

Parks and Recreation Element

Background

Vision

Through the 2040 Vision Survey, the community identified a connected parks and trail system and increased access to recreational opportunities as important components to a successful parks and recreation system. Some of the most frequent responses when asked what citizens loved about White Salmon were the natural beauty of the area, scenic views, available parks and greenspace, the local trail system, and Jewett Creek. When asked what makes White Salmon special and what the community wanted to protect and enhance, the natural beauty and access to nature and recreation were the top responses, along with the city's small-town character.

Parks and Recreation Focus Area Statement

The Parks and Recreation Element is one of four key focus areas established at the outset of White Salmon's Comprehensive Plan update. The following focus area statement, created during the community visioning process, guides the goals and policies included in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan element.

"Surrounded by natural and scenic beauty, White Salmon is at the center of a recreational wonderland. A city-protected trail system offers opportunities for hiking, mountain biking and kayaking. Residents enjoy a variety of parks, green spaces, trails and facilities. A network of neighborhood parks and playgrounds provide daily access for residents to enjoy. Sports fields, specialty parks, a community pool and recreation center promote community gathering and outdoor exercise. Natural areas provide wildlife habitat and enhance local ecosystems. Health and aesthetic benefits are derived from the ample tree canopy. Access to the Columbia Riverfront is maintained so that all can appreciate this precious and defining recreational asset."

Existing Conditions

The benefits of a vibrant parks and recreation system include positive effects on human health, welfare and well-being, habitat conservation, and cultural resource protection. Providing a variety of active and passive parks and recreation opportunities is important to the community. White Salmon offers various park and recreational facilities, meeting the diverse needs of the community while attracting visitors from outside of the community.

The City's main park, Rheingarten Park, includes a variety of sports courts and fields, a playground, and picnic tables. Rheingarten Park is also the focal point for several events and festivals, including the farmers market, music concerts, July 4th festivities, and the Spring Festival, which draws attendees from all over the Columbia River Gorge. On the east side of White Salmon, the Jewett Sports Complex provides the community baseball and softball fields, as well as soccer fields. Just north of these fields across Tohomish Street is Spoke Bike Park, which hosts a skills park for riders of varying abilities and ages, as well as a recreational mountain bike trail through the woods. For a more natural and peaceful recreational experience, Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park offers a trail system along Jewett Creek within a heavily wooded portion of town, and Pioneer Park in central White Salmon includes an historic burial ground. All of these facilities provide opportunities that the City can capitalize on.

As new park and recreational facilities are planned, it is equally important to protect and preserve natural, scenic, and cultural areas. The diverse habitat and landscape of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area provides the overall setting of White Salmon's recreational environment.

The primary source of funding for parks and recreation development and maintenance has been the City's general fund, as no dedicated source of funding exists for this purpose. The City also occasionally receives grant funding from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office. New residents and an increased demand for these facilities will place additional demand on City resources, requiring new funding mechanisms to adequately meet the population's current and future park and recreation facility needs. The City may require park land to be set aside in new subdivisions, paid by the developer and maintained by a homeowners association, to capture the impact of new residential growth on the demand for facilities.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

White Salmon has a diverse mix of City owned and operated park and recreation facilities and facilities owned and operated by other agencies and organizations. Figure XX identifies the existing facilities in White Salmon, followed by Table 1 summarizing each facility. Additional information about these facilities can be found in the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum (or as amended).

