



INDEPENDENCE PARKS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

SECTION IV:
COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

SECTION IV: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

4.1 OVERVIEW

The goal of the Parks System Master Planning process is to address the changing recreational needs of the community's larger, more diverse population to ensure that the city's facilities reflect current future recreational trends. The objective of the public outreach component is to gather community input on how the City of Independence can create an even better system of parks and recreational facilities. A focus was put on meeting the community's need presently and into the future, as well as involving the community's Latino residents. During the early stages of the project, the focus of public outreach efforts has been to identify overall community park, recreation and open spaces needs and priorities and to assess potential needed improvements to existing park facilities.

Many opportunities have been available to allow the community to understand the planning process, share their personal priorities for parks, recreation facilities and open spaces, and offer their opinions about the decisions the City will be making. The following list is a summary of the public outreach elements:

- Meetings of a Parks Advisory Board open to the public.
- Online surveys, questionnaires, and comment forms.
- Regular updates in the City newsletter and Website.
- Notices in the City's utility bill.
- Information and opportunities to comment at local festivals and community group meetings.
- Community open houses.
- In person interviews with community group representatives.
- Focus group discussion with Latino community members.
- Ability to comment via phone, e-mail, or in writing to City of Independence staff.



SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS

Through the outreach efforts described above, community members have been involved in determining the future of their parks and recreation facilities and have been excited about participating. Frequent responses to intercept surveys were, “Great job! Keep up the good work.” Although there were subtle differences in opinions of what the community needs most, some common themes and priorities have emerged:

- Support walking, running and bicycling on trails and pathways.
- Long-term funding is crucial for upkeep and maintenance of parks. Local partnerships will be essential in these efforts.
- Utilize the Willamette River for accessible recreation with a focus on safety and sustaining the environmental importance of the river.
- More sports fields are needed, specifically soccer, and the possibility of a sports complex in which the community could host regional events should be considered.
- Develop year-round facilities, i.e., covered sports courts and gathering areas, indoor swim facilities, etc.
- Encourage or require new residential developments to include neighborhood parks.
- Collaborate with Monmouth, Western Oregon University and others to create a pedestrian/bicycle path connecting the local region. Continue to collaborate with these same organizations and others such as the Central School District, YMCA, Central Youth Sports and others to cost-effectively provide a wide range of park, open space and recreational facilities and programs that serve people of all ages in Independence and Monmouth.
- Create more signs and increase the knowledge of parks, e.g., maps, also market local festivals better to increase regional interest and participation.
- There was not a noticeable numerical difference between the responses and priorities identified by Latino and non-Latino populations based on feedback from intercept and utility bill surveys and other activities. However, in general, Latino residents highly value areas for family gatherings and soccer fields.

PROJECT INFORMATION AND OUTREACH

A variety of activities were undertaken to notify people about the Master Plan update and opportunities for community engagement. They have included the following:

- Announcements on the project website and via the City’s social media accounts.
- E-mails to interested parties list, partnering community groups, stakeholder interviewees.
- Meeting fliers located at City Hall, the Library, and other gathering places.
- Utility bill newsletter and inserts.
- Media releases to local media outlets.

4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

The following are the results of public outreach and involvement events conducted to date for the Master Plan project.

FESTIVAL INFORMATIVO - MAY 2014

The City of Independence partnered with a variety of local social service agencies and non-profit groups to provide information to Latino residents about available community services and programs. Over 200 Latino residents participated in this event. As part of this event, City staff and Parks Master Plan consultant team members asked participants about the types of park and recreation facilities they use most. Summary observations include:

- High priority activities and facilities included soccer fields, picnic shelters, playgrounds for children and walking and biking trails. However, participants also value virtually all of different types of facilities and activities presented at the meeting to some degree.
- Suggested improvements at existing parks included more or larger picnic shelters and areas for informal recreation at Pfaff Park, access to improved playing fields across from Henry Hill Park, an improved swimming pool facility at Henry Hill Park and more community garden facilities in different parts of Independence.
- Participants also noted the need for more shade trees and better maintained soccer and other playing fields in existing parks.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

On July 30 and 31, 2014, eight individuals representing YMCA, CYS, Central School District, City of Monmouth and local businesses provided their thoughts on park and recreation goals, as well as needs and issues that should be considered in preparing the master plan. The stakeholders use the park system in various ways, from holding sports camps to concerts and school field trips. Summary observations include:

- Priorities amongst the stakeholders included valuing and utilizing the asset that is the Willamette River, providing general sport facilities with some undercover for recreation during winter months, encouraging recreation activities for people of all ages, maintaining and enhancing amenities at existing parks, and considering formation of a new Park and Recreation District jointly managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central School District.
- In 20 years, stakeholders envision a new Park and Recreation District, facilities that promote physical activities for all ages and paths between parks and neighborhoods to enhance local connectivity and provide numerous opportunities for bicycling and walking.

MINDMIXER

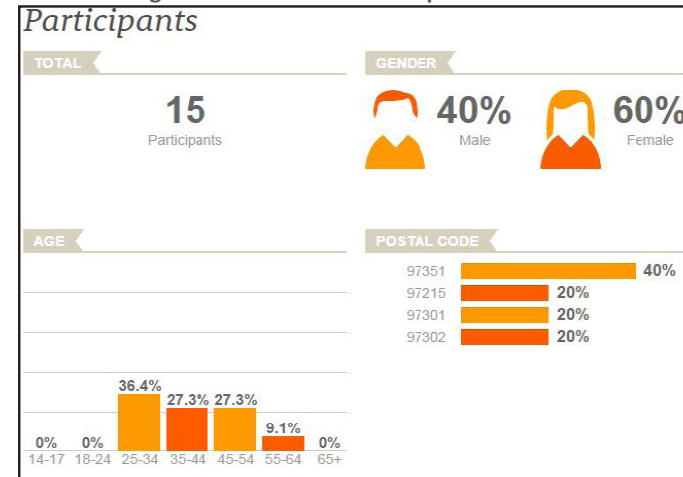
An online discussion platform (<http://independenceparks.mindmixer.com>) was used to gather input about the project from July to October on the following topics:

- Overall Parks and Recreation Priorities
- Parks Visited
- Parks needing improvement

Links to the MindMixer platform were posted on the City’s website and on the City’s Facebook page. The entire site is integrated with Google Translate to provide multiple language options for users. **Figure 1** summarizes information about who used the MindMixer tool (age, gender and location).

Of the limited number of responses, important activities included walking, general play, river uses, concerts, and bicycling. Pioneer Park and Riverview Park were the most visited, followed by Mt. Fir, North Riverview, and the Dog Park. A number of respondents expressed interest in improved rowing facilities and unobstructed boat launches along the river.

Section IV: Figure 1 - MindMixer Participants



LATINO FOCUS GROUP

On September 3, 2014, the project team facilitated a focus group meeting with eight local Latino residents to ask about their priorities for future park and recreation facilities. Similar to the other outreach activities, the objective was to identify potential improvements and desired facilities for the park system. Summary observations included:

- A recurring theme was the need for more facilities for young people. In particular, participants cited the need for more soccer fields, as well as basketball courts and volleyball facilities. Additionally, they suggested more bicycle paths, open areas with shade trees, facilities for group gatherings where they can cook food, drinking fountains and parks with diverse amenities such as “splash fountains”.
- Most participants expressed a desire to maintain accessibility to the Willamette River and preserve natural areas. They highly valued places like Riverview Park, which is seen as a unique asset to the community due to proximity to the river, concerts and movie events held there as well as the playground.
- The focus group recommended several improvements such as more security, trees and signs, better lighting and covered sport courts for recreation after dusk, and more soccer fields and basketball courts.
- Components of the focus group’s long term vision were safety, places to go fishing and for groups to gather, interpretive signs, preservation of natural areas and facilities that accommodate people of all ages.

INTERCEPT SURVEYS

Surveys were conducted at several community events, including the Fiesta Mexicana, Carneceria Mi Casita, a Central High School football game, and the Hops and Heritage Festival. These intercept surveys gathered input from 262 residents and visitors to Independence. Survey participants were asked to rate the City’s park system, indicate their top priorities for different types of recreational facilities and playing fields, identify specific needed park facility improvements and note any other important park and open space planning issues. Summary observations included:

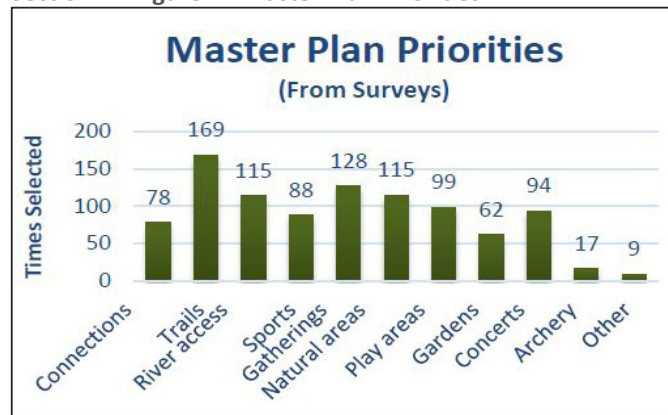
- The average rating of the current park system was 7.5 on a scale of one to ten.
- Section IV: Figure 2 identifies top park and recreation priorities. Walking, running and bicycling trails was by far the top priority amongst participants and creating opportunities for group gatherings was second. Opportunities to participate in sports and maintain natural areas and open space for wildlife also ranked highly.
- Frequent comments about needed improvements to specific parks included the need to add lighting for recreation after dusk, provide more information about the parks and directional signage, add covered areas, provide fencing around playgrounds for child safety, and, in general, improve upon what currently exists.

