equipment as needed
- Upgrade/refurbish public restrooms
- Install designated seating areas/benches for spectators/players resting

### **Long Term**

- Provide pedestrian trail connections up to Hilltop Dr.

# Lions Park

## **Park Information:**

- 598-536 Parkway Blvd
- Approx. 4.1 acres (portion of 44-acre City owned parcel)
- Parcel No. 130431000

## **Key Features:**

- Covered picnic tables and BBQ area
- Basketball court
- Playground

## **Other Features:**

- Off street parking
- After dark park lighting
- Volleyball area



*Lions Park Aerial*

## **Park Character and Context**

Lions Park is a popular park, nestled in a large flat area east of the bank/slope that leads up to the canal maintenance road and the canal. The park is in the southeastern portion of a large City owned parcel with access provided from Parkway Boulevard with designated off-street parking near the Parkway Boulevard and 7<sup>th</sup> Ave SW intersection. The park is considered the main city park, that serves the entire community and receives heavy use throughout the warm months.

The parking area has direct access to a covered picnic area in the south end of the park with seven picnic tables and two communal BBQs under a covered patio area. Also in the parking lot is a small public restroom. The park is a popular residential park with something for everyone including passive areas for strolling and sitting, and active areas for volleyball and basketball. Adjacent to the basketball court in the central area of the park is a large playground area with several facilities including three large swing sets, monkey bars, a climbing dome, and a main play structure with climbing platforms, monkey bars, and a small slide.

In addition to the facilities the park has large green spaces surrounding the playground area and up to the parking lot. As with many of the City’s parks, Lions Park has several mature trees providing shade to park users during the warmer months. The City plans to maintain all existing significant trees in the park.



*Lions Park Play Area*

The park is closed from 10pm to 6am and residents are able to use the park after dark as there are large street lighting posts providing light to both the basketball court and the playground.

### ***Park Issues***

- Limited ADA accessibility
- No designated walking paths
- Vandalism occurs periodically
- Strong windstorms can cause tree damage

### ***Park Potential***

The park is a well maintained and popular park with both passive and active recreation opportunities. The large parking area in the south end of the park has a paved path to the covered picnic and BBQ area, however this does not extend to the remaining areas of the park. A paved loop trail around the perimeter of the park with interior access paths to the basketball court and playground area would make the park accessible to more members of the public with improved ADA access. There is also potential for the park to provide connection to the trail system on Beezley Hill with construction of a bridge across the canal at the top of the ridge along the eastern park boundary.



*Lions Park Picnic Area*

### ***Park Needs***

#### **Near Term**

- Add a sidewalk along Parkway Blvd for the entire frontage of the park
- Consider replacing gravel areas under play equipment with other soft surfaces (such as rubber mulch)
- Add bike racks
- Improve ADA access to areas of the park beyond the covered picnic/BBQ area
- Upgrade BBQ facilities
- Provide maintenance to volleyball area including new sand/fill

#### **Long Term**

- Paint and renovate restrooms
- Recoat basketball court
- Provide trail connection to Beezley Hill with construction of bridge over canal

# Patrick Park

## Park Information:

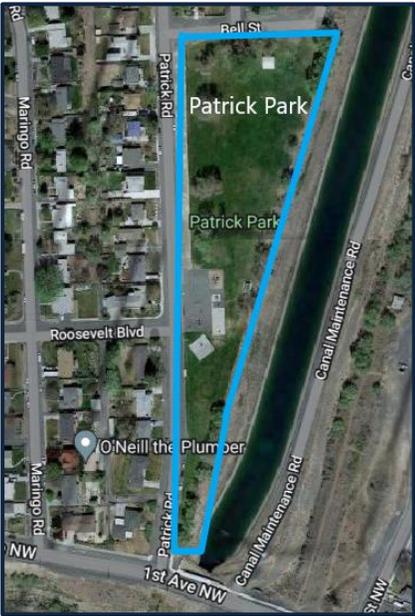
- Patrick Road
- 4.5 acre
- Parcel No. 130478000

## Key Features:

- Covered picnic area with seven picnic tables
- Public restrooms
- Play equipment
- Basketball court

## Other Features:

- Communal BBQs
- Volleyball net
- Uncovered picnic areas
- Mature trees
- Large open green spaces



Patrick Park Aerial

Patrick Park (formerly known as Grandview Park) is a popular park located in a residential area in northwest Ephrata. Patrick Park is the only City owned park in the northwest area of the City and the only park west of the canal. The park serves the local neighborhood and is ideally located on the outer edge of a small bluff offering views to downtown Ephrata. The topography of the park is flat, with a gentle incline at the northwest corner.

The park offers active and passive recreational opportunities. Active recreation park amenities include a variety of play equipment types and basketball courts. Passive recreational opportunities include a covered picnic area with communal BBQs and uncovered picnic tables near the play equipment. Patrick Park also has public restrooms however these are not open during the winter months.



Patrick Park Covered Picnic Area

Patrick Park is a venue for the annual summer movies series. The City has presented the outdoor Summer Movie Series for the past six years and is an inexpensive “night out” for families. In the summer of 2022, Patrick Park was the host venue for three movie night screenings.

**Park Issues**

- Limited landscaped areas
- Restrooms not always open
- Some equipment is aging/dilapidated
- Vandalism occurs periodically
- Strong windstorms can cause tree damage

**Park Potential**

The park is a popular destination for both passive and active recreation in particular for residents in the City’s northwest neighborhood. The park equipment and picnic facilities are orientated to make the most of the views overlooking the downtown area. The park could be enhanced with landscaping features such as flower beds, native shrubbery and/or a small rock garden.

Existing park facilities should also be monitored and maintained and upgraded as necessary. While the park is more popular in the summer months, the park is used year-round and the restroom facilities, currently closed in the winter months, should be upgraded and open year-round.



*Patrick Park Play Area*

**Park Needs**

**Near Term**

- Open restroom facilities year-round
- Plant new landscaping features such as flower gardens and native shrubs
- Assess parking facilities for ongoing maintenance and upgrades

**Long Term**

- Assess need for providing off street parking spaces
- Provide additional active recreation amenities such as soccer goals
- Provide sidewalk improvements along Patrick Road to connect to sidewalk on 1st Ave NW

# Oasis Park

## **Park Information:**

- 2541 Basin St SW
- Approx. 10.9 acres (portion of 12.1-acre City owned parcel)
- Parcel No. 130536000

## **Key Features:**

- Pond
- Fishing
- Restrooms
- Covered picnic area

## **Other Facilities:**

- Off-street parking area near the park entrance
- Basketball hoop
- Chapel

## **Park Character and Context**

Oasis Park is situated near the southern boundary of Ephrata city limits. The park was developed through a State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation grant in the 1970's. Part of the park is operated privately under a lease agreement with the City; the remainder is open for public use. The portion of the park operated privately includes an RV park and 9-hole golf course. For purposes of this Plan only the portion of the park that is for public use (without charge) is addressed in this Plan.

Oasis Park serves as the southern gateway to the City. It is the first impression that residents and visitors have as they enter the City at the transition from the highway to Basin Street SW. The park access is from Basin Street SW where there is a gravel parking lot with an informal parking layout. Near the parking lot is a public restroom, covered picnic area, and basketball court. South of the parking area is a large open greenspace, fishing pond (stocked annually during the spring), and pedestrian bridge crossing the pond to connect to the grassy eastern bank. The existing pond and trees are recreational assets to the City and the park is popular with both residents and visitors to the City.



*Oasis Park Aerial*



*Oasis Park Fishing Area*

## ***Park Issues***

- Limited Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant access
- No designated walking trails/loop trail
- No playground equipment

## ***Park Potential***

The park serves as an excellent gateway facility to the City of Ephrata from the south and is a popular park for both residents and visitors alike. The off-street parking provides a safe area for park users to park and enter into the park. Potential improvements for the park include providing a series of ADA accessible trails and/or a loop path around the pond and to and from the parking area. Boardwalks may be necessary for wetter areas nearer the pond. While there are many mature trees in the park, additional screening trees could be placed along the eastern park border to Basin St SW to complete the gaps in the existing rows of trees. Additionally, interpretative signs could be added to the park to provide the public information about the different plant and aquatic species found in the pond.



