



INDEPENDENCE PARKS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

SECTION III:
TRENDS REVIEW

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3.1 REGIONAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS

The nation's local parks and recreation are the gateways to healthy, prosperous and connected communities. Local parks and recreation take on some of our nation's toughest challenges, like obesity, equity and the environment, and work to offers solutions. Local parks and recreation are uniquely positioned to make significant contributions in these areas, and do so by providing critical front-line services and resources.

Conservation: Parks are critical in the role of preserving natural resources that have real economic benefits for communities. Local parks are the leaders, often the only voice in communities, for protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and providing education and programming that helps communities engage in conservation practices.

Health and Wellness: Improving the overall health and wellness of communities, local parks are essential partners in combating some of the most complicated and expensive challenges our country faces –poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Social Equity: Universal access to public parks and recreation are a right, not just a privilege. Local parks ensure that all members of your community have access to the resources and programming you offer. Very few – if any – can claim the same. The following regional and national trends are likely to shape the activities and desires of residents of Independence in the future.



CONNECTING CHILDREN WITH NATURE

The need to connect youth with the outdoors was one of the key findings of the 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and is a concern nationally. The Oregon Outdoor Children's Bill of Rights is a statewide effort sponsored by the Oregon Recreation and Park Association (ORPA) that encourages recreation providers and families to offer opportunities for children and youth to participate in outdoor recreation activities. Addressing what has become known as "nature deficit disorder," agencies and parks providers across the state are integrating nature into the recreation program offerings and creating recreation opportunities in natural areas where they can be incorporated without adversely impacting habitat and natural resources. (See Section I:2 Related Planning Efforts: OPRD Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan).

HEALTH AND RECREATION

The 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recognizes the important connection between accessible recreation activities and health. Nationwide, the U.S. is experiencing an obesity crisis, and Oregon is no exception. Oregon now has the 36th highest adult obesity rate in the nation, according to The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America, (<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2014/index.php?stateid=OR>). In 2013, Oregon's adult obesity rate is 27.3 percent, up from 21.0 percent in 2004 and from 11.2 percent in 1990. Two to four year olds from low-income families have 14.9% obesity rate in 2011, ranking Oregon as the 10th state in the country for toddler obesity. Obesity rates per race in Oregon in 2013 have the following staggering percentages: White: 26.2%, African American: 39.5%, and Latino: 31.2% (<http://www.stateofobesity.org/states/or/>). The good news is that the obesity rate in kids ages 10-17 was 9.9 percent, the best and least amount in the nation.

Obesity increases the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Physical activity reduces the risk of these chronic diseases, regardless of weight. Providing accessible recreation opportunities—with a variety of activities and locations—has been shown to increase activity levels and promote health. A more active older adult population is also looking for new ways to maintain their healthy lifestyles including competitive sports. (See Section I:2 Related Planning Efforts: OPRD Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan)

SOCIAL EQUITY

This philosophy of social equity and access, which is upheld by all public parks and recreation, is the foundation that allows people to benefit from what public parks and recreation provides such as improved health and restorative green space. True to the very philosophy of public parks and recreation is the idea that all people – no matter the color of their skin, age, income level or ability – has access to programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great. Social equity is a critical responsibility borne by every public park and recreation agency and the professionals that operate them.

ADULT/SENIOR PROGRAMMING PREFERENCES

An aging population is one of the most noteworthy trends across all parts of the United States. Parks and recreation providers will need to develop facilities and programs to serve adults and seniors who possess a variety of needs and interests. Seniors can no longer be lumped into a single category and be effectively served. With healthier lifestyles, people live longer and have more active lives than ever before. Parks and recreation providers need to consider seniors' diverse interests and multiple life stages. (See Section 1:2 Related Planning Efforts: OPRD Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan).

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Food production has re-emerged in the urban landscape in the form of community gardens that serve as areas of sustenance for survival, health, and even social needs. These gardens, along with farmer's markets, community-supported agriculture, food co-ops, and seed-savers groups are part of a larger movement to localize food production – an alternative to the global corporate model of the worldwide food industry. The local food system connects consumers with growers, supports small farmers, preserves agricultural heritage, and ensures the availability of nutritious organic food.

INCREASE IN ALTERNATIVE SPORTS

Indoor or outdoor alternative sports and challenge activities, such as lacrosse, skateboarding, rock climbing, BMX racing, mountain biking, have growing appeal, especially for teens and younger adults. Because these activities have limited availability, they generally draw participants from a larger geographic area. Many of these activities require expert instruction at different skill levels which can be provided through programming. Providing facility access to emerging sports is one way that agencies are engaging new users.