UTILITY BILL QUESTIONNAIRE

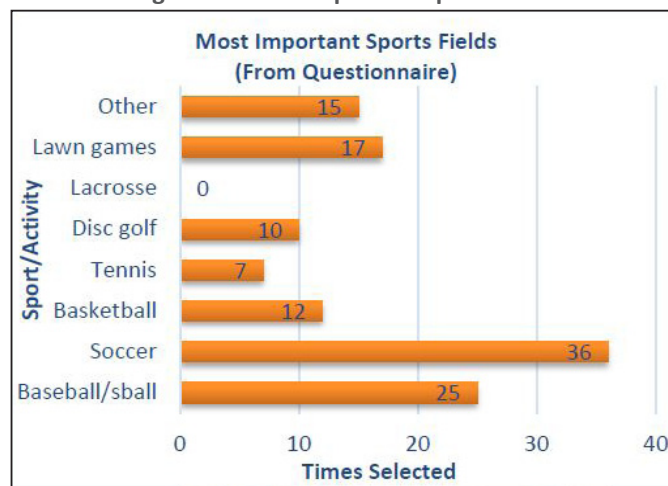
A questionnaire similar to the intercept survey was mailed to Independence residents through the city’s utility bill. The questionnaire was provided in English and Spanish. Approximately 75 people responded to the survey. Summary observations included:

- The average rating of the current park system through this questionnaire was seven (7) on a scale of one to ten.
- Top priorities were pedestrian and bicycle trails, safe play areas for children, connections between neighborhoods and parks and access to the Willamette River. Respondents supported development of more soccer and baseball/softball fields over other sports.
- Common themes in the additional comments field were more the need for more bathrooms, water fountains, trees and places to sit and relax. In addition, concerns were raised regarding funding and the general maintenance of parks.

Section IV: Figure 2 - Master Plan Priorities



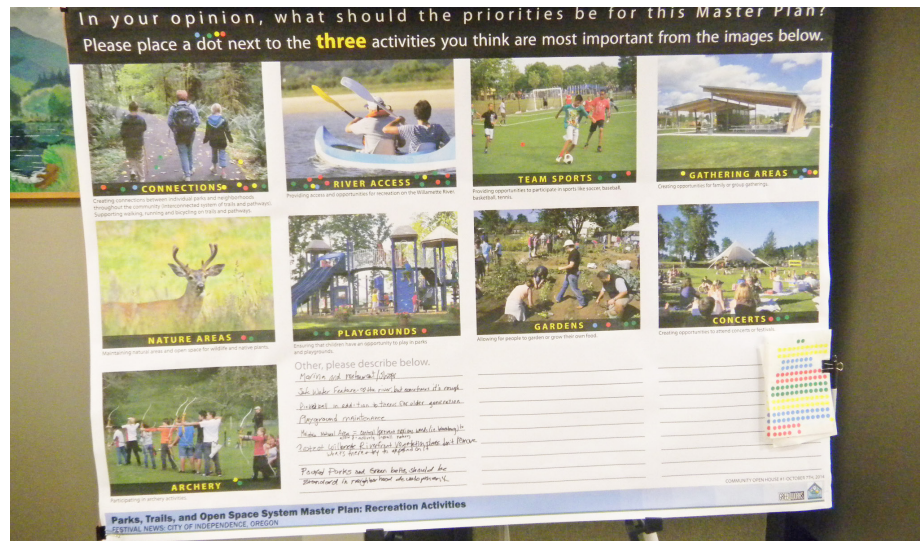
Section IV: Figure 3 - Most Important Sports Fields



COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

The first Open House for the Parks Master Plan was held on the evening of October 7, 2014. The main objectives were to provide an overview of the project, review objectives, ask people to comment on improvements and possible names of future parks, and solicit feedback to help plan for wayfinding and interpretive facilities. Stations set up to gather feedback on these topics.

- Top priorities for park and recreation activities were river access and connections between individual parks and neighborhoods.
- Soccer fields received the highest support among priorities for different types of sports fields.
- The hops and agricultural heritage was a popular choice for interpretive facilities as well as history of the Willamette River.
- A variety of other ideas included relatively strong support, particularly future consideration of formation of a new park and recreation district, co-managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central School District.
- Each individual park had various comments for improvements. Typical comments were more water fountains and/or bathrooms, better trails and signage, better access to the river at Riverview Park and connections to other nearby trails, parks or natural areas, facilities for kayakers or rowers, as well as maintaining natural areas throughout the parks.



RECOMMENDED PARKS AND OPEN SPACE VISION

The feedback generated during these early public outreach and involvement efforts confirms and supports the draft project goals developed at the outset of the project, including:

- Realize the incredible potential of the Willamette Riverfront by enhancing existing facilities and creating new ones along the river.
- Determine how best to improve existing neighborhood parks to meet the needs of local residents.
- Create recreational opportunities for visitors that can enhance the city's economic vitality.
- Chart the path for development of new parks in future growth areas and new developments.
- Protect natural areas and open spaces to enhance the livability of Independence.
- Partner with community groups to continue to help maintain and enhance park and recreation facilities and programs.
- Establish a set of funding mechanisms that will help pay for the development and maintenance of park and recreation facilities in a cost-effective, financially feasible manner.

In addition, additional guidance that should be integrated in the Master Plan includes the following:

- Provide facilities for people to walk and bicycle for recreation, travel and fitness; create connections to travel between different parks and recreation areas by walking, bicycling and other forms of active travel.
- Provide gathering spaces and related facilities for community and family gatherings in all neighborhood and community parks.
- Prioritize provision and adequate maintenance of soccer fields, while also providing facilities for other sports, both formal and informal, including baseball/softball, volleyball, basketball, tennis and lawn games.

The overall vision for the community's future Park, Open Space and Recreation system continues to be to address the changing recreational needs of our larger, more diverse population, ensures that the city's facilities reflect current and future recreational trends, and promotes community livability and life-long physical health for Independence residents.

4.3 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW SUMMARY

As an initial step in the Master Planning process, staff from GreenWorks and their team member at Angelo Planning Group conducted interviews with key community stakeholders to help identify key park and recreation goals, needs and issues that should be considered in preparing the Master Plan. City staff also participated in some of the interviews. A list of interviewees is found at the end of this summary. The following are the interview questions asked at the stakeholder meetings and the results.

QUESTION 1: HOW DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY USE PARK AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN INDEPENDENCE?

Interview participants partner with the City in a variety of ways to help provide recreational and other programs within the City’s parks and also have helped construct and maintain individual park facilities. Examples include:

- Programming for sports league games and events, including softball, baseball, football, soccer in partnership with the Central School District
- Providing school district facilities for general community use or for programs run by local organizations (YMCA, CYS, etc.)
- Using city park facilities for educational, community service and recreational activities by school students and others (e.g., classroom activities in natural areas, swimming classes for school students at the Henry Hill pool and multiple recreation programs and classes organized by the YMCA)
- Programming, organizing and conducting concerts, festivals and other events in Riverview Park such as the Hop and Heritage Festival, Rivers Edge Concert series and Movies in the Park
- Building and maintaining a walking/running trail through along the Greenway adjacent to the Willamette River and organizing local races and training runs using the trail

QUESTION 2: WHAT SHOULD THE PRIORITIES OF THE MASTER PLAN BE? FOR EXAMPLE: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN PARKS AND NEIGHBORHOODS, PLAYING FIELDS AND COURTS, NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACE, ETC.

Interview participants cited a variety of potential priorities. Most frequently cited were the need for more playing fields, particularly for soccer and including associated amenities (restrooms, seating areas, etc.); and additional amenities in existing parks (e.g., restrooms, drinking fountains, shelters, etc.) Additional priorities and specific needs also included the following:

- Maintaining/valuing the river and associated views
- More pocket parks with features that neighborhood residents desire
- Making existing or future sports fields and facilities making available to use for games & practices
- Sports complex – one place for everyone to play/practice
- Maintaining and enhancing the three parks and open spaces along the Willamette River and enhancing the connection between them
- A new park and recreation district co-managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central District to use collective resources more efficiently and provide a broader range of facilities and services overall
- Indoor basketball courts
- Year-round swim facilities

QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE CURRENT ASPECTS OR COMPONENTS OF THE PARK AND RECREATIONAL SYSTEM THAT WORK WELL AND NEED TO BE PRESERVED AND EFFECTIVELY MAINTAINED?

Most participants noted how well Riverview Park is working, including strong programming, the ability to accommodate lots of different uses and people, prevalence of good summary programs, and the availability of trails and other adjacent facilities there. More than one person described this as the “crown jewel” of the park system. The greenway trail along the river was also mentioned as a key community asset. Several people noted that the City’s neighborhood parks are generally well maintained safe places for neighbors and families. Other valuable facilities and assets mentioned included:

- Pfaff Park (good location/visibility, good facilities)
- Pioneer Park (great neighborhood effort to rehabilitate – lots of use & pride)
- Pocket parks (e.g., Inspiration Garden)

QUESTION 4: CURRENTLY, WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE PARK AND RECREATIONAL SYSTEM?

Interviewees mentioned a variety of gaps of features of the existing system that should be enhanced, including the following:

- Sports complex – appropriately located, well-maintained and with good exposure
- Dedicated parks maintenance staff and money – public works does great job but stretched too thin

- Amenities – e.g., no water fountain at amphitheater
- Short trails in neighborhood parks
- Signage and other information making it easier to find parks
- Provide info and promote use of facilities (Monmouth uses utility bills, letter from Mayor, etc)
- Organized adult recreational or athletic activities
- Soccer fields
- Baseball/softball fields
- Basketball courts (indoor)
- Ash Creek Trail
- Circular trail around Monmouth
- Boat rentals associated with the boat ramp
- Centralized information about facilities and opportunities to use them
- Year round aquatics facility
- Connections between parks – trails, signage and/or mile-markers
- Informal areas to play volleyball, tennis, bocci ball, horseshoes, etc.
- Shelters for gatherings
- Toilets facilities and drinking fountains

QUESTION 5: ARE THERE SPECIFIC PARKS/FACILITIES THAT ARE IN NEED OF REPAIR? WHAT TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED AND HOW WOULD THESE IMPROVEMENTS HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION BETTER USE THE SYSTEM?

Suggested improvements included the following:

- Neighborhood/Pocket park upgrades
- Potable water at Mt. Fir and measures to improve its visibility
- North Riverview park enhancements, including safety and security improvements
- Keep trail, parks visible and well used – this will prevent inappropriate use
- Henry Hill Park swimming pool
- Fields in flood plain

- Soccer fields at multiple facilities, including better grading, irrigation and drainage
- Trail system and gathering place at Mt. Fir (planned by Master Gardeners) – need support from City for utilities and permitting costs
- Better signage to parks – e.g., to Pioneer Park, swimming pool, etc.

