

Performance Audit of Parks and Recreation Services

**ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION, OREGON**



August 12, 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter provides an introduction and an executive summary of the study to conduct a Performance Audit of Parks and Recreation of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. This chapter identifies the information and approach used in this study and presents the key findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Matrix Consulting Group was retained by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission to conduct a management and organizational analysis of all functions of the Commission's operation. The scope of the study, as defined by the proposal, includes the following:

- Analyze the staffing and management of the APRC including its staffing and operating structure.
- Evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs and services provided by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current and potential partnerships, outsourcing and promotional opportunities for parks and recreation services.
- Consider options regarding the governmental structure of the APRC.

This report provides the results of Matrix Consulting Group's analysis of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission programs and services.

2. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The following table summarizes the primary improvement opportunities identified by the Matrix Consulting Group in the performance audit of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. The chapters within this report should be read and consulted for a detailed description and analysis of each recommendation.

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Summary of Recommendations			
Page No.	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Priority
ADMINISTRATION DIVISION			
10	1	Adopt the proposed Administration Division organization chart reflecting the creation of the Golf Course Operations Division reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation.	Critical
11	2	Establish a new senior management position of Golf Operations Manager, reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation and charged with the management of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.	Critical
11	3	Work with the City of Ashland Human Resources Department to review and update all of the current job descriptions for full- and part-time positions in the APRC.	Desirable
13	4	Create a Five-Year Park Asset Repair and Replacement Plan as part of the CIP which includes the establishment of a Repair and Replacement Fund with an annual budget allocation to fund identified needs.	Necessary
13	5	Create a Technology Resources Plan as part of the CIP which includes the creation of a replacement fund for future technology needs in the organization.	Necessary
14	6	Implement an internal process to develop a comprehensive APRC administrative policy, procedure and operational manual that codifies all of the existing policies and procedures and establishes a process for updating the manual.	Critical
15	7	Establish a process to negotiate with the school district/s, Southern Oregon University and community agencies for use of selected sites and facilities for APRC programs and services.	Necessary
19	8	Create a 'brand' for parks and recreation in Ashland that promotes the values of leisure services to the community.	Critical
19	9	Develop an expanded marketing plan that expands the use of the website and uses social media to promote the values of parks and recreation and promotes the programs and services offered by APRC.	Necessary
19	10	Develop a marketing style guide that establishes policies and guidelines for all employees in the use of the APRC "brand" campaign and provides agency wide training for all personnel to ensure its appropriate use and implementation.	Necessary
19	11	Clarify and document the respective powers and duties of the APRC Commissioners and the Director of Parks and Recreation.	Desirable

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Summary of Recommendations			
Page No.	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Priority
20	12	Document all agreements between the City of Ashland and APRC relative to APRC's maintenance of City grounds and facilities.	Necessary
20	13	Work with local school districts to create formal written agreements outlining the terms and conditions of all maintenance to be performed by APRC on school property.	Necessary
23	14	Maintain the current organization of a directly elected Parks and Recreation Commission under the guidelines of the current City Charter and the current Memorandum of Understanding.	Desirable
RECREATION DIVISION			
35	15	Develop a Recreation Division Five-year Comprehensive Recreation Strategic Plan that supports the goals and objectives of the APRC and identifies goals, objectives, performance measures and facility needs and priorities to guide the future direction of recreation programs and services provided by APRC.	Critical
36	16	Conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment process to identify underserved groups and future recreation program interests and needs in the community.	Critical
37	17	Implement the proposed organizational structure for the APRC Recreation Division including the transition of the Golf Course operation, including golf course maintenance, to the Administration Division.	Critical
40	18	Create a comprehensive Policy and Procedure Manual containing related APRC, City, and Recreation Division policies and procedures to increase employee knowledge and understanding of the organization and improve overall consistency and employee effectiveness in program implementation.	Necessary
43	19	Establish an online customer feedback system to provide valuable data regarding Recreation Division operations including program evaluation, maintenance needs, facility improvements and future planning.	Necessary
47	20	Develop a Cost Recovery Plan and Policy that establishes a cost recovery model for recreation programs while balancing the need to provide core services at minimal or no cost.	Critical
47	21	Develop a clear and consistent percentage formula policy for programs utilizing contractual instructors that maximizes the revenue generation for the Division.	Critical

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Summary of Recommendations			
Page No.	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Priority
52	22	Establish an in-house task force process to explore and develop program alternatives and strategies to increase participation from currently underserved groups in the community.	Necessary
54	23	Establish a process to create greater opportunities for participant and resident input in recreation programs to increase the overall effectiveness of and support for departmental programs and services.	Desirable
PARKS DIVISION			
60	24	Develop a detailed asset inventory of all parks and open space sites including all structures, fixtures and their features to increase the effectiveness of park maintenance operations.	Necessary
60	25	Make generic facility information, such as acreage and amenities, available to the public online, and all detailed information available to all staff.	Desirable
61	26	Develop quality standards identifying the targeted maintenance condition of all park features.	Necessary
62	27	Establish and document routine maintenance procedures required to maintain park features in their desired condition.	Necessary
63	28	Establish a formal park maintenance training program that focuses on routine maintenance operations, developing personnel skill levels and encourages skilled veteran park personnel to mentor and train less experienced staff on the job.	Desirable
64	29	Establish a formal set of qualitative performance indicators consistent with the APRC goals and objectives by which the Commissioners and the public can judge the division's performance.	Necessary
64	30	Significantly increase the number of seasonal park maintenance staff during summer months.	Critical
65	31	Consider increased ways of utilizing volunteers in parks maintenance operations.	Desirable
67	32	Consider a policy that concentrates on the maintenance of existing facilities before building new ones, unless staff resources and funds are available for maintenance.	Critical
67	33	Prior to funding capital improvements, the APRC should identify a source of funding to ensure the future maintenance of all new park structures and fixtures proposed to be added to the APRC Parks Division's inventory.	Critical

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Summary of Recommendations			
Page No.	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Priority
67	34	The Parks Division should focus its efforts on performing preventive park and forestry maintenance and continue this approach until reactive maintenance is reduced to a fraction of preventive maintenance efforts.	Critical
68	35	Consider contracting for services such as restroom maintenance or forestry treatments.	Necessary
69	36	Periodically revisit APRC's Integrated Pest Management Policies to ensure its implementation continues to protect both the environment and the public without unnecessarily inhibiting the effectiveness of park maintenance efforts.	Necessary
72	37	Consider adoption of a CMMS or other means of determining the full cost of performing specific units of work.	Desirable
74	38	APRC management leadership is encouraged to share APRC's long-term vision for the Parks Division and meet regularly with division staff to share pending changes and future directions for the division to ensure their understanding of the strategic objectives and enlist their support in accomplishing positive outcomes.	Necessary
GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS			
79	39	Review and consider the golf course operational models to determine the most effective model for operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.	Desirable
81	40	Create a Golf Course Operations Division to consolidate the Pro Shop and Park Maintenance functions in one operating division.	Critical
81	41	Establish a Golf Operations Manager position, at the senior management level, responsible for the combined pro shop and maintenance operations of Oak Knoll Golf Course reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation.	Critical
85	42	Consider the establishment of an Enterprise Fund as the financial mechanism for the management and operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course providing an initial loan to establish the fund until adequate revenue are generated to fund the golf course operation.	Desirable
87	43	Adopt a policy providing parameters incorporating the use of a "business model" management approach which allows for inclusion of business strategies in the operations of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.	Critical
89	44	Partner with the Promotions Unit to develop and implement a marketing and promotions plan that incorporates a variety of marketing strategies to increase participation and revenue generation at Oak Knoll.	Necessary

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Summary of Recommendations			
Page No.	Rec. No.	Recommendations	Priority
91	45	Develop and implement performance standards for golf course maintenance that increase the “perceived value” of the Oak Knoll Golf Course playing experience.	Critical
91	46	Conduct an assessment of capital improvement projects needed at the golf course and establish a funding plan to implement these projects over the next three to five years.	Critical
94	47	Consider a variety of expanded program opportunities and strategies to increase use of the facility while increasing financial support for the Oak Knoll Golf Course.	Critical

2. ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

This chapter provides the project team’s analysis of the organizational structure, staffing, management, internal operations, and major components of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Administration Division. The Division’s role is to provide internal leadership and management to the entire APRC organization in support of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission goal of “maintaining and expanding park, recreation and educational opportunities; providing high quality, efficient and safe services with positive experiences for guests and other participants while maintaining community participation in the decision-making processes and promoting the environment.”

This chapter will review the positive features of the Administration Division which serve as the foundation of the organization and will present recommendations for improvements that build upon this strong administrative and leadership foundation.

1. THE ADMINISTRATION DIVISION INCORPORATES A NUMBER OF POSITIVE FEATURES THAT SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ORGANIZATION.

The project team conducted an initial analysis of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Administration Division through interviews with members of the APRC management staff and key support staff, toured parks and recreation facilities, reviewed a variety of background, planning, policy, budgetary and programmatic documents, conducted an onsite analysis of park sites in Ashland, compared the operation to “best practices” and conducted a comparative study with several similar parks and recreation agencies around the country.

The Administration Division is led by the Director of Parks and Recreation, appointed by the APRC, who currently oversees the management and operations of three major divisions including the Parks Maintenance Division, Recreation Division and Capital Projects and Facilities. In addition, the Promotions unit, Senior Center and administrative support positions also report directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

With direction and policy guidance from the APRC, the Administration Division is responsible for 785 acres of park lands including parks, trails, forest lands, and a golf course along with three community recreation facilities, an ice rink and swimming pool. In addition, the division oversees the implementation of a wide variety of recreation programs and services and the implementation of capital project planning and implementation.

The APRC 2015-17 adopted agency budget totals \$16,507,946 including the capital improvement budget of \$4,007,819. Actual revenues generated from programs and services offered by the APRC for FY 2014-15 year totaled \$682,761, with the 2015-17 FY proposed revenues increasing by only 1%. The 2015-17 FY current budget authorizes 44.80 FTE positions in the agency.

The project team analysis of the Administrative Division resulted in identifying a number of positive features and accomplishments of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission.

- The Commissioners has developed and adopted a long range plan with clear goals and objectives to guide APRC internal operations and provide future direction to the agency.
- The APRC budget prepared by the Administration Division clearly aligns the operating and capital improvement budgets with the goals and objectives established in the Commission long range plan.

- A capital improvement program identifies a variety of new park and facility construction projects based on revenues generated from the Food and Beverage Tax, Parks SDCs, inter-fund transfers, grants and other sources of funds.
- The APRC Administration Division has developed a positive working relationship with the City of Ashland based on the current City/APRC Memorandum of Understanding.
- The Administration Division has provided effective leadership to guide and direct the Parks, Recreation and Capital Facilities Divisions in the implementation of programs and services for visitors and the residents of Ashland.
- The Ashland Senior Center program focuses on providing access to social service programs for seniors and the elderly.
- The centralized Promotions Unit has developed an effective program to publicize and market the programs and services of the APRC.

These positive features highlight some of the strengths of the Administration Division and establish the framework for discussion and analysis of several administrative opportunities for improvements to the programs and services offered by APRC. A presentation of these improvement opportunities follows.

2. THE CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADMINISTRATION DIVISION COULD BE MODIFIED TO MORE EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO THE CITIZENS OF ASHLAND.

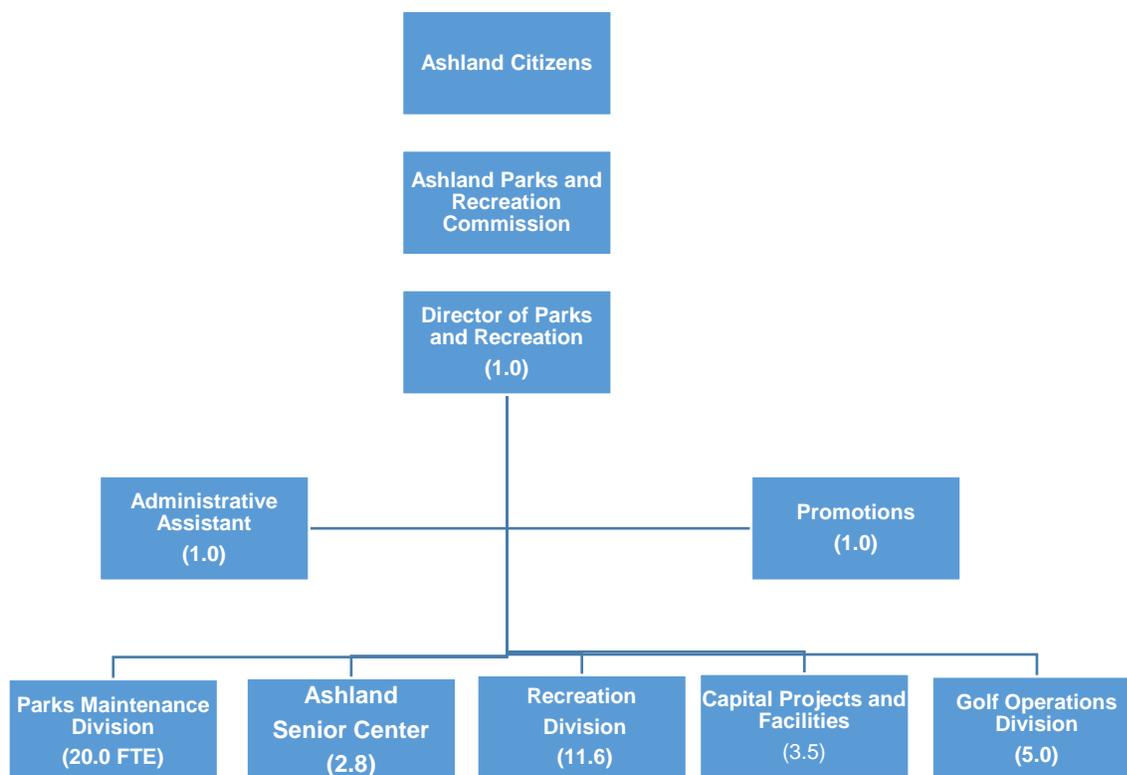
The current structure of the APRC organization and its Administration Division should be adjusted to reflect recommended changes in program operations within the Parks Maintenance and Recreation Divisions. In its analysis of the current organizational structure and in the process of identifying effective strategies for the implementation for future operations, the project team identified one major area for change in the organizational structure of the Administration Division.

The Oak Knoll Golf Course Pro Shop operations were transferred to the Recreation Program unit of the Recreation Division for overall program supervision and direction. A

detailed discussion and analysis of the golf course operation is included in the Recreation Division, Park Maintenance and Oak Knoll Golf Course chapters of this study.

As a result of the program analysis a proposed recommendation having a direct impact on the Administration Division organizational structure is the creation of a Golf Operations Division, combining the pro shop operation currently housed in the Recreation Division and the Greens Maintenance Unit of the Parks Maintenance Division, into a newly created Golf Operations Division, headed by a new senior management position of Golf Operations Manager, who reports to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

The following organization chart reflects the proposed creation of the Golf Operations Division as a new unit within the Administration Division:



Given these current and previous staffing changes made over the course of the last several years and as the Director of Parks and Recreation has established the appropriate staffing team for the APRC, the roles and responsibilities for staff positions may have changed. As a result, the Administration Division should work with the City's Human Resources Department to update all of the full-time and part-time job descriptions in the APRC to reflect recent changes in the scope, roles and responsibilities of the positions.

Recommendation: Adopt the proposed Administration Division organization chart reflecting the creation of the Golf Course Operations Division reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

Recommendation: Establish a new senior management position of Golf Operations Manager, reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation and charged with the management of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

Recommendation: Work with the City of Ashland Human Resources Department to review and update all of the current job descriptions for full- and part-time positions in the APRC.

3. EXPANDING THE CURRENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM TO INCLUDE A PARK ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND A TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE PLAN WILL ENSURE THAT CURRENT PARK ASSETS ARE MAINTAINED AND UPGRADED ALONG WITH NEW PARK DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND THAT THE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES OF THE AGENCY ARE UPDATED TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE DATA SUPPORT SYSTEMS.

The Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) considers infrastructure replacement planning and funding to be a “best practice” and suggests that policies and plans addressing the replacement and retirement of capital assets along with an adequate funding plan are important aspects of the efficient management of capital assets. Park facilities and amenities, especially in Ashland, are valuable community assets that need long-term planning to ensure their value to the City of Ashland and its citizens is maintained. The Parks Tour Report (Appendix A) developed by the project team describes the current condition of many of the parks and their amenities noting the need for replacement and/or repair of many park features.

A Five-Year Park Asset Repair and Replacement Plan, as a component of the existing Capital Improvement Plan, will create a plan to rehabilitate or replace those assets that are aging, unsafe or obsolete, and will better quantify capital funding needs for replacement and repair. This is especially critical for the ongoing maintenance and preventive maintenance of older and heavily used parks, facilities and amenities in the Ashland park system.

An asset repair and replacement plan generally focuses on assets with values greater than \$5,000 and a life span of longer than one year. In the case of Ashland parks, it may be more important to lower the threshold value of assets given the significant use of park facilities such as Lithia Park and the Nature Center. Components of an asset repair and replacement plan could include:

- An inventory of assets that includes a brief description, classification, location and original year of purchase
- Estimated life span of the asset
- Current replacement year
- Cost of repair or replacement
- Priority for repair or replacement based on safety, compliance with current standards and programmatic value

The development of an asset repair and replacement plan as a component of the Capital Improvement Program provides APRC and its Parks Division the information needed to plan for long-term funding for the repair and eventual replacement of park amenities and equipment by establishing a separate repair and replacement fund and allocating funds each year so that future repairs and/or replacements do not create major financial emergencies in future years.

In addition to the Five-Year Park Asset Repair and Replacement Plan the Administration Division should also establish a Technology Resources Plan, as a component of the Capital Improvement Plan, that ensures adequate technology resources for all future APRC operations. The division should conduct an inventory of the current technology resources being utilized in the agency, similar to the asset management plan of park facilities and amenities. Based on current resources the APRC

can determine the future technology resources required for replacement or repair to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of future operations throughout the organization including parks maintenance, recreation services, golf operations and capital facilities management and plan for their future repair or replacement. The development of a Technology Resources Plan will accomplish this need.

Recommendation: Create a Five-Year Park Asset Repair and Replacement Plan as part of the CIP which includes the establishment of a Repair and Replacement Fund with an annual budget allocation to fund identified needs.

Recommendation: Create a Technology Resources Plan as part of the CIP which includes the creation of a replacement fund for future technology needs in the organization.

4. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE APRC ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY, PROCEDURE AND OPERATIONAL MANUAL THAT CODIFIES ALL OF THE EXISTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES AND ESTABLISHES A PROCESS FOR UPDATING THE MANUAL WILL INCREASE THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF APRC OPERATIONS.

Over the years, policies have been established by the Commission, procedures have been established to implement the policies and they have been filed or stored in a variety of documents, minutes, individual operations manuals and/or staff member files. As a result, individual staff members may not be aware of existing adopted policies and/or procedures as they fulfill their responsibilities of providing programs and services to the citizens of Ashland. Developing a comprehensive manual which codifies all the existing agency policies and delineates operating procedures and systems for the agency will increase the consistency and effectiveness of APRC managers and staff as they fulfill their responsibilities.

Codifying administrative policies and procedures in areas such as purchasing, pricing, partnerships, equipment use, fleet management, cash handling, staff training,

volunteers, facility use and reservation systems, data management, scholarships, and personnel recruitment and hiring will make job responsibilities clearer for all employees and ensure that customers are treated consistently and fairly. The process may also identify policy or procedural gaps in important programs, systems or operational areas that need clarification and development.

It is suggested that staff project committees, including appropriate management, supervisory and program personnel, be established to initially review, update and codify existing policies and procedures and identify gaps in current policy or procedural processes. Each committee would be charged with a specific policy or program area to review and make recommendations for updates, additions or deletions of policies and procedures to the agency management team. The management team will review the reports to determine whether the policy requires action by the Commissioners.

The Administration Division will be responsible for updating, codifying and maintaining the policy and procedure manual. Once this initial process is completed, a staff project committee could be assigned the responsibility for an annual review of selected policies and procedures to ensure their continued relevance. In addition, it will be important to ensure that existing policies and procedures are reviewed with all APCR employees during appropriate recreation and maintenance division staff trainings to ensure their consistent implementation.

Recommendation: Implement an internal process to develop a comprehensive APCR administrative policy, procedure and operational manual that codifies all of the existing policies and procedures and establishes a process for updating the manual.

5. ESTABLISHING JOINT USE AGREEMENTS, MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING, WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY AND OTHER NONPROFIT AGENCIES FOR FACILITY USE WILL INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPAND PROGRAMMING AND SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF ASHLAND.

The APRC currently provides programs and services in facilities owned and operated by the APRC. These facilities are currently utilized to capacity, challenging the development of new programs due to space requirements. In addition, current programs are offered at central locations rather than in areas with easier access for residents. Program offerings are also challenged by the lack of larger gymnasium and activity spaces for more active programs.

There are numerous school, university and community facilities that could be utilized for programming spaces, but at this point are unavailable. At the same time, current APRC facilities such as the golf course and swimming pool are utilized by school programs without any remuneration to APRC.

APRC should begin a process of identifying and prioritizing potential sites and specific facilities that could be utilized by the agency for existing and expanded programming opportunities. The APRC Administration Division should negotiate with agency representatives to develop joint-use agreements or memoranda of understanding for APRC use of these selected facilities.

Recommendation: Establish a process to negotiate with the school district/s, Southern Oregon University and community agencies for use of selected sites and facilities for APRC programs and services.

6. CREATING A “BRAND” FOR APRC ALONG WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AGENCY-WIDE MARKETING PLAN TO MAXIMIZE THE BRANDING IMPACT WILL ATTRACT MORE ASHLAND RESIDENTS TO APRC PARKS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The APRC Promotions Unit has undertaken a variety of efforts to market and promote the current parks and recreation opportunities to residents in Ashland utilizing print materials, radio and television coverage, the website and increased use of social media. The following are examples of the current marketing and promotional activities utilized to promote programs and services.

- The Promotions Unit maintains an APRC website as part of the City of Ashland website with information about recreation-sponsored programs, parks and facilities, the Parks and Recreation Commission and recreation and facility-related policies.
- The Promotions Unit produces three seasonal Recreation Guides providing details of program and services, park facilities, golf course programs and rental opportunities which are distributed via a targeted mailing program and distributed at selected locations throughout the community.
- The website also includes a link to the current program guide providing information about current programs being offered and program registration details.
- The Promotions Unit also maintains a web calendar of monthly events being offered by APRC.
- APRC maintains a Facebook page which features information about upcoming activities, events and programs and recaps events and activities when completed.
- Press plans, incorporating a variety of media outlets, are developed and implemented for major APRC events throughout the year.

Programs can only be successful if residents know about the offerings. Failure to publicize program opportunities and increase awareness of the values of participation will impact the participation level of programs. The Promotions Unit has been successful in marketing individual agency programs and services to the community.

There are a number of opportunities for the Division to expand and enhance its current marketing and promotional activities to increase opportunities for residents to become familiar with department-sponsored programs, parks and amenities, trails, golf course and the Nature Center and be motivated to participate. Developing and implementing a campaign to “brand” the APRC as an important community asset that focuses on health and wellness, safety and extensive social benefits will increase the visibility and effectiveness of the recreation programs and park facilities.

As an example of a successful branding campaign, the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) established a branding/marketing effort that focuses on the slogan “Parks Make Life Better” to promote the benefits of recreation and parks. Municipal parks and recreation agencies throughout California have instituted the campaign and have seen positive results in program participation and community support for their agencies. (see details at www.cprs.org)

The “VIP Action Plan – Creating Community for the 21st Century” developed by the California Parks and Recreation Society to assist agencies in positioning themselves as an essential community service is an excellent model for a successful department-wide public information and marketing effort. The VIP Action Plan has been adopted by most recreation and park agencies in California and has significantly increased the awareness and value of recreation and parks programs and services across the state.

The following are suggested actions that APRC can implement to market and promote its programs and services to the community utilizing a brand such as “Parks Make Life Better:”

- Based on the strategic plan, create a branding slogan for the agency after consultation with the Parks and Recreation Commissioners, department staff, community organizations and related community focus groups.
- Develop opportunities for resident participation in describing what parks and recreation means in Ashland to understand what is important to the community and to assist in the development of the agency slogan or byline.
- Incorporate the current agency logo for APRC along with a slogan that reflects the agency and generates excitement about visiting parks and participating in department sponsored programs.
- Using the newly developed slogan and logo, incorporate a variety of tools to promote the values of recreation and parks utilizing a coordinated marketing campaign that includes advertising, promotional materials, media presentations, website upgrading, Facebook and Twitter campaigns, electronic newsletters, print materials and a variety of other marketing strategies.
- Expand the parks and recreation social media presence on the website, in electronic newsletters and on the agency's Facebook and Twitter pages using these vehicles to promote recreation activities with regular photos of events, activities and program promotional information to generate interest in the parks and recreation programs and services being offered.
- Establish a signage program that incorporates the new "brand" on new park signs at all existing and future park sites and facilities.
- Establish guidelines and train all APRC staff to ensure that the implementation of the branding/marketing program provides consistent signage, use of logos, color schemes and verbiage in all APRC communications in the community.

The development of an APRC "brand" and an expanded marketing effort will increase awareness, participation and revenue generation in the programs and services being offered. The development of an APRC "brand" should focus on the health and wellness, safety, family and social benefits of parks, open space, and recreation participation and establish APRC as the major leisure resource serving children, youth, adults and families in Ashland.