*Oasis Park Fishing Pond*

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Assess pedestrian bridge and dock and make necessary structural improvements
- Plant additional screening trees along eastern park boundary
- Provide interpretative signs/information boards about flora/fauna in the park
- Replace the weathered picnic tables as needed

### **Long Term**

- Provide ADA access to the park from the parking lot
- Provide an ADA accessible walking trail/loop around the pond
- Evaluate need/benefit to resurface and stripe parking area
- Develop a water garden area with a fountain and falls where fish and small species of wildlife are protected for the enjoyment of the public
- Add a small playground in the grassy area near the parking lot and picnic tables

# Ephrata Dog Park

## ***Park Information:***

- 1086 Pioneer Ave SE
- Approx. 400 square foot portion of 36-acre parcel (Splash Zone, Sports Complex, Skate Park & Dog Park)
- Parcel No. 130085400

## ***Key Features:***

- Parking (6 spaces)
- Picnic tables
- Shade trees
- Two fenced off-leash dog areas

## ***Other Features:***

- Decommissioned fire hydrants
- Dog watering station



*Ephrata Dog Park Aerial*

## ***Park Character and Context***

Ephrata Dog Park opened in 2019 and is the newest addition to the City's park system. The park is tucked into the southeast corner of the Ephrata Sports Complex near a gravel parking area. The dog park has two grassy fenced areas; one for large dogs and one for small dogs. Since the site was converted to an off-leash dog park the park is becoming increasingly popular in the City, especially as increased awareness of its presence in the community grows.

## ***Park Issues***

- The park is not readily identifiable from A Street or the alley bordering the south of the park
- Unsealed parking area can be muddy after periods of rain

## ***Park Potential***

The park is already functioning as a popular destination for dog owners in the City. The park should continue to be well maintained in the future as awareness and popularity of the park increases. Additional site furnishings and amenities could be provided to address increased park use such as additional trash cans, benches, water/drinking stations and picnic tables.

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Monitor park facilities and provide maintenance as needed
- Provide additional trash cans and water stations
- Install additional signage visible from A Street to identify and provide direction to the Dog Park

### **Long Term**

- Monitor park use and assess need for park expansion as needed
- Provide pedestrian trail connections to Pioneer Ave SE and up the embankment to Hilltop Dr.
- Research alternative options for parking lot ground cover to avoid mud and pooling water



*Dog Watering Station at Park Entrance*



# Lee Park

## **Park Information:**

- 276 SE Smith Ave
- 1.1 acres
- Parcel No. 131642100

## **Key Features:**

- Playground
- Basketball court
- Shade trees

## **Other Features:**

- Large open green space

## **Park Character and Context**

Lee Park is located a block south of the Ephrata Sports Complex in a residential area. The park is bordered by Smith Ave to the south and Park Place SE to the north and west. An unmaintained inclined trail connects the park to Hilltop Dr. to the east. Lee Park is characterized by the large, existing trees along the north edge and plenty of open greenspace. The active elements include a play area, a full-sized basketball court, and two small, paved areas with basketball hoops. The play area includes a large swing set over a refined gravel area with six swings (two infant swings and four standard swings).

Some of the recreation equipment is succumbing to the effects of the weather and showing signs of aging.

## **Park Issues**

- Park does not have any designated off-street parking areas
- Some of the recreation equipment is in poor condition and needs replacing
- Park does not have any seating or picnic areas
- Trash disposal facilities are partially hidden from view of main play equipment area
- Vandalism occurs periodically
- Strong windstorms can cause tree damage



Lee Park Aerial



Lee Park Basketball Court

## ***Park Potential***

Lee Park is a residential park that provides a quieter option for recreation than the larger Ephrata Sports Complex to the north. The park should continue to be maintained however consideration should be given to replacing the existing recreation equipment when needed and for providing additional park furnishings. The large trees provide excellent shade, and this should be utilized with the installation of seating and/or picnic tables.



*Lee Park Swing Set*

There is also potential to create a trail system around the perimeter of the park. A loop path would connect the features of the park and provide connections to the hillside trails beyond the park.

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Relocate trash/waste disposal facilities closer to the play equipment
- Add bike racks
- Install designated seating and/or picnic tables
- Incrementally replace depleted recreational equipment as needed
- Consider replacing gravel areas under play equipment with other soft surfaces (such as rubber mulch)

### **Long Term**

- Install a loop trail around the park and provide a connection trail to Hilltop Dr. (in lieu of a sidewalk)
- Assess need for off-street parking
- Add a toddler park with equipment and sandboxes for children under 5 years old

# Ephrata Skate Park

## Park Information:

- 700 - 900 SE A ST
- Approx. 0.25-acre portion of 36-acre parcel (Splash Zone, Sports Complex, Skate Park & Dog Park)
- Parcel No. 130085400

## Key Features:

- Several skate ramps and rails
- Fenced concrete sealed skate area

## Other Features:

- Non-striped gravel off street parking area

## Park Character and Context

The Ephrata skate park is nestled in the northeast corner of the Ephrata sports complex at the flat area at the base of the ridge leading up to Hilltop Dr. The skate park has a series of ramps and rails laid out over a concrete surface enclosed in a fenced area.

The park is open from sunrise till dusk and is for the usage of skateboards and inline skates only. There are no attendants on duty at the park and helmets are required at all times. The park is popular with the City’s youth population and is within walking distance of many other downtown amenities.

## Park Issues

- No seating for spectators or for resting
- Graffiti



Ephrata Skate Park Aerial



Skate Park Ramps

## ***Park Potential***

The Skate Park is a popular recreational space particularly for Ephrata’s youth population during after school hours and school breaks. Older children generally use the park independent of adult supervision while younger children using the park are usually there with a parent or caregiver. Currently there is no seating or rest area for parents or caregivers to supervise play. This could be remedied by adding park benches outside the fenced area of the skate park. The park also has some issues with graffiti. Some of the skate ramps need to be cleaned and/or repainted.



*Graffiti on Park Rules Sign*

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Clean graffiti and repaint where necessary
- Install park benches/seating areas
- Install additional signage visible from A Street to identify and provide direction to the Skate Park

### **Long Term**

- Provide pedestrian trail connections up to Hilltop Dr

# Sun Basin Plaza (Rock Park Plaza )

## **Park Information:**

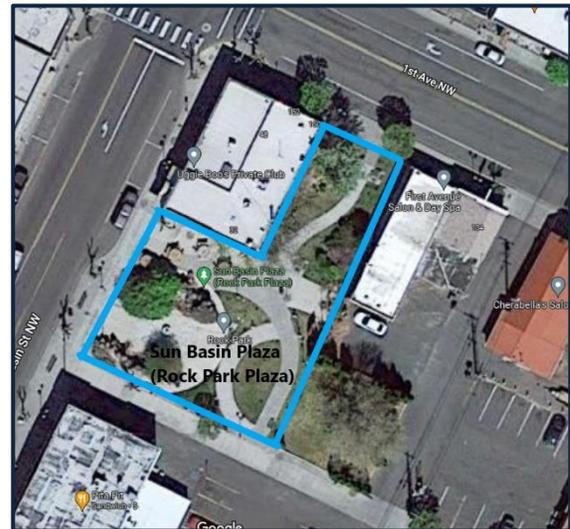
- 32 Basin St NW
- 0.12 acres (approx.)
- Parcel No. 130017000 and 130016000

## **Key Features:**

- Picnic Tables
- Rock Garden
- Informative Notice Boards
- Sculptures

## **Other Features:**

- Water Fountains
- Lighting
- Water Features
- Wall Mural



*Sun Basin Plaza (Rock Park Plaza) Aerial*

## **Park Character and Context**

Sun Basin Plaza is a small 'pocket park' located in the downtown area of Ephrata near the Ephrata Public Library. The park has a variety of landscape features including rock gardens, water features, grass areas, and a number of trees. The park creates a natural space between the retail businesses along 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW. A pedestrian pathway meanders through the park and is accessed by both Basin Street NW and 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW.

Sun Basin Park has several seating areas as well as picnic tables that provide an outdoor space for both people working in and people visiting the central Ephrata businesses to eat outside. The park is nicely landscaped and also has other decorative features including sculptures and a mural. Existing park facilities and landscaping should be monitored and maintained and upgraded as necessary. During the summer of 2021 the Sun Basin Plaza was home to a series of free concerts sponsored by the City of Ephrata Recreation Department and the Ephrata Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber continues to use the park for various community events.

