

## SALEM PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (SPRAB) MEETING

### Parks and Recreation Division Update – February 2026

#### 1. Salem Park Improvement Fund

The Salem Park Improvement Fund (SPIF) award committee met on Wednesday, February 4th to review the 2025-27 cycle project applications that were submitted by neighborhood associations for potential SPIF award funding. Thirteen project applications were submitted on behalf of ten neighborhood associations. The application requests totaled more than \$108,000+ worth of funding support. The SPIF program budget is \$60,000 for the 2025-27 cycle.

The project funding awards breakdown is as follows:

#### **Aldrich Park – Southeast Salem Neighborhood Association (SESNA)**

- Wheelchair Accessible play equipment  
Award Amount: \$5,000
- Information Kiosk w/plexiglass cover  
Award Amount: \$7,000

#### **Highland Park – Highland Neighborhood Association**

- Moveable soccer goal  
Award Amount: \$1,800

#### **Edgewater Parkway Park – West Salem Neighborhood Association**

- Install linear French drain adjacent to multi-use path (approx. 25 feet)  
Award Amount: \$8,600

#### **Livingston Park – North Lancaster Neighborhood Association (NOLA)**

- Pollinator Hedgerow  
Award Amount: \$6,000

#### **Grant Park – Grant Neighborhood Association**

- Replacement of infant/toddler swings  
Award Amount: \$2,000

#### **Bush Park – South Central Association of Neighbors (SCAN)**

- Rose garden rehabilitation  
Award Amount: \$5,800

#### **Clark Creek Park – Morningside Neighborhood Association**

- Additional funds for play equipment shade cover  
Award Amount: \$10,000

#### **Stephens-Yoshikai Park – Northgate Neighborhood Association**

- Mutt Mitt Dispenser and trash receptacle  
Award Amount: \$2,000

#### **Fircrest Park – Southwest Association of Neighbors (SWAN)**

- Replace basketball hoop, backboard and pole, re-stripe and plexipave court surface  
Award Amount: \$11,800

## 2. **Comprehensive Park System Plan Update: “Parks for All of Us”**

Park Planning staff, collaborating closely with the City’s Long-range Planning staff, are launching the *Parks for All of Us* initiative, Salem’s update to the comprehensive parks system plan. This effort builds on the work completed through *Our Salem*, the City’s Comprehensive Plan update adopted in 2022, and continues Salem’s commitment to equity, accessibility, and inclusivity in long-range planning. The initiative’s name is intended to provide a clear and memorable identity—similar to *Our Salem* and *Salem in Motion*—while signaling the City’s focus on equitable access, inclusive decision-making, and need-based investment in parks and recreation.

As part of this initiation work, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was released to solicit professional planning and technical services from qualified consultants. The RFP is posted on [OregonBuys.org](https://OregonBuys.org) and closes on March 6, 2026.

Parks for All of Us is proposed to establish a long-range vision for Salem’s park system through three core service areas: (1) data analytics and system mapping to identify gaps in access and ensure all residents can reach green space; (2) inclusive community engagement to gather input on recreational needs and priorities; and (3) policy and strategy development to guide future park development, funding, and maintenance. The initiative is designed to implement Comprehensive Plan goals adopted in 2022 that recognize parks as essential infrastructure, promote safe and welcoming spaces, and apply need-based equity considerations in planning and investment.

Staff are beginning preparations for a City Council work session on April 20 to: provide an overview of the current parks system plan and its role in guiding staff work; present a proposal for the system plan update that aligns recommendations with community priorities and the 2022 Comprehensive Plan policy goals while establishing a realistic, financially constrained implementation plan; share a proposed project name, currently *Parks for All of Us*, reflecting equity-focused policy direction and operational considerations; and seek Council feedback and buy-in on the proposed approach. Additional information will also be shared with SPRAB in the coming months, along with consultation opportunities, as the initiative progresses.

## 3. **Bush’s Pasture Park Crooked House Playground Resurfacing**

The City Council has authorized the creation of a mid-year project to replace the playground surfacing at the Crooked House Playground in Bush’s Pasture Park, with work anticipated in spring 2026. Park staff identified that the existing rubber tile surfacing, installed in 2015, is rapidly deteriorating, prompting the request to create this new project to maintain safety and accessibility. After evaluating several options, staff are pursuing synthetic turf with an impact-attenuating underlay, balancing safety, accessibility, durability, and long-term maintenance. Following a competitive process with quotes received from multiple vendors, the project cost has been refined to approximately \$167,000 to \$170,000. This project will be funded through the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond as part of the broader playground rehabilitation program.

**4. Fisher Road Park Phase 1 Development – Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application**

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) recently contacted Park staff regarding an opportunity to amend the City’s application to the state-administered, federally funded Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program for Phase 1 development of Fisher Road Park. Staff promptly pursued this opportunity, increasing the potential award from \$975,000 to approximately \$2 million.

The amended application expands the LWCF-eligible scope of work to include several high-priority amenities: a steel picnic shelter; a single-stall restroom facility; water play elements integrated into the playground (with minimal mechanical systems); and a small amphitheater with seating adjacent to the playground. These elements were not included in the original application, as staff intentionally limited the initial request to maintain competitiveness in what is typically a competitive grant program.