Incorporating these marketing strategies and efforts along with the expanded use of the existing website and social media will result in greater awareness of recreation and

parks programs and facilities, increase participation, develop community support for recreation and parks services and increase generated revenues.

Recommendation: Create a “brand” for parks and recreation in Ashland that promotes the value of leisure services to the community.

Recommendation: Develop an expanded marketing plan that expands the use of the website and uses social media to promote the value of parks and recreation and promotes the programs and services offered by APRC.

Recommendation: Develop a marketing style guide that establishes policies and guidelines for all employees in the use of the APRC “brand” campaign and provides agency wide training for all personnel to ensure its appropriate use and implementation.

7. THE APRC PARKS DIVISION WOULD BENEFIT BY IMPROVED CLARITY REGARDING THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS AND THOSE THAT REQUIRE POLICY ACTION ON THE PART OF THE COMMISSIONERS.

While there is a good working relationship between the current Parks and Recreation Director and the APRC Commissioners, there is room for improved clarity regarding the powers and duties of each. Both parties would benefit from that increased clarity, regardless of what powers and duties are assigned to each. A common way of articulating these is to specify the powers and duties of the Commissioners, and to clarify that any actions not addressed by those specific powers and duties are administrative in nature, and therefore may be determined by the Director of Parks and Recreation.

Recommendation: Clarify and document the respective powers and duties of the APRC Commissioners and the Director of Parks and Recreation.

8. THE APRC PARKS DIVISION'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ASSETS OUTSIDE ITS CORE PARK AND OPEN SPACE INVENTORY SHOULD BE MEMORIALIZED AND DOCUMENTED IN DETAILED WRITTEN AGREEMENTS.

The APRC Parks Division currently maintains a number of school assets. There is no written agreement document detailing the Park Division's responsibilities for maintaining these assets or identifying the schools that benefit from these services. These agreements should clearly indicate levels of service provided for each school property, any compensation for services provided, and hours that the parks staff are allowed on school grounds.

Similarly, there should be a written document detailing the assets that the parks staff maintains on behalf of the City including the specific downtown sites and corresponding levels of service. There are many examples of these types of cooperative agreements between park agencies and school districts and APRC is encouraged to explore them.

Recommendation: Work with local school districts to create formal written agreements outlining the terms and conditions of all maintenance to be performed by APRC on school property.

Recommendation: Document all agreements between the City of Ashland and APRC relative to APRC's maintenance of City grounds and facilities.

9. ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO THE ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION ORGANIZATION HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED OVER THE YEARS.

The initial Charter amendment of 1908 created the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission as a five-member, directly elected body and charged the Commission with managing and controlling parks and recreation services for the residents. There have been numerous discussions and proposals over the years to consider alternative structures for the Parks and Recreation Commission including:

- Establish the APRC as a City of Ashland Parks and Recreation Department with a City Council appointed advisory Parks and Recreation Commission, operating as part of the City's General Fund.
- Create a separately operated Park and Recreation District with a directly-elected Board of Directors with taxing authority.
- Maintain the current structure with a directly elected Parks and Recreation Commission operation of Parks and Recreation programs and services under the leadership of a Commission-appointed Director of Parks and Recreation in accordance with the current Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Ashland and the APRC.

The 2005 Ashland Charter Review Committee recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission continue as a directly elected body:

“. . .and the Parks Department should continue to be administered as an autonomous entity independent of the rest of city government. However, existing charter language should be streamlined to combine the Parks Commission and the Recreation Commission. Finally, charter language that dictates the department's formula should be removed from the charter, the Parks and Recreation budget will be determined via the annual city budget process.”

It appears that these recommendations have not been implemented. They, along with the City/Commission current Memorandum of Understanding dated August 19, 2014, provide the structure for the current operation of the Parks and Recreation program in Ashland. While there are pros and cons for each of the alternatives described above, residents of the City of Ashland support their Parks and Recreation Commission and are most likely unaware of the structure of its operation and the relationship between the city and the commission.

After analysis of the above alternatives within the context of the current parks and recreation operations, its organizational structure and the professional leadership, within both the city and commission organizations, there does not appear to be any urgent need

to consider an alternative other than the APCR current organizational and operational structure.

Recommendation: Maintain the current organization of a directly elected Parks and Recreation Commission under the guidelines of the current City Charter and the current Memorandum of Understanding.

3. RECREATION DIVISION

This chapter provides an analysis of the organizational structure, staffing, operations, and programs and services of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission, whose focus is to provide “recreational and educational opportunities for participants of all ages” in support of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission goal of “maintaining and expanding park, recreation and educational opportunities; providing high quality, efficient and safe services with positive experiences for guests and other participants while maintaining community participation in the decision-making processes and promoting the environment.” This chapter will include recommendations for improvement that build upon the existing positive features of the Recreation Division offerings and create opportunities to increase the development and implementation of quality recreation experiences for the residents and visitors of the City of Ashland.

1. THE RECREATION DIVISION OFFERS A VARIETY OF RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

The Recreation Division provides a variety of recreation experiences for the residents of Ashland throughout the year utilizing a variety of unique community-based facilities including the Daniel Meyer Pool, Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink, North Mountain Park Nature Center, The Grove, Oak Knoll Golf Course and a variety of other APRC parks and recreation facilities.

The Recreation Division adopted FY 2015-17 budget reflects an annual expenditure budget for recreation programs of \$2,828,630, an increase of less than 1% from the adopted 2013-15 division budget. Annual revenues generated by the Recreation Division from program fees, facility rentals, admission fees, memberships, concessions

and donations totaled \$ 679,688 for FY 2014-15. The following table presents a recap of Recreation Division revenues generated over the last three years by program unit.

Program/Function	FY 2012-13	FY 2013-14	FY 2014-15
Facility Rentals	\$73,366	\$77,357	\$94,236
Golf Operations	\$292,522	\$286,660	\$281,643
General Recreation	\$96,615	\$100,015	\$87,746
Pool Programs	\$34,851	\$36,226	\$53,857
Ice Rink	\$72,087	\$92,265	\$89,279
Nature Center	\$26,660	\$22,938	\$27,376
Events	\$39,135	\$40,606	\$30,901
Donations	\$4,235	\$12,724	\$4,500
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$4,824	\$22,030	\$10,150
Total Revenue	\$644,295	\$644,739	\$679,688

The Recreation Division is staffed by a professional recreation management staff of 3.5 FTE positions and administrative and program staff totaling 7.6 FTE for a total division FTE of 11.1 position. These figures reflect the recent transfer of the Promotions function to the Administration Division and the transfer of the Oak Knoll Golf Course Pro Shop operation to the Recreation Division.

The Recreation Division currently offers programs and services including aquatics, health and fitness classes, senior services and programs, environmental education programs, adaptive recreation, community events and lifetime activities. In addition, the Recreation Division oversees an extensive volunteer program providing services to the parks maintenance division, community events and recreation programs offered by the Commission. The following exhibit presents an overview of the programs and services currently offered by the Recreation Division to the citizens of Ashland.

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Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Recreation Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with division managers and program staff to implement the recreation program and service goals established by the Commission. • Provides overall direction and implementation of year-round and seasonal recreation program and services. • Produces three seasonal program guides in print and digital versions. • Administers division-wide online and walk-in program registration system. • Administers day-to-day operations of recreation facilities for recreation programming. • Administers facility and field scheduling and reservation and rental system. • Manages unique recreation facilities including ice rink, swimming pool, bike swap and nature center. • Manages contracts with outside users of park facilities. • Coordinates contracts for “Calle Guanajuato” park area with local merchants and artisans. • Coordinates with Ashland Parks Foundation to provide scholarships for individual participation in programs and support for individual programs, facilities and capital improvements. • Administers personnel and program evaluation processes. • Manages part-time recreation personnel selection and evaluation processes.
Nature Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers full range of environmental education, recreation, stewardship and sustainability programs for all ages at the North Mountain Park Nature Center. • Operates North Mountain Park Nature Center with interpretative displays, exhibits, interactive informational elements and resources to inform visitors about local plants, wildlife, history and trails. • Offers over 110 community programs featuring classes, workshops and presentations on a wide range of topics targeted for preschoolers through seniors. • Offers community events including the Rogue Valley Bird Day and the Bear Creek Salmon Festival. • Provides opportunities for school children from kindergarten to 5th grade and middle schoolers throughout the Rogue Valley region, to participate in field trips to the center designed for each grade level and focused on environmental education and sustainability. • Provides service learning opportunities for school groups, high school and college students, adults, and service organizations. • Manages the heirloom and demonstration gardens at the nature center. • Develops a Natural Areas Management Plan to enhance and protect natural areas throughout the community. • Serves as liaison to the Bee City, USA project committee and a variety of sustainability projects in the community. • Fosters fundraising activities and support from individuals, businesses and community organizations. • Coordinates the efforts of a large cadre of volunteers interested in the environment and nature center.

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Recreation Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a variety of recreational, leisure oriented and educational programs and services for children through adults in Ashland during the three program seasons. • Offers year-round opportunities to learn new skills in instructional classes including music and dance, foreign languages, pet care and training, life skills and enrichment, arts and crafts, and sports and fitness. • Offers full range of group and private swim lessons, water safety training, swim team camps, water aerobics and water cross, water polo and recreation swim and lap swim programs seven days per week from mid-June through early September. • Offers Ice Skating Rink programs from mid-November through February including free, open and cheap skating sessions, youth and adult hockey, skating lessons, figure skating and private lessons and opportunities for private and group rentals. • Offers a variety of specifically designed programs for persons with disabilities including social night, gardening, adapted aquatics, bowling, day trips and active adventures. • Coordinates facility rentals at Pioneer Hall, Community Center, and various outdoor areas.
Volunteer Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and oversees programs and opportunities for Ashland residents to volunteer in park adoption and cleanup programs, park hosting programs, program volunteers and community service programs in support of parks and recreation programs. • Offers 52 park work parties with school groups, organizations, and individuals to clean and upgrade park areas annually. • Offers opportunities for businesses, schools and organizations to participate in the Adopt-A-Park program. • Offers 8th to 11th grade youth opportunities to participate in Youth Conservation Corps to improve parks during three summer corps sessions. • Provides opportunities for volunteers to serve as “park hosts” at the ice rink and in Lithia Park, providing information and assistance to park visitors. • Offers several major community special events during the year including the Community Bike Swap and Siskiyou de Mayo music festival. • Offers volunteer opportunities for individuals to assist with recreation and educational programs at the senior center, nature center, adapted recreation programs and the golf course.

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Oak Knoll Golf Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a range of program and services for individuals and groups golf experiences on a 9-hole golf course, including cart rentals, and a driving range seven days per week, year-round. • Offers a variety of annual membership opportunities, seasonal rates, and monthly coupon specials for discounted play on the course. • Offers Foot Golf course as an alternative golfing program experience. • Offers weekly men's twilight golf league and weekly ladies' daytime league beginning in March and continuing through October. • Offers opportunities for outside tournament play on course during the season. • Offers group and private lesson opportunities for children and adults. • Provides club house, beverage and snack sales and small golf equipment amenities for purchase. • Offers club house facility rentals for weddings, family events, business meetings and other events.

(1) There Are Many Positive Aspects of the Recreation Division Programs and Services Provided by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission.

The project team conducted interviews with key personnel in the Recreation Division to gain an understanding of the division's organizational structure and operations including the scope of current programming and services, customer service, marketing and promotions activities, training programs and compared its programs and services to the "best practices" in recreation agencies throughout the country. The results of this analysis identified a number of positive features of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission's Recreation Division.

- The Recreation Division has established a mission, goals and objectives to provide direction to its staff and professional staff.
- The Division currently offers a variety of recreation programs including a comprehensive summer swimming pool operation, a winter ice rink facility, instructional classes for youth through adults, adapted recreation programs for persons with disabilities and community events.
- The Nature Center provides a wide range of environmental education opportunities for children through adults including school programs, community gardens, instructional programs and an active interpretative center facility.

- The 9-hole Oak Knoll Golf Course provides golf experiences through men's and women's golf leagues, a Foot Golf/soccer course, community and private tournaments, lesson programs, driving range facility and daily open play with approximately 15,000 rounds per year.
- Consolidating Recreation Division program personnel offices at The Grove will increase communications and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the division operation and increase customer service responses to the community.
- The Division provides varied opportunities for residents to register for recreation programs and activities through online and walk-in registration services.
- The volunteer program offers a variety of volunteer opportunities for residents to assist in recreation programs including adapted recreation, Nature Center, Senior Center and community events.
- The Division offers a variety of community events for all ages including the 4th of July Run, Siskiyou de Mayo and Community Bike Swap.

These positive features of the Recreation Division highlight the strengths of the current recreation programs and services offered by the division and reflect on the division's efforts and commitment to achieve the recreation and leisure-oriented goals and objectives established by the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission.

(2) There Are Operational and Programmatic Improvement Opportunities That Can Strengthen the Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division.

The project team's analysis of the Recreation Division identified several operational and programming improvement opportunities that can increase the overall service level and effectiveness of Recreation Division operations. Improvement opportunities frame the content of this study and include the following:

- Developing a five-year comprehensive strategic plan for Recreation Division programs and services, based on the Commission's goals and objectives and community interests and needs, will establish a future direction for the division's programs and services and will assist staff in operating the division in an effective and efficient manner.

- Establishing an organizational structure and division of responsibilities that is flexible and responsive to the needs and direction of the Division.
- Centralizing and codifying the existing division policies and procedures will assist division staff in consistently developing, implementing and administering programs and services to the community.
- A comprehensive community needs assessment could identify gaps in program areas and services to age groups not currently being served or being underserved such as teens and active adults. In addition, opportunities for expanded recreation programs for seniors, youth and adult sports could be considered.
- Creating an effective program evaluation/customer feedback system for all recreation program participants will provide data that can be effectively used to evaluate current programs, instructional personnel and assist in planning for future programs and services.
- Establishing a cost recovery plan, model and policy for recreation programs will provide staff with consistent cost recovery policies to use in establishing program fees that cover appropriate cost levels and that can be applied to program fees throughout the division.
- The development of a facility plan that identifies the facility, field and space needs for future indoor and outdoor spaces required to support current and expanded recreation programs will identify future capital improvement requirements and accommodate future program needs.
- Opportunities exist to expand golf course program operations such as food service, lesson programs, junior golf and senior programs, twilight programs, rental programs and community tournament programs that promote tourist use of the course.
- Expanding training opportunities for part-time personnel and professional development of full-time personnel could be addressed as programs and services develop.
- Opportunities for increased volunteer services should be assessed by individual programs and services and coordinated with the volunteer program.
- As programs expand or new program areas are developed, the inclusion of program advisory committees can assist staff in developing, promoting and generating support for selected programs.

2. DEVELOPING A FIVE-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION DIVISION STRATEGIC PROGRAM PLAN WILL CLARIFY THE MISSION, VISION AND

GOALS AND ESTABLISH A FUTURE DIRECTION FOR THE RECREATION DIVISION.

Developing a five-year comprehensive Recreation Division Strategic Plan that identifies goals, objectives, standards and performance measures and establishes priorities for Recreation Division programming would increase the effectiveness of the recreation operations. This is especially critical at a time when the organizational structure and program components of the Recreation Division are undergoing change and modification.

The APRC has undertaken an agency-wide strategic planning process to establish goals and objectives, and a future direction for the organization. The document identifies goals, leadership objectives and leadership actions to follow for the next several years. The following exhibit presents the APRC established goals and objectives related specifically to the Recreation Division. Establishing a comprehensive plan for the Recreation Division, consistent with the goals and objectives established for the agency, will provide a strong foundation for the development of recreation programs and services in the future.

Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Related to the Recreation Division	
Goal	Objectives
<p>Promote Ashland Parks and Recreation as an exemplary organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek local and national recognition for the high level of achievement within the programs and facilities of APRC such as the NRPA Gold Medal Award. Continue APRC social networking strategies and invest in additional training of promotions employees to advance APRC's ability to effectively communicate through social media. Continue to educate public and council regarding the wide scope of park responsibilities and benefits.

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Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Related to the Recreation Division	
Goal	Objectives
<p>Evaluate parks and recreation facilities and programs to ensure the quality of relevant programming and the highest and best use of facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City to facilitate the full transfer of The Grove into the long-term care and control of APRC. • Look at possibility of outdoor fitness equipment for all ages. • Evaluate expanded and alternative use of the Senior Center to meet community needs. • Consider the addition of a “pump track” and bicycle skills park to an APRC facility. • Continue to enhance and expand events. • Add new recreation programs as needs are demonstrated by public support and best practices.
<p>Enhance Oak Knoll Golf Course program and facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install playground at OKGC. • Evaluate the OKGC clubhouse for expanded use and improvements to facility and surrounding hardscape. • Work toward achieving a higher cost recovery percentage. • Evaluate the installation of a Foot Golf course within existing golf course. • Evaluate dog policy at OKGC.
<p>Enhance and expand the Volunteer in Parks (VIP) Program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance visibility to community of volunteer opportunities, such as the adopt-a-park program and trail maintenance and construction. • Develop a volunteer recognition program for individual recognition.
<p>Partner with community stakeholders with similar missions to leverage assets and provide better public spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a partnership between Parks and Recreation and a community partner, such as the YMCA, SOU and Ashland School District, to build new competition-style year-round indoor swimming pool for the community. • Explore options for cooperation between community partners, such as Ashland School District and APRC to share services and facilities.
<p>Promote professional development amongst staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff is provided with the opportunity for professional development for the succession of the employee and to ensure relevancy with parks and recreation current best practices.
<p>Continue to evaluate and implement financial programs for higher cost recovery and financial resiliency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the finance department to develop a simple budget report that a lay person can understand that explains our projected income and how our money is to be allocated toward staffing, capital projects and other costs. • Evaluate and present a cost recovery implementation strategy for Commission approval. • Seek opportunities to increase revenues across recreation programs.

Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives Related to the Recreation Division	
Goal	Objectives
<p>Review the policies of the APRC and amend existing policies as well as develop and implement new policies as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Style and Communication Guide per the adopted MOU. Change language and culture in APRC communications so that directions and design flows to what is allowable; i.e., minimize the “no,” maximize the “yes.” Rebrand Ashland Parks and Recreation “Department” as Ashland Parks and Recreation “Commission”.

A comprehensive Recreation Division Strategic Plan can identify a focused direction and process for achieving the goals identified in the APRC strategic plan. The development of a comprehensive strategic plan that creates goals, objectives, and performance measures for division programs and services that are in support of the APRC goals and objectives can create several valuable operational benefits including:

- Provide direction to the Recreation Division’s current and future program offerings, improve its capacity to manage and evaluate its personnel, facility and fiscal resources more effectively
- Assess the value and benefit of the programs and services being offered
- Evaluate the cost effectiveness of programs and services being offered
- Identify unmet needs and interests and underserved groups
- Determine when it is appropriate to eliminate ineffective programs and services
- Expand its spectrum of program service models and delivery systems and easily document the benefits of the facilities, programs and services it provides the residents of Ashland

An important element of the strategic planning process includes a division-wide assessment of existing recreation facilities used by the Division for programming, along with an assessment of improvements needed to these existing facilities and an analysis of the facility requirements for future recreation programming. This analysis must also include an inventory of non-APRC recreation facilities, including school, university,

business and non-profit agency facilities in the community that could be available for recreation programming.

A second critical element in the strategic planning process is the understanding of community needs and interests related to parks and recreation programs and services. The implementation of a community needs assessment process, as part of the strategic planning process, will provide data that are needed to make critical decisions related to future programming and service delivery priorities.

In addition to the community needs assessment, another important element in the strategic planning process is the assessment of existing recreation facilities used by the Division for programming. Identifying needed facility improvements and upgrades to existing facilities, identifying gaps in current facility resources, assessing non-APRC facilities that may provide opportunities for programming spaces, and evaluating future needs for facility spaces for recreation programming are key elements of the facility assessment component of the strategic planning process.

Involving the Parks and Recreation Director and key Recreation Division management and program staff is critical in developing a comprehensive plan for programs and services. Obtaining input from the Parks Maintenance Division, representatives from advisory committees, other city departments, active businesses and community recreation-related agencies as part of the planning process will strengthen the comprehensive planning process and develop support for its current and future implementation.

The National Parks and Recreation Association has developed suggested components and criteria for the development of a comprehensive recreation strategic plan

which can be used as a guide in developing a Recreation Division Strategic Plan for APRC. The following table provides an overview of the components of a comprehensive plan as recommended by NRPA:

NRPA Components of Comprehensive Recreation Strategic Program Plan	
Component	Description
Environmental Scan	Includes analysis of current demographic and economic data, social problems, physical resources, technology, environmental quality and political environment.
Community Inventory	Profiles organizations providing recreation services. Assesses current recreation facility uses and the need for future facility development.
Community Niche	Identifies constituent groups served, programs and services and use of facilities to avoid duplication.
Constituent Needs Assessment	Uses program data and involves community in identifying program preferences.
Goals and Objectives	Builds on Commission's Strategic Plan to create vision and goals.
Critical Issues	Identifies contributions programs make to Commission priorities.
Basic Premises	Establishes basic operational paradigm such as funding, staffing.
Operational Database	Inventory of physical assets, human resources, statistical data, and standards for desirable programs.
Program Segmentation	Elements of programs by age/person, facility, geography, etc.
Program Master Plans	Provides goals and objectives and performance measures for each planning area.
Resources Needed	Identifies human, physical and financial resources required for implementation.
Interagency Partnerships	Creates community inventory of program offerings.
Prioritizing and Timelines	Sets priorities and timelines for meeting priorities.
Annual Review	Develops qualitative and quantitative assessment processes.
Program and Service Evaluation	Establishes framework for evaluation of programs and services.

Development of a comprehensive Recreation Division Strategic Plan that is consistent with and focused on the achievement of APRC goals and objectives will

provide important future direction and guidance for Recreation Division management and leadership in ensuring that Division programs and services are responsive to the needs and interests of the residents of Ashland.

Recommendation: Develop a Recreation Division Five-year Comprehensive Recreation Strategic Plan that supports the goals and objectives of the APRC and identifies goals, objectives, performance measures and facility needs and priorities to guide the future direction of recreation programs and services provided by APRC.

3. CONDUCTING A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS WILL IDENTIFY UNDERSERVED GROUPS AND GAPS IN RECREATION PROGRAM AREAS AMONG ASHLAND RESIDENTS.

There are two key components in the recreation strategic plan development process identified by the National Park and Recreation Association that are particularly critical to the strategic planning process. These are the “identification of constituent groups currently being served and those groups who are currently underserved,” and secondly, “identifying constituent program and service preferences.” These two components in the strategic planning process can best be accomplished by the development and implementation of a community-wide needs assessment process that identifies current program service levels, programming preferences, gaps in program interest areas and underserved populations.

Opportunities could be available through the local university to obtain assistance in the development and implementation of a needs assessment instrument that could be administered using a variety of data collections techniques including:

- Use of a mail survey instrument sent randomly to all or a percentage of households
- Door to door canvas of home owners using volunteers
- Online electronic survey instrument

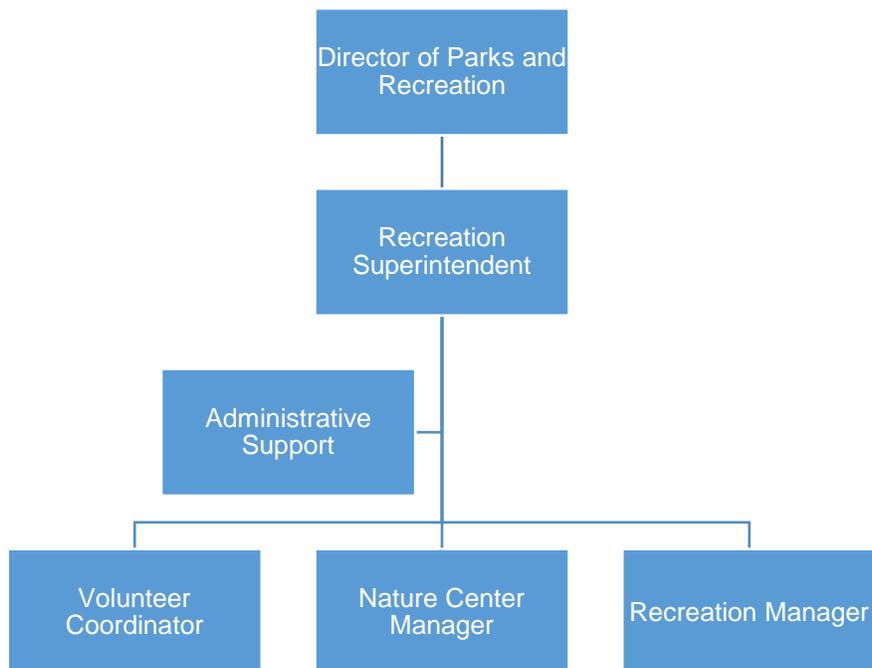
- Written survey instrument administered through local churches and other community facilities
- Newspaper insert with mail in response
- Telephone administered survey instrument

Providing an opportunity for citizens to express their preferences for future programming and identifying the needs and interests of non-users will greatly benefit the Recreation Division programming personnel in identifying community interests and needs, current programming gaps and the needs of underserved segments of the population. These data can then be used in the development of the comprehensive Recreation Division Strategic Plan and identifying the facilities and budgetary resources required to meet the future recreation needs of the community.

Recommendation: Conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment process to identify underserved groups and future recreation program interests and needs in the community.

