



AGENDA REPORT

Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting

TODAY'S DATE: 03/04/2025
MEETING DATE: 03/12/2025
TO: Parks & Recreation Commission
FROM: Maeve Nevins-Lavtar, Park Planning & Development Manager
SUBJECT: Park Planning & Capital Improvement Project Priorities

DESCRIPTION/BACKGROUND:

The [2020 Parks & Rec. Master Plan](#) contains the historical Park Division Background and Community Needs Assessment, Parks and Facilities Inventory Assessment & Analysis, Site Specific Concept Plans, Funding Analysis, Recommendations and Action Plan. The Appendix includes a detailed Level of Service Analysis (LOS) and GRASP analysis, which benchmark current conditions and direct future funding efforts and development efforts. This information creates a baseline blueprint for the future care of existing assets and an action plan for high priority capital improvements. However, not all deferred maintenance issues, nor the need to upgrade existing facilities to an inclusive and ADA accessible standard, were identified. Further assessment in the form of a current "Existing Conditions Report" and "prioritization assessment" for all parks, trails, paths, facilitates, and open spaces with current cost estimates is recommended.

Summary of Master Plan's Vision & Objectives:

The Plan identifies 5 Design Principals and Community Values including:

1. Maintain and enhance park space and public waterfront as a family and community gathering space.
2. Maximize the public's recreational use of waterfront.
3. Reinforce connectivity between parks, recreation opportunities, community and downtown locations.
4. Repurpose underutilized areas for new or needed amenities.
5. Explore improvements that encourage activities that contribute to the economic vitality of Sandpoint.

Specific Park Planning and Capital Projects Goals include:

- Goal 1: Provide integrated and comprehensive parks and recreation facilities to serve Sandpoint's needs.
- Goal 3: Continue to improve organizational efficiencies.
- Goal 4: Increase Financial Opportunities

Capital Improvements: Highest priority remaining **capital priorities** previously included in the master plan: implement the concept plans for *City Beach*, *Downtown Waterfront*, and *Travers/Centennial/Great*

Northern Sports complex. The high-level cost estimate for design and implementation was approximately \$170 Million in 2021.

Planning priorities: the master plan prioritized acquiring additional park property(s) to meet the anticipated LOS demands through strategic property purchase and/or access through partnerships; and improve/add trail/pathway connectivity through the integration of the City's multi-modal Transportation Plan and other regional trail plans.

NEXT STEPS (2025 AND BEYOND):

Parks Staff requests feedback from the PRC on prioritization for planning, fundraising pursuits and implementation. The proposed list of projects was generated through staff analysis of priorities as based on previous master plans, including the 2010 and 2020 Parks and Recreation Master Plans, staff site inspections of park property, and community feedback. This list is not all-encompassing, recognizing that available funding, workload capacity of staff, and City Leadership priorities may impact prioritization timeline and hierarchy. **Note: Items with Asterix (*) are already on the scheduled workplan of Staff.**

CONSTRUCTION 2025:

Travers Park Construction Continued:

- ***JER/Playground/Skatepark** – Complete active construction projects in spring: Landscaping, splash-pad equipment install, punch-list items inside & out, amenities installation, signage by June 15th
- ***Outdoor Tennis Courts Renovations** – Currently in final design; Bid in March pending USTA Technical Review that will allow City to qualify for a potential \$80k grant; Construction in mid-June to end July 2025 (after Highschool Tournament but before school begins). Scope TBD on available funding at time of contract bid award. Seeking additional grants for lighting upgrade to LED.

DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION 2025 - 2026:

- ***Travers Park Picnic Shelter** – if funded, could design in March, construction in spring-summer. Seeking donations now, we could use residual CIP funds if available or 2026 budget. (Est. \$25-\$50K, depending on design & materials).
- ***Travers Skatepark Shade Structures** - this project is currently seeking funding for adding shade structures to the existing skatepark in 2026.
- ***POP Trail Construction Management in Watershed (2025):** on-going construction management of the implementation of the Watershed Recreation Plan. Numerous projects are being completed in partnership with the City's Public Works team and non-profit partners.

City Beach Projects: Concept Design Development (Spring 2025 by in-house City Staff)

- ***Boater Parking Lot renovations phase 1-** IDPR WIF grant submitted - start design now-spring, bid for construction late summer if funded, build in fall and landscape in spring.
- ***RV Campground renovations** – IDPR RV Fund grant submitted - start design now-spring, bid for construction in late summer if funded, build fall through spring.

PLANNING: (Note, the following are for within City limits and do not include work being done by Staff in on City Parcels within the Little Sand Creek Watershed).