QUESTION 6: HOW CAN THE CITY CONTINUE TO BEST PARTNER WITH YOUR GROUP TO USE, IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN THE PARK AND RECREATIONAL SYSTEM? ARE THERE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CO-USE OR PROGRAMMING OF SPECIFIC FACILITIES?

Several interview participants complimented the City on the efforts it has already undertaken to partner with their groups in providing park and recreation programs and facilities. They noted that the City has provided oversight and guidance, allowing people to present ideas and implement them. This has led to good low-cost solutions, lots of volunteer work and community ownership in facilities and programs. Additional suggestions for future partnerships included the following:

- Participate in a recently formed coalition to address school district facility use. This group includes the school district Athletic Director, Central Youth Sports, the YMCA and the Chamber of Commerce
- Create a dedicated staff/crew to help maintain and address facility needs at Riverview Park and other facilities; ensure user groups have the resources they need to help program and hold events
- Continue prior approach but codify the structure and process for supporting local organizations and volunteer groups and their initiatives both in building and maintaining new facilities or programs.
- Continue to not charge fees for community use
- Consider creation of a new park and recreation district co-managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central District to use collective resources more efficiently and provide a broader range of facilities and services overall. The school district could be a potential catalyst for community support of a district because it acts as a bridge between the two cities
- Partner with the City of Monmouth in planning for Monmouth facilities that also serve Independence residents

QUESTION 7: IN 20 YEARS, WHAT DO YOU ENVISION FOR THE INDEPENDENCE PARK AND RECREATIONAL SYSTEM AND WHAT ROLE WILL YOUR ORGANIZATION PLAN IN ACHIEVING THAT VISION?

Responses included the following:

- A major set of linked facilities – meeting recreational & other needs – centrally located and with good exposure.
- Facility maintenance system in place
- Primary path (ADA accessible but with a soft surface) around all three parks adjacent to the river
- An operational joint park and recreation district
- Facilities, capacity & staffing to promote life-long physical activity of various types
- Continued high quality system and facilities in Monmouth, including new projects in construction and planning stages
- Official Park & Recreation District
- Improved access to the river and adjacent park and recreation facilities, including developed facilities and natural areas; would be a community asset that draws people here to live and provides opportunities for solitude and enjoying nature – developing water features is big plus (Reno, San Antonio as examples)

QUESTIONS 8: WHO ELSE SHOULD WE BE TALKING TO OR INVOLVING IN THIS PROJECT AS WE MOVE FORWARD?

Participants identified the organizations already represented by the interviewees, including the YMCA, Central School District, Rivers Edge, Central Youth Sports, running club, Master Gardeners and the City of Monmouth. Additional suggestions included the following:

- Local businesses and residents near downtown
- High school running and soccer coaches
- Western Oregon University
- Oregon State University Extension service
- Polk County
- Monmouth – Independence coalition (501(c)3 for the cities, school district others, with approximately \$1 million in endowments)

- All groups interested in getting more involved in soccer
- Bodie Bemrose – real estate agent, long-time resident
- Brian Joint (Chiropractor in Monmouth)
- Janice at Western Days
- Robin at the Library

QUESTION 9: DO YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS?

Participants provided a variety of additional comments including the following:

- Does potential flooding of the new North Riverview Park facilities create long term maintenance issues and costs?
- Tucked away places can be targets for vandalism; locate facilities in areas with good visibility
- We have a growing youth population using the same facilities we’ve had for a lot of years.
- Re-evaluate parks with how they are used and other needed improvement issues
- Not sure play equipment is being used as much at neighborhood or other parks
- Parking issues and needs associated with park facilities
- Amphitheater use is high, with about 80 days of programmed events during the summer
- Quality of life is key; the summer concert series is intended to help promote downtown businesses; scheduling of concerts and business hours need to support that goal
- Appreciate that the city is not charging fees to use parks/trail, e.g., for races.
- Lots of public use of school district property leads to an overburdened set of facilities which are nearly at capacity both during the daytime and evenings
- Outside groups also use school district facilities during non-scheduled times, there is not enough time for fields to recover. Need a system for both organized and unorganized uses to apply for facility use
- Lots of people have access to WOU facility since they are allowing broader community use; the faucet is open now but might be closed in the future
- Dallas aquatic facility; both the middle and high schools use this facility as do Independence and Monmouth residents

- If the cities have to hire people to schedule use of facilities, it might spur them to pursue a district approach
- Issues with other community groups using Independence facilities and the other way around, e.g., out-of-town soccer leagues using our facilities and our residents having to travel outside Independence to play soccer
- Potential 16th St. “Sports Complex” across from the middle school; this is an undeveloped property with the Monmouth sewage lagoons next door; there was a previous desire to use for sports fields but it is not necessarily the best place for fields
- There is no vacant school district property in Independence
- The City of Monmouth has several existing or planned facilities that mirror facilities in Independence such as dog parks and a new planned amphitheater at the Main St. Park due for completion in 2016
- Other new parks and recreation facilities in Monmouth will include Madrona Park (soccer fields, trail, arboretum), splash play fountain (Main St. Park), and a Senior Center expansion
- Previous efforts to build an aquatic center were unsuccessful, with a failed bond measure in 2008 and no discussion of reviving it at this time
- This is a good process

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

- Natascha Cronin, YMCA)
- Bill Leedy, Master Gardeners
- Mark Fancey, City of Monmouth
- Buzz Brazeau and Cec Koontz, Central School District
- Sean Gatherum, Trail Running Group)
- Alex Trevino, River’s Edge Concert Series
- Tanna Cable Girod, Central Youth Sports



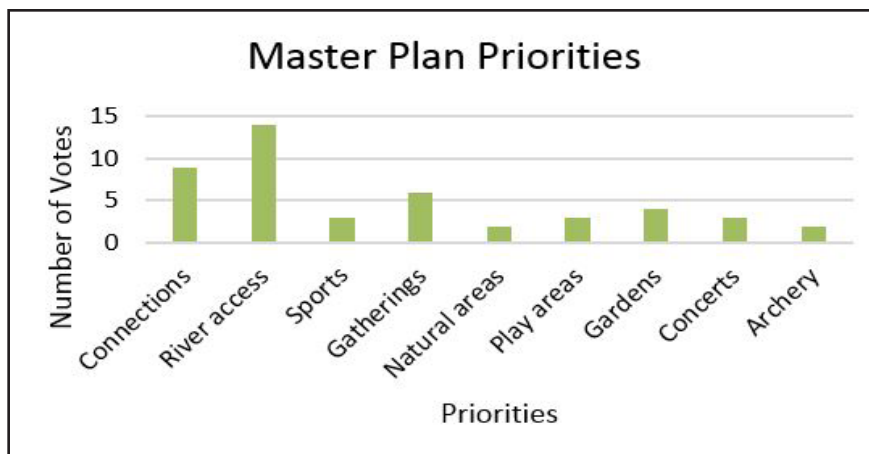
4.4 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #1 SUMMARY

The first Public Open House for the Parks Master Plan project was held on October 7, 2014. The meeting was conducted at Independence City Hall between 5 and 8 p.m. where light refreshments were provided by the city and participants were able to drop in at any time. The objectives of the meetings were to:

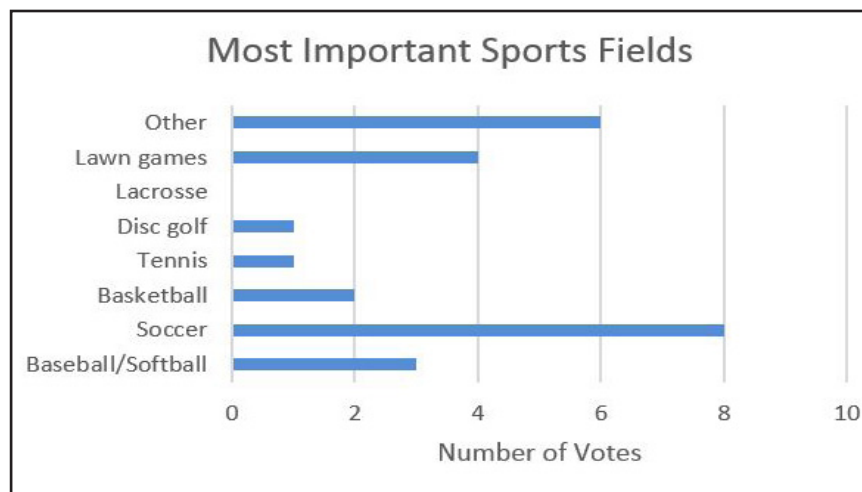
- Orient people to the project, providing an overview of project scope of work, schedule and public engagement goals.
- Review project goals, objectives and priorities identified to date and ask people to identify their own priorities.
- Present the results of outreach efforts conducted to date, including intercept surveys, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and MindMixer results.
- Provide opportunities to comment on possible improvements to specific park and recreation facilities.
- Ask people to comment on possible names for proposed or new park or recreation facilities.
- Solicit feedback to help plan for wayfinding and interpretive facilities, asking people to tell us what stories about Independence are important to tell and where and how we can help tell those stories.

OPEN HOUSE STATIONS

- **Station #1 – Project Overview:** Participants were to review a handout for more information about the project schedule, public involvement activities schedule and draft Project Goals.
- **Station #2 – Park and Recreation Priorities:** Attendees could engage in a “dot exercise” to tell us which types of park and recreation activities or facilities are most important to them. A similar activity was used to tell us which types of playing fields are most important.
- **Station #3 – Park Facility Improvements:** Participants could view maps of parks in Independence and tell us which ones need to be improved and how.
- **Station #4 – Wayfinding and Interpretive Facilities:** Attendees were asked what stories about Independence are important to share, where and how we can help tell those stories, and how they travel to different parks in Independence.
- **Station #5 – Park Naming:** Attendees had the opportunity to share ideas for names for parks that are in the planning or design stage.
- **Station #6 – Other Ideas:** This station allowed for other ideas for improving parks in Independence or tell us what you think should be done.