4. ESTABLISHING A FIRM RECREATION DIVISION ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE WILL STABILIZE THE DIVISION'S FOCUS AND CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE FIVE-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION DIVISION STRATEGIC PLAN.

During the last several years the organizational structure of the Recreation Division has fluctuated with changes in the Director of Parks and Recreation position and the need to address internal issues that have been identified. Establishing an organizational structure that focuses on the capacity of the Recreation Division to accomplish the agency goals and objectives established by the APRC and the division goals identified in the five-year comprehensive strategic plan will assist in providing a positive direction for the division. The following organization chart presents a recommended Recreation Division organization and reporting structure:



The proposed organizational structure recommends that supervision of the golf course Pro Shop operation be transferred from the Recreation Division and merged with the Golf Maintenance Division to create a new golf operations division responsible directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation. More discussion regarding the golf operation is addressed in the chapter of this study related to the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

Recommendation: Implement the proposed organizational structure for the APRC Recreation Division including the transition of the Golf Course operation including golf course maintenance to the Administration Division.

5. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE RECREATION DIVISION POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL WILL INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF RECREATION DIVISION PERSONNEL.

The Recreation Division should develop a comprehensive policy and procedure manual codifying all recreation-related policies and program procedures along with appropriate employee-related policies and procedures for use by the regular full-time and seasonal part-time employees in the Division. Policies and procedures are currently

housed in a variety of locations and individual documents including training manuals, divisional operational documents, commission actions and city-wide policy documents.

The purpose of a Recreation Division comprehensive policy and procedure manual is to codify all the pertinent policies and procedures in one manual to ensure that all management and program personnel understand the overall goals and objectives of the APRC programs and services and their role and responsibilities in being an employee of the Recreation Division. A comprehensive policy and procedure manual not only defines general personnel related policies but also clearly presents the specific policies and procedures that impact each program unit within the division. As existing policies are reviewed, new, updated or revised policies will be identified and action can be taken to ensure that all policies and procedures are current and policy gaps are closed. Newly created policies and revisions to existing policies may require approval from the APRC Commissioners.

The following exhibit presents an example and general outline of the suggested content of a comprehensive policy and procedure manual. Depending on the specific program area, individual sections of the manual can be utilized to create program specific policy and procedure manuals for individual program units.

Components of Recreation Division Policy and Procedure Manual	
Policy Manual Section	Possible Content
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction from Director • APRC Overview • Recreation Division Overview • Recreation Division Mission and Goals • Recreation Division Organization • Employee Roles and Responsibilities

Components of Recreation Division Policy and Procedure Manual	
Policy Manual Section	Possible Content
General Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Registration Systems • Facility Rental Policies/Procedures • Facility Scheduling Procedures • Cash Handling Procedures • Discipline Procedures • Purchasing Procedures • Concession Stand Operations • Accident Reporting • Incident Reporting • Site and Participant Safety • Emergency Response Procedures • Program Evaluation • Child Abuse Mandates • ADA Compliance Policy • Emergency Response Procedures • Participant Behavior Management
Employee Policies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Expectations • Work Schedules • Time Cards • Uniforms • Hiring, Evaluation, Retention Policies • Scheduling • Accident Procedures • Customer Service • Harassment Policies • Training
Aquatic Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of Operation • Program/Admission Fees • Instructional Program Descriptions • Event Descriptions • Open Swim Programs • User Group Programs and Guidelines • General Pool Rules • Opening/Closing Procedures • Maintenance Operations
Ice Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours of Operation • Program/Admission Fees • Instructional Program Descriptions • Event Descriptions • Open Skate Programs • User Group Programs and Guidelines • General Ice Rink Rules • Opening/Closing Procedures • Maintenance Operations

Components of Recreation Division Policy and Procedure Manual	
Policy Manual Section	Possible Content
Nature Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Center Hours • Instructional Program Descriptions • Event Descriptions • School Programs • Community Programs • Community Gardens Programs • User Group Programs and Guidelines • General Rules • Opening/Closing Procedures • Maintenance Operations
General Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration Procedures • Instructional Program Descriptions • Event Descriptions • Adaptive Recreation Programs • User Group Programs and Guidelines • General Rules • Opening/Closing Procedures • Maintenance Operations
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Cards • Employee Accident Report • Incident Report • Facility Rental Agreement

The development of a comprehensive Recreation Division Policy and Procedure manual will bring together, in one location, all the policies and information required to operate programs and services offered by the division and will assist employees in providing consistent, accurate and customer-friendly services to residents participating in recreation programs. Once the policy and procedure manual is completed it will be critical to review the final document with all division staff to ensure their understanding of the policies and procedures and to establish an annual review process to ensure that the manual is updated on a regular basis.

Recommendation: Create a comprehensive Policy and Procedure Manual containing related APRC, City, and Recreation Division policies and procedures to increase employee knowledge and understanding of the organization and improve overall consistency and employee effectiveness in program implementation.

6. EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECEIVING CURRENT CUSTOMER FEEDBACK WILL PROVIDE VALUABLE INPUT TO THE DIVISION IN DECISION MAKING AND FUTURE PROGRAM PLANNING AND EVALUATION.

Obtaining feedback from current customers regarding their attitudes, observations and opinions about the content, organization and quality of programs and services being offered by the Recreation Division provides program managers valuable input into the overall quality and effectiveness of programs being delivered to Ashland residents. Customer feedback also provides valuable data for evaluating the effectiveness of programs in meeting identified goals and objectives, determining levels of customer satisfaction, analyzing the cost effectiveness of programs, evaluating personnel and managing facilities and budgetary resources.

The Nature Center has developed an extensive customer feedback process to collect data regarding programs from program participants, parents, volunteers, instructors and classroom teachers. Children complete questionnaires designed to determine the effectiveness of programs in meeting the identified learning goals and objectives. Teachers evaluate the quality of the field trip experiences and participation in Nature Center interpretative programs and facilities. Community members attending a nature-related class evaluate its quality and effectiveness. The customer feedback is then used to evaluate the effectiveness of the programs offered, make improvements to curriculum, presentations or printed course materials. The data collected are also considered in making future programming decisions, evaluating needed facility improvements and developing program budget proposals. Other Recreation Division program units have not developed customer feedback processes to the level developed and implemented by the Nature Center.

Establishing a Division-wide customer feedback process utilizing an online survey tool could provide Division management with valuable data from which to make decisions regarding future program planning, evaluation, maintenance needs, facility improvements and budgetary considerations. The online customer feedback process provides opportunities to gain valuable input from program participants as well as lost customers.

There are several online survey tools that are easily designed and administered, provide immediate feedback and produce useable and reliable analysis of the resulting data. Online survey instruments such as Survey Monkey or Survey Gizmo could be utilized in the implementation of a customer-friendly satisfaction and feedback system. These existing online survey systems provide features that make its design and implementation easy to use and responsive to the needs of its users including:

- Reasonable implementation costs
- Variety of survey design and questions options
- Customized look for agency branding
- Technical support and customer service
- Real time results
- Accurate and thorough analytical reports

The current online registration system used by the Division for program registration may also include features that would allow the Division to obtain and analyze feedback from current program users. This possibility should also be explored and considered by the Division.

The Recreation Division could enlist the technical support and assistance of the City of Ashland Information Technology Department to create an online customer

feedback system which could include a class/program evaluation component, facility feedback instruments, and periodic feedback on selected events, issues or proposals. The system can be easily administered by participants via email at the end of each program cycle, or on monthly, quarterly or random basis. Results of the online customer feedback system can be shared with commissioners, administrators and recreation division supervisory personnel responsible for the planning, development and implementation of recreation programs and services. Periodic feedback could also be obtained regarding other aspects of APRC operations such as volunteers, parks and forestry units.

Recommendation: Establish an online customer feedback system to provide valuable data regarding Recreation Division operations including program evaluation, maintenance needs, facility improvements and future planning.

7. ESTABLISHING A WRITTEN COST RECOVERY POLICY AND MODEL WOULD ASSIST THE RECREATION DIVISION IN ESTABLISHING CONSISTENT PROGRAM FEES AND AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PROGRAM COST RECOVERY.

A “best practice” currently being implemented and administered by public parks and recreation agencies throughout the country is the development and implementation of a Cost Recovery Plan and Policy to be used as a financial guide in developing and evaluating the cost effectiveness of recreation programs. The purpose of a cost recovery policy is to determine the costs of providing programs and to set a level of fees and charges for these programs that is acceptable to the community. In implementing the policy both the direct costs, costs directly attributed to the program, and the indirect costs, such as administrative overhead, are considered in the calculations of program costs.

At the current time the Recreation Division does not operate with the guidance of a written, commission adopted, cost recovery plan or policy. The Division, however,

calculates on a broad scale the cost recovery rates by program units. Individual program fees are not determined based on a cost recovery policy. The following table presents the cost recovery percentage rates for program units within the Recreation Division:

Recreation Division Program Unit Cost Recovery Report				
Program Unit	FY13/14	FY12/13	FY 11/12	Overall CR Goal
Adult General Recreation	104%	100%	100%	100%
Aquatics Program	27%	29%	32%	30%
Ice Rink	73%	65%	69%	50%
Nature Center	22%	22%	24%	25%
Special Events	81%	69%	68%	85%
Adapted Programs	42%	39%	N/A	40%
Facility Rentals	53%	45%	51%	60%
Sports Field Lighting	83%	80%	84%	85%
Calle Guanajuato	77%	125%	99%	100%

A Cost Recovery Plan and Policy will guide the department in ensuring the consistent application of fees and charges for programs and services offered in individual program units in the Division and the recovery of comparable costs based on the predetermined cost recovery percentages applied to each program or program unit. An important component of the cost recovery policy is the determination of the degree to which selected program costs should be covered by those user groups benefiting from the experience balanced with the percentage of cost recovery assigned to programs which provide core services to the broader community and are maintained at minimal or no cost recovery percentage. This decision must be based on further discussion and deliberation by the Commissioners in order to provide appropriate direction to the Recreation Division.

The following exhibit provides an overview of the definition, purpose and components of a cost recovery plan and policy. It also describes the benefits of such a plan and the steps required to develop an effective cost recovery plan and policy.

Cost Recovery Plan and Policy	
Definition:	A cost recovery policy is defined as a formalized plan that dictates the portion of the direct and indirect cost that will be recovered by the Parks and Recreation agency based on revenue collected for the fees and charges assessed by the agency.
Purpose:	The purpose of a cost recovery policy is to determine the full cost of providing a service (direct and indirect costs) and to set a level of fees and charges that is acceptable to the community, is able to recover a portion of the full cost and to meet the target cost recovery percentage determined for the specific program.
Components:	<p><i>Direct Costs</i> – the direct cost of providing a service is costs associated with the instructor teaching the recreation class or the program leaders monitoring children during afterschool programs.</p> <p><i>Indirect Costs</i> – the cost of overhead associated with providing administrative support to Parks and Recreation Staff in running the various Parks and Recreation Programs. This overhead support can be manifested through program overhead, departmental overhead, or town-wide overhead.</p> <p><i>Participation</i> – the number of participants associated with a specific program or activity. This component is only important for fees and charges that have a “per participant” fee, as the total direct and indirect costs are divided by the number of participants to arrive at the full cost per participant.</p> <p><i>Revenue</i> – the total recoverable revenue associated with a specific program or activity. This revenue is then used in conjunction with the full cost derived to determine the current cost recovery percentage for the Department. This target cost recovery percentage can be used to develop the target cost recovery percentage, which is the main purpose of the cost recovery policy.</p>
Benefits:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department is aware of the full cost of providing the service and can set the fees with full knowledge of what portion of costs it is recovering. • Fees based on costs can be charged to all users, including resident and non-residents who do not pay general property taxes. • User charges can help gauge the demand for a service. • Develop a formal subsidization policy or formal scholarships based upon the needs of the community. • Ability to develop fees appropriately for any new programs or activities. • Able to establish the level benefit of a program to the individual and community to set future and current fees appropriately.

Cost Recovery Plan and Policy	
Steps to Develop a Cost Recovery Policy:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define the full list of services for which the department is currently and potentially interested in charging fees.• Calculate the full cost of each service, including applying appropriate indirect overhead charges.• Determine the community goal of each service or program area and set a different cost recovery level for that service.• Conduct a focus group to evaluate citizens' response to changes to fee structures.• Develop different levels of fees for residents and non-residents.• Establish a written policy dictating different cost recovery levels for the various types of services provided by the department.

There is one critical element within the Cost Recovery Plan and Policy that the Recreation Division must develop and implement throughout the Recreation Division. This is the determination of a consistent percentage return on fee-based programs and a consistent application of the fee structure for program instructors hired on a contractual basis. Current fee structures range from 60 percent to the instructor, 40 percent retained by the division to 80%/20%. While there are individual factors that may impact program fee development and instructor contracts, it is recommended that a clear policy and procedure be developed to administer these contracts Division-wide. It is also critical that the Division identify the percentage of direct and indirect costs to be charges to programs so that program fees maximize their revenue potential.

Developing a formal Cost Recovery Plan and Policy is a viable business practice that ensures the development of an appropriate fee structure and recovery at identified percentage levels of the cost for programs, assists in evaluating the cost effectiveness of individual programs and services, allows for consistent program budgeting and still provides opportunities for participants who may not have the ability to pay to be able to participate through the APRC scholarship program.

Recommendation: Develop a Cost Recovery Plan and Policy that establishes a cost recovery model for recreation programs while balancing the need to provide core services at minimal or no cost.

Recommendation: Develop a clear and consistent percentage formula policy for programs utilizing contractual instructors that maximizes the revenue generation for the Division.

8. EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE EXISTING RECREATION PROGRAM UNITS WILL INCREASE DIRECT SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS CURRENTLY UNDERSERVED BY PROGRAM OFFERINGS.

While the Recreation Division provides a variety of programming opportunities for the residents of Ashland and is careful to not duplicate services being provided by other community recreation agencies the project team identified several opportunities to increase programming for currently underserved groups in the community. The project team's interviews with Recreation Division staff members and its review of the seasonal program brochures and marketing materials identified several gaps in the Division's spectrum of current recreation programming and services. Opportunities are available to increase programming that appeals to these identified underserved groups:

- Junior High School and High School age groups
- Youth and adults interested in a variety of emerging sports activities
- Active Baby Boomers and Retirees
- Senior Citizens and the Elderly

As the focal point of this discussion, consider the following table which illustrates the continuum of leisure services delivery models developed by Dr. James F. Murphy, former Chair, Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at San Francisco State University:

Leisure Services Program Continuum			

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, OREGON
Performance Audit of the Parks and Recreation Services

Direct Services	Facilitated Services	Enabled Services	Advocacy Services
<p>Programs and services developed and implemented by the Department as the lead agency. Most of APRC's program offerings fall in this section of the continuum.</p>	<p>Programs and services facilitated by, but not necessarily provided by the Department as a direct program or service. APRC facilitates the program or service provided by another agency or collaboration of agencies.</p>	<p>Programs and services are offered by other agencies with the agency providing the vehicle for their implementation. An example of enabled services is the APRC providing park facilities for a race or event sponsored by an outside group.</p>	<p>Programs and services advocated by the APRC on behalf of a specific group or agency to another governmental or regulatory agency. An example of advocacy would be efforts to obtain more programs for persons with disabilities.</p>

The continuum describes a model of leisure services delivery systems that can be utilized by the Recreation Division to develop and implement a range of delivery systems including direct services, facilitated services, enabled services and advocacy services. Most recreation programs and services offered by the APRC Recreation Division fall in the direct service sector of the continuum, which often means high levels of direct program costs, staffing resources and facility requirements. Offering recreation programs and services that fall in the facilitated, enabled or advocacy quadrants often requires developing higher levels of collaboration, cooperation and resource sharing with other agencies resulting in less financial and staffing resource commitment from the recreation division, yet continuing to provide quality services to the community. In planning comprehensive recreation programs and services, agencies need to consider the full continuum of leisure delivery system models as it develops, plans and implements future program opportunities.

In addition to considering the programs and service delivery models in program planning for these underserved groups, there are several factors affecting the implementation of expanded recreation programs in Ashland that should be addressed to

ensure that recreation program participation is available to all segments of Ashland's population. These include:

- Decentralizing programming venues to ensure that residents throughout the city have access to programming opportunities closer to their neighborhoods.
- Increasing hours of program operation to maximize facility use and ensure greater potential for program participation.
- Utilizing schools, university facilities and other non-APRC facilities for programming to relieve currently over-utilized sites and increase the potential for greater program participation.
- Collaborating with other community groups, nonprofit organizations and/or businesses to sponsor and provide recreation programs and services will increase recreation opportunities for the community with potentially minimal impact on division staffing and resources.

Addressing these factors creates opportunities to expand the programs and services offered by the Division in addition to addressing the need for more convenient access to programs. The following table presents suggestions for programming opportunities to increase the participation of currently identified underserved groups in Ashland.

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, OREGON
Performance Audit of the Parks and Recreation Services

Recreation Programs Suggestions to Meet the Needs of Underserved Populations	
Underserved Group	Recreation Program Suggestions
Youth and Teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure Camps • Fitness Classes and Camps • Co-Ed Recreational Sports Leagues and Programs (volleyball, dodge ball, Pickle Ball, Foot Golf, etc.) • Hiking and Backpacking • Dances/Music Events • Bicycling • Skate Boarding Classes and Events • Trips to out of town venues • Teen Swim Nights • After School Program (6th to 8th grades) • Leadership Training Program
Alternative Sports Programs (Teens and Adults)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marshall Arts • Yoga • Pickle Ball Clinics and Leagues • Pilates, Bocce Ball Clinics and Leagues • Bicycling • Hiking • Cheerleading Clinics, Team training • Dodge Ball Leagues • Flag Football
Active Baby Boomers and Retirees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Aerobics • Fitness Programs (Zumba, Feldenkrais, Pilates) • Yoga • Marshall Arts • Pickle Ball • Foot Golf • Music and Instrument Classes (piano, keyboard, guitar) • Hiking, Walking Classes • Daytime Skating and Swim Programs • Dance Classes (tap, ballet, social dance) • Arts Workshops (jewelry, fiber arts, painting) • Golf and Tennis Leagues and Instructional Classes • Meditation • Bocce Ball Leagues and Instruction
Senior Citizens and Elderly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness, Strength and Balance Classes (Chair Yoga, Pilates, Feldenkrais, Chair Aerobics, Tai Chi) • Computer Instruction and Lab (digital scrapbooking, family research, Facebook, digital photography) • Arts Classes and Open Studio (knitting, crochet, jewelry, quilting) • Music Classes (guitar, ukulele, vocal) • Bocce Ball • Trips • Card and Game Room/Events • Indoor Sports (ping pong, pool) • Speaker Series (health, nutrition, travel) • Fundraising Activities (rummage sales, Art sales)

The APRC currently operates a Senior Center program, based in the Administration Division, with its primary focus to provide a much needed congregate and home delivered meal program along with utility discount programs, information and referral services and a variety of important social service programs. While the current Senior Center program does also provide some recreational experiences for its participants, the project team believes there are opportunities to expand the recreation and leisure experiences offered at the center and, therefore, has identified senior citizen and the elderly as an underserved population group. The project team believes that increased recreational opportunities at the senior center will increase participation in the program, establish it as a full-service center and provide greater services to the senior and elderly residents in Ashland. There are opportunities and resources from county and regional programs serving seniors to maximize services to Ashland residents.

The project team believes these recreational opportunities can be provided with support from existing center staff and volunteers but also recognizes that it is critical that additional revenues be generated to support the center. There are a number of strategies that should be pursued by center staff to generate added support for the senior center:

- Research and apply for grant opportunities from the Rogue Valley Council of Governments and other state and federal agencies and foundations offering grant funds for programs and services directly related to senior citizens and the elderly.
- Create an annual membership fee for seniors participating in programs at the senior center.
- Establish a center fundraising program with assistance from the Advisory Committee and volunteers that generates added revenues to the center from community based programs such as monthly rummage sales, arts and crafts fairs and other similar events.

- Work with the APRC Foundation to develop a senior center partner/sponsorship program that generates added support from individuals, businesses and community organizations to support the center.

Expanding recreation opportunities for currently underserved population groups will increase recreation program experiences for all residents of the community and attract new participants to the services offered by the Recreation Division.

Creating a division task force process in which selected supervisory and program managers form committees to further explore the potential for individual program initiatives and implementation strategies can ensure that recreation opportunities are developed to meet the needs of these identified underserved populations. Where appropriate, community representatives could be included in the task force process to provide added input and program support. After a time-limited meeting process, specific proposals should be reviewed by the entire Division management team and proposed for implementation in accordance with staffing and budget parameters. This process draws on the internal expertise of the division as a team, along with community input to assess issues, develop workable solutions for meeting the needs of underserved groups and assist in determining the future direction of the department.

Recommendation: Establish an in-house task force process to explore and develop program alternatives and strategies to increase participation from currently underserved groups in the community.

9. CREATING GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANT AND CITIZEN INPUT IN RECREATION PROGRAMS COULD INCREASE THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS AND SUPPORT FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

Creating opportunities for program participants and citizens in Ashland to provide input regarding the quality and content of recreation programs could provide Recreation Division program personnel with important information to assist in making changes to

programs, increasing the overall effectiveness of programs, identifying program gaps, identifying new community resources and responding to customer interests for new program development.

There are several options for increasing participant and citizen input that could be considered by the Recreation Division:

- **Recreation Division Advisory Committee:** Establish a commission-appointed committee of Ashland residents, along with one or two commission members serving as liaisons, that meets regularly with Division staff to discuss and provide input on recreation programs and services offered by the APRC. Suggestions offered by the advisory committee would then be reviewed and considered by the recreation managers and administration and may require approval by the commissioners.
- **Individual Program Advisory Committees:** Establish committees of participants and citizens interested in a specific program area (e.g. general recreation, sports and aquatics, or golf course) to provide input on the programs and services offered and to identify opportunities to support the programs through fundraisers, sponsors and in-kind support and/or by volunteering.
- **Community Focus Group Process:** Establish a bi-monthly or quarterly focus group process in which program participants and citizens are invited to focus groups to provide input on program areas, policy development or specific program issues that the Recreation Division is currently addressing or evaluating.
- **Establish an Online Resident Survey Process:** Establish a bi-monthly or quarterly online survey (using an existing online survey tool such as Survey Monkey) to obtain input and data from participants and/or residents regarding specific program areas, policy or program issues or future program interests.

Utilizing any or several of these vehicles to obtain input and participant or resident feedback on department programs, services and operations can provide valuable data to assist program staff in making changes to departmental operations, improving the quality

of programs and services, identifying new program interests, and making decisions that guide the future development of Recreation Division programs and services.

Recommendation: Establish a process to create greater opportunities for participant and resident input in recreation programs to increase the overall effectiveness of and support for departmental programs and services.

4. PARKS DIVISION

This chapter provides an analysis of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) Parks Division, whose mission is to maintain Ashland's parks, trails, golf course and other open spaces for the enjoyment of all residents and visitors. Its goal is to provide high quality, efficient and safe services with positive experiences for guests and other participants while maintaining community participation in the decision-making processes and protecting the environment. The Park Division's personnel engage in a variety of activities such as turf care, tree care, and the maintenance of park structures and fixtures. Additionally, staff members assist the Recreation Division with the seasonal maintenance of swimming and skating facilities. Parks Division staff also perform tasks associated with the maintenance of local school grounds and certain downtown open space areas under a cooperative agreement with the City.

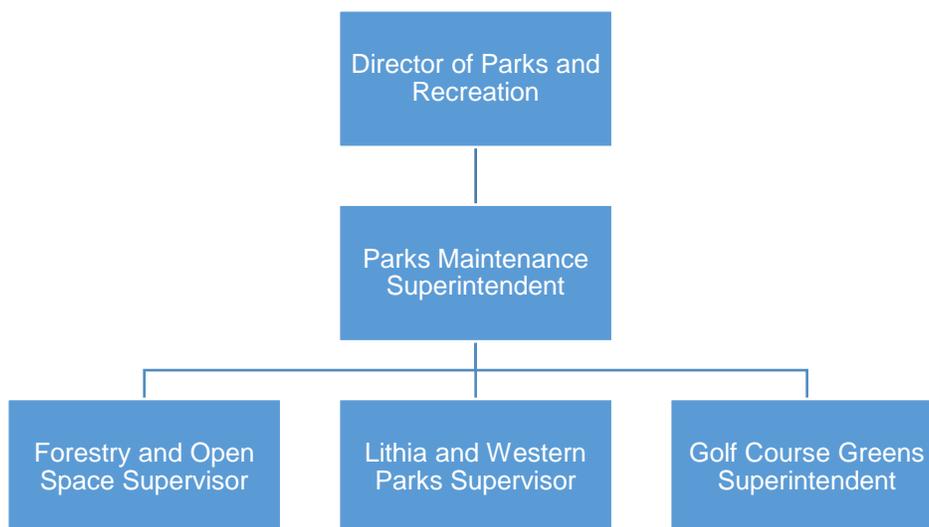
This Chapter provides an analysis of the organizational structure, staffing and operations of the APRC Parks Division. It analyzes the services provided by this Division and makes recommendations that propose improvement opportunities to current practices and expands upon the many positive aspects of the Division and the efforts of its staff.

1. THE APRC PARKS DIVISION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING A LARGE AND DIVERSE SET OF PARK AND OPEN SPACE ASSETS.

The APRC Parks Division provides a variety of services and is organized into four main work units. While Capital Improvements and Facilities Maintenance was recently transitioned into its own division with a manager who reports directly to the Director of Parks and Recreation, because of its small number of employees, two FTE staff and one

seasonal employee, along with its relative newness, it is addressed in this report as though still a work unit within the APRC Parks Division.