## **Park Issues**

- No dedicated bike parking
- Grass/lawn patchy in places

## **Park Potential**

The park is well situated in the central business area of Ephrata and provides a nice connection to the Ephrata Public Library as well as a place for those working in or visiting the central business area to relax and enjoy the greenspace. The park has a balance of pathways, grass

areas and decorative features and should continue to be upkept in the future. The park may benefit from dedicated bike parking for both park users and those visiting the downtown central business area by bike.

## ***Park Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Upkeep and maintenance of landscaped areas
- Add dedicated bike parking
- Resew grass where needed

### **Long Term**

- Add sheltered picnic tables
- Repave concrete pathways as needed

# Linda Ridge Loop Parks

## Park Information:

- 35 Linda Ridge Loop and 64 Linda Ridge Loop
- 1.05 acres (combined)
- Parcel No. 140475074 (east parcel) and 140475073 (west parcel)

## Key Features:

- Benches
- Community notice boards
- Open greenspace/lawns

## Other Features:

- Pet waste stations
- Trash cans



Linda Ridge Loop Parks Aerial

## Park Character and Context

Linda Ridge Loop Parks are comprised of two corner parks along the southern end of Linda Ridge Loop. There are four parcels with residential developments between the two parks. Both of the parcels that make up the Linda Ridge Loop Parks were dedicated to the City of Ephrata as part of the Prairie Ridge plat.

Linda Ridge Loop Parks are minimalist in nature. Both parks are flat, square shaped parks with large, manicured lawns. Both parks have a maintenance access road. The eastern park has a maintenance road along the eastern parcel border and the western park has a maintenance access road running diagonally through the park. Along the maintenance access roads are park benches facing the green space/lawns. Other park amenities include a community notice board at the entrance to both parks as well as trash cans and pet waste stations.

The park is located in a residential area in northeast Ephrata. The parks are both accessible only from Linda Ridge Loop which is accessed by 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave NE. In the immediate vicinity of the parks is residential uses, undeveloped land, and a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. There is no off-street parking provided for the parks and it is assumed the park is primarily used by residents within walking distance to the park.

## Park Issues

- Minimal amenities
- High maintenance costs compared with park use for lawn upkeep, trashcan emptying, and pet waste station servicing

- No shade

### ***Park Potential***

The park has potential to become more widely used by residents within biking distance if there are bike parking options available. Increased use of the park by the community will help rectify the relatively high maintenance costs compared to number of park users.

The park also has potential to attract more visitors if shade were to be provided from either trees or covered picnic benches. Picnic tables located along the maintenance roads will also provide park ADA access to the park.

### ***Park Needs***

#### **Near Term**

- Upkeep and maintenance of lawn areas
- Add dedicated bike parking
- Add picnic tables adjacent to maintenance roads

#### **Long Term**

- Provide shade trees
- Provide additional benches at Linda Ridge Loop Park (east)

# FACILITIES

## Pickleball Courts

### **Facility Information:**

- J St NE & Division Ave E
- Approx. 0.5 acres (portion of School District #165 owned parcels at Sage Hills High School)
- Parcel No. 313506000 (portion) & 313505000 (portion)

### **Key Features:**

- Two pickleball courts

### **Other Facilities:**

- Small off-street parking area

### **Park Character and Context**

The Pickleball Courts are located south of the intersection of J Street NE and Division Ave E in eastern Ephrata. The courts are located in the northeast part of the Columbia Ridge Elementary School campus in a fenced area with access from Division Ave E. In 2019 the City coordinated with the Ephrata School District to convert old tennis courts at Columbia Ridge Elementary into pickleball courts. A small parking area is provided off Division Ave E.

### **Facility Issues**

- No seating for spectators or resting
- Courts do not have identification signage
- Reoccurring weeds



*Pickleball Courts Aerial*

## ***Facility Potential***

The Pickleball Courts are one of the City's newest recreational facilities and court surfaces, netting and exterior fencing have been well maintained. The City should continue to monitor the courts and provide ongoing maintenance and resurfacing when needed. The courts currently do not have any seating area for spectators, substitutes, or for players to rest between games. The courts are also not signposted, so it is not clear if the courts are for public use.



*Pickleball Courts*

## ***Facility Needs***

### **Near Term**

- Place City of Ephrata signage at the courts to indicate they are for public use
- Provide seating/benches on the court sidelines
- Monitor nets, fencing, and court surfacing for maintenance and upgrade needs

### **Long Term**

- Resurface the courts
- Provide additional picnic and/or resting area outside the fenced courts

# Ephrata Recreation Center (ERC)

## Facility Information:

- 112 Basin St SW
- 8,604 SF building on a 0.51-acre lot
- Parcel No. 130042000

## Key Features:

- Hardwood floors
- High ceiling
- Performance stage
- Kitchen facilities
- Can accommodate up to 299 people
- Equipped with chairs and tables
- Facility rentals are possible

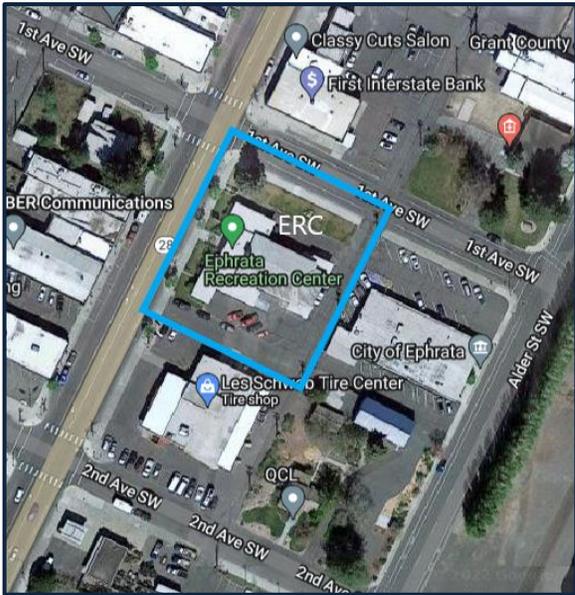
## Other Features:

- Restrooms
- Small separate foyer room
- Off-street parking
- ADA access

## Facility Character and Context

The Ephrata Recreation Center, fondly known as the ERC, is an indoor recreation facility in downtown Ephrata on the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> Ave SW and Basin St SW. The auditorium style building has a performance stage, kitchen facilities, restrooms, and a separate foyer room at the building’s main entrance. The main room has high ceilings, hardwood floors, and a mirror wall for dance classes. The hall is lit by a series of ceiling lights and the foyer has a series of windows along the street façade and entry doors.

The ERC is used by the City for recreation and fitness classes but is also available to be rented for private functions by members of the community. Recreation classes offered at the ERC include adult Tonification (toning condition and strengthening class), children’s cheerleading and tumbling classes, children and tots dance classes, tot’s sports classes, and adult Zumba. Outside of recreation uses and private functions the ERC is also used on occasion for Red Cross blood drives.



Ephrata Recreation Center Aerial



Recreation Center Building

Recent or planned near-term improvements to the ERC include upgrades to doors, windows, air conditioning units, lighting, replacement of ceiling tiles. New tables and chairs are being purchased in 2023.

### ***Facility Issues***

- Recreational programs for adults are limited
- Ventilation issues in warmer months
- The interior of the building is showing signs of aging and general wear and tear

### ***Facility Potential***

The ERC has many classes on offer for children and tots however adult classes are somewhat limited. The ERC has potential to be a venue used for a variety of recreational and fitness classes throughout the year.

### ***Facility Needs***

#### **Near Term**

- Monitor and provide maintenance and upgrades to facility as needed
- Perform community outreach to see what indoor recreational programs/classes are of interest to the community

#### **Long Term**

- Improve ventilation and air circulation within the hall

# Splash Zone

## Facility Information:

- 700 - 900 SE A ST
- Approx. 3.3 of 36-acre parcel (Splash Zone, Sports Complex, Skate Park & Dog Park)
- Parcel No. 130085400

## Key Features:

- Community outdoor pool
- Waterslide
- Diving boards
- Concession stand



Splash Zone Aerial

## Other Features:

- Pool locker rooms
- Large deck and picnic area
- Sand play area
- Zero depth beach area
- Off-street parking
- Small playground



Splash Zone Pool and Waterslide

## Facility Character and Context

The Ephrata Splash Zone is a beloved community swimming pool operating seasonally from June through early September. Splash Zone was first opened in 2002, however the drive behind a community pool started in 1996 when 11-year-old Ephrata resident, Daniel, started a petition and gathered nearly 1,500 signatures in support of a community pool for Ephrata. Daniel presented the signatures to the City Council that in turn formed a committee to review options for constructing and financing a new community pool. The City Council approved a \$1.275 million bond to fund the pool and bathhouse. An additional \$250,000 in private donations and \$300,000 Washington State Interagency Committee (IAC) was used to pay for the extra amenities. The facility officially opened June 17, 2022 to a large crowd of supporters of the new community pool. Immediately after the pool was opened community members formed Ephrata's first ever swim team.