Section IV: Figure 4 - Master Plan Priorities

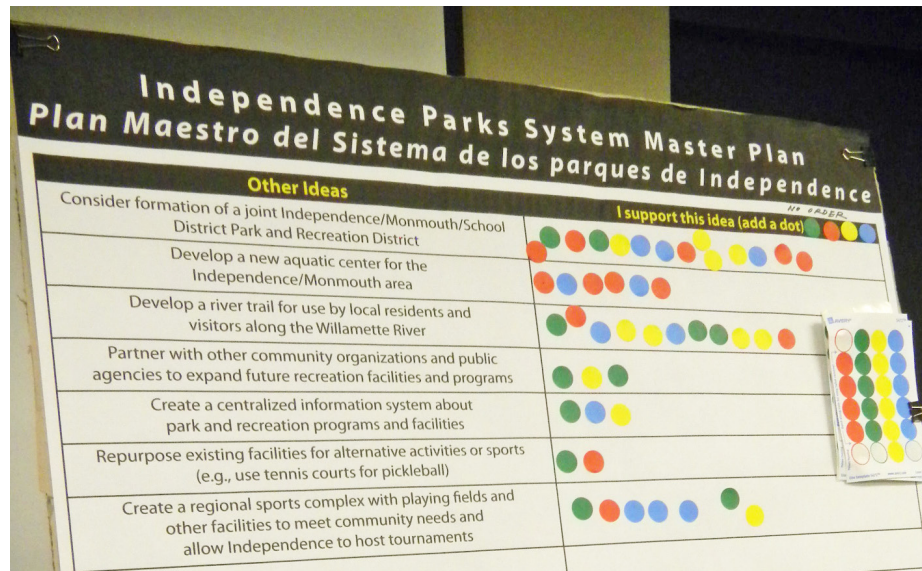


Section IV: Figure 5 - Most Important Sports Fields

NOTIFICATION

A variety of activities were undertaken to notify people about the meeting and encourage them to attend, including the following:

- Announcements on the project website and via the City’s social media accounts.
- Flyer and newsletter article included in the City’s utility bill mailed to all Independence households.
- E-mails to interested parties list, partnering community groups, stakeholder interviewees.
- Meeting fliers located at City Hall, the Library, and other gathering places.
- Media releases to local media outlets.



SUMMARY RESULTS OF OPEN HOUSE # 1

Approximately 25 people attended the meeting. The majority of them participated in most of the exercises described below, providing a variety of comments about overall park system priorities, as well as specific needed improvements to individual facilities.

Key open house results included the following.

- Participants were particularly supportive of more access to the river, with a focus on safety, and connections between parks and neighborhoods, as well as places to walk and bicycle.
- Various sports fields were also considered important, with soccer fields identified as most important. However, participants also indicated a desire for diverse opportunities for the entire community rather than focusing on a single sport.
- Each individual park had various comments for improvements. Typical suggestions were for more water fountains and/or bathrooms, better trails and signage, better access to the river at Riverview park, as well as maintaining natural areas throughout the parks.
- Participants provided a variety of suggestions related to interpretive and wayfinding facilities.
- Among other ideas presented at the meeting, participants were most supportive of the idea of a Park and Recreation District jointly managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central School District.

Station #2 – Park and Recreation Priorities Results

Participants were asked to use “dots” to identify the three most important types of parks and recreation activities in Independence. The highest ranked item was providing access to the Willamette River. The second most popular activity was and providing trails and pathways for walking and bicycling and creation connections between facilities and other local destinations. Other ideas suggested by participants included creating standard pocket parks and greenbelts, protecting vegetation on river banks, maintaining natural areas, playground maintenance, providing safe places to swim in the river, and building a marina with restaurant and shops.

Participants were asked to use “dots” to identify the two most needed types of sports fields in Independence. The highest ranked item was soccer fields. Lawn games, like Bocci Ball or Croquet ranked second with about half as many votes as soccer. Other ideas suggested by participants included Grass fields for miscellaneous activities, volleyball, pickleball, rowing dock.

Station # 3 – Park Facility Improvements Results

Participants viewed maps of each park in Independence and identified potential needed improvements. Following is a list of comments, organized by park facility.

Dog Park:

- Nice trails but area has many invasive plants.

Pioneer Park:

- Need for lights after dark to enhance safety.

Riverview Park:

- Consider relocation of parking to enhance view of river and protection of riparian vegetation. However, keep in mind access for users with disabilities.
- Maintain current amenities before adding new ones. If new amenities are added, select activities suitable for a broader age group, e.g., safe places to swim in river.
- Access point for river users (e.g., kayaks).
- Additional potential park amenities, including nature playground or other equipment, merry-go-round, water feature/splash park, balance beam and activities for older kids.

Un-named Park:

- Give alternative to reaching N/S than 7th St.
- Too narrow for a park, consider widening.
- Create a “nature playground” in this park.

Mt. Fir Park:

- Nice park! Let this be the focus.
- Nice addition by Master Gardeners.

Pfaff Park:

- Construct permanent restroom facility.
- Develop pickleball court.

Henry Hill Park:

- Needs a water fountain.
- Maintain high quality pool and consider movie night at the pool in summer.
- Community/family, recreation place-playground, BBQ, V-Ball, B-Ball, all in one place.

Wildfang Park:

- Support natural watershed enhancement project.
- Comments against and in support of Ash Creek Trail. Those against are concerned about stream health and preserving natural areas.

Independence Sports Park (North Riverview Park):

- More trails needed and better signage.
- Sport fields that will foster tournaments (baseball/softball, soccer, etc.).
- Day use picnic area near river and marina would be nice.

Willamette Riverfront Area:

- More trails and trail connections, including to or along Corvallis Road, the proposed Ash Creek Trail, the Willamette River trail, and the island.
- Kayak and other river activities, including floating docks for kayaks and rowing shells, signage and information about paddling on the Willamette, organized rowing events (e.g., regattas).
- Day use picnic area near river and marina would be nice.

Station # 4 – Wayfinding and Interpretive Facilities Results

Participants were asked to comment on different ideas associated with interpretive and wayfinding facilities, including different aspects of the City’s history that should be featured in interpretive displays or facilities. Comments on this topic included the following:

- Hops and Agricultural Heritage – Hop pickers and growers, history of the railroads, Hispanic history, importance of river and wetlands.
- Historic Ferry Crossing – Independence bridge over the river, floods and connection to river, Oregon Territory times, Railroad history.
- Willamette Waterway Trail – expand of existing interpretive markers and signs.
- Native American History and Culture (Kalapuya).
- Add public art to trails.
- Park system maps for guests.
- Mileage markers on the river to inform users of time and distances to other sites.

Station # 5 – Park Naming Results

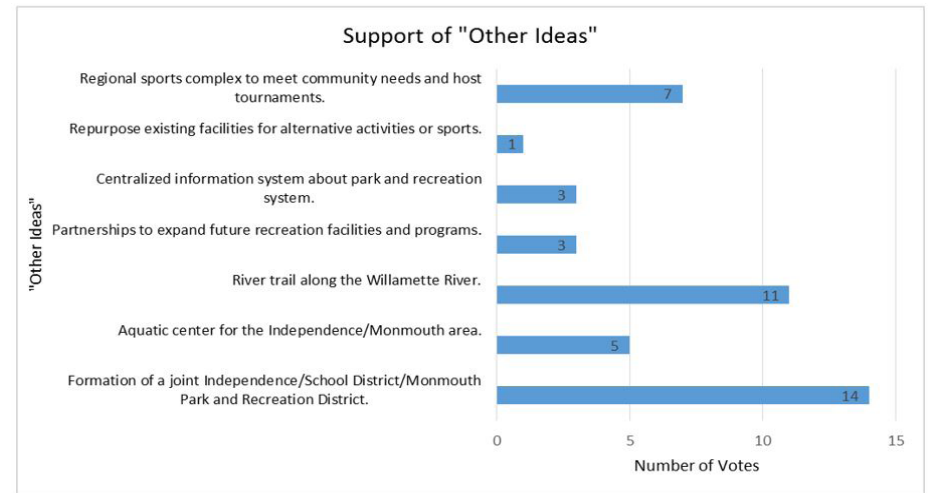
Participants were asked to suggest names for two park/trail facilities: (1) the open playing field area north of Riverview Park; and (2) the entire Greenway trail area along the river. Comments and suggestions included the following:

- Current park names are confusing along the river, e.g., North Riverview Park and Riverview Park. Consider naming parks along the river as one name and then each unit a different name.
- Each park should have a name and sign, but not all parks need interpretive treatment.
- Change name of current “Willamette River Trail” to “Independence River Trail.”
- Name the currently unnamed park by Mt. Fir Park the “All-American City Park.”

Station # 6 – Other Comments and Themes

Participants were asked to voice their support for a variety of ideas generated during previous public outreach activities. **Figure 6 - Other Ideas** illustrates the level of support for each idea. Formation of a joint park and recreation district managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central School District received the highest level of support, among the suggested ideas. Other ideas suggested during this exercise included the following:

- Build a path from Independence to Monmouth (Ash Creek Trail).
- More amenities at parks like electrical access for events and Wi-Fi.
- Expand what exists already. Promote festivals better, increase signage and community knowledge about parks (use the web).
- Neighborhood parks should be part of all new developments.
- Consider impact of park development, i.e., degradation of wildlife habitat and native vegetation, funding for stewardship and maintenance of areas.
- Look for opportunities to collaborate, e.g., WOU (Western Oregon University), City of Monmouth, regional natural resource organizations.



Section IV: Figure 6 - Support of Other Ideas

4.5 LATINO FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

As part of the system planning effort, the City conducted a wide variety of activities to engage community members in the planning process. One of the City’s main objectives in this effort is to engage Latino residents who make up a significant proportion of the City’s overall population.

On September 3, 2014 City staff and system plan team members facilitated a “focus group” with eight local Latino residents to ask about priorities for future park and recreation facilities. The objectives of the focus group were to identify participants’ priorities for future park and recreation development, improvement and programming and have a detailed discussion about specific desired improvements and needed new facilities. The meeting was facilitated by three Spanish translators.

Participants were welcomed and the purpose and format of the meeting was introduced. The City emphasized that there were no wrong answers and it was important for everyone to participate. Participants introduced themselves, noting how long they have lived in the Independence/ Monmouth area and their favorite park. Participants included a mix of men and women and ranged in age from their teens to 60s. Most have lived in the Independence area for at least eight years and some for much longer. Most people said that their favorite park in Independence is Riverfront Park. After introductions, the group was asked a series of questions and each person was asked to respond. Discussion topics are summarized on the following pages.