The current organizational structure of the APRC Parks Division is presented below.



The following table provides an overview of the services provided by the APRC Parks Division.

Overview of Parks Division Services	
Function	Description of Primary Services
Forestry and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains parks on the east side of town • Maintains all City trails • Maintains open spaces such as Ashland Pond Area • Assists with tree care throughout the park system
Lithia and Western Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains Lithia Park (by far the City's largest park) • Maintains all other parks on the west side of the City
Golf Course Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains Oak Knoll Golf Course
Capital and Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and executes capital improvements for the APRC • Provides routine maintenance for park and recreation facilities

2. THERE ARE MANY POSITIVE ASPECTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE APRC PARKS DIVISION'S OPERATIONS.

The project team conducted interviews with the Parks and Recreation Director, the Parks Superintendent, three Park Supervisors, the Golf Course Superintendent, the Capital and Facilities Manager, and the Park Technician II reporting to the latter.

The project team also compared parks maintenance services to those of “best practices” in the industry. This analysis identified several positive aspects of the services provided by the APRC Parks Division, several of which are provided as examples below:

- The APRC Parks Division staff includes several certified playground inspectors, ensuring the continued safety of all playground equipment for park users.
- The Division has implemented a very restrictive Integrated Pest Management program which errs on the side of protecting the environment and the public.
- The Division employs a certified arborist who, while assigned to the Forestry and Open Space Division, serves as “arborist at large” to promote a professional level of tree service for the entire park system.
- Parks staff pride themselves on their work, and there is strong communication between the various work units (i.e., forestry, parks, facilities). They often cooperate with each other to get the job done.

This sampling of positive attributes provides a sound foundation on which to build a more efficient and effective Parks Division, and there exist a number of opportunities for future improvement.

3. THERE ARE SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION OF THE APRC PARKS DIVISION.

The following section presents suggestions to assist the APRC Parks Division in improving its operations. In general, while current operations are carried out by professional, dedicated staff, a more rigorous approach to planning and managing APRC’s park and open space assets should be adopted.

(1) Developing an Inventory of All Parks and Open Space Assets the Parks Division Currently Maintains Would Increase the Effectiveness of the APRC Parks Maintenance Program.

A comprehensive parks and open space asset inventory is the cornerstone of an effective maintenance program. It can significantly reduce maintenance costs, speed repairs, enable comparative studies, educate park users, and inform budgetary plans. A comprehensive inventory should include items such as:

- Detailed description of all the different types of grounds, fields and facilities
- Structures and fixtures including picnic shelters, restrooms
- Acres of turf mowed
- Square footage of planter beds
- Description of playground equipment and structures
- Number of drinking fountains, park benches and other park amenities
- Irrigations systems

The inventory would identify the location of each structure and/or fixture as well as any other information supporting future maintenance efforts such as the make and model number of playground equipment or drinking fountains and the genus and species of trees. While Ashland has inventoried some components of what it currently maintains such as park irrigation systems, most of the park system has either not been inventoried or the inventory has not been updated.

In addition, there is no central repository of information where park users can find the size of all the parks, nor is there a one-stop site where tennis players, for example, can determine how many tennis courts are available in the park system, or where they are located. You could click on each of the park narratives to see whether it discusses tennis courts or playgrounds, but this is not a user-friendly way to provide that information.

The project team could not find any information online that described the location of Ashland's trails, or the length of various trail segments. While some information is available to park users via the web, and additional information is available via hard copies of maps, these sources of information can actually confuse the layperson who is looking for general information. One page of the budget document indicates 26 miles of trails in Ashland, while another page of the same document specifies 30 miles. The same document indicates there are 16 parks in Ashland, yet the City's website indicates there are 18 park sites. The hard copy map available at the Lithia parks office depicts an even greater number of park sites. Hald and Westwood Parks, for example, are shown on the hard map, but users who look for them online will not find them as the hard map does not inform the reader that they are undeveloped parks. While some of the website narratives provide the size of the park they describe, others do not.

The lack of a comprehensive inventory also handcuffs staff. For example, the project team learned through its interviews that Ashland park staff maintains 74 backflow prevention devices. Yet there is no inventory identifying and describing these devices. Each of these devices, and every other park structure and fixture, should be mapped and inventoried so that any park staff member could readily locate all 74 backflow prevention devices without needing to hunt them down in the field. The size, make and model of each should be listed. Similarly, all water shut-off valves should be inventoried and mapped to facilitate repairs and emergency responses. Playgrounds, benches, drinking fountains and other park site amenities should be inventoried as well to assist in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of park maintenance operations.

In addition, a matrix listing all of the parks and identifying their size, location and key features should be created and made available to the public.

Recommendation: Develop a detailed asset inventory of all parks and open space sites including all structures, fixtures and their features to increase the effectiveness of park maintenance operations.

Recommendation: Make generic facility information, such as acreage and amenities, available to the public online, and all detailed information available to all staff.

(2) Creating Quality Maintenance Standards Identifying the Targeted Condition of Park Features Will Guide the Park Maintenance Operation and Increase Its Effectiveness.

Quality park maintenance standards describe the desired condition of each park feature so that staff can identify the level of service required during a formal inspection and determine park features that are in compliance from those needing maintenance attention. While some of these standards are fairly intuitive, others are not. Examples of suggested park maintenance standards include:

- Clearance to be maintained between tree branches and parking lots or sidewalk
 - Safety hazards should be removed within 24 hours
- Some of these more detailed standards are known to some staff but not all. The standards should be formalized and documented in writing, then made available to all staff to serve as a guideline for maintaining park facilities.

Consideration should be given to establishing a “tiered” maintenance system that dictates different standards of maintenance for different parks. For example, a higher maintenance standard might be developed for more prominent, heavily-visited parks such as Lithia Park or downtown parks as compared to dog parks or outlying parks. This concept is employed to some degree in Ashland by established park standards that are

broken into various “levels” but those levels speak primarily to frequency of service as opposed to desired conditions.

The frequency of service for park maintenance tasks such as mowing grass or cleaning restrooms is important, but it is of little value if the desired condition of the feature is not also clearly stated. For example, a restroom cleaned well every other day could actually provide a higher level of service than a restroom cleaned to a lower level of service on a daily basis.

Furthermore, some basic maintenance tasks such as hazard and graffiti abatement are not addressed by the current service “levels.” Hazard and graffiti abatement are two of the most important tasks to be performed by parks maintenance staff, and levels of service should be defined for each (e.g., safety hazards shall be abated within 24 hours of notice). The presence of numerous acts of graffiti throughout Ashland’s park system suggests that acceptable standards for graffiti abatement need to be developed.

Recommendation: Develop quality standards identifying the targeted maintenance condition of all park features.

(3) Formalizing and Documenting Routine Maintenance Procedures Required to Maintain Park Features in Their Desired Condition Will Ensure Consistency in Maintenance Operations.

Most routine park maintenance procedures such as restroom cleaning and lawn edging, for example, are not documented. While such tasks may seem on the surface to be intuitive jobs that do not require formalization or training, a lack of formal guidance can cause problems. For example, anyone with a shovel can put a five-gallon tree into the ground, but the proper method for planting and staking a young tree varies from city to city, as do related results.

Ashland relies heavily on informal training and the passing of general practices from one employee to another. This can lead to varied practices throughout the park system rather than a consistent approach, as well as the possible loss of important information or a decline in park conditions over time. Practices that can be foreseen, such as how to close and lock a facility after being called back to work after normal business hours, can also be good candidates for formal documentation. Even determining who or how to contact an employee in the middle of the night can be problematic if procedures are not determined and memorialized in advance.

Recommendation: Establish and document routine maintenance procedures required to maintain park features in their desired condition.

(4) Establishing a Formal Park Maintenance Training Program for Routine Maintenance Operations Will Increase the Overall Effectiveness of Park Division Personnel.

The development of a formal park maintenance program goes hand in hand with the development of the routine procedures discussed above. Once maintenance procedures have been developed, a formal park maintenance training program should also be developed to ensure that established routine maintenance procedures are imparted consistently to staff. This helps to ensure that tasks such as tree planting or restroom maintenance are performed the same way by every staff member in every park, and that park conditions do not significantly change or degrade as institutional knowledge retires. A formal training program can also help to enhance efforts toward succession planning and employees' career development.

There are currently too few staff trained to perform certain tasks such as only one staff member certified to test backflow prevention devices. A formal park maintenance training program that increases the skill levels of all personnel should seek to eliminate

“single points of failure” and ensure that the loss or incapacitation of one individual does not bring maintenance operations to a standstill. Creating training components that increase staff capacity to perform specialty functions such as backflow prevention device testing, playground safety inspections, heavy equipment operation and pesticide applications maximizes the strength and effectiveness of maintenance personnel.

In addition to a formal training program for routine maintenance tasks and increasing specialized skill levels, developing a hands-on, “just-in-time” training program by seasoned veterans can help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of less experienced staff. Veteran maintenance personnel should be encouraged to impart their knowledge and experience regarding less routine tasks as time allows.

Recommendation: Establish a formal park maintenance training program that focuses on routine maintenance operations, developing personnel skill levels and encourages skilled veteran park personnel to mentor and train less experienced staff on the job.

(5) Developing Parks Division Performance Indicators Will Provide a Basis for the APRC and the Public to Evaluate the Overall Performance of the Parks Division.

By developing high level performance indicators, the Commissioners and management can not only evaluate performance as compared to identified targets, but can also evaluate the resources needed to achieve desired conditions. There are few existing performance indicators for the APRC Parks Division, and those that do exist are primarily quantitative performance measures such as the Forestry Division measure indicating the number of piles of chipped or burned foliage. These do little to inform the reader as to the Division’s performance or progress toward APRC goals and objectives. Parks maintenance should pursue a set of performance indicators that are more qualitative in nature and that link to Commission goals and objectives such as the number

of safety hazards abated within 24 hours of notice or the number of acts of graffiti eradicated within 48 hours of notice.

Recommendation: Establish a formal set of qualitative performance indicators consistent with the APRC goals and objectives by which the Commissioners and the public can judge the division's performance.

(6) Increasing the Use of Seasonal Personnel During the Summer Months Can Increase the Effectiveness of the Parks Maintenance Operation During This Season of Heavy Park Use by Residents and Visitors.

Park maintenance is a highly seasonal activity, yet the current use of staff in Ashland does not reflect this. Only 3.5 seasonal full-time equivalent staff are added to the ranks in the summer. Additional staffing should reflect the corresponding increase in use the parks receive, but this is not currently the case. Restroom maintenance, for example, suffers greatly during the summer. When park use is at its peak, staff are often able to spend only 5 minutes per restroom performing cleaning operations. This might be fine in the winter, when the restrooms see little use, but it is not nearly sufficient time to adequately service a restroom that has been heavily used, with 30 minutes being a more reasonable target.

Recommendation: Significantly increase the number of seasonal park maintenance staff during summer months.

(7) The APRC Parks Division Should Consider Increased Ways of Involving Volunteers.

Volunteers are used most often in Ashland for projects such as raking leaves, emptying trash containers, or eradicating weeds. Yet these are not tasks that motivate most volunteers to leave the house. More attractive tasks are those such as planting trees and flower beds, or building something useful such as a gazebo or picnic facility. People like to see the lasting result of their hard labor, rather than see the weeds they pulled

simply replaced by others a month later. Volunteers are also more likely to assist with routine tasks and special projects that benefit them more than they benefit the general public. With this in mind, APRC should consider securing volunteers to assist with tasks such as tennis court maintenance or ball field striping. This is a reasonable expectation of special interest groups that would allow park maintenance staff to concentrate more heavily on tasks that benefit all park patrons such as picking up litter, cleaning restrooms, or removing graffiti.

If the Parks Division is to continue pursuing added volunteers for mundane tasks it should also identify more creative projects for volunteers to accomplish as part of the formal “adopt a park” program. The fruits of volunteer labor should be recognized and applauded in some meaningful, visual way such as recognition on a plaque or in a volunteer newsletter.

Recommendation: Consider increased ways of utilizing volunteers in parks maintenance operations.

(8) The APRC Parks Division Should Concentrate on the Maintenance of Existing Facilities Before Building New Ones Unless Maintenance Staff Resources and Funds Are Available to Support the New Park or Open Space Units.

An industry best practice ensures that existing assets are well cared for before dedicating too many resources toward adding additional assets. Many cities have unfortunately not adhered to this basic premise, only to find themselves with an ever-growing inventory of poorly-maintained assets. One of the greatest temptations is to use one-time monies from grants or reserves from a particularly good budget year to build new facilities, even though adequate resources to maintain those new facilities over their lifespan have not been identified.

Much of Ashland's current inventory of park assets is maintained at a B or C level, and there are ample indications of deferred maintenance throughout the system, yet a good deal of attention over the past few years has gone to developing new facilities such as Ashland Creek Park:

- Picnic tables that have outlived their useful lives
- Playground equipment no longer meets current standards
- Dry rot in the golf shop rafters

New infrastructure should not be added to the parks inventory without first identifying a source of funding to maintain it over its lifespan. Typically, this means increasing the operating budget at the same time that a new asset is designed to be made available to the public. While it is possible at times to adopt new infrastructure without additional resources through some value engineering or efficiency measures, this should be done consciously and documented for posterity's sake. Otherwise, it should be assumed that existing resources are needed to maintain *existing* facilities, and that any additional infrastructure will require additional resources to ensure adequate service levels are maintained.

In addition to the issue of park maintenance resources being dedicated to the development of new park assets, Parks Division staff are spending too much time on reactive maintenance as compared to preventive maintenance, a circumstance that over time naturally worsens if not addressed. As more and more time is dedicated to reactive maintenance, less and less time is available for preventive maintenance, and the overall condition of the parks infrastructure slowly deteriorates. But until such time as the existing maintenance staff dedicate their full resources to preventive park and forestry maintenance needs and not to the development of additional assets or infrastructure, the

true cause of the current problem cannot be determined. It may be that if the full resources budgeted for maintenance operations were directed toward that endeavor, they would be sufficient to maintain the system in good condition. So long as a good portion of those resources are dedicated elsewhere, it will be difficult to tell.

These complex issues related to addressing *existing* infrastructure needs have a two-fold negative impact on existing operations. First, it diverts existing resources earmarked for maintenance operation, resulting in existing infrastructure suffering or not being maintained to the degree it was resourced to be maintained. Second, it exacerbates the Parks staff inability to maintain desired conditions and performance standards by adding new infrastructure without a corresponding increase in available maintenance staff resources and funds.

Recommendation: Consider a policy that concentrates on the maintenance of existing facilities before building new ones, unless staff resources and funds are available for maintenance.

Recommendation: Prior to funding capital improvements, the APRC should identify a source of funding to ensure the future maintenance of all new park structures and fixtures proposed to be added to the APRC Parks Division's inventory.

Recommendation: The Parks Division should focus its efforts on performing preventive park and forestry maintenance and continue this approach until reactive maintenance is reduced to a fraction of preventive maintenance efforts.

(9) The APCR Parks Division Should Periodically Consider Contracting for Services Such as Restroom Maintenance and/or Forestry Treatments.

There can be a tendency to assume that costs are minimized by performing all work activities with internal crews. However, contractors can play a vital role in supplementing the internal workforce by performing work in a more efficient manner due to a greater level of expertise and experience, or by providing specialized tools and equipment. While Ashland staff do assess the wisdom of contracting for services on an informal, ad hoc basis, a more concentrated, formal assessment is occasionally prudent.

Recommendation: Consider contracting for services such as restroom maintenance or forestry treatments.

(10) APCR Should Periodically Revisit Its Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Policy to Ensure Its Applicability to Efficient Maintenance Services.

The community's sensitivity and awareness regarding environmental issues has prompted a very restrictive IPM program that errs on the side of protecting the environment and the public. This can be considered a strength of current operations. However, the APCR Commissioners should periodically review its adopted IPM policy with the Director of Parks and Recreation to ensure its implementation does not unnecessarily inhibit the effectiveness of park maintenance efforts and to determine whether park conditions could improve through increased use of pesticides at no risk to the public or the environment. While protection of the public and the environment should remain Ashland's highest priority, the judicious use of pesticides under the watchful eye of a licensed pesticide advisor is not at odds with the existing policy.

Recommendation: Periodically revisit APCR's Integrated Pest Management Policies to ensure its implementation continues to protect both the environment

and the public without unnecessarily inhibiting the effectiveness of park maintenance efforts.

(11) Adopting a Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) Would Increase the Effectiveness of the APRC Parks Division and Its Maintenance Operations and Assist in Effectively Planning for the Future.

A computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) would significantly increase the effectiveness of the APRC Parks Division's operation and provide management of the data from which to make planning, organizational, budgetary and financial decisions related to both current and future park operations. There are many benefits of a CMMS once employees are fully trained in both the mechanics of how and what to report, and in the importance of doing so.

The benefits include not just the obvious ones of tracking the dates, employees, locations and descriptions of work performed, but the data can also be used to define appropriate service levels that are achievable within a given number of labor hours, and at a defined level of productivity. Crew members in Parks should report a standard set of work attributes for each work activity performed, and these should be entered into the CMMS daily. These basic work elements would include:

- Crew member name (or numerical identifier)
- Date work accomplished
- Description of work activity and location. (e.g., planting at Lithia Park)
- Labor hours expended
- Equipment used (identified by numerical designation used by Fleet)
- Materials used and their cost

Currently, the performance of maintenance-related tasks is not recorded in a way that facilitates the analysis of costs and/or productivity. As a result, the project team for

this study was unable to analyze any data relating to the types of tasks occurring or the amounts of time and resources expended in their accomplishment. Similarly, the APRC is currently unable to perform any related analysis of maintenance activity and performance.

Adopting a CMMS would track and correlate a number of key data points, allowing staff to generate preventive maintenance work orders on a routine cycle, with different activities scheduled on a monthly, quarterly, biannual, or annual basis. This would be particularly helpful to Ashland, given its need to dedicate more resources to preventive maintenance. At the very least, it would help to identify for decision-makers the work that ought to be accomplished on a routine basis, and where APRC is falling short in terms of the resources necessary to accomplish that work.

A CMMS would also help staff to identify and analyze the following:

- The full cost of performing a unit of work for any particular task (e.g., the cost of mowing one acre of turf, or cleaning one restroom facility).
- Areas in which APRC staff excel or are in need of training; the APRC should accentuate those areas in which staff are relatively proficient, but it should also identify those areas in which staff may be consistently expending excessive amounts of time and/or resources.
- The feasibility of outsourcing specific tasks. Currently, a lack of data inhibits a sound analysis of the events for which outsourcing may be more efficient and/or effective.
- The locations of work.
- Workload data can help in identifying trends in the performance or work in specific areas of the parks that are consuming inordinate amounts of time.
- The need for re-engineering work methods.
- The need for capital improvements in the parks to reduce unnecessary and repetitive work.

In general, a CMMS would be used to schedule tasks and to inform APRC managers on the activities it is accomplishing, as well as the cost of those activities. A CMMS could also serve as a vital piece of a performance reporting system that generates reports on the degree to which the APRC is achieving success against pre-established measures. Therefore, the CMMS can be used both as a scheduling and performance reporting tool.

Should Ashland decide to pursue a CMMS, the project team makes no recommendation regarding the specific software that the division should adopt; however, it is important that the system be compatible with any other system adopted by the Recreation Division as this will facilitate scheduling maintenance of fields in accordance with the needs of the Recreation Division, as well as the development of fees for service.

There are also several challenges to making effective use of a CMMS. Maintenance management systems are not inexpensive, they require a significant amount of time and energy to implement, they require continual care and feeding once installed, and the information they generate is only as good as the data they are provided. As a result, larger organizations are more apt to recoup the expense of a CMMS over a relatively short period of time, whereas a small organization such as APRC may be challenged to justify the expense or the resources required to make effective use of such a system.

If APRC determines that a CMMS is not cost-effective, it should consider other less demanding methods of developing preventive maintenance schedules, as well as assessing the unit/cost of specific work tasks on at least an occasional basis (e.g., time in motion studies correlated to employee time cards and expenditures).

Recommendation: Consider adoption of a CMMS or other means of determining the full cost of performing specific units of work.

2. OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE APRC PARKS DIVISION SHOULD BE PURSUED THOUGHTFULLY AND METHODICALLY.

While there are many opportunities for improvement worth pursuing, the manner in which that change is implemented will be important. The APRC Parks Division has undergone significant change over the past few years, and additional change affecting work priorities, staffing assignments, reporting relationships and locations is currently underway. To ensure the maximum effectiveness of future change, the following strategies should be kept in mind:

(1) Understanding the “Big Picture” Is Important.

Change is most difficult to accept when it is perceived as negative, or as “change for change’s sake,” and these perceptions are easier to gravitate toward when one does not understand the reasoning behind change or when there appears to be no end in sight. When employees are left to guess the rationale driving changes in organizational structure or staffing assignments, they often fill in the blanks with the worst case scenario. Uncertainty fuels speculation and resistance. On the contrary, a great deal of change, even that which might otherwise be perceived as negative, is more likely to be accepted, even welcomed, if it is supported by an appreciation for the end goal. Seeing the “big picture” during the implementation of change allows employees to understand (and perhaps appreciate) not only that there is an end goal, but that there is a justification and purpose for pursuing it.

Those staff interviewed by the project team regarding recent organizational changes in Parks were generally optimistic, supportive, and hopeful, but they did also

express a lack of understanding regarding where the organization was headed—and some trepidation as a result.

(2) The Pace of Change Is Important.

The pace at which change is implemented is also key to its success. The APRC's Parks Division appears to be at a crossroads with regard to the amount of unanticipated change it can withstand. While the general sentiment of staff interviewed regarding recent changes was positive and hopeful, there was also a sense of being overwhelmed.

Given the amount of recent and current change affecting the Parks Division, further change related to the recommendations made by the project team should be implemented thoughtfully, in measured fashion and, as indicated above, by putting future change into the context of strategic objectives tied to positive outcomes for APRC.

(3) Communication is a Key Element.

Continued communication will be critical to the successful implementation of future change. Messages delivered directly by the leadership implementing change would also go a long way toward dispelling related rumors and the negativity that often accompanies them. Both the “big picture” and the manner in which leadership intends to pursue it could be explained and discussed at existing quarterly meetings. These provide a perfect platform for conveying these messages to the entire organization. In lieu of this, or in addition, special meetings designed to convey related messages could be convened. These special meetings and/or written memoranda could also be used to help staff understand the “big picture” and would help to underscore the importance of pending change.

Recommendation: APRC management leadership is encouraged to share APRC's long-term vision for the Park Division and meet regularly with division staff to share

pending changes and future directions for the division to ensure their understanding of the strategic objectives and enlist their support in accomplishing positive outcomes.

5. GOLF OPERATIONS

This chapter provides an analysis of the organization and operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course (Oak Knoll) owned and operated by the APRC. This chapter will include recommendations for its operation based on positive aspects of the golf course operation.

1. OAK KNOLL GOLF COURSE OFFERS A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS AND VISITORS OF ASHLAND.

Oak Knoll Golf Course is a 9-hole, 6,047-yard golf course played as an 18-hole course with a par of 71 for men and 74 for women operating year-round. Facilities and amenities at the course include a driving range, a pro shop with minimal beverage and snack services, small golf merchandise for sale, an outdoor patio area, TV lounge, and table and chairs for seating. The course also offers a 10-hole Foot Golf course, golf cart rentals, golf lessons and men's and women's league programs. Tee time reservations are made through an online golf reservation system. Recorded golf rounds for 2015 totaled 15,978. The table on the following page presents an overview of the programs and services offered by the Oak Knoll Golf Course:

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Oak Knoll Golf Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a range of programs and services for individual and group golf experiences on a 9-hole golf course, including cart rentals, and a driving range seven days per week, year-round. • Offers a variety of annual membership opportunities, seasonal rates and monthly coupon specials for discounted play on the course. • Offers Foot Golf course as an alternative golfing program experience. • Offers weekly men's twilight golf league and weekly ladies' daytime league beginning in March and continuing through October. • Offers opportunities for outside tournament play on course during the season. • Offers group and private lesson opportunities for children and adults. • Provides club house, beverage and snack sales and small golf equipment amenities for purchase. • Offers club house facility rentals for weddings, family events, business meetings and other events.

The pro shop operation is currently operated as a program unit in the Recreation Division and managed by a Golf Course Coordinator position and an Assistant Coordinator position for a total of 1.8 FTE. Seasonal part-time employees are utilized for routine cart maintenance as well as set up for tournaments, events and related activities. The course is maintained by a golf course unit in the Parks Maintenance Division managed by a Golf Course Superintendent position and one Park Technician employee for a total of 2.0 FTE positions. The FY 2015-17 budget allocation for Oak Knoll operations combining golf program and maintenance is \$1,104,650.

