

City of Fircrest

## Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan



## Vital Mission

### **Vision**

The vision of the City of Fircrest is to protect and enhance our identity and quality of life and promote open and honest communication that builds a trusting environment. We will inspire a stronger community by working together toward excellence.

### **Mission**

**To enhance the quality of life where we live, work, and play, the City of Fircrest provides its citizens with efficient, courteous, professional services.**

# **City of Fircrest Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan**

2020

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Introduction**

The City of Fircrest and the Parks and Recreation Department consulted with Nature by Design, Inc. to update this Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan. The PROS Plan provides specific guidelines for the recreational needs for a changing population, and makes recommendations concerning property and facility improvements necessary to provide recreational opportunities in the future.

The City of Fircrest Administration, Parks and Recreation staff, City Council, and the consultant team, working together with community leaders and the general public, prepared this PROS Plan to serve as the strategic planning tool for making parks, open space, facility and recreational program decisions over the next six to twenty years. The PROS Plan identifies the actions vital for the city to implement to satisfy the expectations of the community. It includes recommendations that give guidance for making land acquisitions and protecting open spaces, improving and establishing new facilities and instituting continuous improvement processes. Through these processes, the department will constantly and consistently review community input and proactively make the necessary changes that will help create an attractive and livable city.

### **The process used to shape this PROS Plan included the following tasks:**

- Evaluating current services and operations of the Parks and Recreation Department
- Evaluating current and future needs for parks, recreation services, recreation facilities, open space and trails
- Developing implementation strategies based on a preferred future for the community
- Developing plans that will provide the greatest benefits to the residents

### **The PROS Plan is divided into five chapters:**

- Vision, Goals & Objectives
- Existing Parks, Facilities & Program Resources
- Public Involvement
- Needs Assessment
- Capital Facilities Plan & Implementation Measures

## **Conclusion**

The City of Fircrest's Parks and Recreation Department is striving to meet the needs of the City's population. Citizen input obtained as part of the process used to prepare this PROS Plan clearly identified the need for updating and focusing on the City's community center. Other important needs included the renovation of the City's parks, sports fields, and playgrounds. Implementation of the plan's recommendations will ensure that the residents of Fircrest will enjoy parks and recreation opportunities for generations to come. Continued evaluation of the PROS Plan over a regular schedule ensures the goals set forth within are measured, evaluated, prioritized and

implemented as funds allow and needs of the community change. The plan will be updated every four (4) years.

## City Profile

In 1907, financiers from San Francisco, including Major Edward J. Bowes of the "Original Amateur Hour" fame, had a vision of a 'residential park, an enchanting spot to enjoy life and raise a family.' With that in mind, they purchased a parcel of land to the west of Tacoma and named the subdivision Regents Park. Their influence is reflected in the streets named after their California background and their value of higher education.

With its curved, aesthetically designed streets, sidewalks, and sewers, Regents Park offered quiet living with a strong sense of community. The first store was established in 1919 on Farallone Avenue. The Fircrest Golf Club was incorporated in 1923.

In September 1925, Regents Park and its 306 residents incorporated as the Town of Fircrest in an effort to start new and reenergize the community. Incorporation gave them the financial stability and control to repair and develop the infrastructure and services.

In 1960, Fircrest retook ownership of its parks and constructed the Community Center, followed by the construction of the swimming pool and the dedication of Masko Park. Fircrest continues to rival any city in Washington for resources and facilities dedicated to recreational purposes. The Annual Strawberry Feed began in 1976.

The first woman councilmember was elected in 1973. Many changes occurred in 1988, including the change to a Council-Manager form of government. In 1990, the town that had started as a subdivision became the City of Fircrest, having grown in size and population. During the decade, surrounding properties were annexed to even out the boundaries and provide financial stability.

The Public Safety Building was completed in 1979. The 1990s saw the end of the volunteer fire department's 52 years, and a contract was signed with the Tacoma Fire Department for emergency services. The present City Hall building was built in 1999.

Today, Fircrest, with a population of 6696 as of 2013, has lived up to the dream of a residential park. Fircrest as a "city within a city", enjoys a convenient location as it is surrounded by University Place and Tacoma. Fircrest continues to work hard to keep its reputation of a quiet, quality residential town with great recreational facilities while continuing to set the standard for community-oriented policing.

The majority of Fircrest is located in Tacoma School District No. 10, although portions in the south are served by the University Place School District No. 83. Pre-K through 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade are served by Whittier Elementary School (777 Elm Tree Lane) & 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade are served by Wainwright Intermediate (130 Alameda Ave) both located in Fircrest and DeLong Elementary (4901 S. 14th St) in Tacoma. Most Fircrest 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students attend Truman Middle School. Most Fircrest senior high school students attend Henry Foss High School (2112 South Mason) or Woodrow Wilson High School (1202 North Orchard Street).

# CHAPTER 1

## Vision, Goals & Objectives

### Background

The Washington State Legislature prescribed land use planning guidelines for select cities and counties with the adoption of the Growth Management Act in 1990. This included the City of Fircrest. Thirteen goals were adopted to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans codified in Chapter 36.70A.040 of the Revised Code of Washington. Three of these goals directly affect the development and implementation of this plan, which are:

RCW 36.70A.040(9) guides recreation, parks and open space:

*“Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.”*

RCW 36.70A.040(10) covers the environment:

*“Protect the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.”*

RCW 36.70A.040(13) historic preservation:

*“Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance.”*



## Goals and Objectives

The goals of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan are to provide specific guidelines for the continued evaluation and development of current facilities and programs, to determine recreational needs for a changing population, and to make recommendations concerning property and facility improvements necessary to provide recreation opportunities in the future.

### Goals (followed by Objectives)

1. **Goal: Enhance a high quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that are attractive, safe, functional, and available to all segments of the population**
  - Provide parks with activities for all age groups and abilities.
  - Develop athletic facilities that meet the highest quality competitive playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests.
  - Develop new or improve existing multi-use facilities to increase flexibility of use for new activities, or other new trends, as there is a demonstrated need in the community.
  - Re-develop indoor community spaces that provide arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities and other spaces for all age groups on a year-round basis.
  - Provide a blend of passive and active parks and open spaces which fulfill the recreational needs of the city's residents.
  - Design and manage park and recreational trails and facilities offering universal accessibility of residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels, and age, income, and activity interests.
  - Plan for the future so adequate open space, historical elements, recreation facilities and programs are provided for future generations.
2. **Goal: Provide adequate recreational opportunities to meet the leisure needs for all age and interest groups that engage a broad cross-section of the community.**
  - Evaluate present use and demand of existing parks and facilities
  - Initiate joint planning and operating programs with other public and private agencies to provide for special activities like basketball, baseball, and soccer.
  - Provide programs, special events and facilities that promote a sense of community and stimulate socialization for the individual and family.
  - Ensure a broad range of programs to stimulate good health and physical development for all ages.
  - Support the development of athletic facilities that meet quality playing standards and requirements for all age groups and recreational interests, concentrating on field and court activities, which provide for the largest number of participants.
  - Offer programs at a range of costs and implement strategies to ensure program affordability, while meeting financial goals.

- Evaluate opportunities to produce revenues in excess of expenditures in appropriate areas to help fund other programs.
- Continue to be innovative in offering and providing a broad and varied program of leisure activities, recreation programs and services relevant to the needs, interests and abilities of all citizens.

**3. Goal: Provide a park, recreation and open space system that is efficient to administer and maintain.**

- Develop parks and recreational facilities only when adequate maintenance and operation funding are available to maximize maintenance efficiency, safety and public enjoyment.
- Prepare master plans for parks and facilities prior to development, major improvement or renovation to promote cohesive, quality designs and ensure consistency with community needs.
- Incorporate sustainable standards and best management practices into planning and design of new parks and rehabilitation of existing facilities.
- Preserve and protect significant environmental features for parkland open space use, including unique wetlands, open spaces, and woodlands, which reflect Fircrest's natural heritage.

**4. Goal: Develop, staff, train and support a professional Parks and Recreation Department that effectively serves the community in the realization of the above listed goals and objectives.**

- Employ a diverse, well-trained work force that is knowledgeable, productive, courteous, responsive and motivated to achieve department and citywide goals.
- Where appropriate, provide staff with education, training, and modern equipment and supplies to increase personal productivity, efficiency, and pride.
- Monitor workload and staffing needs to maintain an adequate and efficient work force.

## CHAPTER 2

# Existing Parks, Facilities and Program Resources

### Introduction:

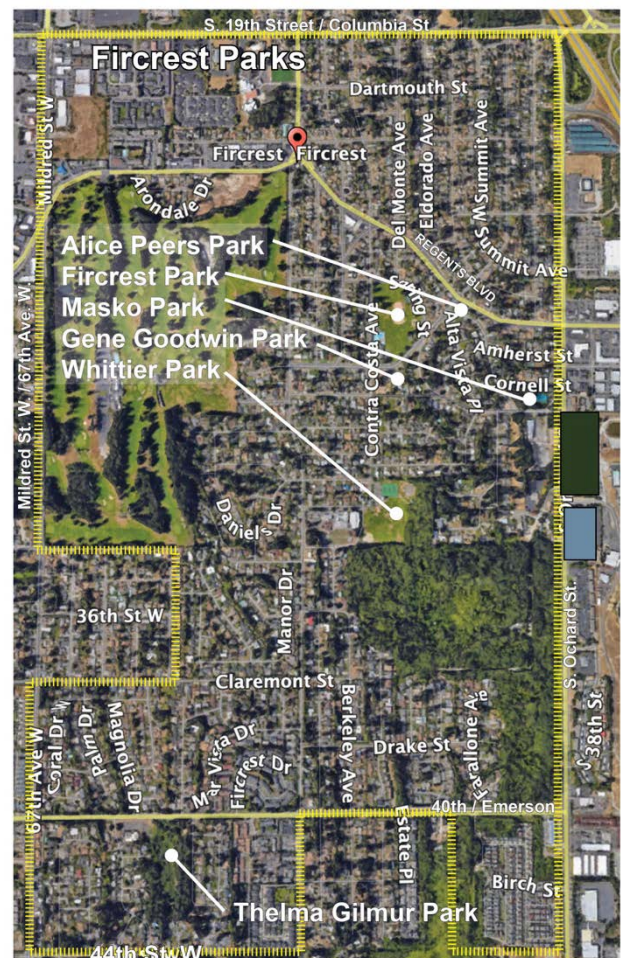
The City of Fircrest benefits from an array of public park and recreation facilities that provide a variety of recreation experiences for the people who live in the community. The inventory summarizes the standards and identifies the definitions for the existing parks and facilities and outlines the current recreation programming. Though there are different providers locally present, this inventory focuses on sites and facilities located in the City of Fircrest park system. To manage the most effective and efficient park system, the existing inventory is defined by different types of parks, with each designed to provide a specific type of recreation experience and opportunity. Classification of types of parks includes pocket parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, natural open spaces, special use areas and trails.

### CITY OF FIRCREST PARKS, FACILITIES, RECREATION AND CITY RESOURCES

#### 1. CITY PARKLAND

Park types and classifications are defined and provided through a number of state and national sources. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), through its Statewide Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), define general classification park types depending on size, service area and public use. Throughout Washington State and the Pacific Northwest, historic and traditional classifications of park types are used by cities to identify and classify each park type. The most commonly used classifications are the NRPA park classification/definitions, which will be used in this plan to define the City of Fircrest Parks system.

The City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains 27.1 acres of land providing a range of active and passive recreational opportunities at the six park sites listed in the following table:



**Table 2.1**  
**Summary of Existing Parks**  
**City of Fircrest Parks & Recreation**

Park Site	Classification	Acres
Alice Peers: <i>601 San Juan Avenue</i>	Pocket Park	0.2
Gene Goodwin Tot Lot: <i>611 Contra Costa</i>	Neighborhood Park	1.4
Fircrest Park: <i>555 Contra Costa Avenue</i>	Community Park	7.8
Whittier Park: <i>921 Contra Costa Avenue</i>	Community Park	10.0
Thelma Gilmur: <i>1404 Evergreen Drive</i>	Natural Open Space	6.5
Masko Park: <i>805 San Juan Avenue</i>	Special Use Area	1.2
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>27.1</b>

### Inventory Methodology

Inventory data was gathered from field assessments completed in early 2013. Additional facility data and site narratives were extracted from inventory efforts completed by the Ad Hoc Committee (Committee) for the Fircrest Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Management issues and recommendations are the result of site assessments, previous inventory efforts, Ad Hoc Committee member's recommendations, staff input, existing records and public comments. Other area recreation providers in the vicinity are also summarized.

### DEFINITIONS & STANDARDS

Fircrest has four basic park and open space types as well as special use areas and trails, which are:

- ◆ Pocket Parks
- ◆ Neighborhood Parks
- ◆ Community Parks
- ◆ Natural Open Space
- ◆ Special Use Areas
- ◆ Trails

### POCKET PARKS & NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

#### Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are also defined as Mini Parks and typically are located on ½ acre size small lots. They primarily serve the immediate residents who live within a ¼-mile walking distance and provide minimal basic recreation amenities like picnic tables and landscaping.

#### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks serve citizens close to home, are small in size and are intended to serve residential areas within walking distance (1/3 to ½ mile radius). Typically, a neighborhood park includes amenities such as pedestrian paths, trails, picnic tables, a

children's playground, restrooms, picnic facilities, sports courts, landscaping and irrigation.

**Table 2.2**

<b>Pocket Parks &amp; Neighborhood Parks</b>		<b>Acreage</b>
Alice Peers	Pocket Park	0.2
Gene Goodwin Tot Lot	Neighborhood Park	1.4 + fox property
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1.6</b>

## **COMMUNITY PARKS & NATURAL AREAS**

### **Community Parks**

Community Parks are large urban parks designed to serve as a focal point for community-wide activities and as such are intended to provide facilities that the entire community enjoy. Community Parks allow for an intensity of activities where noise, lighting and vehicular traffic are appropriate for the surrounding neighborhood. These parks are suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and swimming pools, and provide access to areas of diverse outdoor recreation, such as walking, wildlife viewing, sitting and picnicking, all of which are appealing to varied user groups. Developed parks typically include amenities such as picnic shelters and tables, tennis courts, covered activity areas, soccer and baseball fields, bike and pedestrian trails, restrooms, landscaping, irrigation and parking lots. Swimming pools and recreation centers may be located on these sites. Community parks may be jointly developed in association with schools to complement and expand on the services provided by the combined city and school grounds.

### **Natural Areas**

Natural areas can vary in function and size; and are defined as land or water left primarily in its natural state. They are generally undeveloped but managed for their natural value as well as recreation uses as a secondary objective. Natural areas may or may not be improved, but generally provide amenities for passive recreation such as trails, benches and environmental interpretive panels.

**Table 2.3**

<b>Community Parks &amp; Natural Areas</b>		<b>Acreage</b>
Fircrest Park	Community Park	7.8
Whittier Park	Community Park	10.0
Thelma Gilmur Park	Natural Area Park	6.5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>24.3</b>

## SPECIAL USE AREAS & TRAILS

### Special Use Areas

Special use areas are public recreation facilities used for a special purpose such as cultural activities. They can reflect or display historic features, educational activities or special gardens that provide a specialized experience for residents and visitors.

### Trails

Hiking, walking and cycling trails are in strong demand by residents of most communities. A trail may exist within a publicly acquired open space corridor or right-of-way or utility corridors defined by drainage areas, topographical changes, wooded areas or vegetation patterns. These sites can link schools, libraries or commercial areas with parks. Trails should be sufficiently wide to accommodate the intended type of trail use, preserve the features through which the trail is traversing and buffer adjacent land use activities.

**Table 2.4**

Special Use Areas & Trails		Acreage/Length
Masko Park	Special Use	1.2 acres
Landscape Areas:		
Veterans Memorial Garden (Masko Park)		
Rhododendron Garden (Masko Park)		
Seabrook Specialty Garden (Masko Park)		
Rose Garden (Alice Peers Park)		
Whittier Park Nature	Trail	.11 mile
Thelma Gilmur Nature	Trail	.09 mile

### Modification of Park System Classification from 1994 Plan:

The 1994 Adopted Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan included the 44<sup>th</sup> Street Park, which the City subsequently declared “surplus” and sold to a developer to construct single family residences to help meet local demand for housing. The City did retain Neighborhood Park benefits for the community in the playground and play areas provided within the single-family development, however, which provides play value for citizens in the southern end of the City.

The City has also acquired two private properties for additional park and recreation use. One lot is located adjacent to Fircrest Park on Spring Street and the second lot is located at the corner of Contra Costa and Electron Way adjacent to the Tot Lot and tennis courts. A third property identified for acquisition, the Columbia Street Mini-Park, was not secured and has since been developed for single family residential use.