TOPIC #1 – PARK AND OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES

Participants were asked to describe their highest priorities for the future of the park and open space system in Independence. Recurring themes included more facilities for and a focus on the needs of children. In particular, they cited the need for more soccer fields, as well as basketball courts and volleyball facilities. They noted that there are not a sufficient number of these facilities in Independence for local residents, either for children or adults. They said that many people have to travel outside Independence to play soccer or other sports and that this is difficult for many residents. They also noted that having more places for kids to play sports and be active will reduce the incidence of drug use and other undesirable activities. Participants further noted that want more places that they can go with a large group of family/friends and “do everything” – someplace with a picnic shelter and BBQ pits, volleyball, basketball, playground, soccer, walking paths, etc., where a lot of different people can do the things they enjoy. Other recommended priorities included the following:

- More places for children and adults to ride bicycles

- More large open areas, similar to the area near the dog park
- Signage to tell people how to get to local parks
- Drinking fountains within the parks
- Facilities for large family or other gatherings where people can cook food
- Playgrounds with swings
- More trees to provide shade
- The ability to use school facilities that are closed now
- Splash or spray fountains for kids
- Parks with a little bit of everything

TOPIC #2 – ELEMENTS OF THE PARK SYSTEM THAT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED OR PRESERVED

Participants were asked to describe local parks, open spaces or recreation facilities that are unique to Independence and should be maintained and/or preserved. Most participants said that Riverview Park is a unique asset for residents and should continue to be maintained and used for a variety of activities and events such as concerts and movies in the park, as well as the playground and area near the river. Some said that expanding the park would make it an even better facility for more people. Some people also said that more monitoring or security is needed there to deal with people who are drinking or doing bad things at times. Several participants also said they enjoy areas in the city’s parks that have trees and grass and are green and shady; it is important to preserve these areas. Other important things to maintain included:

- Places to walk near the river
- The entrance to the river
- The stream next to Mountain Fir park should be enhanced to be more beautiful

TOPIC #3 – PARKS OR RECREATION FACILITIES THAT NEED TO BE REPAIRED OR IMPROVED

Participants were asked to identify parks or facilities that are in need of repair or improvement and to describe the types of changes needed. They also were asked to say what things are missing from the parks system. Several people suggested that existing parks need more bathrooms and drinking fountains. A number of people also suggested using synthetic playing fields for new soccer fields or at least better drainage facilities for existing grass fields. Other recommended improvements

included:

- Better security at the dog park
- More trees
- Large signs telling people where the boat ramp is located and better signs for Pioneer Park
- An indoor soccer facility
- Permanent goals at soccer fields
- Better lighting
- A small basketball court with at least one basket and a place to dribble at Pioneer Park
- Tetherball
- New basketball nets at Henry Hill Park
- Maintain the parks that we already have
- Make paths around the soccer fields so that people may walk around them like they do in football (track)

TOPIC #4 – LONG TERM VISION

People were asked to describe their ideal vision for the parks system 20 years from now. Several people said that the park system will need to include more parks and more facilities to accommodate more people as the City grows during that time. This should include more playing fields, water fountains, and more age-appropriate facilities for young children and teenagers such as roller-skating, skating and similar activities. Other elements of a future vision included:

- An awareness that we have a park system
- Places where kids can feel safe
- Places to go fishing
- Fountains or spray or splash parks for kids
- Maintain and improve Riverfront park and the River itself
- More covered areas for family gatherings
- Signs and other unique things that identify the history of the people and the community

- More green, natural areas
- More games for children within our parks
- 20 years from now, we hope that the project is complete
- Games that involve little chains, arrows, building blocks etc. (especially good for kids who might be physically limited)

Participants were asked to mention anything else that is important for the City to consider in updating the Parks System Plan. Comments included the following:

- Ability to cook things in neighborhood parks such as large facilities for grilling food where people can bring their own metal grills
- Splash fountains
- Programs for young people to volunteer to help maintain and clean the parks



4.6 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #2 SUMMARY

The second Public Open House for the Parks Master Plan project was held on January 29, 2015. The meeting was conducted at Independence City Hall between 4:00 and 7:30 p.m. where light refreshments were provided by the city and participants were able to drop in at any time. The objectives of the meetings were to:

- Orient people to the project, providing an overview of project scope of work, schedule and public engagement goals.
- Present and solicit comments on preliminary Master Plan recommendations for an overall approach to meeting the community's park and open space needs over the next 20 years, as well as proposed new facilities and improvements to existing facilities.



OPEN HOUSE STATIONS

- **Station #1 – Project Overview:** Review the project schedule and updated Project Goals.
- **Station #2 – Approach To Providing Facilities and Services:** Engage in a “dot exercise” to note support for a proposed approach to serving the entire community with improvements to existing parks and/or new parks over the next 20 years.
- **Station #3 – Park Facility Improvements:** Review diagrams of proposed improvements to existing parks and possible new parks and note support for proposed improvements and/or additional ideas.
- **Station #4 – Wayfinding and Interpretive Facilities:** Review proposed signage and interpretive facilities within parks and to help people travel to parks in Independence; note support and additional ideas.
- **Station #5 – Neighborhood Connections to Parks:** Review proposals for improved connections from existing neighborhoods to local parks; affirm recommendations, note preferred options, and/or suggest other ideas.
- **Station #6 – Riverfront Park Facilities:** Review options for new and improved parks, trails, natural areas and other facilities along the river; affirm recommendations, note preferred options, and/or suggest other ideas.
- **Station #7 – Costs and Funding Sources:** Review and comment on information about this topic.

NOTIFICATION

A variety of activities were undertaken to notify people about the meeting and encourage them to attend, including the following:

- Announcements on the project website and via the City's social media accounts.
- Flyer and newsletter article included in the City's utility bill mailed to all Independence households.
- E-mails to interested parties list, partnering community groups, stakeholder interviewees.
- Meeting fliers located at City Hall, the Library, and other gathering places.
- Media releases to local media outlets.

SUMMARY RESULTS OF OPEN HOUSE #2

Approximately 35 people attended the meeting. Many of them participated in most of the exercises described below, providing a variety of comments about overall park system priorities, as well as specific needed improvements to individual facilities described above. Key open house results included the following:

- Participants were generally supportive of most of the ideas presented at the open house.
- Most participants support the overall process for meeting future park and natural area needs. Most also say that it is equally important to improve existing parks and create new parks.
- Most participants support proposed connections from neighborhoods to parks, with the Mt. Fir Connector Trail receiving the highest level of support.
- Most participants support wayfinding, interpretive and trail facilities, noting the importance of better directions to parks. A smaller number of participants noted opposition to the Ash Creek Trail.
- Participants generally support improvements to existing parks and several additional ideas were provided.
- Some participants say that proposed new parks are not needed.

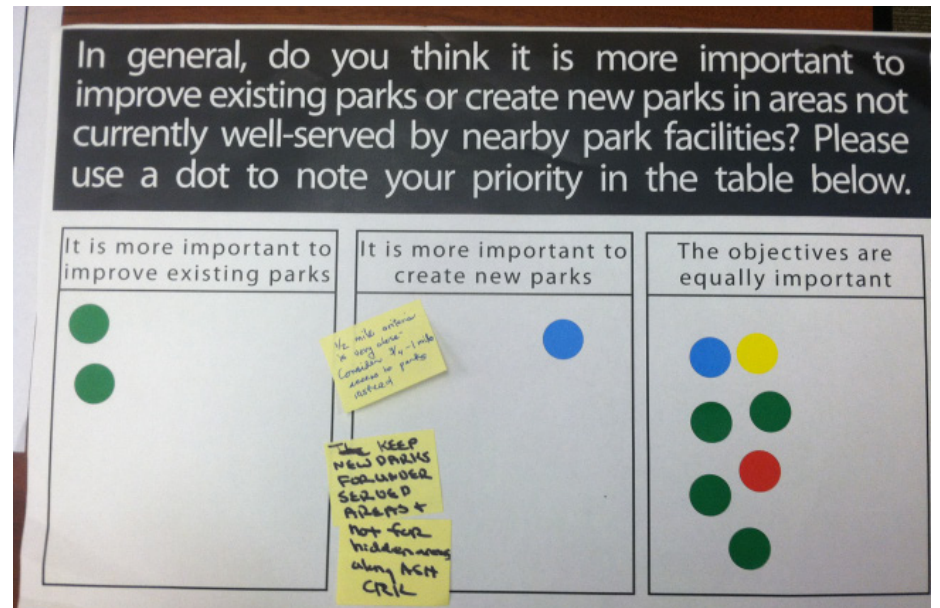


Station #2 – Overall Park and Recreation Service Approach Results

Participants were asked to use “dots” to note their support for a proposed overall approach for meeting community-wide park and open space needs with a combination of existing and new parks. They also were asked to indicate whether it is more important to improve existing parks or build new parks in areas that are currently underserved. The majority of people who commented on this topic (7 of 9) supported the proposed overall approach.

Most people (seven) indicated that it is equally important to improve existing parks and build new parks, while one person said it is more important to build new parks and two people used dots to say it is more important to improve existing parks. Two “post –it” note comments also recommended focusing resources on improvements to existing neighborhood parks. Other comments included the following:

- One-half mile area is very close. Consider $\frac{3}{4}$ or one mile access to parks instead.
- Keep new parks for underserved areas and not for hidden areas along Ash Creek.



Station # 3 – Park Facility Improvements Results

Participants viewed diagrams of proposed improvements to each neighborhood park in Independence and commented on the need for other possible improvements.

Following is a list of comments, organized by park facility.

Dog Park

- Nice trails but area has many invasive plants.

Pioneer Park

- Maintain natural areas.
- Additional potential park amenities, including nature playground or other equipment, merry-go-round, water feature/splash park, balance beam and activities for older kids.

Un-named Park

- (This area) in dire need of a park.
- Bathrooms please!
- Make play equipment little kid-friendly; not just swings and monkey bars.
- Best spot for public art.
- Generally strong support for park in this location and identified amenities.

Mt. Fir Park

- Improve signage for Inspiration Garden.
- I like this Master Gardener garden; me too.
- Volleyball court/net; grass/sand.
- Generally strong support for proposed amenities.