Golf course revenues for the 2014-15 FY totaling \$281,643, generated from a variety of sources, is presented in the table below:

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, OREGON
Performance Audit of the Parks and Recreation Services

Revenue Source	FY14-15 Total
Annual Passes	\$15,189
Green Fees	\$98,154
Monthly Specials	\$53,390
Cart Rentals	\$45,424
Driving Range	\$21,734
Merchandise	\$27,341
Beverages and Snacks	\$19,249
Events	\$1,162
Total	\$281,643

A variety of green fees and rates are available to players at Oak Knoll as presented in the following table:

Current Oak Knoll Golf Course User Rates				
Category	Season	Description	Rate	
Annual Pass	Yearly	Single	\$1,100	
		Family	\$1,540	
Driving Range	Year Round	35 balls	\$3	
			9-Hole	8-Hole
Adult Green Fee	Nov to Feb	18 to 54 years	\$14	\$16
	Mar to Oct		\$20	\$24
Junior Green Fee	Nov to Feb	8 to 17 years	\$5	\$10
	Mar to Oct		\$5	\$10
Senior Green Fee	Nov to Feb	55 plus	\$12	\$14
	Mar to Oct		\$18	\$22
Adult Cart Rental	Nov to Feb	18 to 54 years	\$10	\$13
	Mar to Oct		\$10	\$13
Senior Cart Rental	Nov to Feb	55 plus	\$8	\$11
	Mar to Oct		\$8	\$11

(1) There Are a Variety of Positive Aspects of Golf Course Operations at Oak Knoll Golf Course.

The project team conducted interviews with the key golf course pro shop and maintenance personnel responsible for golf course operations, reviewed background documents related to the golf course and compared its programs and services to “best practices.” The results of this study provided a number of positive aspects summarized as follows:

- The golf course provides a variety of golf facilities to the residents and visitors in Ashland including year-round play, driving range facilities, a club house, patio facility and golf cart rentals.
- Tee time reservations are available online to provide easy access for players.
- Golf leagues, tournaments, golf camps and lesson programs are available to golfers.
- The golf course offers a variety of reasonable rates for players and monthly online specials to attract tourists and new golfers.
- Foot Golf is offered as an alternative sports program at the golf course facility.
- The golf course provides playing and practice opportunities for the local high school and university golf teams and clubs.
- The golf course works closely with local businesses and community organizations to offer tournaments at the course.
- The clubhouse facilities are available for rental for weddings, family reunions and events.

These positive aspects of Oak Knoll provide the foundation from which opportunities for improvement can be identified and implemented. The following sections provide an analysis of improvement opportunities of the golf course.

2. A VARIETY OF OPERATING MODELS ARE UTILIZED BY AGENCIES TO ADMINISTER PUBLIC GOLF COURSES.

Public parks and recreation agencies throughout the United States have considered a variety of effective organizational structures and models in the management of public golf course operations. APCR currently operates Oak Knoll as part of the general fund-financed programs and services offered to the residents of Ashland. Golf course operations are divided between the Recreation Division and the Parks Maintenance Division. The following describes models APCR could consider as the operating structure of Oak Knoll:

- **Agency Operation Model** – The agency administers golf course operations in-house using full-time and seasonal part-time agency employees to maintain and operate the courses. The agency may contract with outside concessionaires to provide specific elements of the operation such as food and beverage services. The agency provides all operating funds including administrative overhead costs and capital improvement funds and receives all revenues generated from the golf course operation.
- **Concession Operation Model** – The agency grants an outside contractor a license to provide all or a portion of the day-to-day operations of the golf course which may or may not include golf course maintenance. The concessionaire is responsible for all operating costs and retains the revenues generated from the operation. The concessionaire pays the agency a minimum rental payment and a percentage of gross revenues. The agency continues responsibility for capital improvements. Depending on the level of services contracted to the concessionaire, agencies may retain substantial responsibility for portions of the golf course operation.
- **Management Agreement Model** – The agency contracts with a professional golf management firm to administer day-to-day golf course operations. The management firm hires all employees, collects all revenues and is responsible for all expenses. The agency retains all revenues and reimburses the management firm for personnel costs and direct expenses and pays the firm a fixed management fee plus a predetermined percentage of revenues based on performance targets. The agency retains responsibility for maintenance and capital improvements of the golf course/s. This model provides the agency with the greatest potential for increased revenue generation and provides the greatest control over operating decisions for the agency.
- **Operating Lease Model** – The agency establishes a long-term lease of the golf course property to a private party who provides overall management and administration of the facilities, is responsible for the maintenance of the golf course and all capital improvements to the facilities and contributes to a capital improvement reserve fund. The lessee retains all the revenues generated from the operations and pays the agency a rental payment. This model provides the least revenue-generating potential for the agency and least control over operations.
- **Hybrid Model** – This model consists of some combination of the models presented above with a combination of agency operations, concessionaire agreements, management agreements and/or maintenance contracts to manage and administer golf course operations.

Each of the five operational models vary in detailed provisions, complexity and implementation depending on the specific circumstances surrounding the golf operation

in each individual agency. The project team makes no specific recommendation for an operational model for Oak Knoll, but suggests that APRC review and consider the most effective model of operation for its golf course. Appendix E of this report provides a detailed description of the key elements of each operating model.

Recommendation: Review and consider the golf course operational models to determine the most effective model for operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

The following analysis and recommendations relate to the current operations of the Oak Knoll Golf Course and will recommend improvement opportunities that apply to its operation regardless of which operating model APRC may select for future golf operations.

3. CONSOLIDATING OAK KNOLL GOLF OPERATIONS INTO ONE DIVISION COULD INCREASE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS.

As previously noted, pro shop and maintenance operations at Oak Knoll are currently managed from separate divisions, with the pro shop operation being managed as part of the Recreation Division and golf course maintenance being managed by a unit in the Parks Maintenance Division. Starting times, the number of golfers allowed on course, and decisions regarding the use of carts on the course are decisions made by the pro shop that affect maintenance operations. Similarly, issues related to course conditions, the application of special maintenance functions such as aerating and sanding of greens and whether to close a portion of the course are maintenance decisions that impact the operation of the pro shop. As a result, it is important to establish an organizational structure that ensures continued communication, coordination and cooperation between these two functions.

As long as APRC continues to maintain direct management and operations of Oak Knoll, the project team proposes that a new division be created within the organization that centralizes the pro shop and maintenance operations under the administration of a new Golf Operations Manager position reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation. The following organization chart reflects the newly proposed Golf Course Operations Division:



The addition of a Golf Operations Manager position provides opportunities to significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the golf operation. In general, the Golf Operations Manager will be responsible for:

- Providing overall management and leadership to the pro shop and maintenance operations.
- Developing expanded golf programs and experiences that increase participation and generate increased revenues to support golf course operations.
- Improving the overall condition and playability of the golf course.
- Developing short and long-term capital improvement programs that upgrade the facilities and amenities of the golf course.
- Improving the day-to-day maintenance operations at the course.
- Increasing the viability of the clubhouse as a revenue generator.

Creating a new Golf Operations Division to provide coordinated management and more effective communication links will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of golf course operations. The proposed Golf Operations Manager would be classified as a senior management position, reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation, and appointed at the initial step in the management range beginning at approximately \$75,000 per year plus current benefits.

Recommendation: Create a Golf Course Operations Division to consolidate the Pro Shop and Park Maintenance functions into one operating division.

Recommendation: Establish a Golf Operations Manager position, at the senior management level, responsible for the combined pro shop and maintenance operations of Oak Knoll Golf Course reporting to the Director of Parks and Recreation.

4. AN ENTERPRISE FUND IS A WELL ESTABLISHED, VIABLE FINANCIAL MECHANISM TO ADMINISTER GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS.

Enterprise funds have been established by public agencies as the predominant financial structure to administer golf course operations with the revenues and expenditures segregated into a separate operating account rather than comingled with general fund revenues and expenditures. Capital improvement programs are also administered as part of golf course enterprise funds. Enterprise funds do not create a separate governmental entity, but are managed as part of the existing governmental operations and are subject to the rigorous accounting and financial standards required of all municipalities.

A recent comparative study of golf course operations conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group for the City of Salt Lake (2014) identified enterprise funds as the predominant financial mechanism utilized by public agencies for the management and

operation of golf courses. The following findings that were identified in the study related to the use of enterprise funds for the financial administration of golf operations.

- Enterprise funds are the preferred financial vehicle for managing golf course financial operations regardless of the operating model or models utilized in administering golf course operations.
- Golf enterprise fund budgets incorporate golf course operating revenues and expenditures, capital improvement expenditures and debt service expenses, if applicable.
- Enterprise funds are generally charged the costs of administrative overhead for services or costs such as accounting, financial management, personnel services, insurance and utility costs. These indirect costs are identified as a budgetary expenditure and reimbursed to the agency's general fund from revenues generated from golf course operations.
- Excess revenues generated from golf course operations are retained in the enterprise fund and identified as a beginning fund balance each year.

Seven of the eight cities surveyed in the Salt Lake City study reported golf course operations as self-supporting, with their golf enterprise fund covering total costs for golf course operations, including administrative overhead, without any additional support from the city's general fund. The only exception to this finding was in Albuquerque, New Mexico due to a one-time general fund contribution in 2014 for funding authorized golf course capital improvements with the anticipation that golf course operations would sustain itself in the future.

Establishing an enterprise fund for the operation of Oak Knoll Golf Course will require an initial loan from the general fund or other designated fund to ensure that the fund is balanced at the end of each fiscal year during the first several years of operating within the fund. In addition, capital improvement funds should be designated in the Enterprise Fund to ensure that needed physical improvements to the golf course are made to ensure increased use of the course and, thus, increased potential for revenue

generation. It is expected that a long-term plan for repayment of the initial loan would be established with payments made each year as part of operating expenses.

Recommendation: Consider the establishment of an Enterprise Fund as the financial mechanism for the management and operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course providing an initial loan to establish the fund until adequate revenue are generated to fund the golf course operation.

5. OPERATING THE GOLF COURSE USING A BUSINESS MODEL IS AN IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR SUCCESSFUL GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS.

Key management strategies currently being utilized to manage municipal golf course operations in other areas, focus on elements of a business model. Business-oriented strategies ranging from flexibility in managing personnel to flexibility in establishing fee schedules and the use of state-of-the-art technology were identified in the recent Matrix Consulting Group study of Salt Lake City golf course operations. The following presents key business model management strategies identified by municipalities in the study as effective in improving golf course operations:

- The ability to assign and utilize personnel in multiple capacities is an effective means of controlling personnel costs while saving time and maximizing service level efficiency. For example, one agency broadened the scope of golf maintenance personnel job descriptions to allow for the performance of tasks such as plumbing and electrical work which would otherwise require a work request, scheduling resources from another maintenance division to complete the work, resulting in unnecessary delays and potential disruption to golf course use. Having the flexibility in assigning golf course personnel provides opportunities to address problem areas without delay, decrease costs and maximize customer service.
- Allowing for the “dynamic pricing” of green fees, tournaments and other services based on current market demand maximizes the revenue generating potential of golf course operations. Oak Knoll currently offers online “specials” or coupons designed to attract new players. Other examples of “dynamic pricing” opportunities include:
 - lowering prices to fill tee times during slow periods of the day
 - increasing fees when the demand is at its greatest

- offering 2nd-round fee discounts
 - offering combination packages that include golf, cart and food service, for one fee
 - developing tourist-oriented playing packages marketed and offered by local hotels and inns
 - creating incentives such as discount play cards, loyalty programs, senior, super senior and military passes
- Having the flexibility to make management decisions without being constrained by the parameters of an established fee schedule or required to obtain commissioner authorization for each fee adjustment provides opportunities for more effective marketing strategies, increasing play and generating added revenues.
 - Incorporating technology systems such as online tee time reservation systems and “Point of Sale” technology increases the effectiveness and efficiency of pro shop and retail sales operations, increases marketing potential and collects data for use in future planning. For example, obtaining patron email addresses as part of the tee time reservation system or point of sale process provides the golf course with a database of customers to include in ongoing promotion and marketing efforts, thus creating the potential for greater revenue generation.
 - Establishing the USGA and PGA of America joint initiative, “TEE IT FORWARD,” to encourage players to play from a set of tees that is best to their driving distance will improve pace of play, increase positive golf experiences for the golfer and increase overall customer service.
 - The ability to temporarily assign maintenance personnel to other related maintenance functions during slow winter months maximizes personnel use and decreases the cost of golf course operations. For example, one agency assigns golf course maintenance personnel to snow removal maintenance at the airport when they cannot be utilized for maintenance activities at the golf courses.

The implementation of flexible management strategies in golf course operations increases the potential for maximizing the effectiveness of existing personnel resources, increases the potential for generating greater revenues and provides opportunities to increase player participation. These management strategies require the flexibility of operating golf courses using a business model.

Recommendation: Adopt a policy providing parameters incorporating the use of a “business model” management approach which allows for inclusion of business strategies in the operations of the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

6. MARKETING OAK KNOLL GOLF COURSE TO THE PUBLIC REQUIRES THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A VARIETY OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES.

Successful golf course marketing efforts must incorporate a variety of marketing strategies to appeal to multiple age groups, diverse interest groups, individual skill levels, varying levels of technology use and economic capacity. Effective marketing begins with the agency defining a clear vision, mission and direction for its golf course operation. This effort creates a platform from which a marketing strategy can be designed that engages new golfers while maintaining interest among returning players.

APRC’s Promotions Unit, can provide the Golf Operations Division with the internal resources to assist in designing and implementing a variety of promotional and communication strategies that can generate interest in Oak Knoll, compete with nearby golf courses and work to engage the public in the game of golf. The following list provides additional strategies that can be implemented to increase awareness of Oak Knoll and encourages participation from Ashland and regional residents and tourists visiting the city:

- Oak Knoll currently maintains a website that is independent of the APRC general website, but has links from the APRC website. Often golf course information is embedded in an agency website pages and listed in a variety of areas that require dedicated searching on the part of the user to obtain information about the course, tee time reservations and the programs and services offered at the golf course. Comprehensive, easy to use golf course websites engage the user by including basic course information, online tee time reservation systems, descriptions of course facilities and amenities, detailed information about lessons, tournament play registration, participation in player associations and upcoming special events. Continuing to develop and expand Oak Knoll’s website will ensure that it has current, up-to-date information that effectively engages the user and promotes golf course opportunities.

- Using search engine optimization is a critical marketing tool that ensures websites receive maximum visibility and increased visitors. Search engine optimization ensures that the golf course website is highly visible when someone searches online for golf courses in the Ashland area.
- Describing the unique features of the course on websites and in print advertising, media and social media is an effective marketing strategy that engages the potential customer in making a decision to take advantage of the right golfing experience. Given there are several golf courses in the Ashland/Medford region, highlighting the unique features of Oak Knoll such as individual golf holes, special memberships and golf rates, or the Foot Golf program will spark interest and engage potential customers.
- Implement a “Point of Sale” feature and online tee reservation systems to generate a customer data-base from which regular email “blasts” about golf course programs and services, special offers, tournament opportunities and new features can alert ongoing course customers to current activities and encourage increased participation. Online tee reservation systems provide opportunities to send email notifications to daily customers regarding changes in course or weather conditions, current status of play and solicit customer feedback on the golf experience, which can be used in evaluating overall golf course operations.
- “Dynamic pricing” strategies also provide an excellent base for marketing the course and its current special offerings on the website and in email newsletters or “blasts” that drive increased tee time reservations, fill unused tee times during slow periods and increase revenues.
- The use of social media outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and others has been successful in connecting with current and potential customers, providing up-to-date course photos and information, driving website access and linking players to the online tee time reservation system. Using social media creates opportunities to engage current and potential customers by posting golf-related facts and information, suggesting holiday gift ideas available for purchase from the pro shop and promoting gift cards and annual membership opportunities. These options can be used as strategies for marketing the golf course during times that golf play is minimal due to seasonal conditions.
- Improved signage, billboards, newspaper and magazine advertising, radio and TV spots, electronic or print newsletters and course brochures should continue to be utilized as effective marketing strategies for golf course operations.
- Developing a marketing and promotional campaign that generates the interest of visitors to the Ashland area can be instrumental in increasing the overall use of Oak Knoll Golf Course.

Incorporating a variety of marketing strategies is considered a high priority in the operation of golf courses and this clearly applies to Oak Knoll. Ensuring that the Golf Operations Division initially identifies a clear vision, mission and direction for golf course operation, with performance targets, and develops a variety of marketing strategies that reach the diverse clientele groups with varying communication styles are keys to increasing revenues.

Recommendation: Partner with the Promotions Unit to develop and implement a marketing and promotions plan that incorporates a variety of marketing strategies to increase participation and revenue generation at Oak Knoll.

6. GOLF COURSE CONDITIONS ARE A KEY ELEMENT IN THE SUCCESS OF A GOLF COURSE OPERATION.

Golf course maintenance and capital improvements have a significant impact on the perceived value and overall success of golf course operations and result in increased revenue generation and player retention. Well maintained golf courses with quality golf-related amenities result in positive golf experiences for the customer and create the perception that the experience is a good value for the price paid.

Project team interviews with current Oak Knoll Golf Course frequent users identified a number of maintenance issues that impact the quality of the golf experience and affect the perceived value of golf at Oak Knoll. Examples of golf course maintenance and facility issues cited during interviews included:

- Overall dry conditions and patchy fairways; inconsistent from hole to hole; some areas not covered with turf.
- Greens not properly watered, aerated and manicured to be consistent.
- Tee boxes not flat and often not focused in proper direction.
- Irrigation system ineffective in providing consistent water coverage to course.

- Rough not properly maintained.
- Lack of cart paths makes winter play difficult.
- Lack of proper drainage on course affects play during rainy season.

Attention to these types of customer comments regarding the current condition and maintenance requirements of the golf course as part of the day-to-day routine maintenance program could make a significant difference in the playability of the course and improve the perception of golfers about the value of the course. The development and implementation of improved golf course maintenance standards would enhance golf course usage and increase revenues.

Capital improvement projects are also a key element in ensuring quality course conditions and providing the amenities that attract and retain golfers to courses. Quality golf course maintenance and capital improvements play a significant role in formulating the “perceived value” of the golf experience, resulting in returning golfers and attracting new players to the course. At Oak Knoll the lack of a bridge between holes 6 and 7 impacts the pace of play and the muddy conditions between holes 2 and 3 during the rainy season are examples of capital projects that could significantly improve the playing conditions at the course and increase participation. The following presents maintenance and capital improvement strategies that support successful golf course operations:

- The development and implementation of system-wide course maintenance standards that result in consistent course conditions and contribute to a quality golf experience are critical to effective golf course maintenance operations.
- Up-to-date and well-maintained equipment is important to the efficient delivery of maintenance services and the delivery of a quality golf course product to the consumer.
- Improvements to course irrigation systems are a key capital improvement project that significantly improves the overall conditions of the course, potentially

decreasing water costs. These are critical to providing quality maintenance operations.

- Tee box renovation projects that adjust tees forward have positively impacted pace of play courses.
- Adding or upgrading golf course amenities such as food and beverage facilities, new or remodeled clubhouse projects, the addition of lights to driving range facilities, and the development of golf learning centers have all been identified as important golf course capital improvement projects that increase golf course use and add to the revenue stream.

Quality maintenance operations and capital improvement investments in golf courses significantly add to the “perceived value” of a golf course, resulting in increased play, new players, increased revenue generation and returning customers.

Recommendation: Develop and implement performance standards for golf course maintenance that increase the “perceived value” of the Oak Knoll Golf Course playing experience.

Recommendation: Conduct an assessment of capital improvement projects needed at the golf course and establish a funding plan to implement these projects over the next three to five years.

7. CREATING A VARIETY OF PROGRAMMING STRATEGIES TO MEET THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF GOLFERS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL SUCCESS OF OAK KNOLL GOLF COURSE OPERATIONS.

In addition to daily play, Oak Knoll currently offers men’s and women’s league play, summer golf camps for junior golfers, lessons taught by an outside golf instructor, assistance with league and community tournaments, driving range facilities, and Foot Golf play. As indicated in the initial summary of current golf course operations, the pro shop does not offer food and beverage services, other than soft drinks and beer purchases. A recent focus of the pro shop, however, has been to market the facility as a rental venue for weddings, family reunions and events.

Recent surveys of municipal golf course operations indicate that courses provide a wide range of private and group lessons, camps, leagues for youth, adults and seniors, men's and women's player groups, family golf events and community and charitable tournaments. In addition, a variety of standard daily and seasonal options are available to players including Twilight and Super Twilight, along with mid-week and weekend play.

The following section presents a recap of expanded and alternative programming strategies, utilized by other public courses, that can effectively be incorporated into golf course operations to increase participation, expand user potential, increase generated revenue and increase the perceived value of the Oak Knoll Golf Course:

- Dedicated course, driving range and practice area times have been allocated to the First Tee program which provides excellent opportunities to “grow” the game of golf for the future.
- The development of golf learning centers that offer opportunities for skill development for children and adults generally include driving ranges, putting, chipping, sand and short game practice areas, 3- to 6-hole practice courses, and a full range of private and group lesson opportunities. These provide excellent programming venues for lessons, children's camps and intensive clinics.
- The Foot Golf open play and league program currently being offered could be expanded with specific tee times set aside for play during the week and on weekends. Expanding the program to include active Foot Golf open play and competitive leagues could generate added golf course use. Revenues from this alternative program, along with exposure of the golf course to young players who could become interested in golf, would be added benefits.
- Alternative programs that supplement existing operations and increase the use of clubhouses and golf amenities during non-peak use times or are not in use for golf-related programs include using the facilities for yoga and fitness centers, child care services, disc golf and driving range skills challenges.
- Food and beverage operations that provide meeting and banquet facilities catering to large meetings, weddings and other non-golf-related events increase awareness and often represent a major revenue-generating source for golf course operations.

- Developing partnerships with surrounding golf courses to offer joint tournament play rotating between courses.
- Creating a regular, year-round senior golf day or teen golf day with reduced rates for playing on the selected days.
- Creating a Junior Golf program, either as part of the First Tee program or as an independent program which offers golf instruction, course etiquette training and ample time for on course play during the summer or after school.
- Creating partnership with other courses in the area to sell annual passes for play at all courses.
- Expanding Twilight Golf experiences to include couples' tournaments, weekly league programs, father or mother/son or daughter events and family play nights provide new experiences at the course.
- Creating programs focused on developing interest among women players such as a Putter Club or selected business women's golf events will increase participation and generate revenue.
- Developing relationships with local businesses to sponsor community tournaments, specific golf programs like the Junior Golf program, or other events in exchange for advertisements at tee boxes, flags, banners and links to their website from the Oak Knoll website.
- Developing golf packages including select tee times, golf cart rental, refreshments and/or lunch and refreshments that are sponsored and promoted by the Chamber of Commerce and local hotels for visitors to the Ashland area.
- Upgrading the existing clubhouse facilities to increase the potential for rental of the facilities for weddings, family reunions and special events.

Adding new programs to existing golf course operations and creating alternative opportunities to maximize the potential use of the golf course facilities when they are not being fully utilized for golf adds to the recreational experience for citizens and maximizes the use of golf facilities during non-use times. These alternative uses add a new dimension to the golf experience, increase participation and generate additional revenues for the golf course.

Recommendation: Consider a variety of expanded program opportunities and strategies to increase use of the facility while increasing financial support for the Oak Knoll Golf Course.

APPENDIX A – PARKS TOUR DEBRIEF

1. INTRODUCTION

Prior to embarking on a tour of the parks, the project team obtained a map that showed all of the various properties owned by the Department for Parks and Recreation purposes, including a listing of all current active parks in the City. The following table on lists all of the parks / properties in the city and whether it is a park or open space / trail, or if it is an undeveloped property.

Park / Property Name	Park Type / Notes
Lithia Park	Visited
Hunter Park	Visited
Garfield Park	Visited
Railroad Park	Visited
YMCA Park	Visited
Garden Way Park	Visited
Glenwood Park	Visited
Triangle Park	Visited
Clay St. Park	Visited
Dog Park	Visited
Siskiyou Mountain Park	Forest / Open Space
Oredson Todd Woods	Forest / Open Space
North Mountain Park	Visited
Bear Creek Greenway	Open Space
Hald Strawberry Park	Open Space
Ashland Community Skate Park	Skate Park
Bluebird Park	A creek
Sherwood Park	Visited
Oak Knoll Golf Course	Golf Course
Ashland Creek Park	Under construction
Scenic Park	Visited
Calle Guanajuato	Creek
Ashland Ponds	Ponds
Chitwood Property	Undeveloped Property
Evergreen	Open Space
Ashland Gun Club	Not an Ashland Park
Westwood Park	Open Space / Trails
Keener Property	Undeveloped properties for future parks
Granite Street Property	
Burnson Property	
Lawrence Property	
Cottle-Philips Property	
Liberty Street Access	Trails
Riverwalk	Trails
Briscoe Geology Park	Park

The project team visited approximately twelve parks and four facilities (Senior Center, Park Administration, Pioneer Hall, and Community Center). The remaining parks were not visited due as they were open space, trails, or undeveloped properties. However, the twelve parks provided the project team with a clear picture of the maintenance routine and appearance of the parks in the city. The following sections of the report provide a brief overview of the maintenance standards for each park visited.

1. YMCA PARK

The YMCA Park is an approximately 8-acre park that is located directly behind the City's YMCA center. The park has playgrounds, soccer fields, a picnic shelter, restrooms, and a concession stand. Additionally, a fitness challenge has been set up around the park for citizens to make use of the vast space of the park. The park had several positive features such as:

- Clear and visible signs
- Tables and trash receptacles were well maintained
- Playground equipment was in good condition and had a mulch surface for soft impact for children.

While these were some of the positive aspects of the park, there were also some opportunities for improvement of the park, such as:

- Soccer Fields were not mowed or level
- Trees and shrubs were not pruned very well.
- The turf was not mowed and trimmed and there were lots of brown spots.
- Restrooms were locked and out of service

While the overall park was clean, it required further maintenance, as there were several muddy spots, due to the rain. Additionally, the park had no rules for use of equipment or soccer fields. The following pictures of the park provide some further insight into the conditions of the park and highlight the issues discussed above.