Additionally, Emerson Park was renamed to honor Thelma Gilmur. Thelma Gilmur, who was raised on a farm in Alder, Washington, graduated from Pacific Lutheran University and passed on her love of nature as a Girl Scout leader and teacher at Lister Elementary School in Tacoma. As a champion of urban green spaces, she helped save Swan Creek from plans to turn it into a landfill site and lead the effort to create the China Lake Nature

Area in honor of the historic Chinese encampments in the area. Gilmur helped preserve Tacoma's Snake Lake, Adriana Hess Wetland Park in University Place, Morse Wildlife Preserve in Graham, and the pond and woods that now bear her name as **Thelma Gilmur Park** in Fircrest. She has been active in groups including the Tahoma Audubon Society, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, and the Washington Environmental Council.

## 2. CITY RECREATION FACILITIES:

The City of Fircrest offers a variety of recreation, sport and community events within its parks that add recreational opportunities and experiences for its citizens. The major facilities provided include outdoor and indoor basketball courts, meeting rooms, swimming pool, wading pool, playgrounds, ball fields for T-ball, soccer, baseball/softball and lacrosse, disc golf, picnic shelters, tables and benches, tennis courts, interpretive garden, bocce court, and trails.

**Table 2.5: Facility Inventory Summary**

Facility/Structure	Number City-Wide	Alice Peers	Fircrest	Masko	Thelma Gilmur	Tot Lot	Whittier
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>							
Basketball Hoops/Courts	2		1				1
Community Recreation Center	1		1				
Gymnasium	1		1				
Horseshoe Pits	3		2				1
Playgrounds	2		1			1	
Soccer Fields [full size]	2						2
Soccer Fields [modified U-5 to U-12]	6		6				
Softball Fields	2		2				
Sport Court Area (tennis practice/handball/racquetball)	1		1				
Swing Set	1					1	
Swimming Pool (25 yard/6 lane)	1		1				
Tennis Courts	6					3	3
Wading Pool (zero depth)	1		1				
<b>Park Structures</b>							
Park Benches	15	1	6	1	4	2	1
Performance Pavilion	1		1				
Picnic Shelters (group/rental)	1		1				1
Picnic Tables	21		3	2		6	10
Restrooms	2					1	1
Restrooms/indoor with showers	1		1				
Recreation/Community Building	1		1				
<b>Site Features &amp; Amenities</b>							
Asphalt Play Area/Pad	5		1			3	1

Backstops	4		3				1
Bike Rack	2		2				
Bleachers (sets)	5		4				1
Bocce Court	1						1
9 hole Disc Golf Course (poles; no baskets)	1		1				
<b>Facility/Structure</b>	<b>Amount City-Wide</b>	<b>Alice Peers</b>	<b>Fircrest</b>	<b>Masko</b>	<b>Thelma Gilmour</b>	<b>Tot Lot</b>	<b>Whittier</b>
Drinking Fountain	4		1	1		1	1
Flag Pole	2	1	1				
Historic Monuments/Displays (permanent)	1			1			
Holiday Tree (Lighting)	1	1					
Interpretive Signage	3				2		1
Kiosk	1		1				
Lighting Park & Security	10		8			1	1
Lighting Sport Field	3		1				2
Observation Deck	2				2		
Reader Board	1	1					
Parking Areas	4	2		1			1
Wildlife Viewing	2				2		

### Key Facilities

**Fircrest Community Pool:** The swimming pool is a 25-yard, 6-lane seasonal community facility. An adjacent zero-depth wading pool is enjoyed by pre-school children. Locker rooms and restroom facilities are within the attached Community Center. Every year on Memorial Day weekend the pool is opened for the summer season, which typically ends Labor Day. The summer swim program includes weekday and weekend open swim hours as well as Family Swim on Tuesdays and Thursdays throughout the summer. Public swimming lessons are offered in two week, half-hour sessions on weekday mornings with a resident and non-resident fee structure.

**Roy H. Murphy Community Center:** Programming at the Community Center includes indoor recreation classes, fitness, gym space, community meetings, administrative offices, events, sports, restrooms and the pool shower/locker room. Rules and regulations for the recreation building are provided in the City Municipal Code under Title 10.08. The Community Center is the hub of recreational activity for Fircrest: it provides the space and facilities for meetings, facility rentals, classes, activities, and fitness programs, as well as programmed open gym for citizens to enjoy. In the summer the Community Center and the Community Pool serve together as a focal point of programs at the site, pool and the adjacent Fircrest Community Park.

**Update:** In April 2019, Fircrest voters overwhelmingly approved a parks bond to building the new Fircrest Community Center and Pool. Years of planning and input from Fircrest



citizens led to this point. Voters approved a \$13.5 million parks bond measure to build the new community center and pool on the existing site. The parks bond will cover 75 percent of construction costs.

We are raising the rest of the funds – a total of \$8.5 million – from individuals, foundations and other private sources and have already met our goal.

The new Community Center and Pool will feature:

- Larger, 15,000- sq. ft. community center with spaces for weddings, business rentals and other events; community kitchen, teen room and other gathering places. The center will also serve as a community emergency shelter.
- High-school sized multi-purpose gym for sports and fitness programs
- 25-yard pool with six lap lanes, a diving board and a whirlpool play area
- Kiddie pool
- New pool house including locker rooms, party room and community kitchen
- Outdoor plaza and pedestrian pathway better connecting the pool, community center and adjacent park



### **3. RECREATION PROGRAMS & EVENTS:**

The City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department provides a wide-range of recreational activities and programs throughout the year. Additionally, the Department provides and assists in a number of planned city-wide community events. To meet the need and demand, programs are offered for all ages, with substantial involvement from citizens throughout the community. The Parks and Recreation Department provides a quarterly brochure and an interactive web-page, which serves as the primary source of program information for the community. Recreation participation occurs on an annual basis in the following major recreation program categories:

- Aquatics
- Community Events
- General Recreation
  - Youth/Teen Sports, Programs & Camps
  - Adult Activities & Classes
  - Senior Activities (55+)

#### **Aquatics**

The City of Fircrest swimming pool is a family-oriented facility that offers activities for swimmers of all ages and abilities. Rules and regulations are listed in Chapter 10.20 of the Fircrest Municipal Code. From Memorial Day until Labor Day the Fircrest Community Swimming pool is open for lessons and family swim times. For young children there is an adjoining wading pool. Both City residents and non-City residents can purchase a season swimming pass. The annual attendance is 8,000 for open swimming and 2,000 for special events, passes and lessons.

#### **Community Events**

The Department and the City support and host a number of special events which include: Daddy Daughter Dance, Fish N Fun, Mother and Son Fun Night, Community Garage Sale, Strawberry Feed, Derby Days, Car Show, Fircrest Fun Days, Haunted Trails, Pumpkin Patch, Holiday Bazaar, Watch your Speed 5K, Family Movie nights and annual Tree Lighting Ceremony.

#### **General Recreation**

- Youth/Teen Sports, Programs & Camps: Annually over 2,000 youth attend various camps sponsored by the department or through partnerships contracts. Camps during summer range from day camps to sports camps. These include Kids Love Soccer, Top Cat Tennis, and Sky Hawks sports camps as well as a traditional Summer Day Camp with arts and crafts, gym games, lunch time, field games and educational activities.

Sports programs include flag football, K-5 youth basketball, pee wee soccer, T-ball leagues and youth baseball.

Monthly Teen Nights provide activities and events for the area teenagers. Special events are annually scheduled for parents and youth, including the annual Daddy Daughter Dance and the Mother and Son Dance.

- **Adult Activities & Classes:** Adults are involved in the spring Adult Slow-Pitch League which consists of 6 or more teams and is part of a cooperative program with the City of University Place. Table 2.6 lists the broad range of adult recreation programs.
- **Senior Activities:** The Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department provides the Active Adults Trips Program, which organizes and schedules a variety of trips to local area destinations. These include museums, shopping, historic cultural sites and even an opportunity to enjoy a casino and buffet lunch.

The major programs and events are listed below in Table 2.6 along with the approximate number of annual participants. The Fircrest pool provides over 10,000 users the opportunity to enjoy the swim activities. Nearly 16,000 users are estimated to enjoy the community events. Over 2,000 youth are estimated to be active in program offerings. Over 4,000 adults and seniors attend and are involved in classes and activities annually.

**Table 2.6**  
**Annual Number of Participants for Major Recreation/Programs & Events**

	# per year		# per year
<b>AQUATICS</b>		<b>GENERAL RECREATION</b>	
Family Swim Night	500	<b>Youth/Teen Sports &amp; Programs</b>	
Go Hawaiian Pool Party	400	After School Program	800
Open Swimming	8,000	Baseball Programs	400
Seasonal Passes/Admissions/Rentals	200	Basketball	195
Swimming Lessons	800	Creative Movement	24
Swim Team	100	Pee Wee Soccer League	75
<b>COMMUNITY EVENTS</b>		Summer Day Camp	180
Car Show	2,000	Summer Sports Camps	100
Community Garage Sale	150	T-Ball	75
Daddy Daughter Dance	220	Toddler Sports Time	300
Derby Days	240	Youth Night	160
Easter Egg Hunt	4,000	<b>Adult Activities &amp; Classes</b>	
Fircrest Fun Days	4,000	Basketball League	280
Fish N Fun	125	Belly Dancing	30
Haunted Trails	450	Bridge & Pinochle	500
Holiday Bazaar	500	Canasta	400
Mother and Son Dance	150	Clubs & Meetings (e.g. rock, railroad, painting clubs)	800
Picnic and Movie in the Park	1,200	Softball Leagues	330
Pumpkin Patch	455	Table Tennis	700
Strawberry Feed	400	Volunteer Program	60
Tree Lighting Ceremony	300	Active Adult Yoga Fitness	45
Watch Your Speed 5K	300		
<b>Senior Citizens</b>			

Active Adult Trips	375		
Senior Foot Care	400		
Chair Yoga for Seniors	180		

#### 4. CITY RESOURCES:

##### **Administration, Recreation Services, Park Maintenance and Budget**

The City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department was created through City of Fircrest Ordinance 551 in 1966 and codified in Title 10 of the Fircrest Municipal Code (FMC). The FMC provides Community Center rules and regulations regarding Parks and Playground rules, Tennis Court rules, restrictions and etiquette, and rules and regulations for the Swimming Pool.

**Administration:** Fircrest has been a non-charter code city operating under a Council-Manager form of government since 1990. The City Manager, appointed by the Council, carries out Council policies and administers the day-to-day operations of the City. The seven members of the Council are the policy-making body of the City. The duties of the Council include enacting legislation, establishing basic policy for the City, and adopting the annual budget.

The Mayor is chosen biennially by Councilmember's at the first meeting of the new Council and is the Presiding Officer at meetings. The Mayor continues to have all rights, privileges and immunities of a Councilmember.

The Parks & Recreation Director is responsible for the administrative responsibilities, community coordination and budget management. The Department provides two areas of responsibility, which are recreation programs and services as well as the maintenance responsibilities for park sites, the community public facilities and community swimming pool. The Director works with the City council liaison to Parks & Recreation to implement programs and provide recommendations to the City council.

**Recreation Services:** The Parks and Recreation Director and program staff promote and provide social, physical and personal recreation activities for all ages. Approximately 30,000 people benefit from the recreation services, including park and recreation users from neighboring communities. The Recreation Department produces a seasonal activity guide as notification to the public for involvement in a variety of recreation program and events in the community. Recreation services provide year-round sports programs for all ages, summer swimming and playground programs as well as a, the Youth Summer Program and the Senior Citizens activities. Many partnerships, grants and donations are secured to effectively provide the recreational services throughout the year. The Director and recreation staff prepare annual programming statistics in the preparation of the recreation portion of the annual department budget.

**Park Maintenance:**

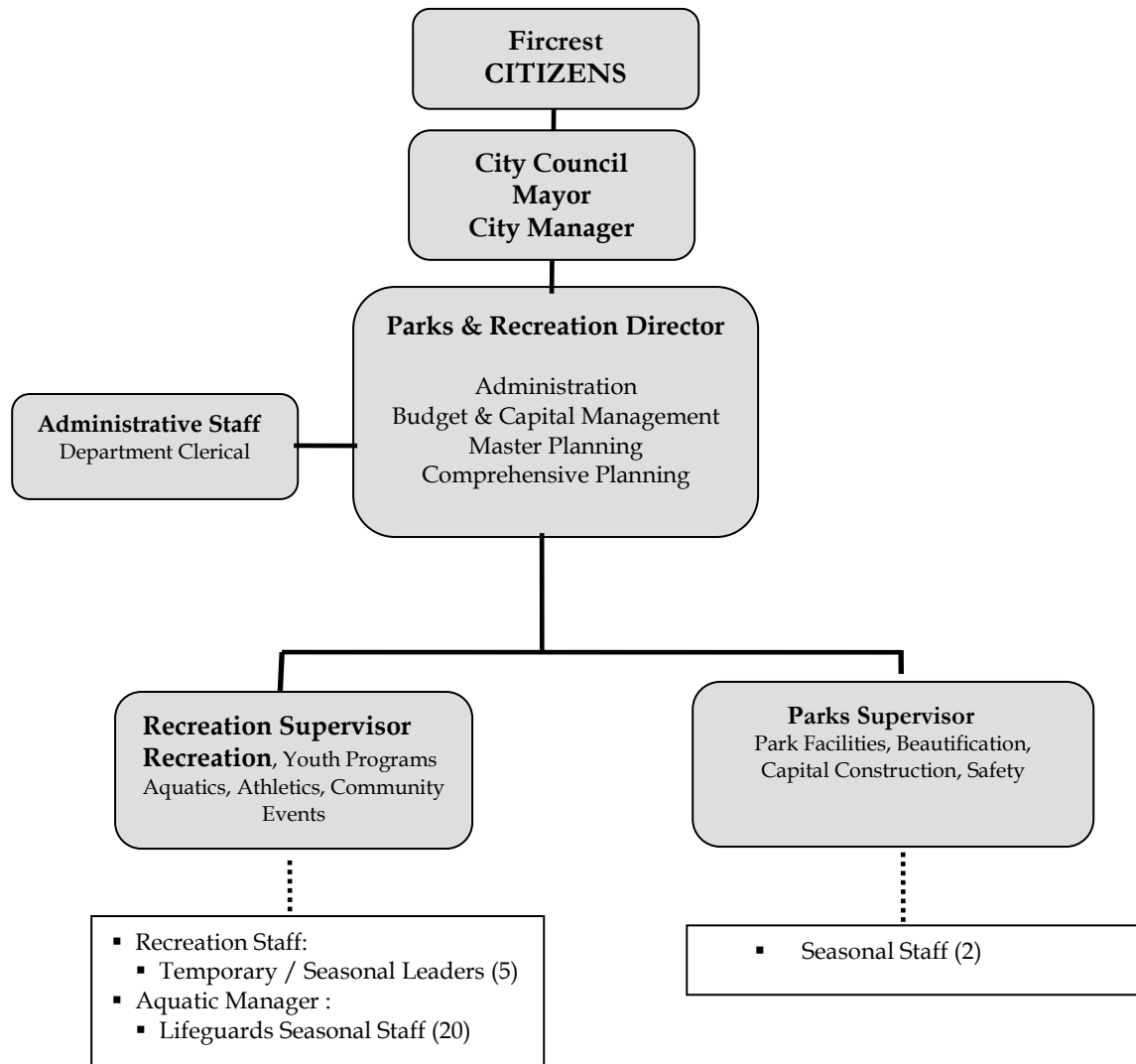
The Parks and Recreation Department develops and maintains the City park system through progressive and efficient management. The parks system of 27.1 acres includes two multi-use parks with tennis courts, ball fields and sports courts, soccer fields, Bocce courts and playgrounds. The community swimming pool and wading pool, as well as the 13,000 square foot Community Center with gym, meeting rooms, restroom and offices, are the Division's management responsibility. Parks staff also facilitate the setting up and taking down of major community special events. They maintain all parks and roadside landscape improvements. Fircrest has one Park Supervisor and two seasonal temporary staff to maintain the parks' grounds and prepare the facilities for recreational play and use.

The Parks and Recreation and Facilities Departments maintain all Parks and Recreation facilities, which includes cleaning of the recreation buildings. Parks and Recreation and Facilities staff coordinate with Community Center staff on assignments and tasks. The Parks and Recreation Department also funds park structures' supplies as well as the repair and maintenance of the park storage garage, the Pavilion, Tot Lot restrooms, the Whittier restrooms and the picnic shelter structure.