Pfaff Park

- Nice park! Needs better irrigation system.
- This is well used and nice now.
- Generally strong support for proposed amenities.

Henry Hill Park

- This park has had no attention since the 1980s. Needs lot of work.
- Needs help. By ALGE neighborhood.
- Is a side, limited area. Really good for a splash pad.
- Strong support for improvements and new amenities.

Wildfang Park

- Isolated, best left natural.
- Extended EMS (emergency service) response types.
- Develop this park but no connection to Ash Creek Trail.
- Lots of crime.

Independence Sports Park

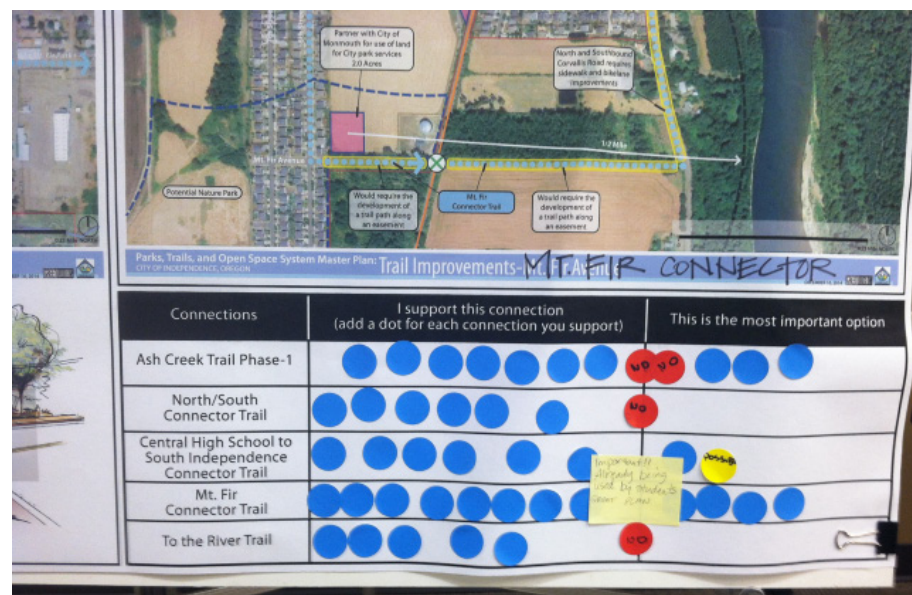
- No. (2 comments)
- Flooding issues and maintenance issues. (2 comments)
- Way too much traffic for residential development (800+ vehicles on two lanes road).
- Incorporate tree lined road.
- Include skills park. (south portion)

North Independence Park

- Not needed.

13th Street Park

- Madrona Park would serve this area.



West Side Park

- Not needed.
- No.

Polk Street Park

- Not needed.
- Common themes in the additional comments field were more the need for more bathrooms, water fountains, trees and places to sit and relax. In addition, concerns were raised regarding funding and the general maintenance of parks.

Station #4 – Wayfinding, Trails and Interpretive Facility Recommendations

Participants viewed two maps and various photos of proposed approaches to providing signs and interpretive facilities in parks and signs direction people to parks in Independence. They were asked to use “dots” to indicate their support for specific connections and to provide additional, specific comments on “post-it” notes. All of the participants who commented on potential support for these recommendations were supportive (13 dots provided).

A number of the example photos also received dots indicating support. Following is a list of additional comments provided:

- Support gateways along main highways. Is this possible (trail along Willamette & Portland Railroad ROW). Response: Easement exists to railroad.
- I do not support Ash Creek Trail easement. (2 comments)
- Do not support pedestrian paths following Ash Creek. Expensive and not safe.
- Directional (signage) on Monmouth Street.
- Add sign to existing pole (on Monmouth Street) for Mt. Fir Park (Pioneer Park sign).
- Add “i” signs to main roads; pull visitors to parks.
- Less art on the action map would be important and legibility is key. Less need for regulation in wayfinding is a good idea. Keeping this height of the center of the map signing is better at eye level and not too high or too low. Knowing where parks are with street sign direction is helpful. I can never find parks!
- Clear, legible signs are good but would we see them? That reflects Independence historical image. (2 comments)
- Make it simple.

Participants were asked to comment on different ideas associated with interpretive and wayfinding facilities, including different aspects of the City’s history that should be featured in interpretive displays or facilities. Comments included the following:

- Hops and Agricultural Heritage – Hop pickers and growers, history of the railroads, Hispanic history, importance of river and wetlands.
- Historic Ferry Crossing – Independence bridge over the river, floods and connection to river, Oregon Territory times, Railroad history.
- Willamette Waterway Trail – expand of existing interpretive markers and signs.
- Native American History and Culture (Kalapuya).
- Add public art to trails.
- Park system maps for guests.
- Mileage markers on the river to inform users of time and distances to other sites.

Station #5 – Neighborhood and Park Connections Results

Participants reviewed maps and diagrams of proposed improved connections between neighborhoods and nearby park and open space facilities. They were asked to use “dots” to indicate their support for specific connections and to say which connection they consider most important. The majority of people supported almost all of the connections. Several people noted opposition to the Ash Creek Trail (Phase 1) and one person each noted opposition to the North/South Connector Trail and Trail to the River. However, the majority of people supported these connections. The Mt. Fir Park Connector Trail was considered most important by more people than any other connection. The following table summarizes results of this exercise.

Following is a list of comments, organized by proposed connection.

- again for a right of way or sidewalk.

Ash Creek Trail Phase 1

- Make no connection to Ash Creek.
- No Ash Creek Trail.

Southbound Gun Club Road sidewalk and bike lane improvements

- “Engineeringly” impossible to connect to high school.
- Connector trail north side to high school.
- Needs to be upgraded; needs better lighting.

Riverview Park

- Consider relocation of parking to enhance view of river and protection of riparian vegetation. However, keep in mind access for users with disabilities.
- Maintain current amenities before adding new ones. If new amenities are added, select activities suitable for a broader age group, e.g., safe places to swim in river.
- Access point for river users (e.g., kayaks).

Central High School to SW Independence

- More places to ride bikes with no cars. Yes!
- Students already doing this as a connection from home to school.

North/South Connector Trail

- This stretch of Ash Creek has been regrown after being clear cut by the Ash Creek Water Conservation District in 1986. It would be a travesty to clear cut it

| Connections | I support this connection | This is the most important option |
|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ash Creek Trail Phase-1 | 7 support; 2 oppose | 3 |
| North/South Connector Trail | 6 support; 1 oppose | 0 |
| Central High School to South Independence Connector Trail | 6 support | 2 |
| Mt. Fir Connector Trail | 9 support | 4 |
| To the River Trail | 5 support; 1 oppose | 0 |

Station # 6 – Willamette Riverfront Area Results

Participants viewed two large-scale maps of potential improvements to existing parks and new park facilities along the Willamette River. They provided a variety of comments about these ideas, including the following.

- I love the idea of the parking area and launch for kayakers and tubing!
- Heavy traffic for residential street. (access road to Independence Sports Park)
- Now this is filled with apartments. (area southeast of Independence Sports Park)
- Are these really all going to be soccer fields? Some of us prefer softball. (Independence Sports Park)

- Former boat landing, old pilings; historic marker? (northwest of private property)
- I think the mountain bike park track makes more sense here as it’s closer to residential and parks and away from industrial. (northwest of private property)
- Skills park. (northwest of private property)
- No bike skills station; Madrona Park in Monmouth is better location. (northwest of private property)
- Support a community garden and orchard and berries. (Public Orchard option)
- All for a Community Garden. (Public Orchard option)
- And community garden. (Public Orchard option)
- The strong promenade of trees at edge of the garden is a good idea and reinforces spatial clarity. (Public Orchard option)
- Let’s double-check the need for 50’ radius on wells. (Well field 100’ easement)
- This boardwalk makes a lot of sense. Brings users out to the water in a very dynamic manner. Hazard? (trail north of hiker/biker camp)
- I like the widening and curving of the overflow parking area.
- Limited drinking fountains in town; add more. (near amphitheater)
- Skills park. (east of existing Dog Park)
- I like the classic alignment and spatial arrangement that frames the view. (river steps and nature play area)
- Make this larger, more like photos on display boards. (splash pad and stage)
- Water Park at Valley Concrete site, rather than houses. Hotel guests could use also.
- Focus on neighborhood parks.
- No Ash Creek Trail. (two comments)
- Lots of ideas. What can Independence really afford and maintain?

Station # 7 – Funding Results

Participants viewed a summary of potential funding options and a table of estimated costs for future park projects. They used “post-it” notes to comment and dots to show support for specific funding sources. Comments included the

following.

- Pioneer Park needs more money.
- United Way grants.
- Pay for development and maintenance as well.
- Support for grants. (two dots)
- Support for partnership and volunteer contributions. (one dot)
- Ash Creek Trail important connection.
- Trail proposals not needed, expensive, hard to maintain and not safe.

Other – Water Park/Aquatic Center

Participants viewed and commented on a display of an aquatic center or water park which was identified as a potential outcome of formation of a joint parks and recreation district managed by the cities of Independence and Monmouth and the Central School District. Comments on this board included the following.

- Oh yeah!
- Absolutely!
- Splash pads, yes.
- Yes! (two comments)
- Dots for support. (four dots)
- Dot opposing. (one dot)

4.7 COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETINGS SUMMARY

As a follow-up to preparation of Master Plan alternatives, staff from GreenWorks and their team member at Angelo Planning Group conducted community outreach meetings with several stakeholder groups of the system plan alternatives. These meetings included the Central School District, regional bicycle advocates, the Lions Club, the Luckiamute Watershed Council, and Latino Community Members. City staff also is providing information to Airpark neighborhood residents, the Independence Chamber of Commerce, and the Lion’s Club to distribute to their members. The meetings are summarized below.