As the pictures above and on the previous page show the bathroom door is broken at the YMCA for the women's restroom and there are cracks in the parking lot. Additionally, there are brown patches in the grass and the open space area is not mown nor looks well-maintained.

2. CLAY STREET PARK

Clay Street Park is approximately four acres and serves in various capacities in the community, including as a community garden. The park has a lawn area and a playground. The community garden is locked and well maintained as the citizens manage it. This park does not have any restrooms and has satisfactory maintenance with little to no issues related to signage, table maintenance, trash receptacles, and walkways.

Opportunities for maintenance improvement for this park include repainting playground equipment, making sure the mulch used as playground surface is level and the same, irrigation of the lawn area, and a parking lot with clearly identified lines, instead of just gravel. There are also some overgrown trees and bushes right by the parking lot. The following pictures provide further insight regarding the park.





As the pictures above show, Clay Street Park had a clear sign but there was an overgrown area near the entrance of the park and some mulch and dirt in the playground area. Additionally, there were some brown patches near the Community Garden. However, the area surrounding the pathway and leading up to the playground was well mown and maintained.

3. SHERWOOD PARK

Sherwood Park is a small neighborhood park that is approximately 0.25 acres in size. It has a play area, bocce ball courts, and a picnic area. However, other than well maintained trash receptacles and playground equipment, there were several issues and opportunities for improvement for this park. These opportunities included:

- A sign identifying the park
- No parking – other than street parking for the park
- Tables (2) were damaged with graffiti
- Trees and shrubs had not been pruned
- Bocce ball courts had been flooded with water
- Grass had not been mown as it was not level
- There were puddles in the walkway and debris

As the list above indicates the overall appearance of the park was unkempt and not well maintained. Some of the maintenance issues such as the puddles and the flooded courts could be due to the recent influx of rain, but it seemed in general that the park had been neglected. The following pictures serve to highlight the issues discussed above:





As the pictures above show other than the doggy bags sign there is no sign identifying the park. In addition, the bocce ball courts are flooded, there are puddles under the playground equipment, and the bench is tattered and broken.

4. HUNTER PARK AND THE SENIOR CENTER

Hunter Park is one of the larger parks in Ashland, as it is ten acres and is also home to the Senior Center. The park has approximately eight tennis courts, several ballfields, a playground, picnic areas, restrooms, and the swimming pool. The swimming pool was closed during the tour, as it opens during the month of June. However, the APRC has entered into an agreement with the local school district to allow the swimming pool to be used year-round by students, The normal operating session for the public spans Memorial Day through Labor Day Weekend.

Hunter Park had several excellent features such as a variety of recreation activities, well-maintained playground equipment (some repainting is necessary), and clear and clean walkways. There were several signs throughout the park identifying park rules and the park name. Restrooms were clean and open and tree beds were well-maintained. Ballfields were also well-maintained.

There were some opportunities for improvement at this park that primarily included the parking lot and the graffiti on the tables. The following pictures provide some additional context regarding the maintenance of Hunter Park during the project team's visit.

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As the pictures above and on the previous page show, there are separate signs for Hunter Park and the Senior Center. There are rules posted for Hunter Park and also for the tennis courts. The playground equipment also shows that the paint has come off so there is need for repainting. The grass is mown, though, and other than the leaves on the tennis court, the nets are attached and without any holes.

In addition to Hunter Park, the project team also toured the Senior Center. The Senior Center is a relatively small building, with two rooms and an office. The rooms are the kitchen area with a dining room and then a library / recreation area. There is an outdoor seating / patio area for the summer. The facility is old but in fairly decent condition. Opportunities for improvement primarily include expanding the facility and enhancing the appeal of it to continue to attract additional seniors to the center.

5. GARDEN WAY PARK

Garden Way Park is a one-acre park with a picnic area available for rent, a community garden, and a playground. There were clear signs for the park, the trees and shrubs were pruned, and a soft playground surface area. The restrooms were unlocked and clean. However, this park had several maintenance issues that included:

- Graffiti on the picnic tables
- One run-down grill
- Uneven turf with brown spots
- Non-level tree mulch for the playground area
- Twigs and leaves littering the walkways
- Non-working water fountains
- No park rules posted, especially regarding the picnic area

As the points above indicate, there are significant opportunities for improvement in relation to routine maintenance for this park. Some significant areas are to update the picnic area with clean tables and a grill. Additionally, the area should have some clearly identified rules that are in compliance with APRC's rental policies for that picnic area. The following pictures provide further insight regarding the maintenance of Garden Way Park:



As the pictures above show, there is graffiti on the picnic table and the grill is not well maintained. Additionally, there is graffiti on the poles of the picnic shelter and there are brown patches in the grassy area surrounding the picnic shelter.

6. GLENWOOD PARK

Glenwood Park is a one-acre park that primarily serves as an open space / play area park. There is no parking lot for this park; only street parking is available. There was graffiti on the table, and no clear walkway. During the project team's visit to this park, it had rained the day before, so the grass in the park was extremely squishy and muddy. The park needed mowing and raking. The following pictures highlight some of the issues associated with the park:



As the pictures above show, Glenwood Park had a clear sign and also was one of the few parks for which there were specific park rules identified. However, there were some overgrown shrubs and bushes in the park that made the park look unkempt. Additionally, there were brown patches around the park rules sign and graffiti on the one picnic table in the park.

7. TRIANGLE PARK

Triangle Park is approximately 0.5 acres and is primarily a neighborhood park with a gazebo and a picnic table. There is no parking lot, only street parking for the park and the trees were well maintained. There was a need for the grass to be mown and irrigated as there were some brown and uneven patches. Additionally, there was graffiti in the gazebo, no access to the gazebo (except from one side of the park) and debris littered across the walkways. The following pictures indicate some of the issues noticed at the park:



As the pictures above show, there is a sign for Triangle Park, but there are also brown patches in the grassy area. There is also graffiti / paint coming off the table outside the gazebo and graffiti inside the gazebo.

8. GARFIELD PARK

Garfield Park is one of the larger parks in the City sized at three acres. It has a playground, basketball courts, volleyball courts, restrooms, and a splash pad area for kids. Overall, the park was in good condition and it was one of the few parks in which city residents were using park facilities. Playground equipment was in good condition, the parking lot was clean and had clearly delineated spots, and the walkways were clean.

The park restrooms were unlocked and relatively clean, although the roofing did look unstable. Additionally, there were no feminine receptacles in the restroom. The basketball courts had nets and backboards but the court had cracks and graffiti. Similarly, tables had graffiti and turf needed to be mowed as it was uneven. The following pictures provide further insight regarding the park:



The pictures above indicate some of the problems discussed above such as graffiti and a black patch on the basketball court. There is also sheeting in the women's restroom. The Park does have a rules sign and a park name sign. However, there are brown spots around the sign and due to heavy rain a large puddle in the middle of the park. There were no puddles on the surrounding sidewalks, indicating an issue in that specific area of the park.

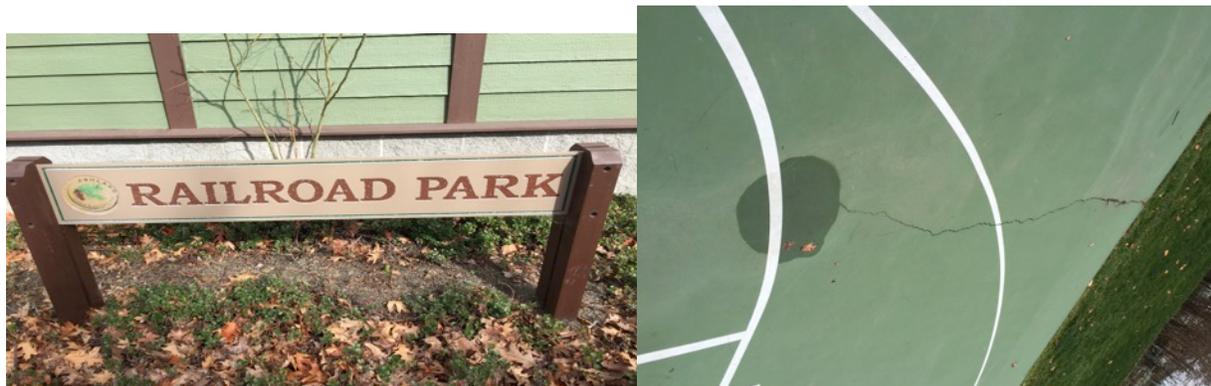
Garfield Park is set to go through major renovation using capital improvement funds to upgrade the splash pad area to expand it and also upgrade the basketball courts. These renovations will help address some of the maintenance issues noted above.

9. RAILROAD PARK

Railroad Park is 1.75 acres and features a picnic shelter, half-court basketball, a wetland area, a trail (adjacent to the Bear Creek Greenway), and restrooms. The park had clear signs, there was no parking lot, but plenty of street parking, the turf was mowed, trees and shrubs were pruned, playground surface was soft and level, and walkways were clean. However, there were some issues with the park such as:

- Locked restrooms
- Graffiti on the trash receptacles
- Inconsistent use of recyclable baskets
- Cracked basketball court
- Cracks in the pavement in the park
- Non-working drinking fountain
- No clear signage regarding trail (e.g. what point in the trail – 0.5 mile, length of the trail, conditions of the trail, etc.)

As the points above detail, some of the issues are preventive maintenance such as cracks in the court and the pavement, while other issues such as locked restrooms or non-working drinking fountains have to do with routine maintenance and assessment of parks. The following pictures illustrate some of the points noted above:





As the pictures above and on the previous page, show there is a clear sign for the Park and there are park rules in the park. However, the playground equipment needs some refurbishing and there are some cracks on the court and in the pavement. Additionally, while there is a sign for the trail, there was no description regarding the length of the trail or the type of terrain that would be encountered on the trail.

10. NORTH MOUNTAIN PARK & NATURE CENTER

North Mountain Park is one of the largest parks in the area, with three soccer fields, two softball fields, two baseball fields, a playground, a covered picnic area, and is also home to the Nature Center. The park was one of the best maintained parks, with no real issues in any area. Additionally, the Nature Center was clean, open to the public, and well

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organized, with clearly advertised signs and hours. There were legends and various maps and signs throughout the park advertising park features. The restrooms were clean, open, and easily accessible to the public. The following pictures provide further context to the maintenance of this park and center:





As the pictures above and on the previous page show, North Mountain Park had a clear sign and park rules identified. Additionally, there was a map of the park, the fields were well maintained, and there was no graffiti in the picnic shelter. This park was also the only park with separate recycling containers.

11. SCENIC PARK

Scenic Park is 1.5 acres and has two picnic tables, two playgrounds, and a community garden. This was one of the only parks (other than Sherwood Park) that did not have a sign. It had only two designated parking spots – one regular and one handicapped. The surrounding area is residential, with limited street parking. There were no major maintenance issues in the park, the trash receptacles were clean and well maintained, the grass was mowed, the playground equipment was in good condition, and the walkways were free of litter and debris. There were some trees and shrubs around the edges of the park that required further maintenance, but overall the park was in good condition.

It is a small neighborhood park and there are no restrooms, no drinking fountains, and no park rules identified. The following pictures show the maintenance level of Scenic Park:





As the pictures above and on the previous page show, Scenic Park is well maintained with the grass mown and even, a community garden and park rules. However, there was no sign (other than the community garden) identifying this as “Scenic Park.” Additionally, there were some overgrown areas as shown in the picture on the previous page on the edges of the park.

12. LITHIA PARK

Lithia Park is Ashland’s largest and most famous park. It is 93 acres in size, includes emerald lawns, tennis courts (can be used for pickleball), volleyball courts, picnic areas, outdoor theaters, and playground equipment. It also has a Japanese Garden, two duck ponds, a formal rose garden, and other various open space features that can be enjoyed by citizens.

During the project team’s visit to Lithia Park, it was definitely the most crowded park, as there were all types of residents frequenting the park – children, adults, and the elderly. There were no major maintenance issues noted at the Park, as the project team did observe maintenance crews working on cleaning up any litter and debris in the park.

While there was one sign for the park and one park map at the entrance of the park, there were no other maps or legends within the park to identify the different features of the park (i.e. playground, duck pond, outdoor theater). There were also no signs indicating that if one traveled in this direction for half a mile there would be the rose garden, and / or if traveling in the other direction half a mile, one would reach the tennis courts. The following pictures detail the project team’s visit to Lithia Park.



As the pictures above show, Lithia Park had a sign identifying the park name, park rules, and a map of the entire park. The picture also shows one of the duck ponds that is right near the entrance of the park. It seems that Lithia Park, more than any other park, could benefit from maps that are specific to it and available at the entrance of the park for the public to use while walking around the park. While such a map is available on the City's website, it should also be available to park patrons at the park.

13. CONCLUSION

Overall, the project team felt that some of the maintenance issues noted in the park could be due to lack of capital investment in the parks such as cracked and uneven pavements and sidewalks, or cracks in the basketball courts. However, there were other issues that were related to routine park maintenance that should be addressed by APRC, such as:

- Unlocking restrooms at all parks that have restrooms; three parks visited by the project team had restrooms that were locked (even though it was after the hours posted that they would be unlocked).
- Recycling containers at all parks – only some parks had little recycling baskets connected to the trash receptacles, and even then the use of those baskets was inconsistent throughout those parks. They should be consistently used throughout the City.
- Mowing lawns and open space / play areas. Other than some of the most heavily used parks, some smaller parks looked like they had been neglected on this maintenance route.
- Drinking fountains not working at all of the parks
- Lack of park rule signs at the majority of the parks; rules identifying hours for the parks, food and drinks allowed, and so on.
- Labeling of trails – all trails should be labeled at a minimum to identify the total length of the trail and the conditions of the trail (hilly, flat, goes through water, etc.)

Addressing some of the issues noted above will help improve the current maintenance standards of APRC and provide greater service to the residents of Ashland.

APPENDIX B – DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE OF ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

This document provides a descriptive profile of the parks and recreation services in the City of Ashland. The purpose of the profile is to document the project team’s understanding of the organization and operation of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the specific services provided by each division, the allocation and responsibilities of staff by functions, and observations of selected workload metrics. Data presented in this profile were developed from the work conducted by the project team including:

- Interviews with the project steering committee, commissioners, city officials, managers, administrative personnel and selected line staff.
- Collection and review of data describing goals and objectives, the organization and staffing, workload, budget, program and service levels and costs associated with the delivery of services.
- Observations of selected parks and facilities.

This descriptive profile of the Ashland Parks and Recreation operations includes an overview of the agency, along with organization charts, a description of programs and services offered, a summary of key roles and responsibilities for staff and a profile of the existing park conditions.

The description of the responsibilities provided in the “Summary of Key Roles and Responsibilities” are not intended to provide the level of detail of a typical job description but rather a review of the team’s understanding of the major program and service activities assigned to staff in Ashland Parks and Recreation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The City of Ashland was granted its original charter in 1874 with a new charter granted by the State of Oregon in 1889. Subsequently a new charter approved by the voters of Ashland in 1898 remained in effect until 1970 when, after a study and recommendations by the league of Women Voters, a new charter was adopted by the voters. This charter has remained as the framework of Ashland's city government since its inception.

The city charter includes an article establishing a five-member elected Park Commission dedicated to the stewardship of park lands acquired by the City of Ashland and incorporated in the Open Space Park Program. A separate article within the city charter designates the Ashland Park Commissioners as members of the Ashland Recreation Commission as well. The mission of the Ashland Parks Commission is "providing and promoting recreational opportunities and preserving and maintaining public lands." To this end, the current goals of the established Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission include:

- In partnership with the City of Ashland and other stakeholders, review, update and implement the Trails and Open Space Master plan.
- Enhance and Expand the Volunteer in Parks (VIP) program.
- Evaluate parks and recreation facilities and programs to ensure quality of relevant programming and the highest and best use of facilities.
- Enhance Oak Knoll Golf Course program and facilities.
- Evaluate current capital project for feasibility, relevancy and implementation planning.
- Continue to build a relevant and functional parks and recreation infrastructure through master planning and implementation strategies.

- Partner with community stakeholders with similar missions to leverage assets and provide better public services.
- Promote Ashland Parks and Recreation as an exemplary organization.
- Promote professional development amongst staff.
- Continue to evaluate and implement financial programs and strategies for higher cost recovery and financial resiliency.
- Maintain a capable and efficient organizational structure.
- Review the policies of the APRC and amend existing policies as well as develop and implement new policies as needed.

To accomplish the identified Commission goals, Parks and Recreation is charged with the responsibility “to maintain and expand park, recreational and educational opportunities and provide high quality, efficient and safe services with positive experiences for guests and other participants while maintaining community participation in the decision-making processes and protecting the environment.”

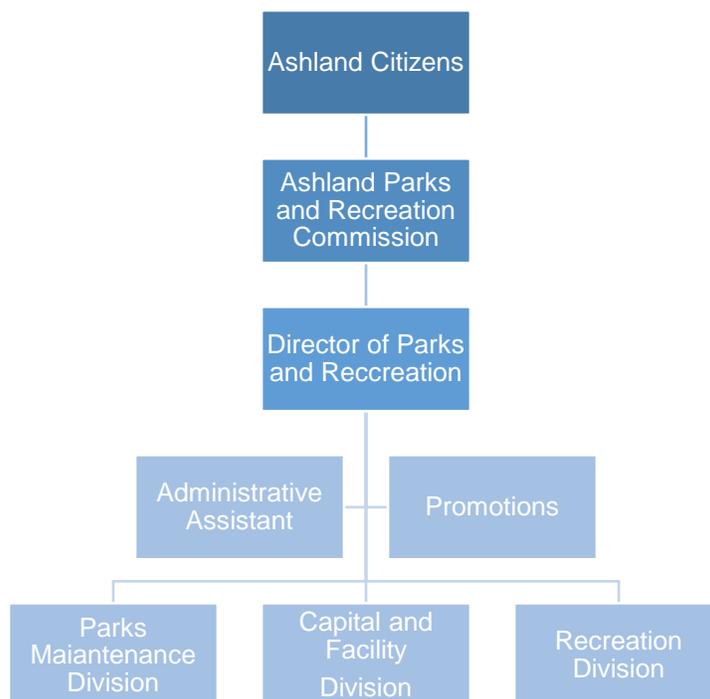
Parks and Recreation is responsible for the maintenance and operation of 785 acres of park lands including developed neighborhood parks, 463 acres of open space and forest lands, 30 miles of trails, a variety of specialized park facilities including an ice rink, swimming pool and 9-hole golf course, and several recreation centers including a nature center and dedicated senior center. Historic Lithia Park is the city’s largest developed park facility and focal point of the community,

Parks and Recreation provides a variety of recreational and education opportunities for the residents of Ashland including aquatics, senior services, nature and environmental programs, leisure-oriented classes and workshops, ice skating, community-wide events and a variety of adapted programs designed for persons with disabilities. A volunteer program for residents, from children through adults, provides

opportunities to adopt-a-park or assist in the maintenance and upkeep of park facilities, volunteer in parks or assist in the implementation of events and recreation programs. The Oak Knoll Golf Course affords golfers and foot/soccer golfers a year-round golf venue to enjoy their chosen sport.

Parks and Recreation in Ashland currently has 44.8 FTE authorized positions in Parks, Recreation and Capital Improvement program divisions. The following organization chart represents the current staffing allocation in Parks and Recreation operational units.

ASHLAND PARKS AND RECREATION ORGANIZATION



The following table presents the 2015-17 adopted biennial budget for Parks and Recreation of \$16,105,946 by personnel, materials and services and capital outlay in each division.

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Function	Parks Division	Recreation Division	CIP Program	Golf Division*	Total
Personnel Services	\$ 4,518,930	\$ 2,206,790	\$ 189,930	\$ 802,600	\$ 7,718,250
Materials/Services	\$ 3,522,917	\$ 621,840	0	\$ 302,050	\$ 4,446,807
Capital Outlay	\$ 86,000	0	\$ 3,817,889	0	\$ 4,342,889
Total	\$ 8,127,847	\$ 2,828,630	\$ 4,007,819	\$ 1,104,650	\$16,507,946

*The Golf Division operation has been combined as part of the Recreation Division operation

2. ADMINISTRATION

The following provides an overview of the Administration Division of Ashland Parks and Recreation. The Administration Division provides staff support to the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Commission in accomplishing its established goals and objectives for parks and recreation in Ashland. The division provides overall direction and guidance to the Recreation, Parks Maintenance and Capital and Facilities divisions and focuses on the promotion of programs and services offered to the Ashland community.

The following exhibit provides an overview of the key roles and responsibilities of the position specifically allocated to the Administration Division of Parks and Recreation.

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Summary Description of Administration Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Director of Parks and Recreation	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission. • 5.0 FTE direct reports. • Directs overall operations of Parks and Recreation programs and services in accordance with goals and objectives approved by the Commission. • Provides information, recommendations and staff support to the Commission to assist in making decision and establishing policies. • Supervises and manages financial operations including development of biennial budget for approval by the City. • Provides overall management and supervision of recreation programs and services offered by the Commission. • Oversees the acquisition, construction, improvements and maintenance of parks, facilities and open space areas. • Organizes and oversees the administrative organization of Parks and Recreation including the development and implementation of established policies and procedures, management of personnel systems and creation of a positive working environment. • Develops and maintains positive community relations with other agencies and the community and serves as spokesperson. • Works with the Commission to establish future goals and strategies to accomplish goals.
Executive Assistant	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Director of Parks and Recreation. • Provides administrative support to Director, Commission and Parks Foundation. • Prepares and distributes agenda packets and support materials in compliance with open meeting laws. • Records proceedings of Commission, Foundation and committee meetings and distributes minutes and other notices as required by law. • Prepares documents, correspondence and reports as requested by the Director. • Serves as liaison to a variety of department and city committees including human resources and City benefits committee. • Serves as support person to Promotions Coordinator

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Summary Description of Administration Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Promotions Coordinator	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Director of Parks and Recreation. • Oversees development and implementation of promotional activities and materials to communicate programs and services offered by APRC to the community. • Produces three seasonal print and digital recreation program guides. • Oversees all social media promotions including Facebook. • Creates and distributes general promotional materials including display ads, flyers, rack cards, banners and signs, blogs, news releases, radio and TV releases and email communications. • Maintains the Parks and Recreation pages on the city website, related program websites and web calendars for programs. • Maintains ActiveNet program registration system. • Develops and implements press plans for annual sponsored community events, contests and facility opening events. • Provides administrative support for implementation of promotional activities.
Administrative Assistant	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to the Director of Parks and Recreation. • Assists the Capital and Facilities Manager with contract administration. • Organizes and produces the biennial budget with oversight provided by the Director. • Monitors budget, including capital projects, and prepares reports detailing revenue and expenditures throughout budget cycle. • Performs special projects by assignment, such as researching and drafting policy and procedures for the organization. • Develops RFPs, bid packages and ensures legal procurement processes are followed. • Serves as bidding, contracting and procurement agent for APRC. • Serves as backup receptionist as needed.

3. RECREATION DIVISION

The following provides an overview of the Recreation Division of Ashland Parks and Recreation. The division provides recreational and educational opportunities for participants for residents of all ages in program areas including aquatics, environment

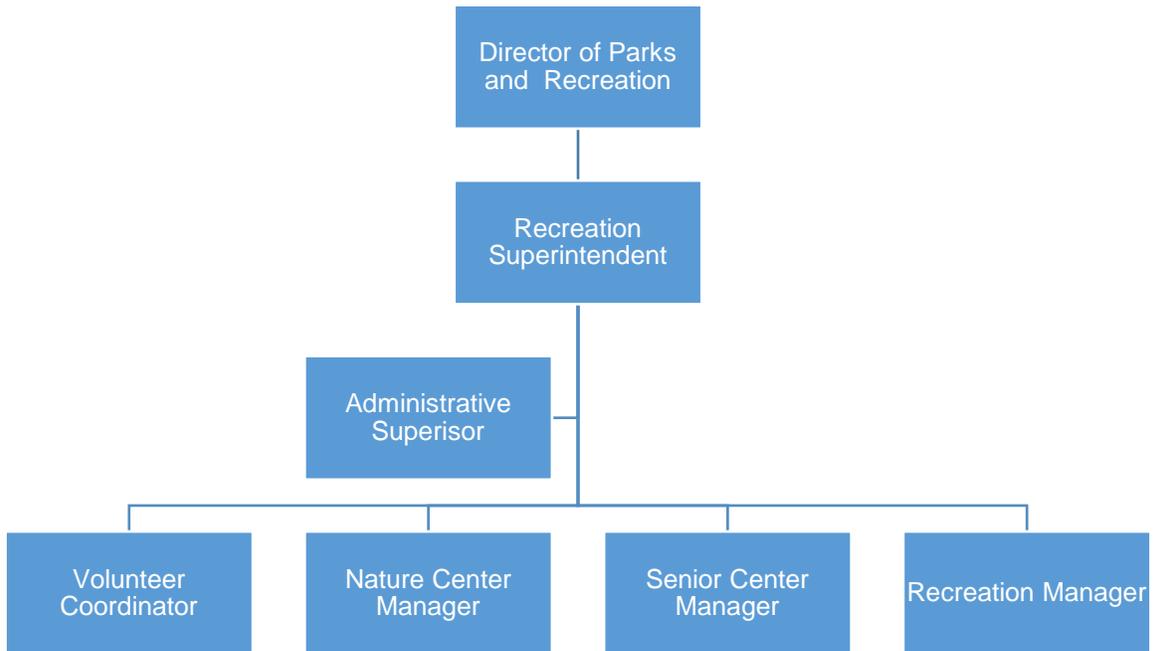
education, health and fitness programs, senior programs and services, recreation and leisure-oriented classes and workshops, adapted recreation programs for persons with disabilities and community-wide events. The division is responsible for the operation and programming of park facilities including the swimming pool, ice rink, North Mountain Park Nature Center, and Ashland Senior Center. The Division also oversees the indoor and outdoor facility rental program, the community-wide volunteer program and the program registration processes. The operation of the Oak Knoll Golf Course has recently been transferred to the Recreation Division.