**2020 Annual Budget:**

The City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation budget includes revenue and expenditures identified in the general fund category. The annual budget provides the resources for the annual operation of the services provided by the Department. Additionally, the annual budget provides special fund accounts for capital projects. The Parks and Recreation budget accounts for about 14% of the General Fund Operating budget.

**Organizational Chart:** The following chart presents the current Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department organizational chart. The Department is responsible for the administration of parks and recreation services. It provides current services and operations as well as the long-range planning for meeting the community's needs and services into the future. The organizational chart provides for the coordination of the Department by the Director and displays the links to the City Council, Mayor, City Manager and the Fircrest citizens.



## 5. COUNTY, STATE & PRIVATE RESOURCES NEAR THE CITY OF FIRCREST

Within the City of Fircrest there are private and public lands and facilities that provide park, recreation and open space opportunities. The Tacoma School District, the Pierce County Public Works and the Fircrest Golf Club are examples of the major entities that provide recreational opportunities.

Whittier Elementary School, which is located adjacent to Whittier Park, provides partnership opportunities for the community with the use of the school playground coordinated with park use for special events and activities for the students during the annual school year.

Currently there are a number of Off-Leash Dog Park areas within close proximity to the City of Fircrest. Some of those include the Metro Parks Tacoma Rogers Off-Leash Park on east L Street, McKinley Park Off-Leash in the upper park site area, Wapato Park at south Sheridan as well as the Off-Leash demonstration area at Point Defiance Park. Other local Off-Leash areas in Pierce County include the 22-acre site at Fort Steilacoom

managed by the City of Lakewood and the Chambers Bay Golf Course Off-Leash area in the central meadow managed by Pierce County.

The Metro Parks of Tacoma Park District provides an array of parks, open space and program services. Key facilities located near the City of Fircrest include Point Defiance Park, Zoo and Aquarium as well as the Tacoma Nature Center at Snake Lake. Metro Parks has year-round and seasonal swimming pools, wading pools and spray grounds and a variety of parks, playgrounds and open space sites available to Fircrest citizens.

The City of University Place, adjacent to and west of the City of Fircrest, has 17 parks and conservation areas. Morrison Park, an undeveloped natural area, and Homestead Park, with walking trails and a rhododendron collection, are just west of Fircrest. Centrally located within the City of University Place is Cirque/Bridgeport Park with ball fields, soccer field, trails, skate park, tot lot and picnic shelter. Sunset Terrace Park, adjacent to Tacoma at the north edge of University Place, features a children's playground, ball field and picnic shelter.

The City of Lakewood is located south of Fircrest and has nearly 20 parks, water access sites and facilities managed by its Parks and Recreation Department. Lakewood has a number of water access sites for boating and swimming, with the largest being American Lake located in the southern portion of the City.

Chambers Creek Regional Park, owned and operated by Pierce County, is an open space site that follows the natural flow of Chambers Creek to the Puget Sound.

During September 2012, Pierce Conservation District (PCD) worked with gardeners to oversee general operations at 66 public community gardens throughout Pierce County. Approximately half of these community gardens are located in Tacoma, which abuts Fircrest to the north and east.

## Chapter 3

### Public Involvement

To assist with developing an understanding of the park and recreation needs and preferences of the citizens of the City of Fircrest, the Fircrest City Council appointed a Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan Ad Hoc Committee in 2013. The Committee included twelve citizens and three City Council representatives. Over the course of the planning process a series of updates was provided through news and city-wide publications as well as through the Parks and Recreation Department web site. Citizens were informed of the current process and provided details of input coming in through the public meetings.

#### **Community Based Ad Hoc Committee:**

Parks and Recreation staff, the City Manager and appointments to the Ad Hoc Committee (hereinafter, Committee) met over the course of the planning process and provided history, technical knowledge and guidance to the planning process. The Committee was also vital in providing the community vision and rendering key decisions that formed the Park Schematic Master Plans and the basic framework of this Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.



**Public Workshops & Opinion:** Community workshops were held on April 24 and June 19, 2013. The two workshops presented a series of maps and Schematic Master Plans for each park. The Schematic Master Plans identify and describe what was/is currently needed, as well as capital improvements needs into the future. The first meeting provided the initial look at the parks to allow citizens to focus on critical needs and create a vision into the future for the community. The second workshop provided a more thorough presentation from the initial citizen input on Schematic Master Plans possibilities for the parks over the next six to twenty years.

The input from the citizens stressed that the most important consideration was meeting the continued need for youth and family activities through programs or facilities at the existing parks. Of primary focus, with overall support from citizens and Committee members, were improvements to the City's critically important recreation facility -- the Roy H. Murphy Community Center and adjacent seasonal swimming pool. Many were observant to point out that limited funding and a changing economy will play a role in the next steps to planning the future of the Community Center, but also noted the continual demand for positive opportunities that are vital from the perspective of most residents.

The workshop conversations centered on outdoor activities that ranged from sports fields' renovation at Whittier and Fircrest parks, to support facilities like added parking for the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot and restroom/concession facilities at Fircrest Park. Looking to the



future, the citizens and committee members prioritized and identified capital improvement needs at all six of the city-owned park sites. Prioritization involved reviewing those items of most importance when reflecting future costs and budgets to most effectively and economically accomplish the identified park capital improvements.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Needs Assessment**

#### ***Introduction:***

The Needs Assessment is one of the most important elements of the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. Establishing priorities for the acquisition, development and maintenance of park and recreation facilities within Fircrest culminates the planning process. Capturing the community-driven hopes and desires establishes a road map for providing quality parklands, facilities, open spaces, trails and recreation programs. The current update, presented herein, reflects the needs and prioritizes the critical park and facilities upgrades and identifies improvements, expansions and programs that can best fulfill these needs and priorities and set the foundation for the next 6-20 years.

#### **Community Needs Assessment**

The 2013 determination of need for parks, facilities and programs is based on the community input and vision for the park system. Development of the statement of need is dependent on local values, availability of land, financial resources, desired service levels plus local, state and national standards. The needs assessment represents a combination of the results of community input, the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) guideline of classification and levels of service (LOS) expressed in acres and facilities per 1,000 people. The assessment provides insight into regional and national trends that may influence how the City will need to respond to meet the current and future population demands.

#### **DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AND PROJECTIONS**

This chapter discusses the needs within the Fircrest city limits. The current population of Fircrest (6,696) is used for this plan. The Puget Sound Regional Council, planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA), projects a Fircrest geographic Forecast Analysis Zone (FAZ) population for 2020 of 6,786 and a 2030 population of 6,915. Fircrest has a land area of 1.58 square miles. Population density expressed in persons per square mile is 4,114.6 compared to 101.2 statewide.

The male and female distribution is approximately 50% and the population is 78.9% Caucasian, which is similar to the state percent of 77.3%. The age ranges are generally consistent with statewide percentages with 5.8% under age 18 (6.5% statewide) and 23.3% 65 years and over (23.5% statewide). Education levels are higher than state averages. This is represented by high school graduates or higher at 93.1%, which is above the state average (89.8%), and those with Bachelor's degree or higher at 37.9% versus 31.4% statewide. In 2010 there were 2,847 housing units with homeownership at 68.3%. The mean travel time to work for workers age 16+ between 2007 and 2011 was 23 minutes as compared to 25 minutes statewide.

**Table 4.1**  
**Population Forecast**

	<b>2020</b>	<b>2030</b>
<b>City of Fircrest</b>	<b>6,794</b>	<b>6,915</b>

## **FACILITY DEMAND AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The park system planning process establishes the priorities for the acquisition, development, enhancement and maintenance of park and recreation facilities in Fircrest with professional analysis and community feedback. Assessing the demand and need includes inventory review to determine the existing need (citizen input on wants/needs) and calculations of future demands. Stating and development of a community “need” is dependent on local values, financial resources and the desired level of service (LOS). Analysis represents a combination of input from the Ad Hoc Committee and Fircrest Community Workshops, and takes into account state and national standards and trends, all of which are related to the current and future population as a statistical standard to meet the demand.

## **RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE (RCO) STATEWIDE LEVEL-OF-SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) serves the State in the planning and provision of funding support for local and state agencies. In 2008 a statewide preliminary LOS *tool* was presented as a proposal, not a mandate, in the RCO Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) document entitled: “Defining and Measuring Success: The Roles of State Government in Outdoor Recreation”. The RCO reflected the traditional and current guidelines used on a local and national basis in the National Recreation and Park Association population allocation and park geographic LOS services area indicators of Population Standards and Service Area Guidelines. The RCO/SCORP identified guidelines include:

- 1. Baseline Criteria:** Population Allocations (Table 4.2): Per capita participation indicators.
- 2. Enhanced Criteria:** Park Geographic LOS (Table 4.3): GIS-based travel distance/population density indicators.
- 3. In-Depth Criteria:** Functions related indicators. Quantity, Quality and Distribution Access Criteria

## **POPULATION ALLOCATIONS/Baseline Criteria:**

The ratio of parkland or recreation facilities is based on a comparison with the existing population base. This numerical level of service standards was originally advocated by the National Recreation and Park Association and is a traditional methodology. The LOS method is used nationally and throughout Washington State on a statewide basis by the RCO and throughout cities, counties and special districts. The National Recreation and Park Association population ratio guidelines establish an overall parkland/open space guideline of 10 acres per 1,000 population (National Recreation and Park Association 1983, 1996). Additionally, it provides guidelines for park types (e.g. neighborhood, community) as well as recreation facilities (e.g. playgrounds, sports fields, etc.). The existing ratio is the existing amount of parkland divided by the existing population within the City of Fircrest. It is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 population. The

recommended standard is the desired amount of parkland expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 population. (Population Forecast Table 4.1)

**Table 4.2** NRPA Guideline Standards for Population

<b>Park Type</b>	<b>Guideline</b>
Mini Park (Pocket Park)	0.25-0.5 acres/1,000
Neighborhood Park	1-2 acres/1,000
Community Park	5-8 acres /1,000
Regional	5-10 acres/1,000
Natural Open Space	Variable
<b>Recreation Facilities</b>	
Baseball/Softball Fields	1 field/5,000
Playgrounds	1 playground/3,000
Soccer Fields	1 field/10,000
Tennis Courts	1 court/2,000
Trails (miles)	0.5 miles/1,000

**PARK GEOGRAPHIC LEVEL-OF-SERVICE/RCO Enhanced Criteria:**

Distributing parks throughout the City creates a more balanced system of parks and facilities city-wide. The geographic distribution method of planning and identification of “service areas” relies on GIS mapping of existing parks and the associated distance and time of travel. The use of the service area identification provides analysis of gaps in the parkland system. The National Recreation and Park Association also recommends service areas for park type, and both location and percent of population served will be used in the analysis of the needs for the City of Fircrest.

**Table 4.3.** RCO Enhanced Criteria

<b>Service Area Range</b>	<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>Community Park</b>	<b>Regional Park</b>	<b>Natural Open Space</b>
Recommended	½-mile	1-mile	15-miles	city-wide
Acceptable	½ -mile	2-miles	20-miles	city-wide
Minimum	1-mile	3-miles	25-miles	city-wide

**TRENDS FOR LOCAL RECREATION PLANNING:**

The National Recreation and Park Association in 2004 developed a list of trends that were identified as having the greatest impact on local agencies planning for recreation facilities. It was identified that national trends, which include the perception of the environment, socio-economics, technology and urban development, will affect the need for the use of park and recreation facilities. National Recreation and Park Association trends that are pertinent to the City of Fircrest’s planning for developing and maintaining park, facilities and open space are as follows:

- Preventative recreation, that is, recreation as an antidote for social problems.
- Family recreation centers that offer a variety of services for each family member.
- A greater need for walking and biking on trails, sidewalks, within parks and along streets and utility corridors.
- Increased demand for Tiny-Tot and Pre-School programs and activities.

- Pressure to increase park capacity and infrastructure of existing parks and concern for adequate maintenance.

## **CITY PARKS AND OPEN SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The needs and recommendations are grouped into sections:

### **1. PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE**

**1-A: Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks**

**1-B: Community Parks and Natural Open Space**

**1-C: Special Use Areas and Trails**

### **2. RECREATION FACILITIES**

- **Sports Fields**
- **Swimming Pool**
- **Playgrounds**
- **Tennis Courts**
- **Other specialized facilities**

### **3. RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

- **Aquatics**
- **Community Events**
- **General Recreation**

## **1. PARKLAND AND OPEN SPACE**

On the following pages, specific needs are described for each type of parkland. As indicated, the community need is dependent on local values, financial resources and desired level of service. It is sometimes difficult to classify a park and open space when the following questions are contemplated:

- What defines a park or open space area?
- Are or should school grounds be considered?
- Should private golf courses, commercial landscapes or private recreation resources be considered?

To focus and resolve this issue, the needs assessment will consider only public lands used and primarily available for public recreation and open space used by the community as a whole within the City of Fircrest.

The following are also elements used for consideration in the process of determining need:

- Level of Service Standards, Existing Level Of Service and desired Planned Level Of Service
- Needs by participation projections
- Existing geographical deficiencies of parkland
- State and national current trends

## **Existing and Proposed Level-Of-Service (ELOS) & (PLOS)**

In the City of Fircrest there are currently 27.1 acres of parkland. If Fircrest grows as planned at an estimated 1.3% per year, the 2020 PLOS would require the addition of one-half acre, and by 2030, one additional acre would be needed.

### Classifications of Parkland Standards

The following assessment of demand and need is divided into three categories: Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks and Natural Open Space areas, and Special Use areas and Trails. A guideline for providing parks and recreation opportunities for the citizens of Fircrest uses the standards as general requirements. The NRPA standards define general indications of the area served by a given type of park. Definitions of each park type are defined as well as the need for specific types of parkland. The following table provides the defined parkland inventory and the existing need by classification:

**Table 4.4: Summary of Existing Level of Service and Future Need\***

Park Classification	Existing Acres/Miles	Fircrest Existing LOS	Future (2030) Deficiency/Need
Pocket Park	0.2	0.03 acres/1,000	0
Neighborhood Park	1.4	0.21 acres/1,000	+1.0 acres
Community Park	17.8	2.66 acres/1,000	+0.5 acres
Natural Open Space	6.5	0.97 acres/1,000	0
Special Use Area	1.2	0.18 acres/1,000	0
Trails	0.204 miles	0.03 miles/1,000	3.46 miles
TOTAL	27.1 acres	4.05 acres/1,000	4.14 acres/1,000

\*Demand/Need and Recommendations narrative in Sections 1-A, B & C

\*\*1994 Adopted Park Plan: Standards Worksheet, page 34/Class III-A Average Standard/1,000 population

<b>1-A</b>	<b>Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks</b>
<b>1-B</b>	<b>Community Parks and Natural Open Space</b>
<b>1-C</b>	<b>Special Use Areas and Trails</b>

### 1-A Pocket Parks

Currently **Alice Peers Park** is the only pocket park or mini park, with 0.20 acres total acres. Alice Peers pocket park serves the community as a welcoming entrance on Regents Boulevard. The small, but well maintained, site is landscaped and provides a beautification gateway to the community. The park contains the City of Fircrest flag pole with the rose garden. A community message board is located at the site to provide citizen information on recreation and city-wide events. Alice Peers Park is the community gathering point for the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Pocket Park Service Area: The traditional recommendation for a pocket park or mini park is ¼-mile radius.

### Comments and Trends Regarding Pocket Parks:

#### *Community Workshop comments:*

- The community reader board at the site is an important information resource for residents. This helps citizens know what events and activities are happening in the community.



- Keep a traditional tree lighting event, but replace the existing tree as it is damaged and in poor health.
- Alice Peers serves as a signature gateway to the City of Fircrest.

*Trends:*

- Small mini parks or pocket parks have become popular, especially in cases where they serve a specific subdivision. They are relatively inexpensive to build and provide a service for residents nearby who are blocked by barriers to easy access to other park sites.
- On a per acre basis, pocket parks and/or mini parks are expensive to maintain and can generally provide limited service for citizens.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- Alice Peers Park serves as a great “Front Door” to our community.
- Alice Peers Park provides a traditional location for community gatherings with the annual Tree Lighting Ceremony, which is an important focus for the citizens.
- The Alice Peers pocket park is a community focus with the American Flag, information reader board and point of welcome for citizens and visitors.

## **1A Neighborhood Parks**

The Fircrest Park system provides one neighborhood park, the **Gene Goodwin Tot Lot**, which is centrally located within the city. The Tot Lot contains children’s play area with pre-school play opportunities, playground equipment, large sand area with concrete surround, restrooms, lawn and picnic area. The park also has three tennis courts with fencing separation between the children playground area and the active courts. The recent purchase of additional acres on the north and west side of the park increased the park site by 30% for a total park acreage of 1.4 acres. The expansion will provide the opportunity to plan for additional recreation elements and features to enhance the park.