Splash Zone is located in the northeast corner of a large City owned parcel which also contains the Ephrata Skate Park, Dog Park, and Sports Complex. The main pool area is surrounded by



green open space with several large umbrellas and mature trees providing natural shade.

During the summer months the pool is open daily to the public with capacity for 612 patrons. In addition to the large community swimming pool, Splash Zone also has several other amenities including a waterslide, diving boards, concession stand, pool locker rooms, picnic area, and a zero-depth beach area.

Recent or planned near-term improvements to the Splash Zone include replacement of a pump, re-surfacing (rehabilitation of the pool surface), and upgrading pool equipment.



Splash Zone Swimming Pools

### ***Facility Issues***

- Aging mechanical room equipment
- Wearing of water features and slides
- Dated locker rooms
- Facility in need of paint, and signage update

### ***Facility Potential***

A new pool liner was installed in Spring of 2022. With continued maintenance and upgrading of the facility Splash Zone has potential to continue operations in the future and serve the wider community. The facility is well suited to continue to host events in the future and should consider hosting additional events for the community and private functions.

### ***Facility Needs***

#### **Near-term**

- Maintain current mechanical components
- Repair and replace equipment as needed
- Upgrade lockers

#### **Long-term**

- Add additional facilities as funding allows such as a speed slide, lazy river, sand volleyball area, etc.
- Upgraded playground

# City Trail System

## *City Trail System*

The City's grid street network provides excellent connectivity for both vehicles and pedestrians. Extensive sidewalk connections throughout the downtown area provide pedestrian connection between downtown businesses. Ephrata has worked hard to develop trails throughout the City. As the major arterials which include Alder Street, Division Street, Nat Washington Way and many



other major streets and avenues have been upgraded, bike trails and sidewalks have been included in the construction projects.

Sidewalk connections, however, become more limited when moving away from the core downtown area into older residential areas surrounding the downtown area. This is also where many of the City's parks and recreational facilities are located, meaning suitable pedestrian access is challenged by disconnected sidewalks.

A trail system can provide safe pedestrian access to amenities where sidewalks are undeveloped as well as opportunity for passive recreation. The trail system within Ephrata city limits, and within the planning area for this Parks Plan, is largely still under development. The existing paved pathways of the trail system are located on the eastern side of Ephrata connecting the area around the municipal airport and Walmart Supercenter to bike lanes and sidewalks leading to the city center. The paved trail system is 3.4 miles in length and is predominantly adjacent to vacant or agricultural land.

Proposed trails, as described in the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan, are distributed throughout the City and total 15.1 miles in length. The proposed trails include providing a trail adjacent to the canal on the west side of the City connecting Patrick Park, Lions Park, and the Parkway Ball Fields to one another. There are also proposed expansions to the existing trail system on the east side of the City. Two central streets (1st Ave NW and 3rd Ave SW) are also proposed for trail development providing an east-west connection from Basin St to western Ephrata. See Figure 10 for existing and proposed trails.

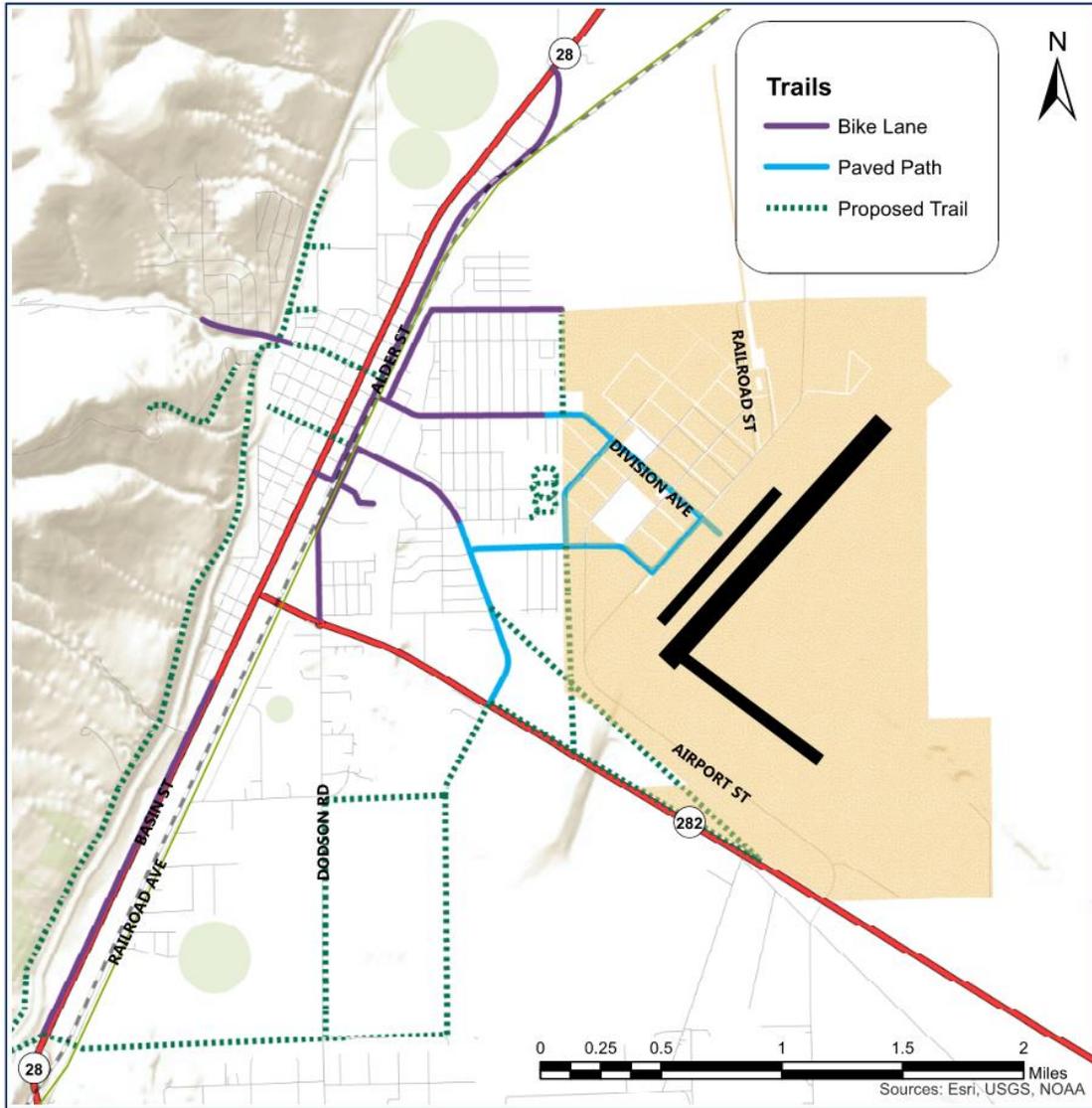


Figure 10: Trails in the City (Map)

### ***Beezley Hill Trails***

A major recreational trail system is located in Beezley Hills, adjacent to the western city limits. The trails are located on private property and include a series of 27 trails of varying difficulty ranging in length from a quarter mile to 3.4 miles. The Beezley Hill Recreation Area trail system covers over 20 miles of trails. The trail system opened in 2012 to hikers, cyclists, walkers, joggers, and mountain bikers. Although the trail system is outside of city limits and the planning area for this Parks Plan, it is important to nonetheless acknowledge that many local residents adore hiking or biking these areas for a moderate hike with fantastic views as a reward.

# RECREATION PROGRAMS

The City of Ephrata’s Parks and Recreation Commission partners with many local organizations to provide a wide range of recreation opportunities for community members of all ages. Their mission is to improve the quality of life of all residents while creating an elevated sense of community and belonging.