Goals of the Recreation Division as identified in the 2015-17 adopted operating budget include:

- Providing high quality recreation programs for the community at an affordable cost.
- Providing opportunities for recreational and educational activities.
- Establishing appropriate fees based on direct costs of activities.
- Promoting lifetime activities.

The following organization chart represents the current organizational structure of the Recreation Division and reflects the number full-time positions assigned to each unit within the division.

RECREATION DIVISION ORGANIZATION



The following exhibit provides a summary of the programs and services offered by the Recreation Division.

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Recreation Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with division managers and program staff to implement the recreation program and service goals established by the Commission. • Provides overall direction and implementation of year-round and seasonal recreation program and services. • Produces three seasonal program guides in print and digital versions. • Administers division-wide online and walk-in program registration system. • Administers day-to-day operations of recreation facilities for recreation programming. • Administers facility and field scheduling and reservation and rental system. • Manages unique recreation facilities including ice rink, swimming pool, bike swap, senior center and nature center. • Manages contracts with outside users of park facilities. • Coordinates contracts for 'Calle Guanajuato' park area with local merchants and artisans. • Coordinates with Ashland Parks Foundation to provide scholarships for individual participation in programs and support for individual programs, facilities and capital improvements. • Administers personnel and program evaluation processes. • Manages part-time recreation personnel selection and evaluation processes.
Nature Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers full range of environmental education, recreation, stewardship and sustainability programs for all ages at the North Mountain Park Nature Center. • Operates North Mountain Park Nature Center with interpretative displays, exhibits, interactive informational elements and resources to inform visitors about local plants, wildlife, history and trails. • Offers over 110 community programs featuring classes, workshops and presentations on a wide range of topics targeted for preschoolers through seniors. • Offers community events including the Rogue Valley Bird Day and the Bear Creek Salmon Festival. • Provides opportunities for school children from kindergarten to 5th grade and middle schoolers throughout the Rogue Valley region, to participate in field trips to the center designed for each grade level and focused on environmental education and sustainability. • Provides service learning opportunities for school groups, high school and college students, adults, and service organizations. • Manages the heirloom and demonstration gardens at the nature center. • Develops a Natural Areas Management Plan to enhance and protect natural areas throughout the community. • Serves as liaison to the Bee City, USA project committee and a variety of sustainability projects in the community. • Fosters fundraising activities and support from individuals, businesses and community organizations. • Coordinates the efforts of a large cadre of volunteers interested in the environment and nature center.

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
Senior Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a venue for social interaction through recreational and health-related activities and access to social services for seniors. • Prepares meals on site and provides home delivered meals to 85 seniors and service congregate meals to 266 individual seniors during the year. • Program averages 1100 contacts annually for information and referral services. • Provides home visits to seniors as required. • Provides opportunities for low income seniors to participate in senior utility discount programs. • Provides bus passes and para-transit vouchers for seniors. • Offers day trips, recreational activities, instructional classes and special events and presentations for seniors at center. • Works with numerous community agencies and organizations to provide quality of life services to seniors.
Recreation Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a variety of recreational, leisure oriented and educational programs and services for children through senior citizens in Ashland during the three program seasons. • Offers year-round opportunities to learn new skills in instructional classes including music and dance, foreign languages, pet care and training, life skills and enrichment, arts and crafts, and sports and fitness. • Offers full range of group and private swim lessons, water safety training, swim team camps, water aerobics and water cross, water polo and recreation swim and lap swim programs seven days per week from mid-June through early September. • Offers Ice Skating Rink programs from mid-November through February including free, open and cheap skating sessions, youth and adult hockey, skating lessons, figure skating and private lessons and opportunities for private and group rentals. • Offers a variety of specifically designed programs for persons with disabilities including social night, gardening, adapted aquatics, bowling, day trips and active adventures. • Coordinates facility rentals at Pioneer Park, Community Center, and various outdoor areas.
Volunteer Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes and oversees programs and opportunities for Ashland residents to volunteer in park adoption and clean-up programs, park hosting programs, program volunteers and community service programs in support of parks and recreation programs. • Offers 52 park work parties with school groups, organizations, and individuals to clean and upgrade park areas annually. • Offers opportunities for businesses, schools and organizations to participate in the Adopt-A-Park program. • Offers 8th to 11th grade youth opportunities to participate in Youth Conservation Corps to improve parks during three summer corps sessions. • Provides opportunities for volunteers to serve a 'park hosts' at the ice rink and in Lithia Park, providing information and assistance to park visitors.

Summary of Programs and Services Offered by the Recreation Division	
Program/Function	Description of Programs and Services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers several major community special events during the year including the Community Bike Swap and Siskiyou de Mayo music festival. • Offers volunteer opportunities for individuals to assist with recreation and educational programs at the senior center, nature center, adapted recreation programs and the golf course.
Oak Knoll Golf Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers a range of program and services for individuals and groups golf experiences on a 9-hole golf course, including cart rentals, and a driving range seven days per week, year-round. • Offers a variety of annual membership opportunities, seasonal rates, and monthly coupon specials for discounted play on the course. • Offers Foot Golf course as an alternative golfing program experience. • Offers weekly Men’s twilight golf league and weekly Ladies daytime league beginning in March and continuing through October. • Offers opportunities for outside tournament play on course during the season. • Offers group and private lesson opportunities for children and adults. • Provides club house, beverage and snack sales and small golf equipment amenities for purchase. • Offers club house facility rentals for weddings, family events, business meetings and other events.

The following exhibit presents a summary of the key roles and responsibilities of full time positions in the Recreation Division.

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Summary of Recreation Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Recreation Superintendent	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Director of Parks and Recreation. • 5.0 FTE direct reports. • Oversees the planning, development and implementation of a full range of recreation, leisure and environmental programs. • Oversees the day-to-day operations of facilities used for providing recreation programs and services including centers, ice rink and pool facilities. • Works with program managers to develop and implement recreation programs, events and services that meet the needs of the community. • Supervises administration of the program registration process, facility scheduling and indoor and outdoor facility rental programs. • Coordinates with Parks regarding field and facility use and maintenance requirements. • Manages contracts for the 'Calle' area and artisan market in Lithia Park and outside use of aquatic facilities. • Manages the recreation personnel selection process with the City Human Resources Department and hiring of contract instructors. • Administers the division-wide recreation personnel and program evaluation processes. • Serves as liaison to schools, community organizations, cultural groups and citizen groups.
Nature Center Manager	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Recreation Superintendent. • 1.8 FTE direct reports. • Oversees wide range of environmental education, service learning, classes, events and community programs for schools in the region and the community-at-large. • Manages operations at the North Mountain Park Nature Center, including exhibits and interpretation programs and stewardship and maintenance of adjoining demonstration gardens and natural areas. • Oversees community garden facilities and coordinates onsite volunteers. • Develops and implements training programs for instructors, school teachers, service learning programs and program volunteers. • Develops partnerships and collaborates with a variety of regional and community environmental education groups and natural resource organizations and agencies.

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Summary of Recreation Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Senior Center Manager	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Parks and Recreation Director. • 1.5 FTE direct reports. • Plans and implements a variety of social service-related programs for senior citizens including outreach, information and referral services, instructional classes, energy assistance and transportation programs, meal delivery program and special events. • Manages the Senior Center facility. • Communicates programs and services to seniors through newsletters and program website. • Works with Senior Advisory Board to establish priorities for programs and services.
Recreation Manager	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Recreation Superintendent • 2.0 FTE direct reports plus part-time seasonal program personnel. • Oversees a variety of recreation programs including aquatics, adult and youth recreation programs, outdoor programs, adaptive programs, instructional classes and special events. • Manages the pool facility and aquatics program including lessons, open and lap swim, water safety training, special interest classes and camps and special events during June to September aquatic season. • Coordinates pool facility use by outside groups and schools. • Oversees general recreation program of youth and adult instructional classes utilizing contractual instructors. • Oversees operation of ice rink including rentals, concession stand, open skate programs, lessons, youth and adult hockey and special events during the mid-November to February season. • Supervises, trains and evaluates part-time seasonal aquatic and ice rink employees. • Oversees club house and pro shop operations of Oak Knoll Golf Course. • Participates in development and implementation of sponsored community events.

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Summary of Recreation Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit / Position(s)	No. of Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Volunteer and Event Coordinator	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Recreation Superintendent • Oversees a comprehensive volunteer effort in support of community events and recreation services, with a special focus on parks and outdoor maintenance projects. • Recruits school and youth groups, organizations and individual volunteers to participate in park work parties scheduled throughout the year. • Coordinates the ‘Adopt a Park’ program generating sponsors from business, school and community groups to support individual parks. • Conducts three summer sessions of the Youth Conservation Corps program for 8th to 11th graders in Ashland. • Recruits individual volunteers to adopt gardens, work in the adapted recreation program and at the nature center, senior center, ice rink, golf course and to serve as walking hosts in Lithia Park. • Coordinates city-wide events including the Bike Swap, Salmon Festival, 4th of July Run and serves on committees to develop new events. • Serves on City-wide event committee to review and coordinate events sponsored and operated by non-City groups.
Golf Course Coordinator	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to Recreation Manager. • 1.0 FTE direct report. • Oversees club house and programmatic operations at Oak Knoll Golf Course including coordination with men’s and women’s clubs, outside tournaments, private lessons, foot golf program, driving range operation and outside facility rentals and events. • Plans and implements city-wide tournament events throughout the year. • Develops and implements marketing strategies and membership programs to encourage increased play on course. • Manages snack shop and merchandise operations. • Maintains tee time reservation system, collects green fees and driving range fees, membership fees, pro shop and refreshment revenues and prepares deposits and daily revenue reports. • Marshals day-to-play on course when needed. • Coordinates golf course use with maintenance operation. • Coordinates use of course with school and university teams for practice and tournament play.

4. PARKS MAINTENANCE DIVISION

The following provides an overview of the Ashland Parks Maintenance Division, which is comprised of three separate work units, each overseen by a manager who

reports directly to the Superintendent of Parks. The Division is responsible for management and maintenance of all city parks and open spaces, a 9-hole golf course, all public trees, dozens of miles of trails, and downtown open spaces such as medians.

The goals of the Parks Division as presented in the adopted 2015-17 budget include:

- Preserve natural areas, protect and enhance our environment.
- Evaluate current conditions of facilities and identify deficiencies that need correction.
- Contribute to the economic viability of our community.
- Ensure continued safety within the parks and recreation system.
- Provide a safe environment for community members using the parks and recreation system.
- Continue enforcement of the park regulations.

The general profile of the Parks Division is heavily influenced by a number of factors. First, community pride in the City's park system runs high, as evidenced not only by a governmental structure that provides the park system its own governing body, but by the funding allocated to the Parks Division and the political support the parks receive from its citizenry. Second, this high degree of pride carries over to the staff, who overwhelmingly express an appreciation for the importance the community places on their work, and who exhibit a high degree of pride in the quality of the work they produce.

The organizational structure of the Ashland Parks Division has undergone a good deal of change over the past few years. Positions have been added and eliminated, job descriptions have evolved, and reporting relationships have changed. In fact, at the time this study was conducted, additional changes were in the process of being considered

and/or implemented. The following chart provides an overview of the organizational structure and staffing allocation of the Parks Division as understood by the project team at this time.

PARKS MAINTENANCE DIVISION ORGANIZATION



The primary duties and responsibilities of staff authorized in this Division are presented in the following table.

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Summary of Parks Maintenance Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit/Position(s)	Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Parks Maintenance Superintendent	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs and oversees the maintenance and development of all City parks, recreational facilities, and other areas under the jurisdiction of the Commission • Organizes and prepares work schedules and assigns personnel to carry out the work. • Establishes maintenance procedures. • Plans for the improvement and development of parks and facilities. • Establishes a training program for employees. • Conducts personnel evaluations of employees under his or her jurisdiction. • Assists in organizing a safety program. • Assists in the preparation of budgets and oversees the maintenance division budget. • Prepares necessary records, reports, and correspondences for the Commission. • Assists in establishing and writing maintenance standards and procedures. • Acts as head in the absence of the director as needed; serves as staff liaison to Parks Commission; develops public relations with boards, commissions, and citizens' groups. Provides information and responses to citizen inquiries. • Responsible for purchasing for the Parks Division.
Park Technician III—General	3.0	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for day to day operations and the performance of skilled tasks related to park and open space planning, maintenance, repair, and construction. • Must be able to move among classifications with appropriate training specific to Horticulture, Irrigation, Forestry and Trails, and Fleet Maintenance. • Works with computerized operations associated with the job. • Interfaces with the public as well as all levels of City Staff. • Supervises staff and gives direction to work crews as needed. • Adheres to all safety regulations and requirements for the use of power tools and equipment and hazardous materials.

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Summary of Parks Maintenance Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit/Position(s)	Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Greens Superintendent	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs and oversees the maintenance, care, and development of the Golf Division. • Organizes and prepares work schedules, and assigns personnel to carry out the work. • Establishes maintenance procedures. • Recommends and plans methods by which to improve maintenance procedures. • Recommends plans for the improvement and development of golf facilities. • Establishes a training program for employees. • Does personnel evaluations of employees under his or her jurisdiction. • Assists in organizing a safety program, including equipment, facilities, and personnel, and oversees the budget for the Golf Division. • Assists in the preparation of budgets for the golf maintenance division. • Performs and assists in all functions of golf maintenance work. • Prepares necessary records. • Communicates and works cooperatively with the golf pro to maintain the course and schedule and set up tournaments for the benefit of all golfers.
Parks Technician II	3.0	4.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for day-to-day operations related to park maintenance. • Plans and leads the work of small crews; • Monitors and assumes responsibility for crew safety. • Performs skilled tasks in the maintenance, repair, and construction of general parks, including facilities, and operates a variety of power tools and large equipment such as backhoes and bulldozers. • Resolves worksite problems or notifies a supervisor if needed. • Provides technical assistance and training to subordinates as needed.
Park Technician I	12.0	11.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a variety of skilled and semi-skilled tasks related to the care and maintenance of grounds and landscapes.
Seasonal Worker	3.0	3.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performs a variety of routine and labor-intensive tasks related to the care and maintenance of grounds and landscaped areas.

The Parks Maintenance Division is responsible for the maintenance of approximately 785 acres of property, including developed and undeveloped park and

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forest lands, a 9-hole golf course, and 30 miles of trails. The parks, and the number of acres maintained at each site, are provided in the table below. In addition to the park areas included in the table the Parks Maintenance Division is responsible for maintaining the downtown boulevards and the airport property.

Acres of Parks Maintained by Parks Division	
Open Space	Acres
Lithia Park	93
Hunter Park	10
Garfield Park	3
Railroad Park	1.75
YMCA Park	8
Garden Way Park	1
Triangle Park	.5
Clay Street Park	4
Dog Park	2
Siskiyou Mountain Park/Oredson Todd Woods	300
North Mountain Park	37.89
Bear Creek Greenway	9.09
Hald Strawberry Park	31
Ashland Community Park	4.67
Bluebird Park	.25
Sherwood Park	.25
Ashland Creek Park	7
Scenic Park	1.5
Calle Gaunajuato	
Ashland Ponds	22
Chitwood Property	2.4
Evergreen	
BMX Park	1.4
Skate Park	.56
Westwood Park	10
Keener Property	2.03
Granite Street Property	
Burnson Property	46
Lawrence Property	
Cottle-Phillips Property	4.0
Liberty Street Access	1.0
Riverwalk	6.24
Briscoe Geology Park	1.78
Oak Knoll Golf Course	72
Kestrel Property	3.0

5. CAPITAL AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION

The following provides an overview of the Ashland Capital and Facilities Management Division, which is comprised of two work units, both of which are overseen by a manager who reports directly to the Superintendent of Parks. One work unit is responsible for planning and executing all new development and capital improvements throughout Parks and Recreation This includes facility and capital project improvements affecting the Recreation Division as well as the Parks Division. The other work unit is responsible for trash pick-up throughout the parks system, as well as routine cleaning of park restrooms.

The following chart provides an overview of the organizational structure and staffing allocation of the Capital and Facilities Management Division:

CAPITAL AND FACILITIES DIVISION



The duties and responsibilities of staff in this Division are presented in the following table:

Summary of Capital and Facilities Management Division Key Roles and Responsibilities			
Unit/Position(s)	Positions		Key Roles and Responsibilities
	Auth.	Cur.	
Park Technician III	1.0	1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses the need for capital improvements throughout Parks and Recreation and assists with preparing related budgets. Plans, constructs and maintains capital improvements for all open spaces and facilities managed by Parks and Recreation. Oversees the maintenance and repair of park and recreation facilities. Prepares reports and gives presentations on recommended projects and improvements. Attends meetings and represents the organization in stakeholder meetings, and serves as primary contact for certain ongoing contracts.
Parks Technician II			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for day to day operations, including planning, prioritizing, and maintaining parks and recreation grounds and facilities
Park Technician I			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs a variety of skilled and semi-skilled tasks related to the care and maintenance of grounds and facilities
Seasonal Worker			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performs a variety of routine and labor-intensive tasks related to the care and maintenance of grounds and facilities.

6. ASSESSMENT OF PARK CONDITIONS

As part of the performance audit of Parks and Recreation for the City of Ashland, the project team took a tour of the parks and facilities. The tour was used to assess the current maintenance conditions of various parks and facilities as well as determine accessibility and use of the parks by the public. The project team drove by all park owned properties throughout the city and visited all facilities currently and projected to be in use. Attachment A – Parks Tour Debrief provides a summary of each park visited, along with pictures and a discussion of maintenance issues seen throughout the parks.

APPENDIX C – DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

While the management analysis is designed to provide an analysis of operations, organizational structure, and staffing, a comparison to ‘best practices’ represents an important step for the project team to report its preliminary findings and issues. In order to make the assessments of operational strengths and improvement opportunities, the project team developed a set of performance measures which we call “best management practices” against which to evaluate the Commission and its component operating divisions.

The measures utilized in this assessment have been derived from the project team's experience and represent the following ways to identify organizational strengths as well as improvement opportunities:

- Statements of "effective practices" based on the study team's experience in evaluating operations in other agencies or “industry standards” from other research organizations.
- Identification of whether and how the Commission meets the performance targets.
- A brief description of potential alternatives to current practice.

In the following pages, the project team provides a detailed analysis of the district's performance against best management practices for each of its operating divisions.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
ADMINISTRATION		
The Commission has developed a strategic plan to guide operations and provide direction for future initiatives.	The Commission has developed and adopted a long range plan with clear goals and objectives to guide operations and provide future direction.	
The Commission has centralized the budgeting effort and aligned the operating and capital budgeting effort with strategic goals and objectives.	The budget document prepared by staff and adopted by the Commission clearly aligns the operating and capital budgets with the goals and objectives established in the long range plan.	
Periodic budget reports and financial updates are provided to the Commission.	The Commission is provided periodic reports and updates on the finances of operations by the Director and staff.	
Office support staff is appropriately centralized to provide a consistent level of support to the Commission while enabling individual division staff to meet unique needs.	Staff time is allocated in the Administration Division to ensure that the Commission receives a consistent level of administrative support for effective commission operations and that thorough information from which the Commission can make decisions to provide appropriate direction to staff regarding current operations and future direction is available.	
Operating budgets provide readable, comprehensive information on budgeted expenditures, staffing, and revenue, and the goals and objectives and performance measures.	The City budget document, which includes the bi-annual budget for Commission programs and services presents comprehensive information on expenditures, revenues and performance data based on the established goals and objectives of the Commission.	
A 5-year capital improvement plan has been adopted that provides readable and comprehensive information on costs, and provides a link to the operating budget.		A comprehensive, long range Capital Improvement and asset management plan could be developed to address current and future capital improvement needs.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Operating and capital expenditures are monitored on an ongoing basis to assure actual expenditures do not exceed the authorized budget.	The Director and division managers monitor the budget on an ongoing basis.	
The Commission has an established fund reserve policy.		The Commission should consider the adoption of a fund reserve policy.
Effective recruitment efforts are in place and are periodically evaluated.	Division managers currently work with the city HR Department to recruit and select qualified full-time and part-time seasonal personnel.	An analysis of the current recruitment and selection processes may identify opportunities to improve the recruitment and selection process.
Existence of an employee handbook and/or an employee procedures manual which clearly outlines policies and procedures.	Current adopted policies and procedures related to internal operations, personnel, program implementation, maintenance operations and facility operations exist in a variety of documents and forms.	The review and codification of existing Commission operating policies and procedures will assist employees in the effective operations of programs and services and insure that services are implemented in a consistent manner.
Human Resources maintains up-to-date, clear, concise, and readily accessible position descriptions that accurately identify the duties of each position and the background and competency levels required.	Current position descriptions are maintained by the City Human Resources Department.	As changes in the organizational structure and programs and services are implemented, a review of job descriptions will ensure that current duties and position competency levels accurately reflect current positions.
The Commission has developed a multi-year technology plan that addresses individual departmental and agency-wide technology needs; equitable resource allocation, anticipating growth and technology advances and funding and is reviewed/updated annually.		Developing a multi-year technology plan that addresses current and future needs for technology resources ensures that the agency maintains efficient operational systems and continues to effectively communicate with the community.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
The Commission has developed a consistent brand for communications and marketing efforts.	The promotions function of the agency has developed a brand for communications and marketing efforts produced by the agency.	Developing an agency-wide marketing plan and style guide could ensure that all promotional materials produced throughout the various program and service divisions are consistent in utilizing the 'brand' of Ashland Parks and Recreation.
The District has a centralized effort to provide publications, communications, and marketing efforts to the public.	The promotions efforts of the Commission provide a wide range of promotional and marketing efforts utilizing a variety of print and online media resources to communicate programs and services available to the community.	Ensuring that adequate resources are available to maintain and increase promotional opportunities can benefit all services provided by the Commission and increase participation by the community.
A centralized volunteer program is in place to augment and support staff efforts.	An active volunteer program has been developed to recruit, train and engage volunteers in a variety of parks maintenance programs and in the implementation of recreation division programs and community-wide events.	Ensuring that volunteer opportunities are available to all program divisions and programs that efforts are coordinated with operational divisions can strengthen the effectiveness of the volunteer program.
The Commission has an understanding of the needs, desires and interests of residents regarding the parks and recreation programs, services and facilities in Ashland.		Developing a community-wide needs assessment process can provide the Commission and operational divisions with data from which to evaluate current services, identify program gaps, and utilize the information in future planning for programs, services and facilities.
RECREATION DIVISION		
Mission, vision and goal statements exist to guide the Recreation Division operation.	Recreation Division mission, goals and objectives currently exist.	The division should ensure that the mission and goals are current and that employees understand the mission and vision of the operation.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Clearly defined policies and procedures are in place to guide division programs and operations.	Policies currently exist in a variety of documents.	Efforts to centralize and codify division policies and procedures will assist personnel in effectively and consistently administering services to the community.
A strategic plan is in place that outlines the future direction of the department programs and services.		Developing a strategic plan specifically for recreation division programs and services will assist staff in program development, evaluating existing program and services, budgeting and the future direction of the division's operations.
The Recreation Division offers a variety of unduplicated programs and services for all ages, skills levels and interests in the community.	The Division currently offers a variety of recreation programs including a comprehensive summer swimming pool operation, a winter ice rink facility, instructional classes for youth through adults, adapted recreation programs for persons with disabilities and community events. The Nature Center provides a wide range of environmental education opportunities for children through adults and the Senior Center offers a meals program along with added services of the elderly. A 9-hole golf course offers golf leagues, tournament, lessons and open play.	A comprehensive needs assessment could identify gaps in program areas and services to age groups not currently being served or being underserved such as teens and active adults. In addition, opportunities for expanded recreation programs for seniors, youth and adult sports could be considered.
The organizational structure makes authority, responsibility and accountability clear	The current organizational structure of the department appears appropriate for the current level of programs and services.	Potential alternative organizational structures may be required as division programs and services change and/or expand in the future.
Adequate full and part-time positions are in place to ensure effective operations and program implementation.	The current level of division personnel appears to be appropriate for existing program and service implementation.	Changes in the level of programs and service offered by the division may result in the deletion of personnel or require the addition of personal in selected program areas.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Appropriate office space and equipment are available for employees carry out the roles and responsibilities of their positions.	Consolidating Recreation Division personnel at The Grove facility will increase communications and overall effectiveness of division operations.	Added office space and equipment required for employees to carry out their roles and responsibilities may be needed as programs expand and develop.
Customer service is maximized through hours of operation, on-site contact, online, telephone assistance.	Consolidating recreation personnel at The Grove will increase customer service.	Evaluating the current hours of operation and customer service operations could identify opportunities for increased customer service.
In-service training and continuing education program are in place to ensure that staff receives appropriate training and professional development for their position.	The division currently provides internal training for division program staff and opportunities for participation in OPRA and NRPA professional development training. Individual program areas provide skills training in specific program areas.	Training opportunities for expanded part-time personnel and professional development of full-time personnel could be addressed as programs and services develop.
A volunteer program is in place to augment staff efforts.	The current agency volunteer program provides volunteers for recreation division programs including the Nature Center, Senior Center and Adapted Recreation Program.	Opportunities for increased volunteer services should be assessed by individual programs and services and coordinated with the volunteer program.
An aggressive marketing effort is in place to inform citizens of program opportunities.	The current Commission promotions program effectively markets recreation programs.	Training for recreation personnel to ensure appropriate promotion of individual programs will increase the effectiveness of the marketing program.
Facility use agreements with non-commission agencies are in place for use by recreation programs.	At present agreements are in place only for outside agencies and organizations to use commission facilities.	The addition of facility use agreements with schools, university, YMCA, and other agencies could expand opportunities to provide recreation programs and services to the community.
Registration systems make program registration as easy as possible for participants and encourage program participation.	The department currently uses the Active-Net registration system for online program registrations along with walk-in registrations at the main offices and eventually at the Grove.	