Neighborhood Park Service Area: Neighborhood parks serve a ½-mile distance and are located, if possible, within an uninterrupted easy access. The Gene Goodwin Tot Lot, with the additional ½-acre of newly acquired property on the northwest corner, increases the level-of-service for the community. Geographically the northern and southeastern areas of the City are not as well served with neighborhood park benefits. The development of one additional acre of neighborhood park benefit would serve the increased population by 2030.

### Comments and Trends Regarding Neighborhood Parks:

*Community Workshop comments:*

- Parking is of major concern with regard to the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot and new park acreage addition.
- Age segregated areas of the park are important as the current Tot Lot for pre-school ages is a very important park feature for many citizens and visitors to the park.

*Trends:*

- Today citizens want to get outside, be active and play with their children and grandchildren in a park that is within close proximity, is safe and can be accessed with pedestrian usage.
- The neighborhood park located near residents provides the ideal opportunity for play, fitness and exercise opportunities, and provides a social opportunity for those who live in close proximity to the park.
- Playgrounds have a service area recommended at the same levels as neighborhood parks; therefore, playgrounds are recommended at neighborhood park sites.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- Citizens and visitors identify Fircrest as a community that takes pride in children's play and play areas.
- The Gene Goodwin Tot Lot is a park that reflects the community image of their support for childhood play.

**Demand/Need and Recommendations for Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks:**

Fircrest has one **Pocket Park** (0.2 acres) that represents an existing level of service of 0.03 acres per 1,000 population. The NRPA recommends 0.25 per 1,000 population. Applying the existing demand standard (0.03 PLOS) to the projected 2030 population (6,915) demonstrates that the City will meet the existing acreage standard for pocket parks (0.207 PLOS).

National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 1-2 acres per 1,000 population for a standard for **Neighborhood Parks**. If the PLOS is applied to the current population there is a need for an additional .94 acres, or a total of 2.3 acres, of neighborhood parks. Fircrest has one neighborhood park, the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot, which is 1.4 acres. In the future one additional acre will be needed (total of 2.42 acres). With the expansion of the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot, the need for additional neighborhood parks in the central area will be met. Geographically, National Recreation and Parks Association recommends a ½ –mile travel distance and this is met throughout the City. As a consideration for the citizens in the northern area of the City, an additional neighborhood park would provide geographic value. In the future, discussions of a partnership with school owned properties may lead to the provision of additional play areas. In the southern area of the City, citizens have use of a playground at the Fircrest Greens neighborhood park located at the former 44<sup>th</sup> Street Park site and the playground at The Commons at Fircrest neighborhood.

**Table 4.5**  
**Pocket Parks and Neighborhood Parks**  
**Recommended Level-Of-Service (PLOS)**

<b>Pocket Parks</b>		
Alice Peers	Existing Inventory	0.20 acres
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.03 acres/1000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b>		<b>0.03 acres/1000</b>
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>		
Gene Goodwin Tot Lot	Existing Inventory	1.40 acres
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.21 acres/1000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (future need +1.0 acre)		<b>0.35 acres/1000</b>

### **1-B Community Parks**

There are two community parks in Fircrest, with a total of 17.80 acres. The community parks are Fircrest Park (7.80 acres) and Whittier Park (10.0 acres). The community parks in Fircrest provide fairly even coverage throughout the community. These parks serve a broad range of recreational activities and community events.

**Fircrest Park**, located near the center of the city, is the location of the Community Center and a seasonal swimming pool and wading pool. The park provides an open grassy area and a wide range of recreational activities with sports fields for soccer and ball games and open space for many annual community events that include the annual Easter Egg Hunt, Picnic and Movie in the Park, and Fircrest Fun Days. The Ron Russo Pavilion group picnic shelter is scheduled for citizen use and the picnic facilities provide opportunities for picnicking in the park. The outdoor basketball sport court is a popular site for pick-up games. The park maintenance center is also located onsite. The park is well maintained, surrounded by neighborhood residential uses, with limited parking on-site.

**Whittier Park**, located in the south central area of the city, is bordered on the north and east by single-family housing. The park is adjacent to the Whittier Elementary School at the south west corner of the site. The City of Tacoma Storm Water Detention Basin is located on the southern border of the park. The site is home to many recreational and sports activities that range from soccer to Little League Baseball/softball where field lighting is available. Three outdoor tennis courts are heavily used by the community and provide an active facility for senior citizen teams. The park has a group picnic shelter, restrooms, and Bocce courts. Whittier Park received matching grant funds from the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO/formally the IAC) for the development of eight acres of the existing 10-acre park with State Bond funding for a total project cost of \$203,820.00 in 1972 (Project #72-069). Funding provided site preparation, utilities, restroom, irrigation, landscaping and one baseball field, one softball field, two combined football/soccer fields, three tennis courts, basketball court and tot lot. The RCO grant agreement for the state funding states that the property and facilities shall be open for the

use of all segments of the public without restriction because of residence of the user. In 1999 the City received a Youth Athletic Fund (YAF) grant for Whittier Park (RCO #99-1179) for improvements on the baseball field, drainage improvements, and bleachers to support the use of the site for soccer, baseball and other youth team activities. The total project cost was \$11,136 with a 50% local match by the City of Fircrest.

Community Park Service Area: The service area of a community park is generally a 1-3 mile radius. In Fircrest the two community parks appear to serve the citizens fairly well. Fircrest Park is located north of center of the city and Whittier Park is located three blocks to the south. To maintain the recommended level-of-service for community parks into the future, an additional ½-acre area would need to be developed by 2030.

#### Comments and Trends Regarding Community Parks:

##### *Community Workshop comments:*

- Site development plans for both Fircrest and Whittier Park were reviewed with noted suggestions and additions shown on the individual site improvement designs.
- Overall, the community enjoys and benefits from the activities and use of the community parks in the City.
- The Community Center is the “Heart of Fircrest”.
- Residents with children are heavily involved in youth sports and activities at both community parks.
- The tennis courts at each park have a long history of use and support active use on all six courts.
- The community preferred Whittier Park as the priority location for synthetic surfacing of ball fields with Fircrest Park’s fields to be completed later.
- The number one priority needs to be to address the Community Center and swimming pool at Fircrest Park.
- The citizens stated that Fircrest needs to acquire additional acreage around Fircrest Park if the land becomes available.

##### *Trends:*

- As land becomes scarce, housing becomes denser and neighborhood parks become smaller; many communities rely on the City’s community parks to serve multiple functions. These include organized active recreation (e.g., ball fields, soccer, and swimming) as well as spectator events (e.g., concerts, community family events) and passive recreational opportunities.
- Kansas State University research shows children living within a half-mile of a park or playground were five times more likely to be of a healthy weight, rather than overweight, as compared to children who didn’t have a park with a play area nearby.

##### *Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- Residents of all ages were increasingly involved in the entire spectrum of activities within the park system.

## **1-B Natural Areas Open Space**

The 6.50 acre Thelma Gilmur Park is the only Natural Open Space Park in the City of Fircrest. The site is undeveloped with a designated wetland surrounded by single-family housing except for the church located on the northwest corner of the park boundary. The park is easily accessible by adjoining streets to the north and east. Trails bisect the forested hillside on the eastern edge of the site and the native plant-dominated upland area abutting the centrally located wetland. Wetlands plant life consists of reed grass, cattails and native willow.

Natural Open Space Park Service Area: Natural areas with open space do not have a defined service area as they are dependent upon the function they serve. These parks can preserve wildlife habitat, be part of a trail system, provide a separation between neighborhoods or provide a place for quiet and solitude.

### Comments and Trends Regarding Natural Open Space Parks:

#### *Community Workshop comments:*

- Volunteers would be willing to clear and maintain trails within the park.
- Potential funding for work on Thelma Gilmur Park may be obtained through a partnership grant from REI.
- Citizens showed interest in restoring and maintaining the natural shoreline on the west bank of the pond as stated in 1994 Park Plan.

#### *Trends:*

- Communities are increasingly interested in policies and practices that promote long term sustainability and protection of natural resources and open spaces.
- Education about the value and functions of natural open space is increasing across many age groups.
- Government resources through various grants have become available for the protection and preservation of urban habitat areas to support conservation of natural resources.

#### *Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- There is a need for trail connections with sensitivity to the shoreline edge of the Thelma Gilmur wetlands.
- The annual Halloween event is a favored activity along the existing trail at the park.

### **Demand/Need and Recommendations Community Parks and Natural Open Space:**

The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 5-8 acres per 1,000 population and 1-3 miles distance from residents. All residents of Fircrest live within one-mile of both Community Parks, which is the high end of the recommended standard. Currently Fircrest has 17.80 acres of Community Parks. When divided by the City's current population, this provides an ELOS of 2.65 acres per 1,000, which is below the National Recreation and Parks Association standard of 5.0 acres per 1,000. If the City were to retain the ELOS of 2.66 acres per 1,000 and multiply the PLOS by the projected 2013 population (6,915), there would be a need for 18.39 acres total or an additional 0.59 acres of Community Park land. Citizens discussed the need for additional parkland, particularly at Fircrest Park. Therefore, if additional land becomes available abutting the

park, it is recommended that the City acquire this land to help address increased demand for Community Parks acreage.

National Recreation and Parks Association does not have a recommended standard for Natural Open Space; however protection of natural resources to provide management of the natural/cultural environment is of primary importance with recreational use considered to be secondary.

**Table 4.6**  
**Community Parks and Natural Open Space**  
**Recommended Level-Of-Service (PLOS)**

<b>Community Parks</b>		
Fircrest Park (7.8 acres)		
Whittier Park (10.0 acres)		
	Existing Inventory	17.80 acres
	Existing ratio ELOS	2.66 1000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> ( future need + 0.5-acre)		<b>2.66</b> <b>1000</b>
<b>Natural Open Space</b>		
Thelma Gilmur Park	Existing Inventory	6.5 acres
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.97 1000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b>		<b>0.97</b> <b>acres/1000</b>

### 1-C Special Use Areas

Special Use Areas Service Area: Currently there is one special use area, Masko Park, consisting of 1.2 acres in the City of Fircrest. The park is the location of the Seabrook Rhododendron Garden, the Veterans Memorial Garden, and natural trails throughout the site. The service area for a special use site varies widely depending on the function it serves. Additionally, the level of maintenance is dependent on the site's function.

#### Comments and Trends Regarding Special Use Areas:

##### *Community Workshop comments:*

- The Seabrook Rhododendron Garden was and should be retained as a special species hybrid plant garden with consultation from local hybridizers.
- Consideration was given to the creation of additional specialized facilities such as a skate park and dog park but the consensus was that they are of low priority as existing options for both are within short distance of most citizens.

##### *Trends:*

- Within communities, recreation facilities that are located independently fall under the special use category.
- Specialty and community gardens, as well as memorial sites, are unique and provide a citizen connection to beautification and city history.

- The creation of a designated dog park is being addressed throughout communities. Issue-specific task forces are established by cities to centralize the process. Considerations for establishing a new site would include recommended laws and policies (e.g. scoop & leash), the identification of environmental health concerns (e.g. toxocara larvae concerns), wildlife and habitat impacts, and planning for land use conflicts and operation and management solutions (e.g. volunteer stewardship program, self-policing, and Adopt-A-Park program).

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- In the past the Rhododendron Garden functioned as a place for citizens to view a variety of species.
- Upgrade of the garden could provide opportunities for interest that also result in a beneficial health and fitness activity.
- The establishment of a dog park, either separate from, or integrated into one of the existing community parks, was not endorsed.

### **1-C Trails**

Trails, pathways and connections serve to provide links, routes and connections for walking and bicycling, and they add opportunities for regional connections to existing trails in neighboring communities. In the current 2014 budget, \$14,700 for path and trail construction is to be funded from the Designated Fund Balance for Paths and Trails.

Comments and Trends Regarding Trails:

*Community Workshop comments:*

- The placement of an exercise station in connection with the natural trail would be a good addition to Whittier Park.
- At Thelma Gilmur Park some of the planned improvements could be funded through a grant from REI.
- Citizen volunteers are more than willing to help keep the trails cleaned.
- Fircrest is a “walking” city. Make trails available for all homeowners and users.

*Trends:*

- Trails and open space connections provide links and routes for walking and bicycling and enjoyment through scenic corridors.
- A combination of urban design, land use patterns, and transportation systems that promote walking and bicycling will create active, healthier, and more livable communities.
- Regular physical activity is such a crucial part of good health; our goal is to help people understand that even modest activity such as walking or gardening is a step in the right direction.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- At Whittier Park, lighting the trail and making it a little more public with improvements would be beneficial to the trail value.
- The trail at Thelma Gilmur Park is a natural trail and needs to have maintenance.
- Extension of the trail around the wetland at Thelma Gilmur Park should be explored.

### **Demand/Need and Recommendations Special Use Areas and Trails:**

Masko Park was identified as a site that potentially could serve as a natural area with natural improvements as a passive recreational **Special Use Area**.

**Trails** continue to be a priority for the citizens as well as the City. Securing grant funds to match local funding could help address the demand for additional trails. A variety of trails could be funded, including natural trails, multi-use trails, bicycle trails or shared use with vehicles trails. Natural and soft-surface trails are less expensive to develop than shared use on public roads trails, which must use defined highway development standards. Natural trails are identified in the Master Plan for Whittier and Thelma Gilmur Parks and can be developed and maintained through community partnerships or citizen stewardship groups that have a dedicated interest in the trails that provide opportunities for exercise and recreation. In 1994 the adopted Park Comprehensive Plan identified the Class II-A City average standards for trails were 0.5 miles/1,000 population. Retaining this standard for the current plan results in a current need of 3.35 miles of trails and a future need of 3.46 miles of trails in 2030.



**Table 4.7**

### **Special Use Areas and Trails**

#### **Recommended Level-Of-Service (PLOS)**

<b>Special Use Areas</b>		<b>Area/Length</b>
Masko Park		
	Existing Inventory	1.2 acres
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.18 1,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b>		<b>0.18 1,000</b>
<b>Trails</b>		
Whittier Park Nature Trail		0.11 of a mile
Thelma Gilmur Nature Trail		0.09 of a mile
	Existing Inventory	+/- ¼ mile
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.03 ,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b>		<b>0.5 1,000</b>



## 2 RECREATION FACILITIES

The specific needs for specific types of facilities are discussed and provided with the current and future demand standards and related trends for these facilities. The facilities are:

- 2.A Sports Fields**
- 2.B Swimming Pool**
- 2.C Recreation Center**
- 2.D Playgrounds**
- 2.E Tennis Courts**
- 2.F Other specialized facilities**

Establishing the need for recreation facilities is determined from participation levels, identified trends, public input received at the community workshop and input from staff and the Comprehensive Plan Ad Hoc Committee.

### 2.A Sports Fields

Fircrest has one softball field, two Little League Baseball fields, one tee ball field, two full size soccer fields and six modified soccer fields. There are no dedicated fields to one sport; all soccer and baseball fields overlay one another. Sports fields with competitive play generally require a higher level of maintenance, especially during the playing season. Since the existing fields are located in the parks, the City is responsible for the maintenance and operation of the fields.

#### Comments and Trends Regarding Sports Fields:

##### *Community Workshop comments:*

- As noted in the Community Park narrative, the first preference for synthetic fields would be at Whittier Park with completion of fields at Fircrest Park coming later.
- The cost analysis of the operation and maintenance needs to be known to help with making a decision on whether or not to install synthetic surfacing.
- Working with community organizations and non-profit groups can be an opportunity to decrease the cost of local service for the City Parks and Recreation Department's annual budget.

##### *Trends:*

- Over the past fifteen years, soccer play has continued to increase significantly.
- Nearly 70% of children (ages 6-17) in the U.S. are playing team sports and three out of four teenagers are now playing at least one team sport.
- "Team sports bring us together as young children, teaching us to socialize, solve problems, resolve disputes, experience the benefits of hard work, and understand different personalities and gain self-confidence and direction."

##### *Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- There are a number of interests, which include soccer, baseball/softball and even lacrosse when discussing recreation activities at Whittier Park.

- Youth sports are very active in the City of Fircrest with many citizens providing volunteer hours to the recreational game needs.
- Synthetic fields will provide a much needed benefit to the turf conditions at Whittier Park but maintenance cost analysis will be critical in the final decision-making process for purchase and installation.