The City offers many programs and opportunities including the following:

- 
- Fitness classes (all ages)
  - Youth dance and gymnastics classes
  - Youth and adult sports leagues and clinics
  - Summer Adventure Camp
  - Senior Center monthly group travel opportunities
  - Senior Center special events and educational courses
  - Aquatics - recreational, lessons, and leagues

The City aims to make recreation programs accessible to everyone by offering need-based Recreation Program Scholarships. These scholarships are given with first priority to children and can be used to cover program expenses or partially cover memberships such as a Splash Zone pass.

The Summer 2022 Community Survey results suggest that the facilities or amenities most frequently used for recreational activities are the Beezley hiking trails, Oasis Park, and the Splash Zone Aquatic Center. A substantial share of survey respondents, 16.7%, indicated that they participate in fitness classes or other Ephrata recreation programs more than once a month.

## ***Promotion and Outreach***

The city’s website (at <https://ephrata.org/>) and a Facebook page used exclusively for the City’s Parks and Recreation department (at <https://www.facebook.com/CityofEphrata.ParksandRec>)

are two primary ways that the City's Parks and Recreation department provides information about programs, community events and other offerings.

The city also provides a user-friendly online catalog where patrons can learn about activities and classes and sign up and make secure payments online, hosted by a third-party cloud-based software vendor.

Upcoming community events and programs are also posted on these online platforms.

The city has amassed an impressive following for the Parks and Recreation Facebook page, with over 4,000 followers. The community survey asked respondents to report how they receive information and a majority of respondents (70%) indicated they get at least some of their information about recreation programs through Facebook or other social media platforms. Other common ways of communication were through friends/family and the City's website.

### ***ERC Classes and Events***

The ERC is well-utilized for hosting many of the recreation programs and has a gymnasium and stage with rentable space for community events.

### ***Programs at the Splash Zone***

The city utilizes the Splash Zone to provide informal recreational opportunities through open swim and the City also provides dedicated lap swim hours, swimming lessons, and *aquacise* classes.

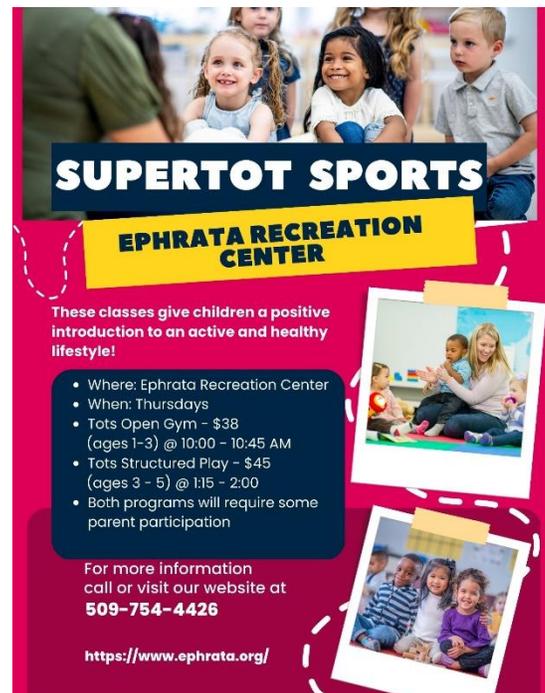
There is also a recreational summer swim team for all school age youth called the Tiger Shark Swim Team and a lifeguard training program where participants, upon completion of the training, receive a two-year First Aid and CPR/AED certification and Lifeguarding certification.

The Splash Zone is also used to host a number of community events including a pet-friendly event called Paws in the Pool and co-hosting with Patrick Park, the Summer Movie Series. Additionally, the Splash Zone is available for private events at an hourly rental rate.

### ***Events***

Recent events hosted by the City include:

- Adult Dodgeball Tournament
- Daddy Daughter Dance
- Breakfast with Santa
- Free movies in the Parks
- Summer Concert Series
- Cheer Camp
- Flashlight Easter Egg hunt
- Mountain Bike Fundamentals clinic



Sample program announcement

## ***Partnerships***

The Parks and Recreation department frequently partners with other community organizations to host, organize, or promote programs. For example, the youth basketball program, a recreational league that involves volunteer coaches, meets for practice on weekday evenings at Ephrata High School. Other current or previous partners include but are not limited to the Lions Club, Rotary, and the Chamber.

# GOALS AND POLICIES

The following goals and their related action items (or policies) are in no set order, and should be used as a framework and basis for the City operations, planning and development efforts relating to parks.

## **Goal 1: Maintain and improve all existing parks and recreational facilities.**

- a. Maintain all parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities to maximize safety, visibility, usability, accessibility, and appeal.
- b. Increase compliance with ADA accessibility standards where feasible especially in parks with existing partial accessibility such as Lions Park.
- c. Upgrade existing restroom facilities at all parks and extend opening hours of restrooms at Lion's Park.
- d. Upgrade outdated play structures.
- e. Take measures to enhance safety, the perception of safety, and potentially minimize crime.

## **Goal 2: Provide adequate funding to manage parks and recreation facilities in a fiscally responsible manner.**

- a. Maintain a parks and recreation facilities management program that is sustainable with respect to annual operations and maintenance costs and also allows for future parkland acquisition and facility development.
- b. Seek to fund projects on the City's Capital Improvement Plan through grant opportunities, impact fees, local taxes, and donations.
- c. Identify and secure sustainable funding opportunities for the operation and maintenance of the City's parks and recreation facilities.
- d. Update the Parks Plan periodically to stay in compliance with RCO guidelines and to maintain eligibility for RCO funding.

### **Goal 3: Provide a range of recreational facilities to meet the diverse needs and interests of the community.**

- a. Provide parks, trails, and recreational facilities that serve a diverse public; design (or improve) the facilities in order to meet community recreational values and needs.
- b. Identify opportunities to reflect the history of Ephrata and current cultural values.
- c. Identify opportunities to provide additional community recreational programs and classes.
- d. Identify barriers to participation and prioritize their removal.
- e. Provide multiple methods to promote and provide equitable access to program information, including online, hard copy, smartphone, telephone, and in-person opportunities.
- f. Upgrade park facilities to provide both active and passive recreation opportunities in all parks.
- g. Provide shaded facilities at parks near high-usage areas.

### **Goal 4: Plan new parks and recreation facilities based on current and anticipated community needs.**

- a. Respond to opportunities to acquire ownership of lands where there is potential to make a unique or significant contribution to the City's overall park and open space system.
- b. Acquire new parkland as community growth occurs with a focus on developing new parks in areas that experience the highest population growth.
- c. Plan new trail systems to provide connectivity throughout the City, especially in high density areas.
- d. Pursue dedication of private land to facilitate access to, or continuity of, the park system.
- e. Pursue additional land acquisition where existing neighborhoods are underserved by recreational land or where opportunities arise to add strategic parkland to the community.
- f. Provide increased lighting, staffing, and other safety measures, in order to increase park hours.

## **Goal 5: Preserve and enhance natural resources and maintain excellent environmental and cultural resource stewardship.**

- a. Comply with all Federal and State environmental laws and consider the environmental and aesthetic qualities of the City of Ephrata as new development occurs.
- b. Promote the use of native and naturalized plantings, minimize the use of irrigation, fertilizers, and pesticides particularly near sensitive areas and control invasive species. Plant appropriate trees in City parks through the development and implementation of a tree plan, including a list of recommended trees.
- c. Manage environmentally sensitive lands for long-term ecosystem health and biodiversity of natural systems, while making them accessible to the community.
- d. Encourage public awareness of environmental and cultural resources by installing interpretative signage or historical markers within City parks.
- e. Develop education programs to further encourage citizen stewardship and knowledge of local biodiversity and ecosystems, and natural history.
- f. Develop landscaping and landscape maintenance standards to best use capital, labor, climate, and natural resources in beautification and administration of City parks and recreational facilities.
- g. Incorporate design considerations that minimize the need for ongoing maintenance.
- h. Obtain the services of qualified professionals in the disciplines of natural resource management (e.g., habitat and wildlife biologist, arborist, horticulturist, etc.) where knowledge gaps exist among City staff.