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Central School District representatives Buzz Brazeau (Superintendent), Cec Koontz (Facilities Manager), Shane Hedrick (Central High School Athletic Director) and Dale Cutsforth (Talmadge Middle School Athletic Director) participated in this meeting. Key points of discussion included the following:

- The School District is a strong supporter of a future Independence-Monmouth recreation district which could be a joint district with the two cities and the school district. Given current limitations on funding and staffing resources, many of the future park and recreation goals of the two cities and district may only be possible through formation of and funding by this type of district. It also would represent a more efficient combined use of resources (money and staff) by the two communities. Improving the communities’ recreational facilities and programs also is a way to improve residents’ connections to Independence and Monmouth and keep them in the area, rather than going outside of the area (e.g., to Salem) for recreation.
- This District strongly supports coordination and sharing of city and School District facilities for community use where there is available capacity. That said, in some areas, there will be limited capacity for community use of District facilities, particularly athletic playing fields.
- The playground at the Henry Hill district facility is currently open during most parts of the week and weekend for community use and quite a few community members use the playground on a regular basis, including local daycare groups and the YMCA. The gymnasium also is used regularly by youth sports leagues and can be reserved for community or private events. The tennis courts are owned by the City but rarely used for tennis. The District would be open to considering the entire Henry Hill set of park and recreation facilities (Henry Hill Park, the swimming pool, the playground,

gymnasium and playing fields) as more of a neighborhood recreation site. However, there would need to be limitations on regularly scheduled community use and other activities, including the following:

1. It would be difficult to rent out or schedule the playground for regular, ongoing use by specific groups beyond what is currently being done.
 2. The playing fields are managed and scheduled by the District and are generally at capacity during much of the year. Occasional, casual community use may be an option as long as such use does not become regular use which prevents other people or groups from using the fields and as long as the fields are able to get adequate rest for maintenance purposes.
 3. Moving the play equipment to Henry Hill Park could possibly be considered and might be advantageous to both the City and School District.
- There are probably very limited opportunities for community use of other playing fields owned and managed by the District. They are already at capacity and need time to rest and be repaired, consistent with good maintenance practices.
 - The District’s top priorities for use of its facilities is first and foremost to serve District activities. To the extent that there is additional capacity to meet other needs, priorities would include casual neighborhood use and use by adult recreational groups. Club sports group use would be the lowest priority, given the impacts of such use on the facilities.
 - If the District’s facilities are available for casual use, it will be important to have infrastructure needed to support such use, including restrooms. Safety considerations also are important. The design of some facilities presents safety issues. Open areas are most appropriate for community use from a safety perspective. Facilities with lots of “nooks and crannies” are problematic in that regard.
 - Several sites represent good opportunities for future community use and should be further considered, particularly if the cities and District pursue a joint Recreation District concept. All of these properties are close to School District facilities, making them good candidates for both community and District use. They include:
 1. 16th Street property (near the City’s wastewater treatment facilities)
 2. Open grassy area next to the First Baptist Church

3. Open area next to the Central Baptist Church

- If the two cities and District pursue a joint recreation district, the District recommends development of a large, indoor multi-purpose recreational facility; it should be oversized to ensure it has the capacity to expand in the future as the area grows.
- The City of Monmouth also should be involved in this conversation. Their upcoming visioning process is a good opportunity for community discussion about these ideas.

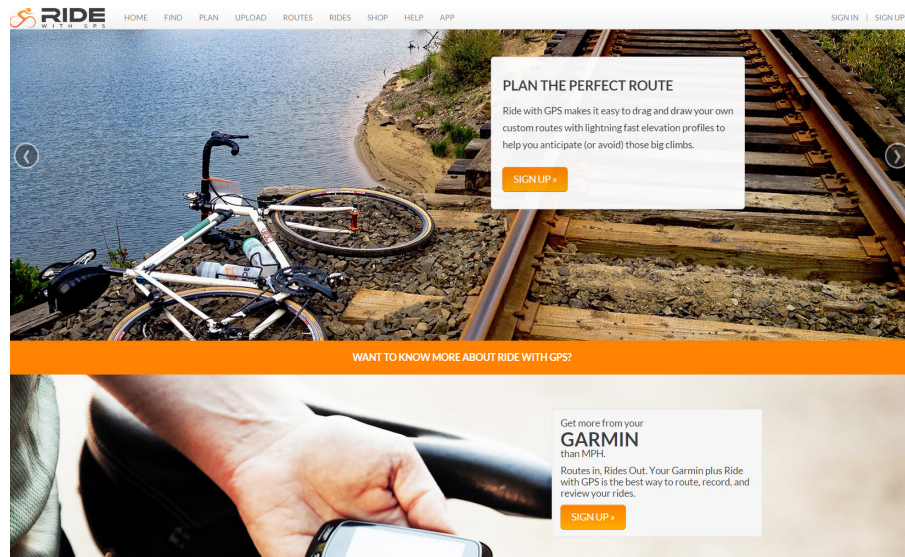
MARSHALL GUTHRIE – MONMOUTH CITY COUNCILOR/BICYCLING ADVOCATE

This meeting focused on providing opportunities for local residents and visitors to bicycle for commuting and recreational purposes. In general, approaches would include promotion of local facilities, routes and bicycle-friendly businesses; development of information for bicyclists about local routes and destinations (online and on-the-ground); improvements to selected bicycle facilities; and development bike-centric facilities. Specific discussion points included the following:

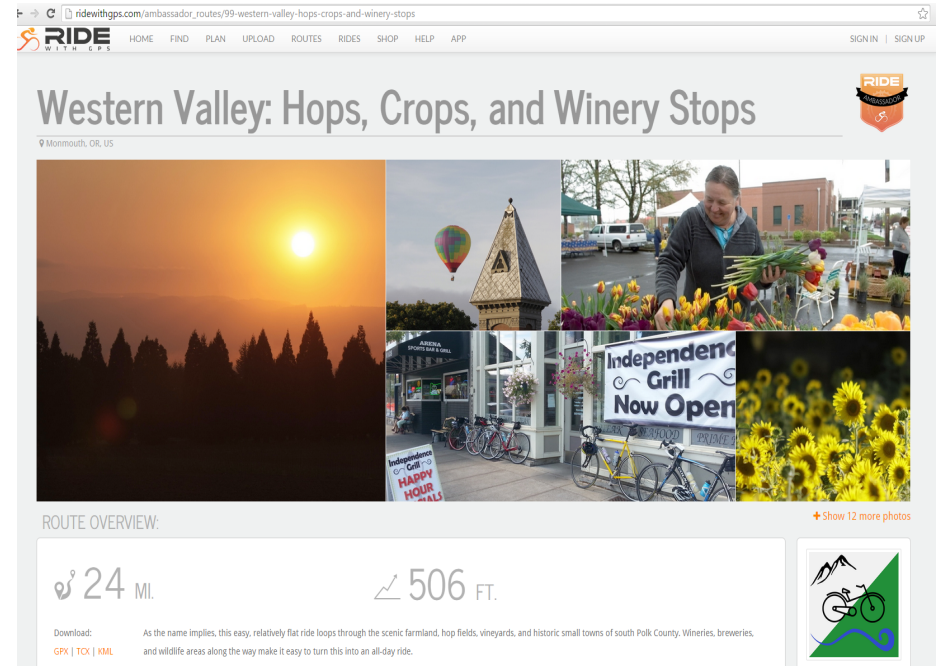
- This is one of the best locations in the Willamette Valley for bicycling with several great scenic routes on a combination of separated paths and low-traffic streets with a mix of topography for people of all abilities.
- The downtowns of both communities can benefit economically from more bicycling in the area and those areas should be the focus of bicycle-friendly businesses or bicycle-centric facilities.
- Highway 51 is the primary route for travel between the two communities – from downtown Independence through the S curve and along Main Street in Monmouth. Travel on the paved pathway along Highway 99 towards Dallas is a good extension of this route.
- There are some good portions of routes parallel to the Highway 51 connection but none of them extend all the way from one community to the other and people are ultimately forced back to Highway 51 near the S curves. Partial parallel routes include Powell, Clay, C and F streets.
- The ideal connection between Independence and Monmouth would be along Ash Creek (the proposed Ash Creek Trail). This would be a great connection, particularly for students commuting from northern neighborhoods in Independence to Western Oregon University.

- There are some great regional recreational bicycling loops in the area. Local bicyclists are promoting these routes online via the “Ride with GPS” website <http://ridewithgps.com/> (Figures 7 and 8). They include:
 1. Buena Vista loop
 2. Rittner Creek loop
 3. Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway route which needs a better connection between Independence and Salem
- Recommended actions by the cities of Independence and Monmouth to support local and regional bicycling include the following:
 1. Continue to promote local routes and rides online and in coordination with statewide groups like Travel Oregon, Cycle Oregon and Travel Salem, as well as with local bicyclists, businesses and other organizations like the Chambers of Commerce.
 2. Improve bicycle facilities along Highways 51 and 99.
 3. Create places people can go with large groups and have lots of options for recreation, e.g., like Henry Hill or Riverview Park.
 4. General interest in the biker/boater campground and mentioned several anecdotes of bicyclists looking for a place to stay in the area.

Section IV: Figure 7 - Ride with GPS Website Home Page



Section IV: Figure 8 - Ride with GPS Website Western Valley Bike Route page



CHRIS EGGENS – BIKES PLUS AND BLACK ROCK MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

Chris has previously recommended that a mountain bike skills park be located somewhere in the Riverfront area and one of the Master Plan options includes a suggested location for that type of facility. Chris also has met with skate park design firm Dreamland, one of the premier skate park designers in the Pacific Northwest and they are interested in possibly designing and building a skate park in the same area. Discussion items included the following:

- A skills park could be co-located with a skate park and a skate park also could be designed to accommodate BMX bicycles.
- The location for a skills park identified in one of the Riverfront area options would be a good location in that it would be visible from the highway, close to downtown and near existing parking for the Dog Park.
- Either a skate park or skills park could be elevated to reduce floodplain issues.
- Chris has also considered sites next to the Fire Station and the existing skate

park site in Monmouth. The Independence riverfront site has advantages over both of those sites in terms of size and visibility.

- Site size needs have not been determined but it likely would take up as much space as the existing soccer field near the Dog Park. More area might be needed for parking as well. Chris offered to work with Dreamland to better define the site needs.
- There are good opportunities for volunteer efforts to help design, build and maintain the facilities, particularly in terms of earth movement and grading.
- Shawn Irvine suggested that Chris meet with other potential advocates for the site and begin to identify a proposal for moving forward that the City can consider.