### **Demand/Need and Recommendations for Sports Fields:**

The National Recreation and Parks Association standard recommends a ratio of one regulation field per 10,000 population. National Recreation and Parks Association also recommends a service area of 1-2-miles for soccer fields. The popularity of the game determines the number of units that will be needed for play. Youth soccer can generally be provided for on smaller youth fields located on parkland such as Fircrest Park, where most of the youth play is currently scheduled. The existing inventory provides a demand standard of 1 field per 837 population and a future need by 2030 of one additional field. The ball field demand standard applicable to this plan requires a team to have sufficient field space to play games and practices each week. The field lighting at Whittier provides for extended play times. The future demand can be sustained into the future with the placement of all-weather synthetic turf at Whittier Park. These renovations with improved subsurface drainage would provide for consistent and increased play on the fields. To address operation and maintenance costs of all-weather fields, a revenue generation cost analysis would provide the data to assure that funding is in place rather than add to an already heavy parks maintenance schedule and operational burden. Partnerships could be broadened or formed with non-profit organizations and community groups to address maintenance costs for improved fields into the future.

## **2.B Swimming Pool**

The City of Fircrest's swimming pool is a seasonal all-city facility. The service area for a swimming pool is 15-minutes to 30-minutes of travel time, which reaches nearly every resident in the City of Fircrest. The pool is a 25-yard, 6 lane facility with a 1,400 square foot dive tank and an additional children's wading pool area. A new pool is currently being constructed and is scheduled to open during the Summer of 2020.

### **Comments and Trends Regarding Swimming Pool:**

#### *Community Workshop comments:*

- The future of the community swim pool along with the Community Center is a first priority for needs and improvements on a community-wide basis.
- The "life cycle" of the pool makes it of critical importance for emphasis in current and future planning.
- There are short term needs for the pool that include rehabilitation of the pool liner and filtration system.
- Residents are overwhelmingly supportive of the swimming pool as it is a key facility for all citizens.
- Some stated that they enjoyed the dive boards but a water slide would also work.

#### *Trends:*

- Nationally, swimming continues to be a very popular recreation activity.

- To provide and enhance revenue, many communities are looking to adapt pool facilities with a variety of play amenities to off-set the annual cost of operation.
- In 2008, the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) listed swimming as popular at the state level when looking at seasonal averages.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- There are many improvements that will become necessary within the near future, one of which includes a new pool liner.
- The wading pool area could potentially be a good location for a splash pad.

**Demand /Need and Recommendations Swimming Pool:**

The National Recreation and Parks Association standard is 1 pool per 20,000 population. The 25-yard, 5 lane pool equals 4,584 square feet of water space. The existing ratio is 685 square feet per 1,000 population. In the future, retaining or replacing the pool with a 25-yard, 5-lane seasonal swimming pool provides 685 square feet per 1,000 population, thus meeting and exceeding NRPA standards.

The Fircrest pool is important and vital to the community. Repairs and maintenance to retain the facility as an asset rather than a liability will include upkeep of the pool mechanics and support facilities and addressing the life of the existing pool liner (cost shown under Fircrest Park - Community Center Short Term Improvements).

**Update:** In April 2019, Fircrest citizens came together around a shared vision:

*To build a modern community center and pool with safer, more efficient and larger facilities to better meet the community's needs through additional recreational opportunities – A Gathering Place for All.*

Voters approved a \$13.5 million parks bond measure to build the new community center and pool on the existing site. The parks bond will cover 75 percent of construction costs.

We are raising the rest of the funds – a total of \$8.5 million – from individuals, foundations and other private sources and have successfully met that goal.

**2.C Community Center**

The Roy H. Murphy Community Center located in Fircrest Park serves a focal point for recreation and community programs. The existing facility is 13,974 square feet. The site is the location of the Parks and Recreation administrative offices. The community center has a gymnasium, meeting rooms and a full-size kitchen for public use, and it provides the restroom and locker room amenities for the Fircrest Community swimming pool, which is adjacent to the northern end of the Community Center. The facility provides for year around programming, which includes aquatics, community events, youth and teen sports and programs, and adult recreation activities and classes.

**Comments and Trends Regarding Community Center:**

**Community Workshop comments:**

- The Community Center has a long history of use by children throughout the city.

- Families have historically enjoyed the value of the center as a safe place that provides the opportunity to come together as a focal point for youth.
- The future of the Community Center was expressed as the most important priority concern for the Ad Hoc Committee and the citizens in the community.
- There is a current need to refurbish all meeting rooms in the Center as well as to update the restroom fixtures.
- The basketball court outside of the Community Center needs to be upgraded.
- Recreation programming emphasis at the Community Center should be mid-teen and pre-teen ages.

*Trends:*

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that community programs provide a range of developmentally appropriate community sports and recreation programs that are attractive to all young people.
- Of children and adolescents aged 6-19, 15%, about 9-million, are considered overweight.
- One of the most important steps to improve one's health is being active. Suggestions for youth to improve bone-strength are activities such as hopping, skipping, jumping rope, running and sports such as gymnastics, basketball, volleyball and tennis.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The Community Center provides multiple uses that include gym activities, meeting rooms, classes and the pancake breakfast.
- The future of the Community Center is of primary concern in all community discussions.
- The Community Center is the place where kids go to hang-out!
- The Community Center and the benefits of the programs are what Fircrest is about- it is a safe place and is the "Heart of the City"!

**Demand/Need and Recommendations for Community Center:**

The existing Fircrest Community Center provides for the annual recreation programs and events. The community understands the importance of the center and stressed the need to look to the future for replacement or expansion of the existing facility as being of highest importance. The service area for recreation facilities such as gymnasiums is a 1-mile to 2-mile radius. National Recreation and Parks Association does not have a level-of-service specific to recreation centers, but does list a combination of indoor elements (gym/racquetball/volleyball) at 2.35 sf/1,000 population. Using this standard, the current need is for 15,736 sf. of indoor recreation space which is approximately 2,000 additional sf. If the facility remains as a combination seasonal swimming pool and indoor recreation center, the 25-meter 5 lane pool will meet the demand need of 541 square feet of water area per/1,000 in 2014.

The community stated that the first priority of the Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan is to address the future of the Community Center.

**Update:** In April 2019, Fircrest citizens came together around a shared vision:

*To build a modern community center and pool with safer, more efficient and larger facilities to better meet the community's needs through additional recreational opportunities – A Gathering Place for All.*

Voters approved a \$13.5 million parks bond measure to build the new community center and pool on the existing site. The parks bond will cover 75 percent of construction costs.

We are raising the rest of the funds – a total of \$8.5 million – from individuals, foundations and other private sources and have successfully met that goal.

## **2.D Playgrounds**

The City of Fircrest currently has playground equipment located at Fircrest and Whittier Parks. Under the National Playground Safety Inspection Guidelines through National Recreation and Parks Association, children's play areas need to be designed with areas for toddlers up to five years old, a site for 6-12 years old and a play area for those 12 and above.

### Comments and Trends Regarding Playgrounds:

- The service area for children's playgrounds is the same as that of a neighborhood park, or ½-mile radius.
- The City of Fircrest has two playgrounds, one at Fircrest Park and the second located at the Gene Goodman Tot Lot.
- Safety surfacing must be maintained at an appropriate depth and the site needs to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) for access.
- Maintenance staff must be trained and certified under the NRPA National Playground Safety-Training Program for completion of annual inspections.

### *Community Workshop comments:*

- Future designs for Whittier Park support the input regarding the creation of a Play Plaza with pre-school and school age themed play opportunities.
- Parents noted that some children play at the Whittier School playground but visibility for the area from the park grounds is blocked, which is of concern for most parents.
- Citizens indicated that the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot provides a wonderful playground for preschoolers and toddlers.
- In park designs, individuals supported the swings for preschoolers at the Tot Lot.
- The playground at Fircrest Park provides play opportunities for school age children.

### *Trends:*

- The Outdoor Industry Association (outdoor product providers) continues to advocate for communities in which all kids have places to play within walking distance from their homes.

- Obesity now affects 17% of all children and adolescents in the United States-triple the rate from just one generation ago. “1 of 3 children is obese or overweight before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.”
- The author of *The Genius of Play*, Sally Jenkinson, concurs (page 18) that “Success in social play, skill in the use of good interventions, good interactions and flexibility all develop social competence and prepare the child not only for integration into school but also for life itself”
- The U.S. Access Board has issued a Final Rule (36 CER Part 1191) regulating the accessibility of playgrounds, which is one of the critical issues of playground design.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The Gene Goodwin Tot Lot is a vital focal point play area for young children.
- The entire community supports the play area and amenities provided to the citizens for young children.
- There is a need for playground equipment at Whittier Park, which would be beneficial to parents as other siblings play team sports.
- Improving play opportunities at Fircrest Park is important.

**Demand /Need and Recommendations for Playgrounds:**

Fircrest currently has a demand standard of 0.30 per 1,000 population (1/3,348 population), which is just below the Recreation and Conservation (RCO) recommended standard of 0.33 per 1,000 population for playgrounds. With a PLOS of 0.33 applied to the 2030 population, this reflects a need to add three playgrounds within the City. Whittier Park has been identified as a park for the addition of another children’s playground with equipment and a play area which will meet the future demand.

**Update:** In 2016 the City with the help of a Grant from RCO, replaced an aging play structure at the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot. And in 2018 with the help of the Friends of Fircrest Golf Tournament replaced the aging play structure at Fircrest Park with a state-of-the-art play structure.

**2.E Tennis Courts**

The City of Fircrest has a long history of community use of the public tennis courts located in the community. Play is active and steady use continues on all the courts. Fircrest has six tennis courts. Three courts are located adjacent to the Gene Goodwin Tot Lot just south of Fircrest Park. Three additional tennis courts are located at Whittier Park. Tennis courts require minimal maintenance compared to other recreation facilities.

**Comments and Trends Regarding Tennis Courts:**

*Community Workshop comments:*

- There is a need for tennis court renovations on all six courts, which includes the placement of a new base, paving or sport court coating.
- Drainage improvements as well as maintenance of the nets and the wind screen are needed. Fencing improvements were also discussed.
- The community supports the retention of the tennis courts for community play.

*Trends:*

- From 2000-2008 participation changes indicate that tennis has grown by 43% compared to traditional sports (e.g. soccer, baseball, football, and softball) with a total player increase of 9.6% and a frequency of players increase of 8.6%.
- NRPA and the US Tennis Association (USTA) provide resource information and data on current partnerships for planning, designing and community facilitation of plans for creating outdoor tennis courts and paddle sports courts.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The tennis courts at Whittier Park and adjacent to Fircrest Park are well used and enjoyed by the community at large.
- When looking at options for additions to Whittier Park, the initial discussions focused on creating an indoor tennis facility, but following the first Community Workshop with citizen input the committee suggested they should be left as open courts.

**Demand /Need and Recommendations Tennis Courts:**

Over the past ten years, interest in tennis has remained steady, however, in some areas there has been an increased interest in all paddle sports. Based on studies and the National Recreation and Parks Association demand standards, the ratio of tennis courts per population is on average about 1 court per 2,000 population. The current ratio in Fircrest is 1 court per 1,000 population. It is recommended the City maintain this ratio, which meets the current demand and the future population demand for tennis courts.

**Update:** In 2018 the City funded the resurfacing of the Whittier Tennis Courts.

## **2.F Other Specialized Facilities**

**Group Picnic Areas:** Currently Fircrest provides two sites where picnic shelters can accommodate large groups of people for gatherings and events. The Fircrest Pavilion has picnic tables and nearby amenities that include the playground, horseshoe pits, tennis courts and ball fields. The Whittier Shelter provides shelter with picnic tables, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, a bocce ball court, nature trail, ball fields and restroom. Group picnic shelters provide the community with an added benefit for group activities. There is not a recommended standard for group picnic shelters, but they have proven to be a high demand amenity in Community Parks with the benefit of providing revenue to off-set operating costs.

**Basketball Court Outdoor Pad:** Fircrest has one outdoor basketball court used year around at Fircrest Park, and one court at Whittier Park that is not heavily used due to poor site conditions. Basketball courts or the placement of an outdoor pad are of value for residents which are located within a radius of need for neighborhood parks (within ½-mile) or community parks (1-mile). Over the past twenty years the popularity of basketball has remained somewhat constant nationally. When the need for upgrades or improvements to Neighborhood Parks or Community Parks is identified, it would be beneficial to improve the quality of existing courts while adding a full or half-court basketball pad.

**Table 4.8**  
**Recreation Facilities Summary**  
**Recommended Level-Of-Service (PLOS)**

<b>Sports Fields</b>		
	NRPA Standard	1/1,000
	Existing Inventory	5 fields
	Existing ratio ELOS	1.0 field/1,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (future + 1-field)		<b>2.00 fields/1,000</b>
<b>Swimming Pool</b>		
	NRPA Standard	1/20,000
	Existing Inventory	1 swimming pool
	Existing ratio ELOS	539 s.f./1,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (retain existing LOS)		<b>541 s.f./1,000</b>
<b>Community Center</b>		
	NRPA Standard	2.35 s.f./1,000
	Existing Inventory	1 Community Center 13,974 s.f.
	Existing ratio ELOS	2.10 s.f./1,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (future + 2,000 s.f.)		<b>2.35 s.f./1,000</b> <b>15,736 s.f.</b>
<b>Playgrounds</b>		
	RCO/SCORP	0.33/1,000
	Existing Inventory	2 playgrounds
	Existing ratio ELOS	0.30/1000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (future + 3-sites)		<b>0.33/1,000</b>
<b>Tennis Courts</b>		
	NRPA Standard	1 /2,000
	Existing Inventory	6 courts
	Existing ratio ELOS	1 court/1,000
<b>Recommended PLOS</b> (retain existing LOS)		<b>1 court/1,000</b>



### 3. RECREATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- **Aquatics**
- **Community Events**
- **General Recreation**

#### **Aquatics**

From Memorial Day Weekend throughout the summer until Labor Day, the City of Fircrest Swimming Pool provides a full range of aquatics programs. There are traditional swim lessons with four morning sessions as well as two evening sessions. Lessons are offered for resident and non-resident fees with two weeks of half hour sessions. Open swims are offered weekdays as well as weekends and scheduled times throughout the days. The Family swim is offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays for three sessions between 5:30pm and 8:30pm.

#### Comments and Trends Aquatics:

##### *Community Workshop comments:*

- The swimming pool and the recreation center need to be the number one planning priority identified in this planning document.
- There are short term items that need to be addressed such as the rehabilitation of the pool liner and the filtration system.

##### *Trends:*

- Citizens continue to enjoy a summer pool and wading pool opportunities, which provide fun and healthy recreation activities.
- Swimming on a national scale continues to be a very popular recreation activity.
- When pool renovations are needed, many communities look to the addition of play amenities that enhance revenue and may off-set annual operation costs.

##### *Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The Fircrest swimming pool is an important community asset
- Addressing repairs and maintenance is important.

#### **Community Events**

Programming for community events has a substantial value to the citizens of Fircrest. The Parks and Recreation Department is involved in a variety of unique opportunities for community gatherings. Events range from dances to garage sales. Traditional events include the annual Fircrest Fun Days, the community Tree Lighting Ceremony, Derby Days and Car Show. The community events are well attended by both citizens and visitors to Fircrest.

#### Comments and Trends Community Events:

##### *Community Workshop comments:*

- The value of community events for socialization and their creation of a sense of “community” are recognized.

- The events are generally heavily attended and at times impact adjacent residents, but on a general basis those in attendance who live near the parks enjoy the added value of community gathering.

*Trends:*

- Communities that focus on the value of community, cultural and historic events provide the community and the visitor with activities that broaden opportunities for socialization and a glimpse of the historic culture of their area.
- Visitors to local communities provide an economic benefit to the local businesses within the community.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The entire community enjoys the annual city-wide events sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department, from the summer movie nights to the Fircrest Fun Days activities.
- These events provide the opportunity to see neighbors and meet new citizens in Fircrest.

**General Recreation**

Many of the recreational programs are offered for all ages at the Roy H. Murphy Community Center. The recreation facility is linked to the seasonal community swimming pool with the shared locker room facilities. The meeting rooms and gym provide the space for classes, fitness programs and sports activities. The Department office is located in the recreation center. Programs, events, seasonal camps and classes are presented through the seasonal recreation brochure and on the parks and recreation web-site.

Comments and Trends General Recreation:

*Community Workshop comments:*

- The Recreation Center is a central location for the community to be involved in activities.
- The youth from the community gather at the Recreation Center for socialization and recreation.

*Trends:*

- John L. Crompton points out that it is important to develop outcome-oriented performance measures and to provide “evidence-based” justification for budget requests that assist citizens and elected officials to support continued funding.
- Recreation programs are important in the delivery of benefits that address important community issues and meet fundamental human needs.

*Input from Ad Hoc Committee*

- The program and activities provided through the Parks and Recreation Department play a key role for the community at large. .
- The city-wide events hosted by the Department or in partnership are very well attended and of added value to community livability of Fircrest.
- Most Committee members have a close tie with the programs and the Department as family members are involved with activities and programs offered through the Department.