## **Goal 6: Provide for multiple functions in parks.**

- a. Maintain facilities that offer both passive and active recreation such as sports fields, play structures, and picnic tables or benches.
- b. Seek funding from grants or sponsorships to renovate key facilities.
- c. Determine the feasibility of creating a Splash Pad, a Dog Park, and/or a Fitness Trail in a new or existing park.
- d. Encourage cultural and special events to take place in the parks.
- e. Maintain ongoing restoration projects throughout parks separate from recreational spaces.

## **Goal 7: Improve the trail system.**

- a. Maintain existing trails and add new trails that are safe and comfortable for recreation.
- b. Prioritize safety, including sufficient lighting, noise and road buffers, emergency checkpoints, and access.
- c. Focus on adding trails and pathways in order to connect parks or other important community destinations and to provide access to the community's best views.

## **Goal 8: Plan for the preservation of open space.**

- a. Maintain open spaces.
- b. Manage environmentally sensitive lands for long-term ecosystem health and biodiversity of natural systems, while maintaining community accessibility.
- c. Support efforts to provide education and public awareness regarding the benefit of open spaces to biodiversity, stormwater management, and climate hazard mitigation

## **Goal 9: Communicate the City's parks and recreation opportunities by keeping residents informed about programming and community events.**

- a. Maintain a unique, welcoming, and safe atmosphere.
- b. Continue to provide current and easily accessible information about the City's facilities and programs and keep the City's websites, Facebook pages and the event calendar up to date.
- c. Ensure that consistent and effective outreach is conducted to inform City residents and other potential users of the parks various amenities and facilities. Focus outreach efforts on communication with special user groups, i.e. disabled persons and youth.
- d. Continue public relations and publicity efforts to inform residents and visitors of the recreation opportunities and special events available.
- e. Consider developing a list of volunteer opportunities and ways for citizens to get involved in the City's parks.
- f. Develop effective partnerships with City community groups and institutions.
- g. Continue interacting with facility users to learn about their experiences and thoughts about the facilities.
- h. Establish / maintain interpretive signage and historical / cultural information available at park sites and seek opportunities to add additional information when capital facilities improvements are made.

# Goal 10: Maintain the established Level of Service Standards

- a. The City’s Level of Service standards remain consistent with what is identified in the Comprehensive Plan and are included in Table 2.

**NOTE: TABLE 2 IS STILL BEING REVIEWED**

**Table 2: Ephrata's Level of Service Standards**

| Facility                                 | Unit of Measure                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Community Park                           | 2.6 acres per 1,000 residents   |
| Regional Park                            | 20 acres per 1,000 residents    |
| Gymnasiums (1 gym)                       | Per city quadrant               |
| Playgrounds (1 supervised)               | Per 1,000 residents (age 5-14)  |
| Baseball Diamonds (1 diamond)            | Per 6,000 residents (age 5-19)  |
| Softball Diamonds (1 diamond)            | Per 3,000 residents             |
| Football / Soccer Fields (1 field)       | Per 10,000 residents            |
| Tennis Courts (1 court)                  | Per 1,000 residents (age 9-70)  |
| Handball / Racquetball Courts (1 court)  | Per 10,000 residents (age 9-59) |
| Swimming (450 sq ft surface water)       | Per 1,000 residents (all ages)  |
| Community Centers (a facility / 2 miles) | Per 25,000 persons (all ages)   |

# NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section focuses on analysis and observations of the current and future parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open space needs for Ephrata. The needs assessment is based on analysis of:

- Public feedback gleaned from survey responses;
- Information collected in stakeholder interviews;
- Knowledge and expertise of City Parks and Recreation staff;
- Community vision and values;
- Identified local trends in participation and use of facilities; and
- State and national recreation trends.

This needs assessment includes a system-wide evaluation of parks, recreation, and open space needs in the City. A key aspect of the assessment is to identify and analyze current service levels in the City's parks, trails, and open spaces. The level of service analysis is based on the park's classification and existing standards for each park type, size, and geographic location. This analysis helps to identify existing and future projected needs based on projected population growth.

The recommendations resulting from the needs assessment are also based on the goals and policies identified in this plan.

## Needs Assessment Based on Community Input

The community survey and youth survey were used as the primary method to solicit community input for the update to the Parks and Recreation Plan. A brief summary of the results of these surveys can be found in the Public Involvement chapter of this plan and a complete summary and list of written comments can be found in the Appendix to this plan. This section will focus on future needs and desires for parks and recreational facilities expressed by the community in the public surveys.

Of the 292 responses to the community survey the most common written responses to what prevents respondents and their households from visiting Ephrata's parks and recreational

facilities was insufficient power and/or sewer hookups at Oasis RV Park<sup>6</sup> (21 comments), insufficient restroom facilities (10 comments), outdated play structures (6 comments), and lack of shaded areas for rest and play (5 comments).

With regards to how the City should focus its park and recreational facilities funding the most popular answers given for where more focus should be given were:

- Upgrading existing parks – 76 percent
- Adding amenities to existing parks (e.g., shelters, grills) – 63 percent
- Creating additional biking and walking trails – 58 percent
- Creating more shaded areas with trees, shade canopies, etc. – 56 percent

According to the survey results ...Will include survey highlights here

Many respondents to the survey requested.... (Include brief summary of what respondents wanted to see in the City’s parks and recreation facilities in the future. )

## Needs Assessment Based on Level of Service standards

The City’s population as of 2022 has reached 8,693 persons. Based on the current level of service standards...

| Facility | Unit of Measure | Standard currently being met? |
|----------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| TBD      |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
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|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |
|          |                 |                               |

Will include summary here

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<sup>6</sup> Oasis RV Park is privately managed independently of the City of Ephrata

# Key Recommendations



## ***Continue to Support and Expand Outdoor Events and Activities***

The regional recreation trends, outlined in the Community Profile chapter of this plan, showed there is a high rate of interest in attending outdoor concerts or events at parks. The City Parks and Recreation Department and/or other community groups should therefore look for opportunities to continue to grow these types of events and/or expand the range of activities being offered in the community. Some concepts that could be explored include:

- Food Truck events at the Sun Basin Plaza.
- Expansion of the Saturday Farmer’s Market and continued enhancement / promotion with live music events, “shop local” messaging and marketing initiatives, and various offerings such as local crafts and other artisan products.
- Summer concert series

The efforts and sponsorship of events throughout the year by groups such as the Ephrata Chamber of Commerce (which hosted myriad events in 2022 including a free summer concert series, Car Show and Shine, Parade and Sage and Sun Festival, downtown Trick-or-Treat and “Bells on Basin” parade) and the Lions Club (hosting a Fun Run and Fishing Derby) provide countless benefits to the community as a whole and contribute greatly to the sense of community and local pride while fulfilling the local demands and needs for outdoor activities and celebrations.



## ***Maintain and Improve Existing Facilities***

As the City develops new parks and recreation amenities to support increased demands, maintaining and improving the existing parks and recreation facilities should not be forgotten and should remain a key focus for future parks planning. When asked about how the City should focus its park facilities efforts and funding, 42 percent of survey respondents indicated they felt “more focus” should be given to ***‘maintaining existing parks’*** and 76 percent of respondents indicated “more focus” should be given to ***‘upgrading existing parks’***.

When planning for new parks and recreational facilities it is important to ensure this is not at the expense of the current parks and recreational facilities. The City should continue to ensure sufficient funds are available to maintain existing parks and recreational facilities. Maintenance schedules should be reviewed periodically to ensure each of the parks/recreational facilities is receiving sufficient maintenance hours.

The Capital Facilities Plan includes funding dedicated to park improvements at Oasis Park, Patrick Park, Parkway Ball Fields, Lion’s Park, and Lee Park. This plan outlines park issues and

potential improvements at these parks. Community outreach should also be conducted nearer the time of proposed park improvements to solicit feedback on park improvements.



## ***Expand the City Trail Network***

The City's existing trail network is somewhat underdeveloped and includes just 3.4 miles of paved pathways. The 2018 Comprehensive Plan includes the following Land Use goal and policy:

***1. To maintain the general appearance and aesthetic quality of the community, and provide for a variety of recreational opportunities through the retention of open space and development of parks and access trails to natural resource lands.***

- ***1.a.1 Design a network of trails that would provide pedestrian linkages between recreation areas.***

Included in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is a map of the proposed new trails. This includes 15.1 miles of new trails which would greatly increase the supply of paved trails as well as non-motorized connectivity throughout the City and between recreational areas. Feedback from the General Survey shows there is strong support for this from the community with many respondents commenting they would like to see development of more multi-purpose trails. When asked how the City should focus its park facilities efforts and funding, 51 percent of respondents indicated that 'adding sidewalks and paths to and within parks' should have 'more focus'.