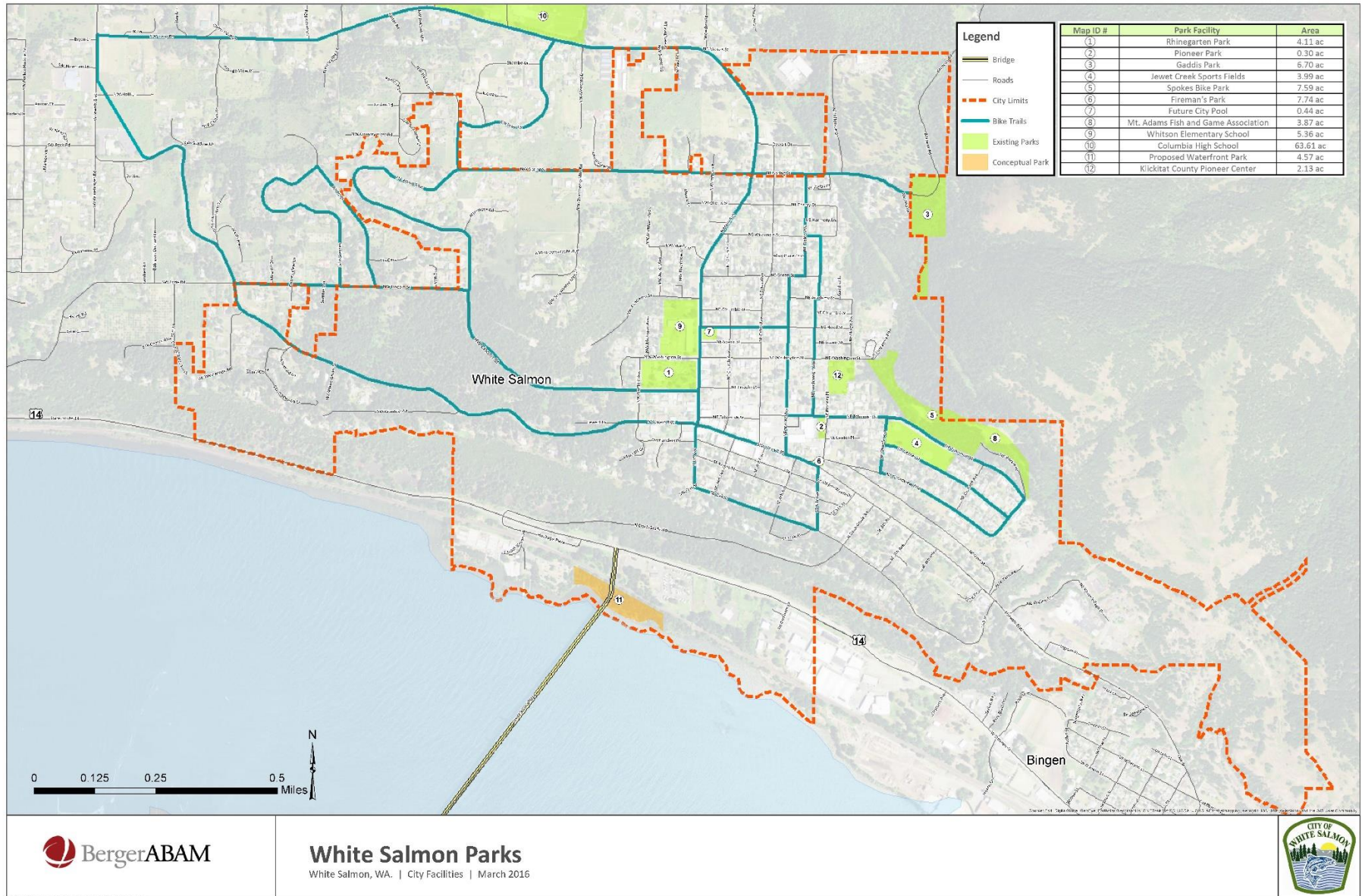


Table 1: White Salmon Parks and Recreation Facilities

Existing Facility	Description
City-owned Facility	
Rheingarten Park	This 4.11-acre community park is located at the intersection of North Main Avenue and Northwest Lincoln Street. The park is used for community activities, such as Springfest. The location has expansive views of Mount Hood and the Columbia River Gorge. Popular features of this park include tennis courts, a play structure, open space, and picnic areas.
Pioneer Park	Pioneer Park is a small (0.39-acre) park located off Northeast Tohomish Street. It provides a grassy expanse with views of Mount Hood. Central to the park is a memorial in tribute to White Salmon's first burial ground. Pioneer Park was originally a cemetery for early pioneers. While no one is currently buried at the park, the grave markers still exist. The land was operated as a cemetery until 1962, when the City designated it as a memorial park.
Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park	Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park (6.70 acres) is located in a natural setting along the eastern edge of White Salmon and adjacent to Jewett Creek. This park, dedicated in 2003, was originally named in memory of Mamie Gaddis; the name was changed to Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park in July 2004, and the park was rededicated in 2007 with the completion of a kiosk. Notable features of this park include interpretive signs that provide information on native plant species, creekside picnic tables, and a trail system.
Washington Gorge Action Program Youth Center	The Washington Gorge Action Program (WGAP) Youth Center is located just east of downtown White Salmon, on property owned by the City. WGAP initiated youth programs in 1994 and, over the past 25 years, has provided opportunities for youth to build positive relationships through healthy activities. Activities offered at the youth center include billiards, foosball, ping pong, computers, video and board games, music, books, and places to relax.
Spoke Bike Park	Spoke Bike Park is a 7.60-acre park located adjacent to Jewett Creek and across from the Sports Fields. The park is located on City land and is maintained by volunteers. The bike park hosts a series of jumps, berms, and other challenges for riders of all skills and ages.
Fireman's Park	Fireman's Park is a small gateway park located on the corner of Jewett Boulevard and Grandview Avenue. This site welcomes visitors to White Salmon and provides views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood.
Non-City-owned Facility	
Jewett Sports Complex	The Jewett Sports Complex is a 3.99-acre active recreation park. The White Salmon Community Youth organization constructed and maintains the complex, but the property is owned by the White Salmon Valley School District. The complex is used for community baseball, softball, and soccer. The Jewett family donated the property to the White Salmon Valley School in 1925.
Whitson Elementary	Whitson Elementary School is located across from Rheingarten Park. The school offers amenities such as play structures, open space, and basketball courts. The Columbia High School, Henkle Middle School, Wallace and Priscilla Stevenson Intermediate School complex is located just outside the city limits, within the county. The high school provides recreational fields for