**Demand/Need and Recommendations for Recreation Programs and Events:**

The demand standard for Community Centers and Swimming Pools is identified and summarized in Table 4.8. Recommendations to address the future of the Community Center can be achieved by working with the citizens, staff and elected in the successful completion of a Need and Feasibility Study for the realization of a center that meets current and future needs.

Recreational programming demand continues to substantiate the support and interest of the citizens of Fircrest. The wide variety of community offerings is reflected in the broad attendance. Recreation program demands are currently met with the available facility space at the Community Center, pool and park facilities. As stated in the Community Workshops and through the Ad Hoc Committee, the highest priority of the citizens of Fircrest is the need to address long-term facility needs of the Community Center to retain and expand year-round recreation services into the future.

## CHAPTER 5

### Capital Facilities Plan & Implementation Measures

#### Summary of Capital Facility Improvements by Park

Whereas Fircrest is a community surrounded by two other developed cities, and the City of Fircrest itself is limited by a lack of undeveloped land that is publicly owned, Fircrest is focusing on enhancing the quality of its recreational experiences by improving its land base, facilities, and programs within the confines of its existing parks. “Improving what we already have” is the unofficial credo! Improvements such as synthetic infields at Fircrest Park, increasing the quantity, quality and diversity of play opportunities and shelters at Gene Goodwin Tot Lot, and adding trails and renovating the overlooks at Thelma Gilmur Park go a long way to improving the quantity and quality of recreational experiences in Fircrest’s parks without purchasing land. New facilities such as restrooms at Fircrest Park, synthetic fields at Whittier Park and gateway feature improvements in Alice Peers Park accommodate and enhance existing recreation experiences and even expand seasonal play -- thereby making the best use of Fircrest’s existing park resources.

Through the Ad Hoc Meetings, Public Community Workshops and staff meetings, Schematic Master Plans were developed and refined to reflect the values and needs of Fircrest. These Schematic Master Plans provide a broad brush view of the type, size and location of possible capital facility improvements for each park. Table 5.1 defines the Total Project Development Cost for each park based upon the capital facility improvements shown on each Schematic Master Plan. Total Project Development Cost includes the construction, mobilization, taxes, professional services, and contingency costs for all capital facility improvements for each park (a 20 year horizon) in 2014 dollars.

**Table 5.1**

<b>Park</b>	<b>Total Project Development Cost</b>
Fircrest	\$4,790,320
Whittier	\$5,358,060
Gene Goodwin Tot Lot	\$1,473,370
Thelma Gilmur	\$314,430
Alice Peers	\$191,200
Masko	\$90,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,217,380</b>

## **Fircrest Park**

As the namesake signature park for the city, Fircrest Park offers the greatest diversity of recreation opportunities of all Fircrest's parks. Much of this recreational diversity is offered in the Roy H. Murphy Community Center, which has served the city well over the years. However, Fircrest residents uniformly spoke loudly and clearly stating the Community Center no longer addresses the recreational needs of Fircrest in a quality and efficient manner. Residents spoke to the deteriorating condition of the building and pool, lack of locker rooms, lack of youth and teen recreation opportunities, no spectator facilities in the gym, too many entry/exit points to monitor, and many other issues – all of which lead to the consensus that time has come to take a fresh look at the whole Community Center model for Fircrest.

It is clear the highest priority issue with Fircrest residents is to explore if and how the Community Center can be renovated/expanded, or if the Community Center should be demolished and rebuilt. Two common themes prevailed throughout the Community Center discussion: 1) the community center location is ideal (don't move it); and 2) the swimming pool must stay in the program element menu.

To begin to address this challenge, an architectural firm should be retained to conduct a Community Center Feasibility Study. Such a study is designed to gauge public needs, define a menu of program elements, study options, select a preferred Schematic Design, and generate cost projections. The cost to renovate, or rebuild the Community Center is not defined in Table 5.1 as this cost is unknown and will be a product of the Community Center Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study.

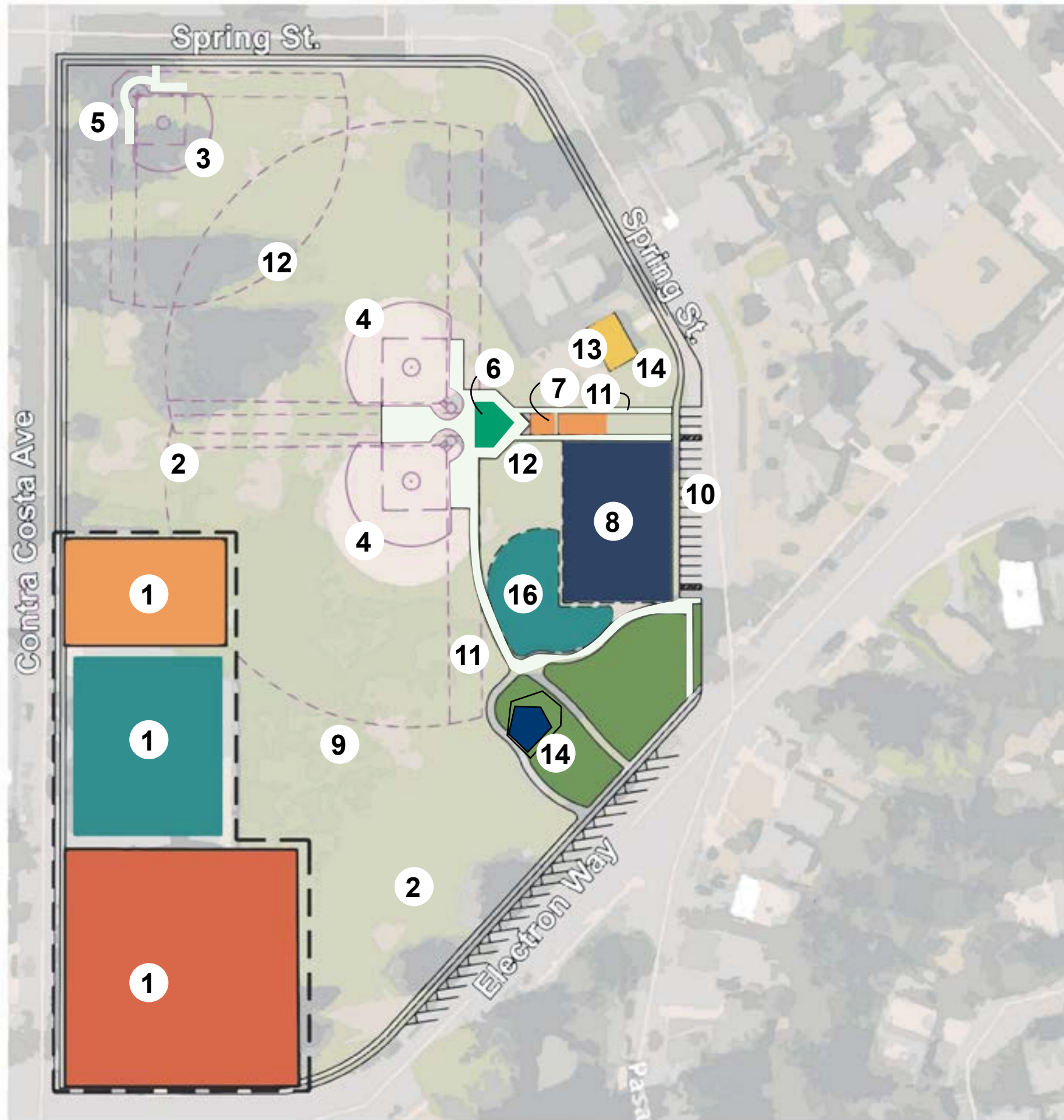
Improvements proposed for Fircrest Park shown in Schematic Master Plan focus on improving the quality of recreational experiences. Many residents agree this can be accomplished by the following (Numbers correspond to those shown on the Schematic Master Plan, below).

1. The number one priority amongst the Ad Hoc Committee and Workshop attendees is the Community Center Needs Assessment & Feasibility Study. Fircrest citizens have concluded that their present, and foreseeable recreation needs are not adequately met by the current Community Center and time has come to examine options that can. In April 2019, Fircrest voters overwhelmingly approved a parks bond to building the new Fircrest Community Center and Pool. Years of planning and input from Fircrest citizens led to this point. The new Community Center and Pool will offer the following features:
  - Larger, 15,000- sq. ft. community center with spaces for weddings, business rentals and other events; community kitchen, teen room and other gathering places. The center will also serve as a community emergency shelter.
  - High-school sized multi-purpose gym for sports and fitness programs
  - 25-yard pool with six lap lanes, a diving board and a whirlpool play area
  - Kiddie pool
  - New pool house including locker rooms, party room and community kitchen
  - Outdoor plaza and pedestrian pathway better connecting the pool, community center and adjacent park

2. Existing sports turf can be renovated and improved by installation of new subsurface drain lines between existing drain lines, deep-tine aeration, top dressing, over seeding and irrigation modifications to assure full coverage and improve distribution uniformity. Such improvements will result in increasing the length of seasonal play and healthy and vigorous turf growth.
3. Installation of new spectator pavements, backstop, dugouts and skinned areas at the bases will improve the quality of play, provide increase safety, improve maintenance efficiency, and provide a higher quality spectator experience for patrons at Field 1, which is primarily used for Tee Ball and Coach-pitch play.
4. Whereas 95% of the play is in the infield, these two Little League fields are proposed to receive synthetic infield installation thereby lengthening seasonal and time-of-day play which essentially increases the numbers of games/practices Fields 2 & 3 can accommodate annually. New backstops/wing fencing and team dugouts increase safety and the quality of the recreational experience.
5. ADA compliant spectator pavement and small bleachers provide a higher level of spectator experience while improving maintenance efficiency.
6. A small play area behind Field 2 and 3 backstops provides preschoolers with age appropriate boulder climbing opportunities on a synthetic turf surface. The play area's location and three picnic tables provide parents/guardians the opportunity to watch the games while keeping a watchful eye on their preschooler. Overhead netting catches errant foul balls falling into the play area.
7. A combination Restrooms, Concessions, and Shelter building in concert with site amenities provides convenience, revenue generating opportunities for the City and volunteer groups and an appealing gathering spot, ultimately serving as the sports fields' core.
8. Building upon the existing play area location, the play area will be expanded in its range of play diversity and age groups.
9. With the turfgrass, lighting, and synthetic turf, youth soccer field overlays will enjoy longer seasonal play longer seasonal and time-of-day play thereby increasing programmable soccer hours.
10. Depending upon the event, parking can sometimes be an issue at Fircrest Park. Whereas Fircrest park land at a premium, Fircrest residents were not willing give up the limited supply of existing park land to accommodate parking, but did conclude parking in the proposed location would not adversely impact park functions while providing a net increase of nine parking stalls thereby addressing average daily use.

11. ADA compliant paved paths are proposed to connect all new and existing park facilities thereby providing hardened walks for all patrons.
12. The Sport Court, popular for street soccer and hockey play, impromptu play and special events will be renovated with new pavement, sport court surfacing and fencing.
13. New siding and trim, solar tubes, roofing and paint extending the life and improving the aesthetics of this conveniently Maintenance Center facility.
14. The Maintenance Center is simply a garage that has proven to be too small for the functions it is expected to accommodate. Expansion of the Maintenance Center to the south with residential stud wall construction, allows for an office in the south corner and safe storage of fuel and fertilizer. The office location with corner windows provides a surveillance opportunity of the whole park.
15. The Ron Russo Pavilion received upgrading in 2019. Upgrades included: painting, new electrical upgrades, motion detection security.
16. Sports field lighting expansion to the north, installing shields on the existing lights and electrical/programming upgrades will result in increased power efficiency, longer seasonal play and light spill containment.
17. Climbing Boulders (synthetic) with fall protection surfacing will provide challenging play opportunities for pre-teens, teens and adults.





## Fircrest Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update

### Fircrest Park

#### Legend

1. New Community Center and Aquatic Center 2020
2. Sports Turf Renovation: installation of new subsurface drain lines, deep tine aerate, top dress & seed, irrigation repair
3. Field 1: new 24' backstop / backboard, skinned areas at bases, new dugout with canopy
4. Field 2 & 3: new 24' backstop / backboard, new dugout with canopy
5. ADA compliant spectator pavement and small bleachers
6. Pre-School climbing boulders, synthetic turf hill (3') for game seating, flat areas with picnic tables and protective screening overhead
7. Restrooms, Concessions, and Shelter Structure: 2 Unisex Restrooms with mechanical chase, warm-up concessions booth with roll-up windows, shelter with seating, drinking fountain, bicycle rack, litter receptacles, motion detection security lighting
8. Completed 2018 - Play Plaza: Pre-School & School Age themed play opportunities: seating, picnic tables, benches
9. U-6, U8, U-10 Soccer Fields (Not shown for clarity) flexible layouts
10. 90° Parking 12 Stalls Minimum; 2 Van ADA Accessible Stalls
11. ADA compliant paved paths
12. Maintenance Facility Renovation: new siding / trim, solar tubes, paint and roof
13. 16' x 30' Maintenance Facility Expansion: add office, fuel and fertilizer safety enclosure, storage
14. The Ron Russo Pavilion received upgrading in 2019. Upgrades included: painting, new electrical upgrades, motion detection security.
15. Upgrade Sportsfield Lighting: Extend to North, Fields 1 & 2 (not shown on plan)
16. Climbing Boulders (Teens)

North





## **Whittier Park**

Improvements proposed for Whittier Park in Table 5.1 focus on resolving past issues with the site layout and security, enhancing the quality of existing recreational facilities, and providing a greater diversity of recreational opportunities. Many residents agree this can be accomplished by the following.

1. Install new Tennis Courts on higher ground in a quieter setting. The Tennis Courts are proposed to switch locations with the Basketball Court and Bocce Courts to foster a more convenient and natural surveillance of the Basketball Court. Construction of the Tennis Courts will require grading modifications and drainage improvements to handle off-site stormwater. Three new Tennis Courts will feature new paving sports coatings, nets and fencing.
2. Replacing the sight obscuring hedge separating the parking lot and Contra Costa Ave. will foster natural surveillance of Whittier Park.
3. Parking lot circulation and entrance/exit safety can be improved by rendering the parking lot as one-way through seal coating, striping and signage. LED lighting will provide safe, efficient parking lot lighting.
4. A combination Restrooms, Concessions, and Shelter building in concert with site amenities provides convenience, revenue generating opportunities for the City and volunteer groups and an appealing gathering spot, ultimately serving as the Park's core.
5. The existing Shelter will require minor renovation, painting and electrical work within the planning horizon. Improvements to the existing shelter, drainage and turf grass to make the shelter more desirable for rental functions.
6. Installing a new Play Plaza in concert with the Restrooms/Concessions/Shelter building to form the central park core creates a natural gathering spot. The Play Plaza offers pre-school and school age opportunities, climbing boulders, seating, climbing net over a synthetic turf hill, picnic tables and other site amenities. A small concrete "Skate Spot" (>800 sf +/-) provides 2-3 beginner level skate features.
7. Install synthetic turf for team sports and open field play. In Western Washington's climate, one synthetic, illuminated field equates to 2-3 high performance natural turf fields in terms of use capacity, since weather, except for snow, does not affect its play conditions. Improvements include synthetic turf for two soccer fields with a softball field overlay, fencing with lockable gates, security cameras, backstop/wing fencing, dugouts and spectator paving.
8. Sports field lighting; installing shields on the existing lights and electrical/programming upgrades will result in increased power efficiency, longer seasonal play and light spill containment.
9. A five foot wide by 1700 linear foot crushed rock perimeter trail provides loop trail walking and a future connection to the Leach Creek Trail system.
10. The existing crushed rock and boardwalk trail system will be completely resurfaced and rebuilt along with new interpretive signage.
11. New Park Identification Sign creates park unity and park system branding while reducing maintenance.
12. Relocate Basketball Court so that it is conveniently located for natural surveillance and closest to parking.

13. Bocce Court plaza
14. The north property line fence is in poor condition and needs to be replaced with a six foot sight obscuring fence.
15. Invasive species has invaded the Open Space/Natural Area on the east side of the park; invasive species removal and planting of native species is warranted.
16. The natural turf area proposed for south of the Play Plaza will be a high performance natural turf programmed for unstructured play.
17. When the Leach Creek Trail system is developed by others, the connection to Whittier Park will be accommodated.