- **Dog Park Feasibility Study** - Goal would be to use the study to identify the highest priority dog park facility and then take that concept through design (using in-house staff) and then fundraise and construct in following year, pending available funding.
- **Sand Creek Water Trail Non-Moto Boat Launch** – Utilize in-house staff to design as much as possible, then seek funding through a future RTP Grant and other sources while pursuing permitting. Currently two sites are identified for an ADA-accessible non-motorized boat launch and associated amenities, however there is a Sand Creek Connections planning report anticipated to be completed this spring that if adopted by City Council, identifies additional boat launch facilities. Media: [Link here](#)
 - **Site A:** Sand Creek Trailhead (this was identified in the Parks Master Plan). Challenges include ADA access would be required from parking lot to launch, most feasible option.
 - **Site B:** Chamber of Commerce Site (this was identified in the Downtown Design Competition Report). Challenges include significant grade change from parking lot to water would increase costs for an ADA ramp; need for restroom facility to support boater traffic at that site.
- **Invasive Weed Management Plan** for within City Limits – The City does not currently have an adopted invasive weed management plan for supporting [City Code](#). This project has support from County and State partners and could be completed utilizing in-house staff. Once a plan is adopted, there would be opportunities for improved City property management as well as education and enforcement on private property. As new construction developments continue, it is highly recommended that the City prioritize this planning effort. City links: <https://www.sandpointidaho.gov/police/page/noxious-weeds>
- **Cedars Park Site Plan** – This 2.56 acre natural-use park is [tucked away](#) on the north end of Sand Creek and accessible by the steep, non-ADA paved pathway connected to the Schweitzer Cut-off round-a-bout, or off of Maddie Lane. There is no designated parking (notably the lack of designated ADA-accessible parking), and no park amenities including rule signage, making it challenging for law enforcement.
- **Ponderay Bay Trail:** Trailhead Plaza and Kiosk at City Beach trail entrance and ADA Parking Lot (could potentially pave ADA parking spaces this summer, if desired, or pursue additional funds for a larger re-grading and paving project). Plaza at City Beach was identified in the Bay Trail master plan to include a map kiosk, bench and art. No funding is currently available for construction, but there are multiple potential donors interested in supporting both projects. [POB website link](#).
- **Donor Program and Implementation** – City Council recently adopted a donor policy, however it has yet to be implemented. Is this a program that the PRC wishes to utilize to fund park amenities such as benches, etc.? If yes, a program needs to be developed and strategic action plan for implementation and public outreach.
- **Lake View Park** - Site Plan needed; Native Plant Society Land Use Agreement is in the works as they recently completed their master plan for the arboretum. The Museum Lease Extension is on the agenda for the March PRC and upcoming City Council seeing an extension, and it won't be long before the Lions Club Agreement needs to be addressed. Additionally, with the upcoming wastewater treatment plant reconstruction, it is time to start thinking about developing a park site plan that would help guide the City as it moves forward with other area improvements. Through such a planning process, the other park users would be able to have confidence in their partnership and continue to invest in their leased assets. Note, the playground is not considered ADA accessible and the asphalt trails in the arboretum are in desperate need of repaving, tennis courts need resurfacing and the forest canopy is an on-going maintenance requirement. Deferred maintenance needs prioritization.

- **Hickory Park** - Site Plan is needed to guide the prioritization of park improvements. Note, the playground is not considered ADA accessible and deferred maintenance needs prioritization.
- **Cedar Street Triangle Park (s)** –Parks maintenance staff takes care of the multiple triangle green parks along Cedar and Main Street corridor. Should any of those properties be repurposed for a use that better serves the neighborhood? Is maintaining turf in alignment with best practices for stormwater treatment or are there other plant species such as clover that could replace lawn and lower maintenance costs. All of these items could be addressed through park planning efforts, and not just for Cedar Street triangle parks, but for all of the right-of-way property that City Parks maintains.

MAINTENANCE/SPECIAL PROJECTS: (This is a suggested list of ideas to tackle in the near future, and more analysis is needed for proper funding and staff resource dedication).

- ***City Beach Swings and ADA Trail** (construction scheduled for spring 2025) - the refurbished Travers Park equipment is finding a new home.
 - However, what about the other **forgotten areas of City Beach** that could use a minor makeover of mostly sweat-equity combined with volunteers time? A proper site analysis is recommended to assess what can be achieved with minimal resources and when would the PRC hope to see these tasks realized.
- **Travers-Centennial-Great Northern Sports Complex:**
 - **Asphalt Trail improvements:** there are several cracks and heaves along the aging asphalt path that flows through the sports complex. These are safety hazards and are also considered non-ADA compliant.
 - **Landscaping maintenance** along the eastern creek is needed to remove invasive weeds and replant native species. There are many opportunities for volunteering, however organizing events is time consuming and often occurs after typical work hours.
 - **Passive park corner and arched “troll” bridge repairs:** Fortunately the local pollinator plant lovers are working on adopting this little corner of the sports complex, but there is deferred maintenance throughout that beloved corner.
- **Memorial Field Boat Wash** – Hook Up water/Paint asphalt
- **Downtown stormwater planters** - beautification, weeding and possible adopt-a-garden opportunities.
- **Volunteer Park Fix-It Program** – regularly scheduled events during summer to support above projects, ideally a typical event is on a Sat. morning from 9am to noon, and lunch would be catered for volunteers. It is an opportunity to complete deferred maintenance, meet neighbors, and add value to projects that are already in progress to maximize community impact.

Key Observations and Recommendations

1. **Resource Constraints:** The city currently has only one full-time Park Planner/Landscape Architect with limited administrative support, which may impact project implementation.
2. **Funding Considerations:**
 - Many projects are seeking grants or donations
 - High-level cost estimates for previous capital priorities were approximately \$170 Million in 2021
 - Funding availability will significantly impact project timelines
3. **Prioritization Needs:**
 - The commission is requested to provide feedback on project priorities for:
 - 0-5 years
 - 5-10 years
 - 10-20 years

Suggested Commission Review Approach

1. Evaluate projects against the master plan's core principles
2. Consider community needs and accessibility improvements
3. Assess feasibility given current staff and financial resources
4. Prioritize projects that:
 - Address critical infrastructure needs
 - Enhance recreational opportunities
 - Improve community connectivity
 - Maximize existing resources

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Review the detailed project list in the staff report
2. Discuss resource allocation and potential funding sources
3. Provide strategic guidance on project prioritization
4. Consider developing a phased implementation strategy

ACTION: N/A

WILL THERE BE ANY FINANCIAL IMPACT? N/A HAS THIS ITEM BEEN BUDGETED? Varies

ATTACHMENTS: none