Existing Facility	Description
	football, soccer, baseball, and track. Basketball courts, open space, and various play structures are available as well.
Mt. Adams Fish and Game Association Gun Range	The Mount Adams Fish and Game Association, which was established in 1939, owns and operates a gun range next to Jewett Creek, off Park Avenue. The Association is private, and the gun range is membership only. The range features an indoor pistol range and an outdoor 100-yard rifle range with a trap house. The gun range provides a safe place to shoot pistols, rifles, or traps for members drawn from the Columbia River Gorge area.

Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

Outdoor recreational activities abound in the White Salmon area. The Columbia River and the wild and scenic White Salmon River west of the community provide a host of water-related activities. These include fishing, boating, whitewater rafting, windsurfing, kiteboarding, stand-up paddle boarding, kayaking, and other sports. Gifford-Pinchot National Forest, the second largest national forest in the United States, lies approximately 25 miles north of White Salmon and is used by residents and visitors to the area for camping, hiking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobiling. Downhill skiing is available at several ski resorts in the Mount Hood National Forest of Oregon, located 40 miles south of White Salmon.

Future Facilities and Plans

City Pool

For much of the twentieth century, the City owned and operated a public pool located on 0.43 acre next to Whitson Elementary School, at the intersection of Washington Street and Main Avenue. The City built the pool in the early 1930s to serve residents and the surrounding community and completed renovations in the early 1950s to add a bathhouse. The City developed a pool feasibility study in 2015 to determine the demand for, and location of, a new pool to replace the existing facility. Because of ongoing maintenance needs and costly repairs, the City decided to decommission the pool in 2019. The White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District is now in charge of the pool relocation and is moving forward with the construction of a new pool near Henkle Middle School along Loop Road.

Community Center

The City is considering the construction of a new community center located across the street from Whitson Elementary School. The facility may also house the WGAP Youth Center, which would be relocated from its current location in a City-owned building built in 1950. In addition, the City Council would use the space for meetings and space would be able available for public use.

Riverfront Park

Access to and recreational opportunities along the city's riverfront are currently limited. A riverfront park is currently envisioned under the existing Hood River Bridge and surrounding shoreline, which would be nearly 13 acres in size and would accommodate in-water recreational activities. A concept plan for the park includes an ADA-accessible trail, viewpoints, picnic areas, children's nature play area, beach access, a stand-up paddle board ramp, and a natural area. During the public outreach of the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum (or as amended), there was strong community support for this park. The Hood River-White Salmon Bridge is currently proposed to be

replaced, which may alter the conceptual design of the park. Providing public access to the park is a current challenge because of private property and the BNSF railroad right-of-way along the site's northern boundary. Klickitat County currently owns the park land, and the City is working to obtain ownership of this land. The concept plan envisions a gateway entrance at the Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce parking area and a pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad tracks that would connect the gateway area to the park.

Loop Trail Plan

Regional multimodal transportation will be improved by developing the Loop Trail, an 11.5-mile pathway located in existing Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), City of Bingen, White Salmon, and Klickitat County rights-of-way. Possible elements of the Loop Trail may include directional signage, visual separation between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians, and scenic vistas. The plan will provide visitors and residents with a trail connecting publicly owned parks. The exact alignment of the trail is still being decided on by all interested parties.

Goals and Policies

The following goals and policies highlight the long-term outcomes and direction for the City of White Salmon's desired parks and recreation facilities, based on the 2019 community visioning process and the 2016 Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Comprehensive Plan Addendum (or as amended).

GOAL P&R-1: Maintain and improve access and multimodal circulation between park and recreation facilities.