## Whittier Park

### Legend

1. New Tennis Courts on higher ground in a quieter setting. Three new Tennis Courts will feature new paving sports coatings, nets, wind screen, drainage and fencing.
2. 2018: Landscaping upgrade - hedge removed (diseased) replaced with Ornamental Maples
3. Parking Lot Renovation: seal coating, signage & striping for one way circulation
4. Restroom / Storage / Shelter Structure: 2 Unisex restrooms / mechanical chase, team storage, shelter for (4) 6' picnic tables minimum, motion detection security lighting, drinking fountain
5. Existing Shelter: renovate
6. Play Plaza: Pre School & School Age themed play opportunities, climbing boulders and climbing net over synthetic turf surfacing, seating, picnic tables, litter receptacles, bike rack, skate area for beginners
7. Soccer Fields / Baseball Field: turf renovation: installation of new subsurface drain lines, deep tine aerate, top dress & seed, irrigation repair,
8. Sports field lighting renovation: evaluate locations and update technology to efficient standards, minimize light pollution leaving site (not shown)
9. Five foot wide (5') perimeter pervious trail
10. Wetland Trail with interpretive signage (not shown)
11. Park Identification Sign
12. Teen / Adult Court activity space
13. New Bocce Courts / Horse Shoes
14. Six foot (6') High Fence replacement
15. Native plant replacement
16. Turf Area
17. Trail Connection to Leach Creek Area



### **Gene Goodwin Park**

Throughout Puget Sound, Gene Goodwin Tot Lot has earned a quiet, yet renowned, reputation as an interactive Pre-School play facility where parents and young ones have a range of fun and safe play opportunities. The focus of the Tot Lot improvements is to enhance its spirit and reputation through improving the quality of the existing facilities and creating new Pre-School play opportunities and accommodations. Many residents agree this can be accomplished by the following.

1. Although not necessarily congruent with a Tot Lot, the high demand and historical use of the Tennis Courts calls for rebuilding the Tennis Courts at their current location. The Tennis Courts are proposed to be renovated with overlay paving, sports coatings, new nets, fencing, wind screen and drainage.
- 2 & 12. A combination Restrooms/Shelter/Storage building in concert with site amenities provides convenience and an appealing gathering spot, ultimately serving as the Park's core.
3. A four foot ornamental fence will provide a physical barrier to preschoolers and a boundary limit for others.
4. Existing pre-school play apparatus will be replaced with themed play apparatus within the planning horizon.
5. A synthetic turf play hill with climbing nets provides a safe and fun pre-school play opportunity.
6. A new Park Identification Sign creates park unity and park system branding while reducing maintenance.
7. Custom site furnishings such as benches, gates, trellises, and handrails created by artists in a playful themed manner.
8. The Tot Lot's main entrance will be relocated so it will front on Electron Way thereby focusing parking to the north and away from homes where parking has been an issue. An Artistic Gateway Trellis will playfully announce the Tot Lot's entrance.
9. Concrete paved walks with skillful patterns and embedded stones forming numbers, letters, hopscotch, etc. will provide ADA compliant routes to all facilities.
10. Individual concrete pads with picnic tables provide families and small groups with the opportunity to have their own picnic space. Two picnic table pads are ADA compliant.
11. The Picnic Shelter at the corner of Alameda and Electron is the "Signature" shelter which reaffirms the character of Fircrest.

12. See # 2 above.
13. This small interactive water feature is characterized by a farm-based hand crank water pump whereby the water flows down a stream where it can be manipulated by crank and flap gates.
14. New ADA compliant Pre-school swings with ADA compliant surfacing.
15. Nature Play Area with a wide variety of logs, boulders, gravel and other natural materials.
16. Whereas picnic shelters, especially in this park, can be popular and a source of revenue. This shelter should be architecturally subservient to the Signature Shelter while accommodating four tables.
17. A split rail or ornamental fence is proposed to suggest a separation between the existing play to the south and the new Nature based play area to the north.
18. Whereas Gene Goodwin Tot Lot has proven to be a very unique and popular park for families, on street parking on Alameda where the existing Tot Lot entrance is located has been problematic for Alameda homeowners. The Schematic Master Plan addresses this issue by locating ninety degree parking and the Tot Lot's entrance on Electron. This improvement yields a net increase of eleven parking stalls.
19. Artistically inspired and designed ADA compliant benches just off the walkway system provides restive spaces for park patrons.
20. Native Plant restoration provides a buffer to the Tennis Courts.



Gene Goodwin Tot Lot

Legend

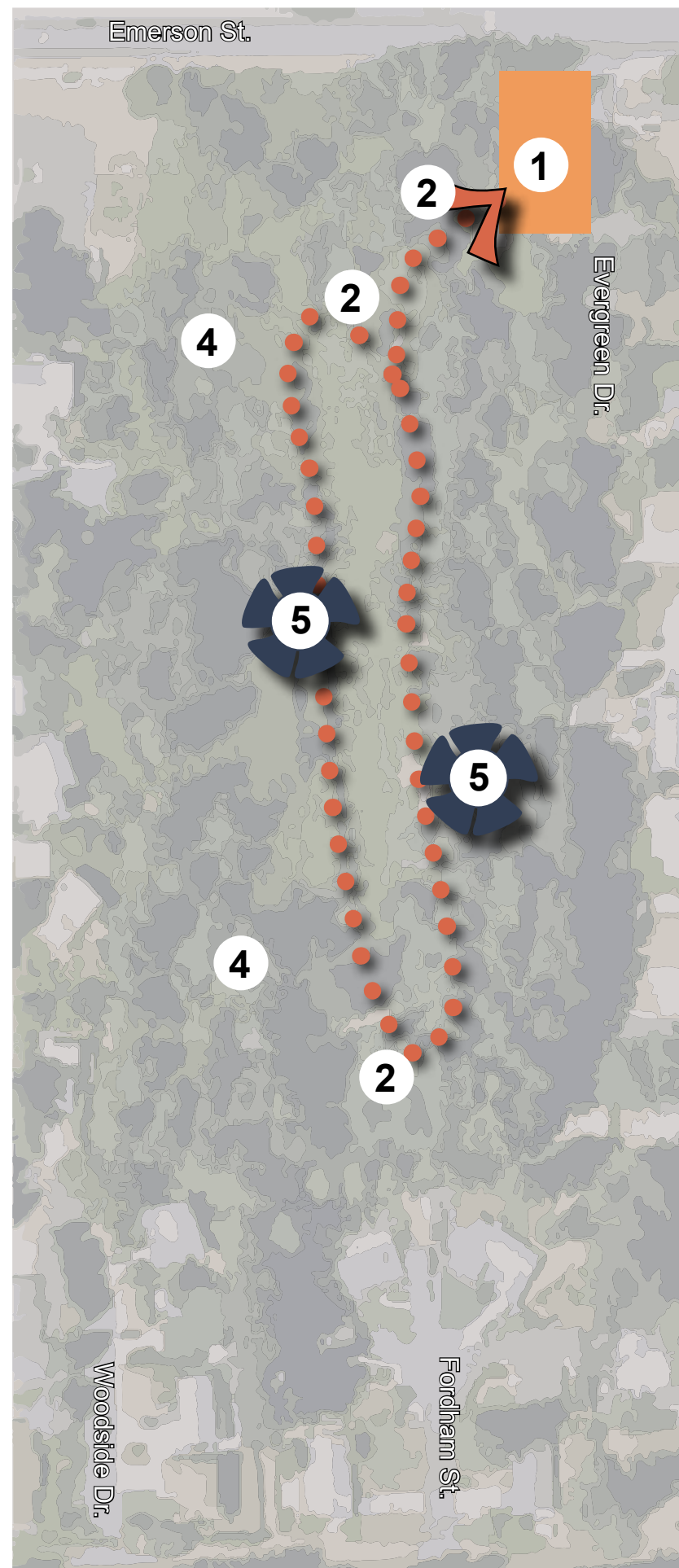
- 1. Renovated Tennis Courts: overlay paving, sports court coating, nets, fencing, wind screen & drainage
- 2. Restroom / Shelter / Storage Structure: 2 Unisex restrooms / mechanical chase, covered area, picnic tables, drinking fountain, bike rack, litter receptacles, motion detection security lighting
- 3. A four foot ornamental fence will provide a physical barrier to preschoolers and a boundary limit for others.
- 4. Completed 2016 - Themed Pre-School Play opportunities
- 5. Synthetic turf play hill with climbing nets
- 6. Park Identification Sign with landscaping
- 7. Themed, artistic, playful site furnishings (not shown)
- 8. Re-Located Entry with Gateway Trellis
- 9. Paved walks with skillful patterns forming numbers, letters, hopscotch, etc. will provide ADA compliant routes to all facilities.
- 10. Picnic Tables with Concrete Pads (not shown)
- 11. Picnic Shelter
- 12. Full Court Basket Ball Court
- 13. Completed 2020: ADA compliant Pre-school swings with ADA compliant surfacing.
- 14. Nature Play Area with a wide variety of logs, boulders, gravel and other natural materials.
- 15. Picnic Shelter with 4 picnic tables & motion detection security lights
- 16. A buffer separation between the sport courts and tot play areas (not shown)
- 17. 90° Parking Stalls added along Electron Way with ADA Accessible stalls
- 18. Benches (not shown)
- 19. Landscaping
- 20. Pickleball Court / Multi Purpose Court



### **Thelma Gilmur Park**

As the only Open Space resource in Fircrest, the proposed improvements focus on quietly announcing the park's presence to the public and taking care of the facilities already present while restoring natural habitats. Improving the street side appeal and pedestrian entry through signage, limited paving, an information kiosk and custom site furnishings will create a sense of transition from urban to natural. Resurfacing trails, renovating overlooks and installing new interpretive placards will rejuvenate existing facilities. Perhaps the greatest challenge yielding the biggest impact will be the removal of invasive species and the planting and establishment of native plant species.

1. Create an attractive street presence and sense of entry to Thelma Gilmur Park through cleaning up and fine grading the corner of Emerson and Evergreen, locating a Park Identification Sign, a welcoming and information kiosk, render the transformer visibly subservient through architectural and landscape means, install site amenities and a nature based gateway feature. This task also includes the general trash removal throughout the open space.
2. Install crushed rock trail surfacing and fine grade to create a smooth and firm trail surface on the existing trail loop system.
3. New interpretive Signage along trail system will focus on the open space's micro-habitat, flora/fauna, the geomorphology and how this habitat connects to bioregional habitat.
4. Invasive plant removal and native plant restoration throughout the open space, yet especially focused on the west side of the open space/pond will yield a healthier micro-habitat.
5. Remove and replace decking and handrails for the pond and Friesz overlooks will yield a safer recreational experience.



## Fircrest Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update

### Thelma Gilmur Park

#### Legend

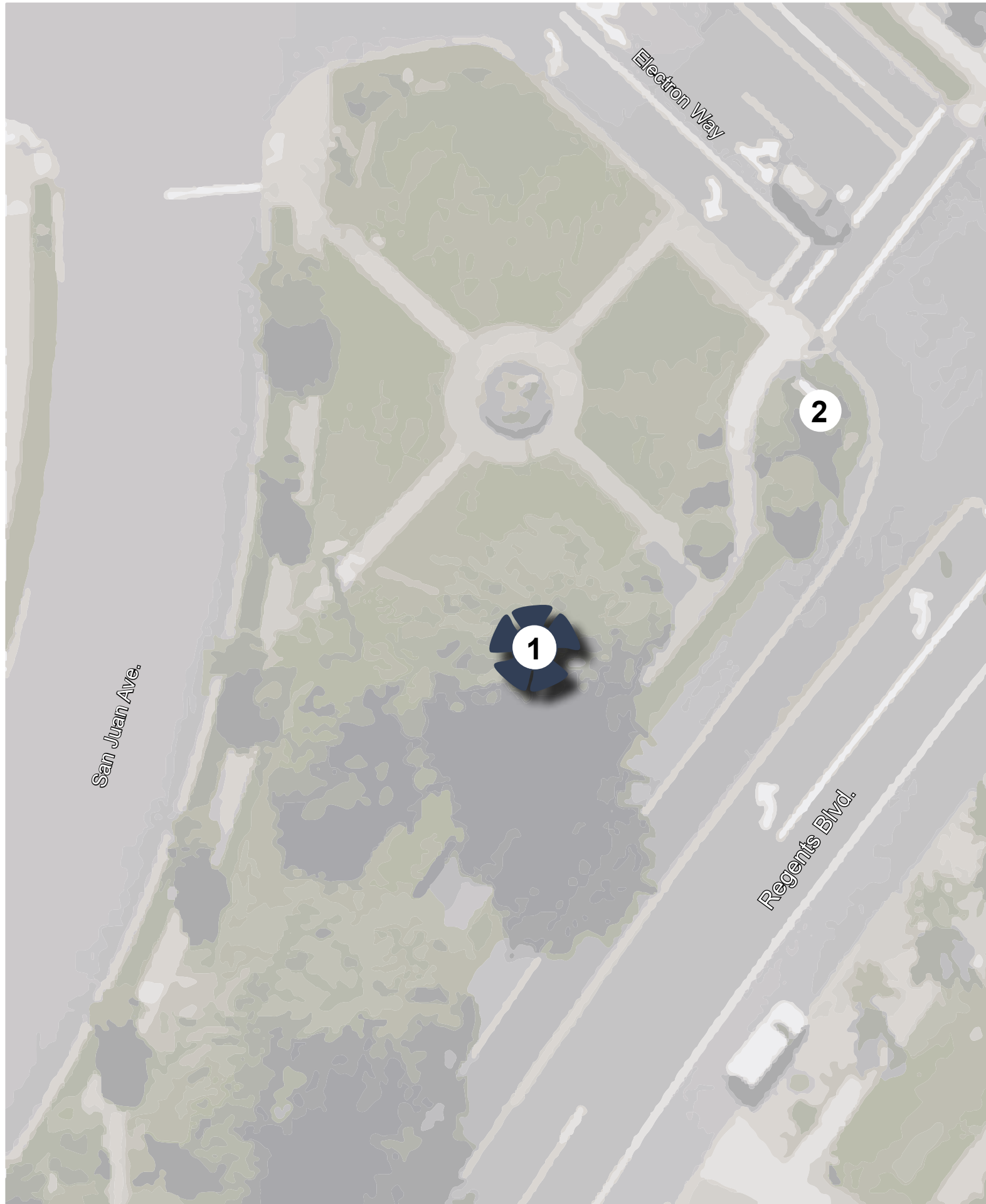
1. Improve street presence / appeal: Park Identification Sign, pedestrian access, entry plaza, welcome / information kiosk, screen transformers, pet waste station, litter receptacle, bike rack
2. New trail surfacing, fine grading for existing trails
3. New interpretive signage (not shown)
4. Invasive plant removal & native plant restoration (not shown)
5. New decking & handrails for pond and Friesz overlooks



### **Alice Peers Park**

Improvements include the installation of a Community Board whereby programs and events can be digitally communicated to the public, replacing the damaged signature tree with a healthy tree, undergrounding the overhead lines, creating a permanent, weatherproof podium/utility junction box, and installing minor landscape and irrigation improvements.

1. Fircrest's Signature Tree is showing unhealthy signs and requires removal and replacement with a maturing Douglas fir (15'-25' tall at time of planting).
2. In an effort to formalize and organize the staging of ceremonial functions, the existing power pole will be removed, power and communications will be buried and a vandal-resistant podium and public address system will be installed.
3. Public information regarding Fircrest's events, meetings, programs and activities will be displayed a new digital LED Reader Board.
4. Turfgrass restoration, ornamental shrub plantings, irrigation and other landscape improvements are proposed to further enhance this important community gathering space and visual amenity.