In addition to the increased funding opportunity, OPRD has offered flexibility to adjust the required local match from approximately a 70 percent local / 30 percent grant split to a 50/50 match ratio. This adjustment maximizes federal investment and improves the City’s ability to deliver these additional amenities. The amendment opportunity arose because total requests in the current LWCF cycle were lower than available funding, effectively reducing competition. Grant award recommendations are anticipated in May or June.

If the City is offered an award exceeding \$1 million, staff will return to City Council for authorization prior to executing any grant agreement. As noted in the October staff report authorizing submission of the original application, staff anticipated pursuing additional grant funding to support these priority amenities.

The revised Fisher Road Park project site plan included in the LWCF application is attached to this division report.

In coordination with Public Works Engineering, Parks Planning staff are proceeding with assignment of a landscape architecture consultant of record to support design, permitting, and construction documentation. Construction is currently anticipated to begin in July 2027.

**5. Riverfront Park Playground Renovation & Expansion, Electrical System Upgrades**

The Riverfront Park Playground Renovation and Expansion project has transitioned from design into the bidding and construction contracting phase. The project will deliver a significantly expanded, fully accessible playground, construction of a new pathway along the south edge of the South Meadow, and comprehensive upgrades to the park’s aging electrical system.

Bids were open on February 10, 2026. Staff anticipate executing a construction contract and holding a pre-construction conference by late February or early March. Following that meeting, staff will confirm the contractor’s proposed milestones—including demolition timing—and provide a schedule update. While the project is currently tracking approximately one to two months behind the original timeline, the team is working to recover time during the spring construction season. Substantial completion of the playground remains targeted for mid-summer 2026.

The new pathway through the South Meadow is intended to better separate user groups—particularly fast-moving cyclists—from the playground area to improve safety and circulation. Electrical upgrades are being delivered under the same construction contract, consolidating two planned projects into a single effort. The existing system is outdated and occasionally hazardous; improvements will enhance safety and provide reliable power for events and seasonal lighting. Most electrical work will occur underground, though new power pedestals will be visible throughout the park.

Staff and the project design consultant team are also finalizing a visual package of the final playground design for public release to support community awareness as construction approaches. A city-wide communication push will be occurring over the coming week, continuing with regular updates throughout construction.

## 6. Geer Park Construction Updates

Construction of the dog park and adjacent reservable picnic shelter is nearing substantial completion, while turf establishment is underway on the new soccer fields and baseball outfields. In addition, the sidewalk infill connection along Park Avenue—linking the park to the Oregon State Hospital campus and the Salem neighborhoods to the north and west—is progressing rapidly. This pedestrian access improvement strengthens neighborhood connectivity and enhances access to the recently opened skatepark and other park amenities.

The skatepark, which opened in November, is proving to be extremely popular, drawing skateboarders, BMX riders, and skaters of varying skill levels throughout the day. Its strong and consistent use underscores the demand for this type of facility in the community. Collectively, completion of these improvements represents a significant milestone in transforming the park into a well-connected, multi-use recreational destination serving a broad cross-section of residents.



*High school-aged volunteers with IKE Box (Isaac's Room) plant trees with Urban Forestry staff at Geer Park near the new skatepark*

## 7. Brown Road Park Phase 1 Development

Park staff are advancing Phase 1 implementation of the Brown Road Park Master Plan. In coordination with Public Works Engineering, staff are working with a design consultant to develop construction documents and engineering specifications. This technical phase is critical to translating the approved development plan into a detailed, buildable project.

Phase 1 focuses on delivering priority improvements identified during the master planning process. Key elements include development of a new playground area, construction of paved perimeter pathways to enhance accessibility and circulation, and establishment of designated open space for informal recreation. The plans also incorporate site furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles, as well as

necessary irrigation and landscaping improvements to support long-term site functionality and durability.

Updates regarding final scope, cost estimates, and the construction schedule will be provided in the coming months upon completion of the current design phase. Construction is currently anticipated to begin in mid- to late-2026.

#### **8. Fairview Park Phase 1 Development**

Development of Fairview Park continues to advance in alignment with the SPRAB-endorsed, Council-approved Development and Management Plan (March 10, 2025). As envisioned, implementation is structured in phases and aligned with available funding.

Staff are preparing to advance Phase 1, which is focused on establishing foundational infrastructure and delivering priority amenities that will support increased public use. Planned elements include a fully fenced, dual-zoned dog park with small shelters – funded through the 2022 Safety and Livability Bond; pedestrian pathways and off-street parking; installation of utilities and stormwater infrastructure; and development of a place-based interpretive space reflecting the site’s cultural and historical context – funded through an approximately \$825,000 funding award from the State of Oregon. Additional Phase 1 features identified in the development plan—such as a central play area, picnic shelters, restrooms, and broader landscape enhancements—remain under evaluation and will be calibrated to available capital resources and long-term operations and maintenance capacity. Design initiation is anticipated in early 2026, with construction currently targeted for 2027.