During the next budget cycle, the City should ensure there is funding to begin the trail network expansion. The expansion is an incremental process, and the City should focus on getting the first stages of the expansion started as soon as possible.



## ***Improve ADA Access and Amenities***

Many of the parks and recreational facilities in Ephrata are not readily accessible to people with disabilities and mobility issues. Suggested park improvements described in the Parks Profile section of the Plan include upgrades to make parts or all of a number of parks ADA accessible.

The City should focus on making more of the City's parks and recreational amenities accessible to all residents including those with disabilities. Suggested improvements include providing paved pathways from park entrances to amenities in the park, providing picnic tables that allow

visitors in wheelchairs or mobility scooters to sit at the table, and creation of pathways both within and connecting to other recreational facilities that are ADA accessible.



### ***Add Parks in Portions of the City Lacking Recreation Space***

The City has many parks and recreation amenities located within the central and core area of the city. More than half of the parcels developed for residential purposes are located within a quarter-mile buffer of a city park. This is demonstrated visually in Figure 11; parcels developed with residential uses that are within a quarter mile of a park are symbolized with a teal dot, and parcels with residential uses that are not as proximate to parks are shown with an orange dot. In the future as the city acquires additional lands for parks, the city should strive to serve new and developing neighborhoods in the outer portions of the city.

The City may also find it important to focus attention in acquiring property and developing parks near multi-family developments, because residents of apartments or other multi-family structures may not have back yards or other personal play space available.

Next, the City should additionally acquire land and right of way or easements in locations where future parks or trails could be beneficial for recreation and circulation needs. City staff should endeavor to work with developers throughout the development process including the pre-application process for platting, to discuss opportunities for dedication of new parks and trails when land division occurs. When park land is proposed or desired by the city, the location, access, basic attributes of the land (topography, drainage, soils), lot size and shape, and environmental impacts should all be considered. Park sites will need supporting infrastructure and should be generally free of easements and features (such as high-tension power lines) which could pose barriers for various uses or introduce additional costs. Additional factors to consider include proximity to residences and schools, potential maintenance costs, and any special cultural or historical significance the site may have.

Lots or parcels which will become conservation areas or dedicated open space due to environmental constraints should also be carefully evaluated. Physical features and attributes such as the presence of critical areas (i.e., wetlands, steep slopes, frequently flooded areas), wildlife corridors, potential for conservation efforts and environmental resources should be identified as early as possible.



Figure 11: Distribution of Parks and Residences (Map)

# OPERATIONS AND BUDGET

## ***Maintenance Standards***

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has developed parks maintenance standards. These standards set out six levels of maintenance against which practices are measured. Depending on the extent of development, each park (and areas within some parks) may have unique needs or aspects that should be considered. These standards are:

**Level 1** applies special, high-visibility areas that require the highest level of maintenance. Regional parks and specialty parks should be maintained at this standard.

**Level 2** is the normal standard the average park user expects to see on a regular, recurring basis. It is the desired standard and at a moderate-level of maintenance. Neighborhood and Community Parks should be maintained at this standard. The difference between Level 1 and Level 2 is the frequency rate of users. Maintenance standards can change by season or month depending on the level of park use. This level is associated with locations that have moderate to low levels of development or visitation, or with operations that, because of budget restrictions, cannot afford a higher level of maintenance.

**Level 3** is just below the norm and result from staffing or funding limitations. The levels of maintenance limitations include reductions in frequency of maintenance and a focus on maintaining the safety of park facilities and improvements. This level is at a moderately low-level of maintenance. It is associated with locations affected by budget restrictions that cannot afford a high level of maintenance.

**Level 4** is one above allowing the land to return to its natural, undeveloped state. It is the minimum level of maintenance. This level is associated with locations that have severe budget restrictions.

**Level 5** applies to land allowed to revert to a natural state or undeveloped open space already in its natural condition.

All of the above maintenance levels can be applied to categories of maintenance:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Turf Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turf care (mowing and weed control)</li> <li>• Seeding / sod</li> <li>• Aeration</li> <li>• Fertilization</li> <li>• Irrigation</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Trees and Landscape Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pruning</li> <li>• Floral plantings</li> <li>• Fertilization</li> <li>• Irrigation</li> <li>• Fall clean-up</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Disease and Insect Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-emergent herbicides and spot treatment</li> <li>• Fungicides</li> <li>• Insecticides</li> <li>• Soil / water testing</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Refuse Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garbage collection – Routine</li> <li>• Garbage collection – Events</li> <li>• Litter Control</li> <li>• Graffiti monitoring and cleanup</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Snow Removal Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking lots</li> <li>• Sidewalks</li> <li>• Trails and Pathways</li> </ul>  | <p><b>Athletic Field Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety checks</li> <li>• Lighting system / electric</li> <li>• Field rotation / seasonal closures</li> <li>• Ballfield maintenance (i.e., backstops, benches, pitching rubber, fencing, goalposts)</li> <li>• Also see Turf Management</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Hard Surface Court Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety checks</li> <li>• Cleaning / small repairs</li> <li>• Large-scale repairs and repainting</li> <li>• Replacement of nets</li> <li>• Resurfacing</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Trails and Bikeways Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surface clearing (debris, animal waste)</li> <li>• Safety checks for hazards</li> <li>• Cleaning, repair and replacement</li> <li>• Painting and signage</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Facilities and Site Amenities Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play equipment safety checks / inspections</li> <li>• Play equipment surface replenishment</li> <li>• Emergency repairs</li> <li>• Routine repairs</li> <li>• Restroom janitorial services</li> <li>• Restroom inspections (leaks, graffiti, conditions)</li> <li>• Signage repair / replacement</li> </ul> | <p><b>Stormwater Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Routine maintenance of grass-lined swales</li> <li>• Inspections</li> <li>• Fencing upkeep and repairs</li> <li>• Water quality controls</li> <li>• Cleaning and maintenance of outfalls including clearing debris</li> </ul>                         |

# Budget

In this section the different funds used to support the city’s parks department are summarized.

## ***City General Funds***

General Funds from the City are allocated to parks and recreation services. The 2023 Annual Budget has \$1,557,350 allocated for ‘Parks’.

## ***Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)***

The state collects funds known as a Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) when most real property is sold. The tax is collected on the full selling price of the property (and there is a graduated scale which means that more expensive properties are subject to an increased percentage, which begins when the sale price exceeds a threshold, currently at \$500,000, unless the land is agricultural / timber land) and is paid when the sale occurs and is collected by a county when sales are recorded. There are two types of REET funding, and Ephrata uses both types. In general, this provides a helpful revenue stream which the city has traditionally used to support a variety of capital projects and maintenance of capital facilities including parks and recreation facilities. The City of Ephrata’s use of REET funds for parks and recreation facilities is praiseworthy and shows a strong commitment to the health, enjoyment, and well-being of the residents.

## ***Park Impact Fees***

Impact fees (authorized in RCW 82.02) are one-time charges assessed by a local government against a new development project to help pay for new or expanded public capital facilities that will directly address the increased demand for services created by that development. Park impact fees are one-time charges used to help pay for new or expanded demand for parks and recreation services created by development. Park impact fees must be used for “publicly owned parks, open space, and recreation facilities’ that are addressed by the City’s Capital Facilities Plan.

In February 2022 the Ephrata City Council approved Ordinance 22-02. This ordinance establishes a flat fee of \$1,800 per lot to be collected on new residential plats in lieu of land dedicated for parks and open space. The payments received for the impact fee must be expended within six years of collection.

The city should closely monitor the collection and use of park impact fees and maximize their use by leveraging matching grant funds when possible.

## ***Staffing***

Staffing to support maintenance of the parks and facilities, administer the Parks and Recreation Department, operate the city pool, run programs and all the other city parks and recreation functions are rather extensive. The city utilizes a lot of seasonal labor help (particularly for the pool operation, which requires over 50 employees every year) which requires a significant

investment in time for posting open positions, hiring staff, training staff and so forth. The coordination of volunteer coaches is also a unique administrative duty.

Full-time (and non-seasonal) positions include the Parks and Recreation Director and a Recreation Supervisor. Additionally, there are two staff persons that perform maintenance on the cemetery and parks facilities.