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Opportunities are available for customer feedback on programs and services.	The Nature Center has established and effective customer feedback process for programs offered at the Center.	The development of an effective customer feedback system for all recreation program participants will provide data that can be effectively used to evaluation current programs, instructional personnel and assist in planning for future programs and services.
A recruitment and selection process tailored specifically for recreation personnel is in place.	The Recreation Division has worked closely with the city Human Resources department to recruit and select personnel with skills sets appropriate for recreation program positions.	
A cost recovery plan, policy and procedure is in place for recreation programs.	There is no adopted cost recovery plan or policy.	The development of a cost recovery plan, model and policy for recreation programs will provide staff with consistent cost recovery policies to use in establishing program fees that cover appropriate cost levels and that can be applied to program fees throughout the division and ensure that are fair to program participants and the percentage return for programs using contractual personnel.
A long-range facility plan is in place to identify facility and space needs required to support recreation programs and services.	Programming spaces and facilities are at a premium for use by the Recreation Division. Spaces at the Senior Center for programs and services are inadequate.	The development of a facility plan that identifies the facility, field and space needs for future indoor and outdoor spaces required to support current and expanded recreation programs will identify future capital improvement requirements and accommodate future program needs.
An advisory committee is in place to provide input on programs and services.	Advisory committees exist for the Senior Center and Nature Center.	As programs expand or new program areas are developed the inclusion of program advisory committees can assist staff in developing, promoting and generating support for selected programs.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Commission facilities provide opportunities for a variety of recreation programs, services and events for residents of the community.	As notes, current facilities for programming are limited.	The development of joint-use agreements with schools, the university and other local agencies could create new opportunities for programs and services for residents.
Recreation facilities are maintained in compliance with health and safety codes to ensure participant and staff safety.	Facilities are currently maintained by in house personnel.	An assessment of maintenance needs could ensure that facilities are maintained in compliance with health and safety codes.
Recreation program policies are consistent throughout the division.	Policies and procedures are reviewed with program staff during training sessions.	The development of a commission-wide policy and procedure manual will assist with personnel training to ensure that policies are applied consistently throughout the division.
Programs are offered and accommodations made for special populations and persons with disabilities.	The adapted recreation program currently offers programs and services special populations. Accommodations are made for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in existing programs.	
The Golf Course program a wide variety of golf related programs and services for the community.	The Golf program currently offers open play, men's and women's leagues, group and private lessons, opportunities for school team to practice, driving range, footgolf, tournaments and a facility rental program.	Opportunities exist to expand golf course program operations such as food service, expanded lesson programs, junior golf and senior programs, twilight programs, expanded rental programs, community tournaments programs that promote tourist use of the course.
Golf Operations fully recovers the cost of its operations.	Current fees do not cover cost of golf operations.	The development of a cost recovery plan, policy and model will assist the golf course in identifying cost of existing operations and opportunities for increase revenues.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Golf rounds, range fees, and the like are based on a formal marketing plan conducted on a periodic basis and updated annually based on on-going information.	A variety of marketing techniques are currently used to promote the golf program.	Opportunities are available to expand the marketing effort at the gold course with the assistance of the existing promotions unit.
Sufficient capital funds are invested in the golf course to ensure that the course is considered a desirable destination for golfers.	There is no existing Capital improvement plan for the golf course facility.	Needed improvements to the golf course could be included in the Capital Improvement plan.
The golf program effectively uses public private partnerships and contract service providers, as appropriate.		Opportunities for public-private partnerships and contractual service providers could be explored.
The Golf Course tracks and reports financial and operational performance measures such as: revenues, number of golfers by fee, average length of rounds, repeat business, sales, and maintenance costs.	Some data are collected through the existing registration tracking system.	The collection of added data regarding golf course operations could enhance the overall operations and revenues of the golf course.
The division is organizationally placed with similar functions, and the structure fosters communication and accountability, and results in the maximum utilization of resources.	The golf course operation is currently a part of the recreation program unit reporting to the Recreation Manager.	An analysis of possible organizational structures for the golf course operation could result in improved operations and accountability.

PARK MAINTENANCE

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
Staff periodically inspect the condition of the parks and related facilities.	Formal safety inspections of the parks are conducted on a quarterly basis.	With the exception of the noted safety inspections, there is no formal inspection program for the parks. A scheduled inspection program should be implemented to track the condition of the park system and to prompt future work efforts.
Performance measures exist to evaluate the effectiveness of work performed.	Ashland does make use of performance indicators in the context of its budget report, so a framework for establishing useful performance indicators does exist.	Existing Parks Performance Measures are primary quantitative "output" measures (e.g., number of brush piles burned), and these do little to inform the reader regarding the qualitative performance of the Division, or its progress toward Commission goals. The existing measures should be revised to help management and policy-makers understand progress toward desired goals, and to assist in planning and budgetary decision-making.
A preventive maintenance program exists for facilities maintenance.	The Superintendent of Parks recognizes the importance of a preventive maintenance program and understands the need to pursue one.	A preventive maintenance program should be developed to maintain the parks in the desired condition, and to minimize the cost of deferred maintenance.
The organization has a clear outsourcing strategy that focuses on core competencies and service improvements. Periodic evaluation of the feasibility and effectiveness of contracting vs. "in sourcing" is performed. Alternative service delivery methods are periodically assessed to determine if there are cost-effective alternative service delivery options.	While there is no formal process in place, the effectiveness of contracting vs. "in sourcing" is assessed as needed.	A clear outsourcing strategy focusing on core competencies should be developed.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
A replacement reserve or sinking fund is used to ensure timely replacement of structural assets.	A replacement reserve was recently established by the Director of Parks and Recreation to ensure future funding of facilities and equipment.	Funding of this reserve should be increased to facilitate the cost-effective replacement of not only facilities and equipment, but park fixtures (e.g., benches, drinking fountains, etc.).
All park technician time is recorded and monitored on a daily basis.	Technician time is recorded for payroll purposes, but there is no correlation to tasks performed.	A system should be developed to correlate hours worked with tasks performed, such that decision-makers can assess trends and compare costs to industry standards.
Technicians are encouraged to keep skill levels current through financial incentives.	Technicians are encouraged to maintain certifications (such as pest operator licenses and backflow prevention certifications) through financial incentives.	
Annual surveys are conducted to assess customer satisfaction.		Annual surveys or a periodic needs assessment should be performed to determine park patron satisfaction with park services and conditions.
The Parks Division maintains and updates a comprehensive list of park-related inventory such as the square feet of turf, linear feet of edging, square feet of sidewalks, number of picnic areas, etc.		The Parks Division maintains a list of parks and open spaces, but it is not maintained or updated, nor does it provide sufficient detail to fully inform staff or park users. Making the inventory an up-to-date, comprehensive tool represents a significant improvement opportunity for both customer relations and park maintenance operations.
Maintenance activities are organized so as to facilitate coordination with recreational programming.	There is effective communication and a good working relationship between the parks maintenance unit and the recreational programming unit.	Communication links could be improved to ensure lower level parks staff are consistently advised of future special events requiring park staff's assistance.

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
<p>Levels of service have been formally adopted to ensure a linkage between policy-level decision-making and actual service delivery.</p>	<p>The frequencies of service for typical park maintenance tasks have been identified and classified as “Level 1, 2 3, or 4”. Furthermore, these levels of service have been applied to the various tasks generally performed at individual park sites (e.g. the restrooms at Lithia Park are to receive Level I service, indicating they are to be inspected and cleaned twice per day).</p>	<p>Levels of service should be formally adopted by the Parks Commission, and tied to budgetary appropriations, so that a linkage between park conditions and policy-level decision-making is facilitated.</p> <p>Steps could be taken to better ensure all staff are familiar with these standards.</p> <p>Levels of service should speak to more than just the frequency with which tasks are to be performed; they should describe the desired condition of the park feature once the task has been completed. Frequency and condition go hand in hand—one without the other is of limited value.</p>
<p>Sufficient resources have been provided to maintain at least a “B” level of maintenance such as weekly mowing, bi-weekly edging, weekly inspection of playground equipment, daily restroom cleaning, aeration 2 to 3 times annually, fertilization once annually, etc.</p>		<p>As indicated by the MCG’s tours, park conditions could improve. It is difficult to say, however, how much they suffer from the amount of operating resources currently dedicated to park development; operating resources should be dedicated more fully to park maintenance operations to better determine whether they are sufficient to maintain at least a “B” level of maintenance.</p>
<p>The Division maintains and uses information on the full unit costs of maintenance activities.</p>		<p>The Division does not maintain or utilize related information.</p>
<p>The Division has developed a tree inventory</p>	<p>The recent hiring of a certified arborist enhances the ability of the agency to pursue a tree inventory.</p>	<p>A comprehensive tree inventory should be performed, and serve as the basis for future work efforts.</p>

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
<p>An annual maintenance calendar has been developed that identifies when seasonal tasks will be performed (e.g., turf will be fertilized in March and September, color planting in Spring, etc.).</p>	<p>An annual maintenance calendar has been established for specific tasks at specific sites.</p>	
<p>Parks has identified the maintenance tasks and staff hours required to maintain service areas using specific inventory information, desired levels of service, and an annual maintenance calendar. As a result, Parks is able to deploy staffing levels to meet targeted service levels.</p>		<p>This information is not available.</p>
<p>A computerized maintenance management system (CMMS) is in place to handle and schedule preventive, routine, and emergency maintenance service requests. Routine reports of corrective, preventive and deferred maintenance are issued and analyzed by management and supervisors.</p>		<p>A computerized maintenance management system (or other system capable of producing these reports) should be implemented to ensure work efforts are planned efficiently and effectively.</p>
<p>A cost-effective balance between full-time versus- part-time and volunteer staff is utilized.</p>		<p>There are only 3.5 FTE staff assigned to park maintenance during the summer months; given the seasonal nature of parks maintenance, the ratio of seasonal to full-time staff should be higher.</p>

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Performance Target	Strengths	Opportunities for Improvement
<p>An integrated pest management (IPM) program is utilized that includes a range of treatment strategies including setting action thresholds, monitoring and identifying pests, preventing the damage specific pest types are likely to cause, and choosing the right and least damaging option.</p>	<p>The community’s sensitivity and awareness regarding environmental issues has prompted a very restrictive IPM program that errs on the side of protecting the park system and the public.</p>	<p>The Commission should periodically review its adopted IPM policy with the Director of Parks and Recreation to ensure its implementation does not unnecessarily inhibit the effectiveness of park maintenance efforts (i.e., to determine whether park conditions could improve through increased use of pesticides at no risk to the public or the environment).</p>
<p>Management, supervisory, and line staff have obtained appropriate professional certifications.</p>	<p>Parks Division staff have obtained appropriate certification in their profession (e.g., playground safety, backflow prevention inspections, and pesticide application).</p>	<p>Many certifications are held by one individual only—increased effort should be directed toward securing greater bench strength and back-up.</p>
<p>Safety reviews of facilities, parks, playground equipment and other resources are conducted at an appropriate frequency level (such as: playground equipment – daily to weekly; facilities and parks – monthly, etc.)</p>	<p>Playground equipment is inspected daily, and more comprehensive park safety inspections are conducted on a quarterly basis.</p>	
<p>Continuous training programs are provided to keep step with state-of-the-art advances and continuously improve workers knowledge and skills in safety, park care and maintenance practices.</p>	<p>Professional staff provide “hands on” field training as needed, and safety training is provided on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>There is significant reliance on undocumented institutional knowledge and the passing of information by word of mouth from veterans to new employees. A formal training program should be developed and documented around each work unit’s core competencies to ensure training is comprehensive and consistently applied.</p>

APPENDIX D – COMPARATIVE STUDY

As part of the audit of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the project team has conducted a comparative survey of maintenance and recreation services. The list of agencies surveyed included: Asheville (CA), Bend Parks & Recreation District (OR), Carmel (CA), Charleston (SC), Moab (UT), Palm Springs (CA), and Santa Cruz (CA). The survey has been conducted through a combination of outreach to the individual jurisdictions as well as online research.

1. GENERAL DEMOGRAPHICS

General demographic information was collected from each of the jurisdictions surveyed to provide appropriate context when evaluating comparable factors. This general demographic information included total service population, total service area (square miles), FY16 budgeted employees, FY16 Operating Budget, and the FY16 CIP budget. The following table presents this general demographic information by jurisdiction:

City	Service Population	Service Area	FY16 FTE	FY16 Budget	FY 16 CIP Budget
Asheville					
Bend Parks & Recreation District	82,069	4.23	89.34	\$13,701,106	\$1,084,874
Carmel ¹	3,800	1.0	4	\$803,179	\$4,064,000
Charleston	137,477	156.6	218	\$22,180,155	\$988,473
Palm Springs	46,821	94.97	28	\$7,450,328	N / A
Moab	5,046	3.591	5	\$865,897	\$6,000,000
Santa Cruz	62,884	15.83	82.63	\$8,397,016	\$9,930,316
Ashland²	20,324	6.52	43.80	\$11,030,100	\$4,851,000

- In all of the areas surveyed above, Ashland ranks below average, except for in relation to its CIP expenditures. Its CIP expenditures are slightly higher than \$4.4 million average.
- The average staffing level per service area square mile is 5.57, and Ashland at 6.72 is above the average.

¹ The city of Carmel only provides parks maintenance services and no recreation services.

² There is only FY15 budget available for Ashland.

- The average cost per capita is \$168.51; however, for Ashland this cost is \$ almost 3x the average at \$542.71
- Ashland’s parks division staffing level is approximately 2.16 employees per 1,000 residents, which is almost double the average of 1.10 employee per 1,000 residents.

The demographic information reveals that a wide variety of cities / jurisdictions were chosen, some who are fairly small such as Carmel and Moab, and others that are fairly large such as Santa Cruz, Bend, and Charleston. Additionally, this information also reveals that Ashland has an extremely high service level as it relates to cost per capita, the only jurisdiction that comes close to Ashland is Bend at \$211 per resident.

2. PARKS MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

The project team compiled various information regarding parks maintenance standards. This information included total number of parks, total number of acres maintained, the FY16 budget for park maintenance and FY16 full-time employees for park maintenance. The following table lists these factors for each of the jurisdictions surveyed:

City	Total # of Parks	# of Park Acres	FY16 Maint. FTE	FY16 Maint. Exp.	Maint. Organization
Asheville					
Bend Parks & Recreation District	N / A	777	60.39	\$5,186,917	Combo ³
Carmel	8	98	4	\$803,179	Functional
Charleston	120	1,809	153	\$15,680,155	Functional
Palm Springs	12	N / A	5	\$2,724,890	N / A
Moab	5	50	5	\$468,000	Functional
Santa Cruz	30	1,600	56	\$5,879,892	Geographical
Ashland	24	785	24.5	\$7,469,390	Combo

There are several takeaways from the information presented above:

- Ashland ranks in the middle as it compares to number of parks and total number of acres maintained.

³ Combo refers to functional and geographic .

- Ashland’s maintenance expenditures per acre at \$9,500 is slightly below the average of \$11,000 per acre.
- The average number of acres per maintenance staff is 17.50, which is almost half the number of acres per staff for Ashland at 32 acres per maintenance staff.
- Ashland’s functional maintenance organizational structure is the most common seen in other similar jurisdictions.

Therefore, all of the parks maintenance information suggests that Ashland’s park maintenance efforts are below the levels of other high-level park maintenance jurisdictions. Ashland typically spends less on maintenance and maintains more acres per staff member than the typical average.

Information from the demographics table coupled with the information in the table on the previous page can be used to develop various parks maintenance standards that can be compared to national standards developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association. These standards include the cost per park and the number of acres maintained per maintenance staff. The following table presents the lower (LQ), median (M), and upper ranges (UQ) for those standards based upon the total park acreage.

Standard ⁴	0-250 acres	251-1,000 acres	1,001-3,500 acres	3,501+ acres
Operating Expenditures / Acre				
Lower Quartile (LQ)	\$4,825	\$3,803	\$2,568	\$427
Median (M)	\$12,467	\$7,855	\$4,513	\$3,579
Upper Quartile (UQ)	\$43,051	\$17,312	\$7,965	\$4,752
Acres of Parkland Maintained / FTE				
Lower Quartile (LQ)	2.2	6.3	10.8	20.1
Median (M)	7.6	17.1	21.3	95.3
Upper Quartile (UQ)	13.1	33.0	42.0	322.1

As the table on the previous page indicates the standard varies greatly based upon the total number of acres maintained by the parks maintenance division. Based upon the information in the two tables in this section, the project team calculated the standard for

⁴ This standard is based on the 2013 PRORAGIS National Database report released by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

each of the jurisdictions surveyed. The following table shows the operating expenditures per acre and acres of park maintained per maintenance employees.

Agency	Cost / Acre	Standard Level	Acres / FTE	Standard Level
Asheville				
Bend Parks & Rec District	\$17,633	Slightly above UQ	12.87	Above LQ
Carmel	\$16,733	Above M	12.00	Below UQ
Charleston	\$12,261	Above UQ	11.82	Below LQ
Palm Springs	\$46,565	Slightly Above UQ	32.00	Btwn M & UQ
Moab	\$22,787	Between M & UQ	7.60	M
Santa Cruz	\$5,248	Slightly above M	28.57	Below M
Ashland	\$14,051	Slightly below UQ	32.04	Slightly above M

As the table above shows that generally Ashland is above the median jurisdictions surveyed for its acreage in relation to cost per acre and acres maintained per staff. Overall, the average cost per acre for the jurisdictions surveyed was \$20,204 and the average number of acres maintained per staff at 10.28. In relation to both of those standards Ashland is above average, meaning even though it spends more cost maintaining per acre of land, it also has less staff coverage for each park acre maintained.

3. PARK MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Only a few of the jurisdictions surveyed discussed the use of performance measures in park maintenance as either a tool in the budgeting process or for measuring the level and standards of service. The jurisdictions that provided response regarding performance measures, measured the following metrics:

- Annual employee evaluations – to check performance levels
- # of preventive maintenance work orders
- # of days to complete work orders
- Average cost of maintenance
- # of trees planted

Ashland, as part of its budget process tracks several performance measures as it relates to park maintenance. These measures include:

- Total acres treated
- # of piles burned
- # of piles chipped
- Total # of miles maintained
- # noxious weeds
- # of weeds abated

As the points above demonstrate, Ashland is already doing a better job than other jurisdiction of reporting and tracking more performance measures than many of its comparable jurisdictions. However, there is room for additional performance measures to be reported, such as preventive vs. reactive maintenance; measures that better identify the goals and service level standards of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

4. RECREATION

In addition to parks maintenance services, the project team also compared recreation services offered by the same jurisdiction. The City of Carmel does not provide any in-house recreation services, as such it was eliminated from the comparison of recreation services. Information was collected regarding the major recreation units, the total number of positions (full-time and part-time / seasonal), FY16 Budget, FY15 Revenue, and the contract instructor policy agreement. The following table presents this information for all jurisdictions surveyed.

Agency	Major Recreation Units	# of Positions	FY 16 Budget	FY15 Revenue	Contract Instructor Policy
Asheville					
Bend Parks & Rec District	Fitness Center, Sr. Center, Youth Rec; Youth Enrichment; Youth & Adult Sports, Facility Reservations	28.95 Full-Time 82.5 Seasonal	\$7,884,189	\$6,237,785	N / A

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Agency	Major Recreation Units	# of Positions	FY 16 Budget	FY15 Revenue	Contract Instructor Policy
Charleston	Aquatics, Tennis, Golf, Seniors, Community Centers, Gymnastics, Programs, Youth Sports, Adult Sports, Environmental Education	65 Full-Time 100-150 Seasonal	\$6,500,000	\$2,000,000	80-20
Palm Springs	Aquatics, Community Centers, Special Events, Sports Leagues, Facility Rentals	23 Full-Time 40 Seasonal	\$4,725,438	\$1,111,093	60-40 for majority; some are 70-30
Moab	N / A	N / A	\$397,897	\$241,499	N / A
Santa Cruz	Museum, Sports, Civic Auditorium, Youth & Teen Community Center, Events, Admin	N / A	\$2,517,124	\$1,353,700	80-20
Ashland	Pool, Ice Rink, Nature Center, Facility Rentals, Youth Programs, Adult Programs	9.8 Full-Time 3.7 Part-time	\$2,547,830	\$752,732	70-30

The following points discuss the information presented in the table above:

- Ashland is organized similar to other jurisdictions, as there are separate units for facility rentals, youth programs, and adult programs.
- While Ashland's recreation services has similar budget to that of Santa Cruz, its revenue is approximately \$600,000 lower than Santa Cruz.
- For the jurisdictions surveyed two had a 80-20 split, while only one other city besides Ashland had a 70-30 split with its instructors.
- Ashland's cost recovery percentage of 30%, while typical for Parks and Recreation services, is below the average of 50% seen for the other jurisdictions surveyed.

Overall, the results of the recreation services comparison reveals that Ashland is in line with other jurisdictions in terms of organizing services and relying on seasonal employees. However, its low cost recovery suggests, that there is potential for evaluating cost recovery on a program-by-program basis and increasing cost recovery for certain

types of programs relative to others. This would increase the overall cost recovery of recreation services provided. For example, the City of Palm Springs stated that they have cost recovery targets in place, such as: Aquatics (40%), Classes (40-50%), Sports (40%), and Youth (35-40%).

5. CONCLUSION

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission is pretty similar to other high-service level jurisdictions surveyed around the country. However, there are potentials for improvement in relation to parks maintenance such as lowering the cost per acre maintained to be more in line with national standards. Similarly, there are more acres maintained per staff person than what is considered optimal or the industry standard (9-10 acres per staff person compared to 18 acres per staff person). Additionally, there is also the need for the Commission to focus on improving its cost recovery percentages, by ensuring that all direct and indirect costs are factored into assessing the costs of a program or activity.

APPENDIX E – GOLF OPERATIONS MODELS

The following exhibit provide a more detailed description of the golf course operating model options identified in the Oak Knoll Golf Course Chapter. Each operating model varies in specific provisions depending on the status of golf course operations and the specific requirements of local agency jurisdiction.

Description of Operating Models			
Operating Models	Description	Contractor Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
Agency Operation Model	The Agency administers golf course operations in-house using full-time and seasonal part-time agency employees to maintain and operate the courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency may contract with outside concessionaires to provide specific elements of the operation such as food and beverage services. (See Concession Agreement section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides day to day operations of course including maintenance and golf course amenities. Retains control over all policies and decisions Operation staffed by agency employees Responsible for all operating funds including administrative overhead costs and capital improvement funds Receives all revenues generated from the golf course operation
Concession Agreement Model	The agency grants an outside contractor a license to provide all or a portion of the day to day operations of the golf course. Length of agreement varies based on selected services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for daily operations of selected services Responsible for all operating costs Responsible for hiring and training personnel Retains all revenues generated from the operation May be responsible for golf course maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depending on services contracted agency may retain substantial responsibility for portions of the golf course operation Responsibility for capital improvements Receives minimum rental payment and a percentage of gross revenues Retains control over fees and operating policies Retains control over budget Maintains contract compliance

Operational Models	Description	Contractor Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
<p>Management Agreement Model</p>	<p>The agency contracts on a fee-for-service basis with a professional golf management firm to provide day to day management of the golf course operations. Contract is generally for 2 to 5 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides professional management services • Responsible for daily operations • Responsible for hiring and training personnel • Responsible for human resource functions, procurement, marketing • Prepares annual operating budget • Collects and accounts for all revenues • Responsible for all operating expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains greatest control over operating decisions • Provides agency greatest potential for revenue • Allows for most input from agency • Retains all revenues • Reimburses the management firm for personnel costs and direct expenses • Pays firm a fixed management fee plus a predetermined percentage of revenues based on performance targets • Retains responsibility for maintenance and capital improvements of the golf courses • Retains control over budget • Maintains reserve fund for capital improvements • Maintains contract compliance
<p>Operating Lease Model</p>	<p>The agency establishes a long term ground lease of the golf course property to a private party who provides overall management and administration of the facilities. Lease agreements range from 15 to 30 years.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for the maintenance of the golf course • Responsible for daily operations of golf course • Responsible for all capital improvements to the facilities • Contributes to a capital improvement reserve fund • Retains all the revenues generated from the operations • Provides all maintenance equipment, clubhouse furnishings and licenses • Reserves right to raise fees • Can reduce service levels • Bears financial risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes agency from daily operations • Receives rental payment from the lessee • Retains least control over golf course operations • Provides least amount of revenue

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Operational Models	Description	Contractor Responsibilities	Agency Responsibilities
Hybrid Model	The agency creates a model consisting of some combination of agency operations, concessionaire agreements, management agreements and/or maintenance contracts to manage and administer golf courses operations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies depending on components of agreement • Most common hybrid model includes a concession agreement for golf course operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies depending on components of agreement • Most common hybrid model include agency retention of golf course maintenance responsibilities