



November 3, 2023

City of Camas Council  
616 NE 4th Avenue  
Camas, WA 98607

**Commissioners:**

Ellen Burton, Chair

Katy Daane

David Dewey

Brittany Grahn

Jason Irving, Vice Chair

Steve Lorenz

Jenny Wu

**VISION:** We envision Camas as a thriving, cohesive community that honors a unique legacy of coordinated parks, trails, natural areas and diverse recreation opportunities highlighted by our lakes, rivers and streams. Stewardship and thoughtful enhancement of these assets ensure a safe, healthy, active and balanced lifestyle for all.

**MISSION:** Camas Parks and Recreation promotes a healthy and sustainable community by listening and responding to the community's needs and desires, protecting and preserving its natural spaces to improve ecological health, and developing and maintaining parks, trails and recreation programs that are welcoming for all.

**RE: Requesting Approval of Mayor's 2024 Proposed Budget**

Dear City Council members,

The Camas Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) respectfully requests the City of Camas Council approves the Mayor's 2024 budget. The Parks and Recreation Department's (Department) proposed budget is in direct response to and aligns with community priorities heard during the development of the 6-year 2022 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. By approving the budget, you reaffirm your commitment to implementing the adopted plan.

**Strategies**

To address our community's desires, balanced with Council's vision and guidance, the Director and Commission are prioritizing 2024 projects based on key strategies identified in the PROS Plan:

1. **Protect** our current assets by bringing parks and sports fields in poor and fair condition up to standard and maintaining and improving our natural resource assets in our parks, open spaces and trails.
2. **Continue building** great parks and trails with Council's partnership to fund capital and on-going operational expenses.
3. **Invest in our future** by taking a deep dive into open space management to safeguard our legacy lands, protect our ecosystem, and slow climate change.

In this letter, we will update you on **project status** and **propose three options** for moving forward in 2024.

**Department Overview**

The Department provides and manages a wide range of places and programs for year-round recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Additionally, the Department develops, operates, and maintains:

- **16 developed parks**, including neighborhood parks such as the well-used Grass Valley Park and destinations such as Fallen Leaf Lake Park;
- A variety of **outdoor recreation places**, from playgrounds and picnic areas to boating and water access, to sports facilities such as the Riverside Bowl Skate Park and Prune Hill Sports Park;
- Three **indoor recreation and community gathering** spaces – the Camas Community Center, Lacamas Lake Lodge, and Scout Hall;
- 12 miles of **City trails**, both neighborhood trails and regional trails such as Heritage Trail;
- Over 1,060 acres of **parks and open space** preserved (over 462 acres acquired in the last 10 years);
- An increasing number of **participants** served at **special events and recreational classes**, (21% and 25% growth, respectively, 2019-22); and
- **\$2.36M in grants**, 36% of all state Recreation and Conservation Office grant funding in 2022.

As our city grows and people continue working from home, more people and dogs are using the parks, trails and facilities daily, increasing maintenance needs and demands for new and improved facilities.

## 2023 Accomplishments and Updates

With Council's funding of the FY 2023 Budget and community priorities identified, the Department is on track as of November 2023 to implement the 6-year community-led PROS plan. These projects, typically completed with partners and often partially funded via state, county and local grants, were accomplished on-time within budget:

### COMPLETED

- ✓ Green Mountain open space acquisition reimbursement – \$1.25M RCO grant
- ✓ Riverside Bowl Skate Park renovation – \$39K in grants from three local foundations
- ✓ Louis Bloch Park bleacher replacement and ADA improvements to ensure compliance
- ✓ Educational/interpretive signage for the Washougal River Greenway Trail restoration project
- ✓ Updated Parks rules and signage to improve public safety, CMC 12.32
- ✓ Updated Parks and Recreation Commission, CMC 2.28

### UNDERWAY

- Crown Park renovation – bid issuance tentative for January 2024, \$500K RCO grant
- South Lacamas Creek Trailhead – bid issuance tentative for January 2024, \$500K RCO grant
- Parks and Open Space Management Plan – \$75K Department of Natural Resources grant
- Washougal River Greenway Trail restoration project – partnership with Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement
- Off-Leash dog area – partnership with DOGPAW, fund-raising and volunteer commitment
- T-3 Trail – connecting trails around Lacamas Lake

### ON-GOING

- Special events – over 11,000 attended 20 plus free events in 2022, a 21% increase from 2019
- Recreational classes – almost 2500 attended 268 classes in 2022, a 25% increase from 2019
- Grants – both management and new applications
- Signage update – 3 signs completed promoting safety (park rules, public trail, trail courtesy)
- Pilot programs – repeat successful Water Safety month and Fuel Reduction/Defensible Space workshop

### Next Steps

Since the 2024 revenue projections have decreased and a parks project manager is no longer funded, the Commission recognizes priorities may change. Thus, we propose three options for Council to consider:

1. **Current path** - The Department **continues** on its current path, focusing on systemic changes that protect current assets, build great parks and trails, and invest in our future. **Pool and community center planning delayed to 2025-26.**
2. **Reprioritize work** - Council could reprioritize, asking the Department to **focus on the pool and community center, stopping work** on current planning projects **adversely affecting** our ability to secure grants.
3. **Additional staffing** - Council could reallocate additional **staffing** (e.g., Parks project manager) so **all** the FY 2023-24 budgeted projects proceed **including pool and community center planning.**

**We recommend options 1) current path or 3) additional staffing.** Then the Department can continue delivering on our community-driven vision and commitments. We sincerely appreciate your continued support of our valued Camas parks, trails, open space, and recreational programming, all of which contribute to what makes Camas a special place and our "small town feel."

Sincerely,



Ellen L. Burton

Chair

City of Camas Parks & Recreation Commission