# IMPLEMENTATION

## Potential Additional Funding Sources

This section provides an overview of potential additional funding sources to fund projects identified in this Plan or other projects pursued by the City in addition to the typical funding sources identified in the “Budget” section of this Plan. The funding sources discussed below should be considered when determining a budget for a project. A combination of several sources is typically used to fund projects.

### ***General Obligation Bonds***

General obligation bonds issued by local governments are secured by a pledge of the taxing district’s property tax authority. General obligation bonds have been the traditional form of financing for capital projects such as land acquisition, park development, and transportation projects that are owned and operated by government. There are two basic kinds of general obligation bonds: First, limited tax general obligation bonds (also called LTGO bonds, councilmanic bonds or non-voted debt) which may be issued by a vote of the legislative body. The other type, unlimited tax general obligation bonds (UTGO bonds or voted debt), must be approved by voters.

### ***Washington State RCO Grants***

The City may pursue several grant funding sources to augment funding available for capital projects. One of the primary sources of State grant funding is through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). RCO administers several grant programs for recreation and habitat conservation purposes including:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- No Child Left Inside (NCLI)
- Non-highway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA)
- Recreational Trails Program (RTP)
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)
- Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)



**Recommendation:** Monitor funding options and grant opportunities from the RCO office; most RCO programs are open for applications in even-numbered years and matching funds are required.

### ***DNR – Community Forest Program***

The Washington State Urban and Community Forestry Program partners with the USDA Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program to provide financial assistance to localities and providing grants. The grants can be used for public tree inventories, urban tree canopy assessments, education and outreach, urban forest management or maintenance plans, tree planting on public properties, tree pruning, and other innovative projects. Applications are submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in mid-December of every year and typically grant awards are between \$5,000 and \$20,000. The funds are federal dollars and subsequently have specific requirements; matching funds are required. *(Note: capital outlays including the purchase of land and large equipment are ineligible costs, and staff salaries and overhead for paid employees may be used as an application match but in-kind matches such as volunteer hours or donated materials may not be used for the matching funds).*



**Recommendations:**

- Apply for grant funding to inventory and assess all trees in City parks, in City-controlled landscape areas, and rights of ways (suggested amount: \$25,000).
- Apply for grant funding to replace aging or dangerous trees as necessary, or to recover and replace trees damaged by storm events (various).
- Apply for grant funding to create a management and action plan and develop specifications and practices for tree selection, planting, pruning, and maintenance; consider the creation of specific ordinances and policies for a community tree program.

### ***DNR Evergreen Communities Act (ECA) Funding***

DNR recently modernized the Evergreen Communities Act (ECA) under RCW 35.105 (which had been dormant since 2009 when funding was lost) that become effective in July 2021. The ECA will provide funding and technical assistance to Washington cities and towns to develop tree inventories, management plans, and other necessary tools to improve the planting, protection, and management of community trees. The program prioritizes the distribution of resources to focus on addressing human health disparities, water quality, and protection of aquatic habitats (for salmon and orca populations).



**Recommendations:**

- Determine if Ephrata is eligible to become a designated “evergreen community,” recognized under RCW 76.5.090 and if so, seek the designation.

- Consult the guide completed by DNR's Technical Assistance Committee in 2009 called "A Guide to Community and Urban Forestry Programming" for direction on writing county policy, ordinances, and management plans.
- Occasionally monitor the program for technical assistance and funding opportunities.

### ***Ecology Grants***

The Washington State Department of Ecology offers grants on an annual basis for projects that improve and protect water quality, including stormwater facilities and activities. Grants are awarded based on funding availability.

### ***Interlocal Agreements and Partnerships***

Partnerships and interlocal agreements are important to the City. Partnering with other local jurisdictions and local agencies (with and without financial agreements or components) ensure that projects and programs can take place. Some examples include partnerships with Grant County, the Ephrata School District, and Grant Soil & Water Conservation District, Grant PUD, as well as local organization like the Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce and Rotary.



#### **Recommendations:**

- Establish and maintain involvement with staff from other agencies on projects and initiatives that could be of a mutual interest or benefit.
- Consider an interlocal agreement with the nearby cities or other agencies for specialty services they may be able to provide at a lower cost or at an improved efficiency for certain service items (i.e., maintenance or small-scale construction projects).
- Work with the operators of the Oasis RV Park and Golf Course to upgrade electrical systems at the facility, with repayment to the City for the capital improvement expenses according to a rent adjustment payment scheme at low or no interest.

**Land and Right of Way Acquisitions**

The City should consider multiple factors when acquiring additional land for parks. One of the factors to consider is a more dispersed inventory of parks and recreational facilities. Many of the current facilities are located in the older parts of the City in the central Ephrata area. Where newer development has occurred in the northeastern part of town there are less parks servicing those residents. Creating additional parks and providing more access for Ephrata residents in underserved areas will ensure Ephrata has equitable options available for all residents.

The City should additionally acquire right of way or easements in locations where future trails could be beneficial for recreation and circulation needs.

The City’s community development department should endeavor to work with developers as early as possible, including during the pre-application process for platting, to discuss needs and opportunities that can be addressed when land division occurs. When park land is proposed or desired by the City, the location, access, basic attributes of the land (topography, drainage, soils), lot size and shape, and environmental impacts should all be considered. Park sites will need supporting infrastructure and should be generally free of easements and features which could pose barriers for various uses (such as high-tension power lines) or introduce additional costs. Special consideration should be given for locations having any special cultural or historical significance and for surrounding current or future land uses. Other factors to consider include the potential for a site to complement other nearby parks, serve as a linkage or corridor to other parks lands, and proximity to residences and schools. Finally, attributes that would introduce certain liabilities or result in excessive maintenance costs or other burdens should be avoided.

**Six-year Capital Facility Plan**

The list of recommended capital projects in Table 3 is intended to be updated and officially adopted into the City’s Six-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as funding and implementation plans are further developed. The City’s Six-year CIP is integrally tied to the City’s Comprehensive Plan. The listed projects are identified in order to help the City plan for grant requests and arrange for budget allocations. All of the listed projects are contingent on funding availability, unless otherwise noted. Items which are considered minor upkeep (such as the installation of water fountains) are excluded from the table.

Table 3: Recommended Capital Projects (2023-2028)

| Project Name  | Potential Funding Source(s) | Estimated Cost                       | Completion Target                    |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Splashzone improvements and upgrades – annual program | REET                        | \$25,000 / year                      | N/A                                  |
| ERC Improvements and Upgrades                         | REET                        | \$83,000 / year<br>(\$249,000 total) | N/A<br>(Annual Program for the years |

| Project Name                                  | Potential Funding Source(s) | Estimated Cost | Completion Target    |
|---|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------------|
|   |                             |                | 2023, 2024 and 2025) |
| Parks Improvements (Various – annual program) | RCO Grant                   | \$100,000/year | N/A                  |
| Orchard Home Park                             | RCO Grant                   | \$500,000      | 2025                 |
| Beezley Hill Trail                            | County, Private, City       | \$260,000      | 2023                 |
| Downtown Tree Revitalization Project          | GF, DNR                     | \$50,000       | 2023                 |
| Port Aviation Park                            | REET                        | \$180,000      | 2024                 |
| Beezley Hill Land Purchase                    | Acquire from DNR            | \$300,000      | 2027                 |
| Sports Complex Improvements                   | RCO Grant                   | \$600,000      | 2027                 |
| Splashzone General Improvements               | RCO Grant, REET             | \$3,000,000    | 2027                 |
| Oasis Park Improvements                       | GF, Donation, Grant         | \$150,000      | 2028                 |
| Parkway Fields Improvements                   | GF, Donation, Grant         | \$150,000      | 2030                 |
| Downtown Park / Square                        | IAC, Private, City          | \$2,000,000    | 2032                 |
| Lee Park Improvements                         | GF, Grant                   | \$200,000      | 2034                 |
| Lion’s Park Improvements                      | GF, Donation, Grant         | \$200,000      | 2035                 |
| Patrick Park Improvements                     | GF, Donation, Grant         | \$210,000      | 2037                 |

Additional potential projects (long-range):

- Performing Arts Center (new)
- Municipal Golf Course
- Prairie Bluff Park Acquisition and Development
- Indoor Recreation Center
- City Complex Park Development