Policy P&R-1.1: Improve wayfinding in parks, trails, and along roads by developing a uniform directional signage system.

Policy P&R-1.2: Continue to work with Klickitat County and WSDOT to improve safety along routes connecting to parks and recreation facilities with increased striping and enhanced pedestrian crossings.

Policy P&R-1.3: Develop trails and pathways between park sites and points of interest, including developing a trail system that connects Spokes Bike Park and Mamie and Francis Gaddis Memorial Park.

Policy P&R-1.4: Access to recreational opportunities along the Columbia River shoreline shall be required while preserving the ecological environment of the shoreline, in accordance with the City's SMP.

Policy P&R-1.5: Continue to work with the City of Bingen and Klickitat County in developing the Loop Trail to improve the regional multimodal transportation system.

Policy P&R-1.6: Partner with Klickitat County, Washington State Parks, the Columbia River Gorge NSA, White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District, and the White Salmon Valley School District in planning and funding efforts to link the UEA parks, trails, recreation, and open space system with the City of White Salmon.

GOAL P&R-2: Maintain existing park and recreation facilities and improve existing park and recreation facilities with new or improved facilities, amenities, and uses.

Policy P&R-2.1: Parks and recreational facilities shall be maintained to be clean, attractive, accessible, and safe.

Policy P&R-2.2: Encourage low-maintenance and durable park facilities to reduce the City's long-term costs.

Policy P&R-2.3: Maintain and improve existing sports fields and courts.

Policy P&R-2.4: Improve Pioneer Park with new recreational facilities, such as benches, barbeques, children's play equipment, tree plantings, and/or a wood chip walking path, while maintaining and respecting the historic nature of the site.

Policy P&R-2.5: Provide modern bicycle racks in all park facilities to which a bicycle's frame and wheels can be locked.

Policy P&R-2.6: Support the White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District in the construction of a new pool that accommodates current and future demand.

Policy P&R-2.7: Work with the White Salmon Valley School District in converting the Jewett Sports Complex into multiuse fields serving both baseball and soccer equally. Consider alternative uses for the complex in the winter, such as an outdoor modular ice rink.

GOAL P&R-3: Develop a riverfront park.

Policy P&R-3.1: Acquire the Columbia riverfront park land from Klickitat County.

Policy P&R-3.2: Establish public access to the park for all users, working with the current park design, the BNSF railroad, private property owners, and the future Hood River Bridge configuration.

Policy P&R-3.3: Work with the Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce to share or build additional parking at the existing Chamber of Commerce parking area to accommodate park users.

Policy P&R-3.4: Develop a pedestrian and bicycle connection between the riverfront park and the downtown commercial district.

GOAL P&R-4: Ensure adequate funding opportunities, coordination, and partnerships to meet current and future park and recreation facility demands and maintenance needs.

Policy P&R-4.1: Park and recreation planning and improvements shall be coordinated within the City and the County, and with the City of Bingen, especially to provide an integrated network of parks, open space, and pedestrian connections to and through the UEA.

Policy P&R-4.2: Recreational uses that capitalize on the City's assets shall be encouraged.

Policy P&R-4.3: All planned parks and recreation facilities shall be consistent with the City's capital facilities planning.

Policy P&R-4.4: Continue to work closely with volunteers and service organizations for park maintenance.

Policy P&R-4.5: Consider maintenance early in project planning and design to ensure that projects can be maintained cost-effectively.

Policy P&R-4.6: Address repair issues early before issues become significant and costs escalate.

Policy P&R-4.7: Maintain and update inventories of park and recreation facilities, their physical conditions, and the anticipated need for repair and replacement in the future.

Policy P&R-4.8: Reach out to local businesses, schools, and additional service organizations for maintenance workdays and sponsorship.

Policy P&R-4.9: Coordinate with private landowners regarding trail and conservation easements.

Policy P&R-4.10: Continue to support the White Salmon Valley Pool Metropolitan Park District.

Policy P&R-4.11: Explore grant opportunities from the State of Washington and other funding agencies or organizations for the development of park, recreation, and trail facilities; pursuing funding for projects with the greatest community support; and partnership opportunities.

Policy P&R-4.12: Update the City's development regulations to require useable park land as part of new subdivisions (residential or mixed-use development) of 5 acres or more to capture the impact of new residential growth on the demand for new facilities. The park land shall be built by the developer and maintained by a homeowners association or other private entity.

Policy P&R-4.13: Consider financing tools, such as tax levies or a bond, to fund specific capital projects and defer project costs over time.