LUCKIAMUTE WATERSHED COUNCIL

Shawn Irvine presented information about the Parks Plan to the Luckiamute Watershed Council (LWC) at one of their regular meetings in March. Comments and discussion items included the following:

- Minimize impervious surfaces and use of chemicals.
- Implementing streambank preservation in a natural way is important; don't use riprap.
- Make sure the development code minimizes floodplain development and/or has a setback for Ash Creek.
- It would be great to include interpretive signs at bioswales like the ones at the boat ramp. The LWC has done this kind of thing before and can help.
- The LWC is very interested in opportunities to open off-channel habitat on the Willamette.
- Trails are great and need to happen, but make sure you plan for the long term maintenance – they can be vectors for invasive species (blackberries, scotch broom, etc.) to spread.
- Call the LWC if the City has questions or will be doing anything related to riparian/watershed issues. The Council is a resource and wants to help.

LIONS CLUB

Shawn Irvine presented information about the Parks Plan to the Lions Club at their regular meeting in March. Comments and discussion items included the following:

- There was lots of interest in trails and trail systems; they love what the City has and want more, especially off street.
- They expressed cautious interest in the idea of a recreation district; doing it as a partnership with Monmouth makes sense.

- Will the Supreme Court ruling on rails to trails would affect our riverfront railbed property? The group understands that rails/trails in other locations are in danger of reverting to neighboring property owners because of this ruling.
- Consider exercise stations along trails.
- Create places people can go with large groups and have lots of options for recreation, e.g., like Henry Hill or Riverview Park.
- The group expressed general interest in the biker/boater campground and mentioned several anecdotes of bicyclists looking for a place to stay in the area.

COLONIA AMISTAD – LATINO COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

Kevin Alejandre and Robin Craig met with several members of the Latino community in April 2015 to share the master plan alternatives. The meeting was hosted in Spanish and meeting information was translated into Spanish. Comments and discussion items included the following topics:

- Desire for larger playgrounds and places for infants and children to play
- Specific support for a splash pad and skate park location to be developed in the future parks system
- Overall support and interest in a broad range of recreation activities and facilities to support those activities.
- Create large covered gathering areas for grilling and spending time with family and friends
- Support for the Ash Creek Trail connection and the North South Connection between Hoffman Road south through Wildfang Park to Monmouth Avenue.

4.8 PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #3 SUMMARY

The third Public Open House for the Parks Master Plan project was held on April 9, 2015. The meeting was conducted at Independence City Hall between 4 and 7:30 p.m. where light refreshments were provided by the city and participants were able to drop in at any time. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Orient people to the project, providing an overview of project scope of work, schedule and public engagement goals.
- Present and solicit comments on updated draft Master Plan recommendations for an overall approach to meeting the community's park and open space needs over the next 20 years, as well as proposed new facilities and improvements to existing facilities.

OPEN HOUSE STATIONS

- **Station #1 – Project Overview:** Review the project schedule and updated Project Goals.
- **Station #2 – Potential New Parks:** Engage in a “dot exercise” to note support for developing new parks over the next 20 years.
- **Station #3 – Park Facility Improvements:** Review diagrams of proposed improvements to existing parks to note support for proposed improvements and/or additional ideas.
- **Station #4 – Wayfinding and Interpretive Facilities:** Review proposed signage and interpretive facilities within parks and to help people travel to parks in Independence; note support and additional ideas.
- **Station #5 – Neighborhood Connections to Parks:** Review proposals for improved connections from existing neighborhoods to local parks; affirm support for recommendations.
- **Station #6 – Riverfront Park Facilities:** Review recommendations for new and improved parks, trails, natural areas and other facilities along the river; affirm recommendations and/or suggest other ideas.



NOTIFICATION

A variety of activities were undertaken to notify people about the meeting and encourage them to attend, including the following:

- Announcements on the project website and via the City's social media accounts.
- Flyer and newsletter article included in the City's utility bill mailed to all Independence households.
- E-mails to interested parties list, partnering community groups, stakeholder interviewees.
- Meeting fliers located at City Hall, the Library, and other gathering places.
- Media releases to local media outlets.

SUMMARY RESULTS OF PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE MEETING #3

Approximately 30 people attended the meeting. Many of them participated in most of the exercises described below, providing a variety of comments about overall park system priorities, as well as specific needed improvements to individual facilities described above. Key open house results included the following:

- Participants were generally supportive of many of the ideas presented at the open house, including improvements to the Riverfront, a wayfinding program and improvements to a number of existing neighborhood parks.
- Most participants do not support locating a new neighborhood park in the vicinity of the Independence Airpark.
- Support for proposed connections from neighborhoods to parks was mixed.
- Most participants support wayfinding and interpretive and trail facilities.
- Participants generally support improvements to most existing parks, with particularly strong support for improvements to the Independence Sports Park and Mt. Fir Park.
- Some participants say that proposed new parks are not needed and question the ability of the City to maintain existing or new parks.
- While there was relatively strong participation in the open house, participants did not seem to represent a broad cross-section of Independence residents. A majority of them live in a single neighborhood and attended the open house with a primary objective of opposing a new park in the vicinity of the Independence Airpark. They also did not appear to

represent a wide range of ages or ethnicities, with the majority being older residents and with virtually no Latino residents present. Many were generally opposed to new facilities, citing the potential inability of the City to pay for the maintenance of existing or new facilities. This is at odds with much of the public feedback the City received from residents earlier in the process which was supportive of improvements to a variety of different types of park, trail and natural area improvements.

Station #2 – New Park Locations Results

Participants were asked to use “dots” to note relative priorities for new parks in locations which are currently lacking in local or neighborhood parks. The majority of attendees were from the Airpark neighborhood in northern Independence and expressed a variety of concerns about a park in this area, including possible safety concerns, as well as the potential for vandalism or other unwanted activities by visitors to the park (particularly young people). This was particularly a concern for any location directly adjacent to or in very close proximity to the airstrip itself. This was tempered somewhat by comments from other meeting participants with children who want a place close-by where their kids can play. One couple also said that they are concerned about parks in this area but think their concerns could be addressed through good design, siting and planning of a new park. Support for possible new parks outside the airpark area was mixed, with some opposition resulting from the perception that a park located in one of these areas also could end up close to and affecting the Airpark. The highest priority was for the Polk Street Park which garnered the most high priority dots and fewest low priority dots. The following table summarizes responses to this topic.

| Park Location | 1, HIGHEST PRIORITY | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5, LOWEST PRIORITY | AVERAGE PRIORITY |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Southwest Independence Park | 2 | 2 | | | 8 | 3.8 |
| West Side Park | 1 | | | 5 | 9 | 4.4 |
| South Independence Park | 4 | 2 | 1 | | 6 | 3.2 |
| North Independence Park | 5 | | | | 11 | 3.8 |
| Polk Street Park | 7 | 1 | | 1 | 6 | 2.9 |

Station #3 – Improvements to Existing Parks Results

Participants viewed diagrams of proposed improvements to each neighborhood park in Independence and the relative priority of improvements to each park. Support for specific improvements varied although several parks received fairly strong support. Highest priority parks included Mt. Fir Park, Independence Sports Park, Polk Street Park, Pfaff Park and Henry Hill Park in that order. Parks with mixed or lower levels of support included Pioneer Park, Unnamed Park and Wildfang Park. The following table summarizes responses to this topic.

| Park | 1, HIGHEST PRIORITY | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8, LOWEST PRIORITY | AVERAGE PRIORITY |
|------------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|------------------|
| Pfaff Park | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | | | | 3.1 |
| Pioneer Park | 1 | | | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4.9 |
| Henry Hill Park | 1 | 2 | 3 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4.0 |
| Un-named Park | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Wildfang Park | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 3 | |
| Mt. Fir Park | 4 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | 1.6 |
| Ind. Sports Park | 9 | 3 | | | | | 1 | | 1.7 |
| Polk Street Park | 8 | 1 | | | 1 | | | 2 | 2.6 |



Station #4 – Wayfinding, Trails and Interpretive Facility Recommendations

Participants viewed maps and various photos of proposed approaches to providing signs and interpretive facilities in parks and signs direction people to parks in Independence. They were asked to use “dots” to indicate their support for the Wayfinding Plan. Three of four people who commented said they support the element of the Parks Plan.

Station #5 – Neighborhood and Park Connections Results

Participants reviewed maps and diagrams of proposed improved connections between neighborhoods and nearby park and open space facilities. They were asked to use “dots” to indicate their support for specific connections and to say which connection they consider most important. The majority of people supported almost all of the connections. Several people noted opposition to the Ash Creek Trail (Phase 1) and one person each noted opposition to the North/South Connector Trail and Trail to the River. However, the majority of people supported these connections. The Mt. Fir Park Connector Trail was considered most important by more people than any other connection. The following table summarizes results of this exercise.

| Trail Connection | 1, HIGHEST PRIORITY | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5, LOWEST PRIORITY | AVERAGE PRIORITY |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|------------------|
| River Trail | 11 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 1.6 |
| Mt. Fir Trail North/South | 1 | 2 | | | 4 | 3.6 |
| Central HS Connector Trail | 2 | | | | 5 | 3.9 |
| North/South Connector Trail #1 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 3.1 |
| North/South Connector Trail #2 | 5 | | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2.7 |



Station #6 – Riverfront Park Improvements Results

These recommendations received unanimous support from participants. Comments on proposed improvements included the following:

- Dock for float planes near downtown; would shop and eat here.
- We love this plan for our community.
- Looking forward to playgrounds for airpark kids; ___ future of the ___.
- Interpretive signs along Willamette River (trail).
- Softball/baseball fields in sports complex.
- How will these additions by the water affect community events such as Western Days, Hops and Heritage and Community Fest?

Additional Observations

As noted in the Summary Results of Public Open House Metting #3, participants did not seem to represent a broad cross-section of Independence residents. A majority of them live in a single neighborhood and attended the open house with a primary objective of opposing a new park in the vicinity of the Independence Airpark. They also did not appear to represent a wide range of ages or ethnicities, with the majority being older residents and with virtually no Latino residents present. Many were generally opposed to new facilities, citing the potential inability of the City to pay for the maintenance of existing or new facilities. This is at odds with much of the public feedback the City received from residents earlier in the process which was supportive of improvements to a variety of different types of park, trail and natural area improvements.