## Fircrest Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update

### Alice Peers Park

#### Legend

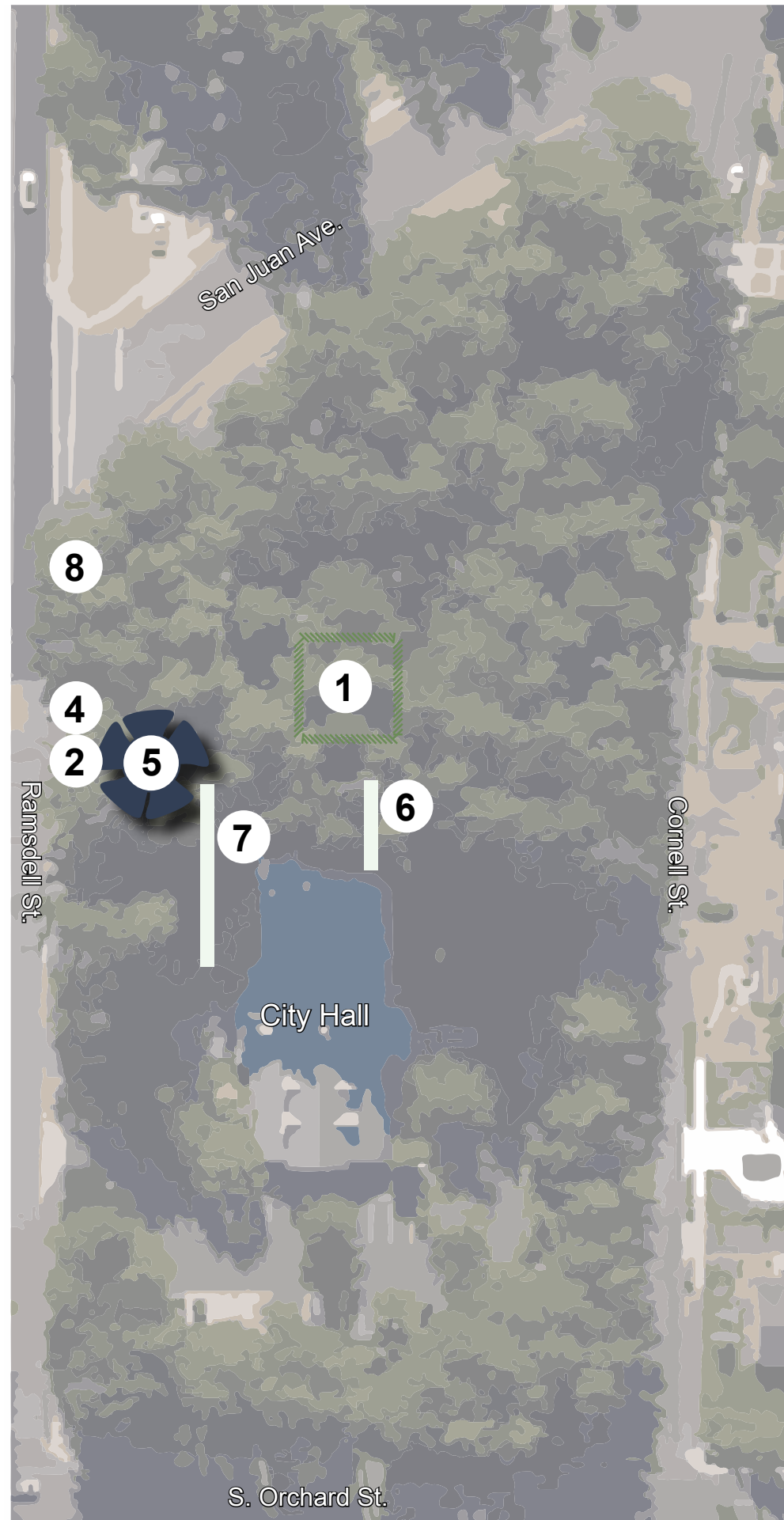
1. Signature Tree
2. Remove Power Pole / Provide ornamental podium / utility junction box for power and public address system (not shown)
3. New Digital Fircrest centered Reader Board
4. Landscape and irrigation improvements (not shown)



## **Masko Park**

Masko Park improvements focus on low key, passive park and garden facilities intended to revitalize this resource. Improvements include screening the well house and generator -- thereby rendering them visually subordinate to the garden and forest setting. New crushed rock trails will be installed to make connections from the perimeter sidewalks to existing park trails, which will be resurfaced. New entries with information kiosk, limited pavers, site furnishings and accent plantings will be installed at three entries. The Seabrook Rhododendron Garden will be restored by finding similar hybrids and replanting the garden, and installing new plant identification signs. Limited irrigation improvements will help assure plant survival. A new concrete walk and stairway will be installed to provide a direct connection to City Hall and encourage transitions between the two resources.

1. A linear trellis, greenscreen or living wall around the wellhouse and generator planted with shade tolerant planting are proposed to screen this necessary utilitarian structures.
- 2 & 8. A Park Identification Sign with landscape base plantings will signify the park entry while creating park system thematic continuity.
3. The installation and fine grading of crushed rock surfacing on existing trails as well as the installation of new trail connections will foster a loop trail system.
- 4 & 8. A Welcoming/Information Kiosk augmented by a new drinking fountain, trash receptacles and benches further signify gateway entries and accommodate patrons.
5. The restoration of the Seabrook Rhododendron Garden through existing plant propagation, new planting, mulch, irrigation and interpretive/ plant identification signage will reinvigorate this passive park.
- 6 & 7. These access improvements consist of a new concrete stairway and walk to provide two new connections to the Fircrest City Hall.
9. Groundcovers, understory shrubs and irrigation are proposed to foster a full, vibrant garden experience.



## Fircrest Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan Update

### Masko Park

#### Legend

1. Greenscreen or Living Wall around well house
2. Park identification sign / landscape
3. Resurface trails (not shown)
4. Information kiosk with new drinking fountain
5. Seabrook Rhodendron Garden - restoration, irrigation, interpretive signage
6. New concrete stairway to City Hall
7. New concrete walkway connection to City Hall
8. New Garden Access
9. Restoration landscape & irrigation (not shown)

North



### **Thematic Park Design**

Throughout the planning process, residents opined the desire to create a uniform, nature inspired thematic character throughout the park system. Park Staff supported this goal as a means of reducing and standardizing maintenance materials inventories and reducing Staff repair time. Such a thematic design sense throughout all parks would further define the Fircrest ambiance and appeal, while creating a sense of uniqueness and pride amongst residents.

## Capital Improvement Priorities

The PROS Plan identifies strategies for funding the Proposed Park Improvements identified over the next six years. The analysis of the park system and the identification of project priorities were recommended through the community planning process as well as through analysis of the park system inventory and an assessment of the park, recreation and open space needs for the City of Fircrest Parks and Recreation Department. Through identification of funding sources with projected revenue options, the plan also considers long term capital plans into the future. As might be expected, the cost of meeting those needs far exceeds the existing financial capabilities. The summary of this planning process is shown in the 6-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP identified in Table 5.2)

## Capital Improvement Plan

The following is a funding strategy for implementing the plan of proposed projects, including estimated costs and potential revenue sources, shown in Table 5.2.

It is essential to remember that over time, priorities change, new funding sources become available, and unfortunately, legislative and congressional actions can eliminate or shift funding sources. Also, opportunities for the ability or the option to develop a project can arise and change the proposed project list. As a requirement of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), the City reviews the CIP on an annual basis and can make adjustments with the adoption of the annual budget.

The key to funding the CIP is using a combination of grants, general obligation bonds for large projects either approved by the voters or authorized by City Council action, and general fund budget funds, real estate excise tax or special taxes.

**Table 5.2**  
**Proposed Projects for 2020-2026**

Priority	Project Name	Total Cost
3	Tot Lot Parking and Relocation of Main Entrance	\$66,283.56
6	Tot Lot Restroom/Shelter	\$323,465.86
8	Tot Lot Landscape & Irrigation	\$7,293.11
9	Tot Lot Nature Play Area	\$52,678.73
10	Tot Lot Pre-School Swings	\$32,808.68
11	Fircrest Park Sports Turf Renovation	\$342,658.16
12	Fircrest Park Sports Field 2 & 3 Improvements	\$902,284.90
13	Fircrest Park Sports Field 1 Improvements	\$74,974.76
14	Fircrest Park Sports Lighting Upgrade	\$392,000.00
15	Fircrest Park Paved Paths	\$57,624.00
17	Fircrest Park Play Plaza	\$585,057.31
Priority	Project Name	Total Cost
18	Fircrest Park Maintenance Center Renovation	\$59,136.00
19	Whittier Restrooms/Storage/Shelter	\$431,287.81
20	Whittier Play Plaza	\$466,406.96

21	Whittier Tennis Court	\$290,811.21
22	Whittier Basketball Court	\$206,902.62
23	Renovate Existing Whittier Shelter	\$15,403.14
24	Rebuild Fircrest Park Tennis Courts	\$142,016.91
26	Thelma Gilmur Entry Plaza	\$65,463.33
27	Masko Park Misc. Improvements	\$130,926.66
28	Alice Peers Park Reader Board	\$60,072.23
30	Fircrest Park Maintenance Center Renovation & Expansion	\$81,328.56
31	Fircrest Park Landscape	\$24,028.89
32	Fircrest Park Irrigation	\$53,910.98
33	Fircrest Park Property Acquisition	\$400,000.00
34	Whittier Park Parking	\$28,495.80
35	Tot Lot Paved Paths	\$48,827.94
36	Tot Lot Stormwater	\$20,794.23
37	Tot Lot Buildings	\$569,916.03
38	Tot Lot Synthetic Turf Hill	\$89,615.45
40	Whittier Park irrigation	\$36,967.53
41	Whittier Park landscape	\$56,529.51
42	Whittier Park lighting and electrical	\$600,722.30
43	Whittier Park trails	\$148,948.33
44	Masko Park Trails	\$30,407.44
45	Masko Park Landscape & Irrigation	\$130,056.10
46	Thelma Gilmur Invasive Plant Removal	\$88,414.00
47	Thelma Gilmur Overlooks	\$25,415.17
48	Thelma Gilmur Interpretation	\$26,955.49
49	Thelma Gilmur Crushed Rock Trails	\$29,693.44
50	Masko Park Site Furnishings	\$42,131.70
51	Concrete Stair/Walk Connections to City Hall	\$37,290.72
52	Signature Tree	\$4,620.94
53	Power & PA system	\$66,233.48

## Appendix A: FINANCE OPTIONS

**Finance Sources:** Detail Description of Grant and Funding Sources for Capital Improvement Plan Projects:

The City's annual general government expenditures are derived from the combination of general fund, special revenue, capital projects funds and debt service. The following is a listing of suggestions for possible sources of funds for capital facility projects or sources of matching grants for implementation of current and future recommendations.

Capital projects can secure matching grant funds from a variety of sources, which include local taxes and city funding, as well as state and federal capital fund programs that are listed below in detail.

**General Fund:** This source primarily funds general operations and maintenance. Capital projects are occasionally funded from this source when the capacity exists, usually via a transfer of funds to the Capital Improvement Program Fund (CIP).

**Real Estate Excise Tax (REET):** Tax imposed at the time of a real estate sale. There are two components of the tax, the first quarter of one percent of the sale to be used for acquisition and development projects and the second quarter of one percent (development projects only) of the property's sale price. Cities that are not levying the optional half-cent sales tax under [RCW 82.14.030\(2\)](#) have the option of levying an additional one-half percent real estate excise tax. These receipts are not designated for capital projects. They are general fund revenue for city operating expenditures. Only two cities, Asotin and Clarkston, have chosen to do this. From a financial standpoint, the optional half-cent sales tax will probably bring in more revenue than this additional one-half percent real estate excise tax. Many cities as a priority dedicate the revenues to be used for park and recreation capital purposes. This tax does not require the vote of the people. Because this revenue source has a dedicated purpose, it must be accounted for separately in a capital projects fund. Those cities that are planning under GMA and levying both REET 1 and REET 2 need to keep track of each of these revenues separately because the uses to which they may be put are different. [RCW 82.46.030\(2\)](#) and [RCW 82.46.035\(4\)](#). Revenue from this fund should be estimated conservatively, as the real estate market can be volatile.

**Washington State:** The principal revenue source for Washington State is the sales and use tax. It is an important funding source for cities, second only to the property tax. Almost half of the state's taxes for the general fund are from the imposed sales tax of 6.5 percent. Local governments have a number of different optional sales and use taxes, which also represent a substantial support for the local general fund budget. Cities can levy a basic sales and use tax of 0.5 percent and add an optional tax of up to an additional 0.5 percent



for a total of 1.0 percent.<sup>1</sup> Several additional local options are allowed for transit, public facilities and criminal justice purposes.

**General Obligation Bonds:** These are voter-approved or Councilmanic bonds with the assessment placed on real property. The money can only be used for capital improvements -- not maintenance. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time (usually 20-30 years). Passage of a voter-ratified bond requires a 60%, majority vote, while Councilmanic bonds require only a majority of the elected City Council or Board of Commissioners. One disadvantage of using this type of levy may be the interest costs.

**Voter Approved Utility Tax Increase:** Citizen approved increases in utility taxes are an option as a parks and recreation *Facilities Funding Measure*. The funds can provide an on-going funding source of dollars dedicated to specific capital funding projects (e.g., City of Olympia measure of 3% provides \$2,000,000 annually for park capital projects, which includes trails).

**Growth Impact Fees:** Park Growth Impact Fees are fees imposed on new development to mitigate the impact of new development on the city park system. Impact fees can be used only for parkland acquisition and/or development. Cities planning under the Growth Management Act, per RCW 82.02.050 (2), can impose, collect and use impact fees.

**HUD Block Grants:** Grants from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development are available for a wide variety of park projects (5% of total). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access projects for parks and playgrounds are eligible for this funding. Grants can fund up to 100% of the project.

**Donations:** The donation of labor, land or cash by service agencies, private groups, or individuals is a popular way to raise small amounts of money or reduce the cost of capital development of a park. Under RCW 35.21.278, the community service organizations and associations providing service in the local area can provide, without regard for public bid, design plans, improvements to a park or public square, installing equipment or artworks, or providing maintenance services for the facility as a community or neighborhood project. Within one year, the cost cannot exceed \$25,000, or \$2.00 per resident. The contracting association may use volunteers in the project.

**Life Estates:** This is an agreement between a landowner and the city or county where the government buys or receives through donation, a piece of land, and the jurisdiction then gives the owner the right to live on the site after it is sold for the lifetime of the owner.

**Private Grants and Foundations:** Private grants and foundations provide funds for a wide range of projects. In many instances the foundations are required to provide the grant funds through a non-profit entity. The City can establish a non-profit "Parks Foundation" with the purpose of securing capital funds from private foundations and trusts.

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<sup>1</sup> 82.14.048

## COUNTY FUNDING/LEGISLATIVE OPTIONS:

**Conservation Futures:** Conservation Futures are a useful tool for counties to preserve land of public interest for future generations in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County. RCW 8.34.230 allows a property tax levy to provide a reliable and predictable source of funds to help acquire interests in open space, habitat areas, wetlands, farm, agricultural and timberlands for conservation. In Pierce County the Council enacted the tax and all property taxpayers pay 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value of each Pierce County owned parcel. These monies, identified in the budget as Conservation Futures, are budgeted annually by the Pierce County Council. The nomination process starts with a project sponsor who would like to nominate a property for purchase. The individual must not have an interest in the land but is typically someone who wishes to preserve an eligible property. The review process begins in May. If the property is selected for purchase, the county makes an offer to purchase. A portion of the funds from the Conservation Futures tax levy can be dedicated to the cost of maintaining and operating the property.

## STATE FUNDING:

Washington State provides various grants for public recreation acquisition and development through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Washington State Department of Ecology (ECY).

**Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO):** The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board (RCFB) administers several grant programs for recreation and habitat conservation purposes. Depending on the program, eligible project applicants can include municipal subdivisions of the state (cities, towns and counties, or port, utility, park and recreation, and school districts), Native American tribes, state agencies, and in some cases, federal agencies and nonprofit organizations. To be considered for funding assistance, most grant programs require that the proposed project will be operated and maintained in perpetuity for the purpose for which funding is sought. Most grant programs also require that sponsors complete a systematic comprehensive planning process prior to seeking RCFB funding. Grants are awarded by the RCFB Board based on a public, competitive process which weighs the merits of proposed projects against established program criteria. <http://www.rco.wa.gov/>. The grant categories include:

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP):** The WWRP funds the acquisition and development of conservation and recreation lands. The Outdoor Recreation Account of the WWRP provides matching grant funds for local and state park projects, which include active parks, playgrounds, sports fields, water access sites, trails, natural areas, urban wildlife habitat and farmland preservation. The RCO accepts grant applications by May 1<sup>st</sup> of each even year. The successfully scored projects are presented to the Governor, who recommends them to the legislature for capital funding the following year.

**Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF):** The program was approved by Washington voters as part of Referendum 48, which provides funding for the Seattle Seahawks stadium. The purpose is for acquiring, developing, equipping, maintaining, and improving youth and community athletic facilities. Eligible grant recipients are cities, counties and qualified non-profit organizations. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in cash or in-kind contributions. An initial \$10-million was contributed by the Seattle Seahawks “team affiliate” sources for the grant program.

### **Washington State Department of Commerce:**

**Direct Appropriation:** Direct appropriations are placed in the state budget by the Governor or legislature. The Department of Commerce Capital Programs has no role in the selection of grant recipients. These types of grants may be used by designated local governments, tribes, and nonprofit organizations throughout the state to acquire or construct a variety of capital projects. Each project funded under these programs stimulates the state and local economies by providing construction-related employment and associated revenues.

**Humanities Washington:** Humanities Washington supports public programs that have as their primary purpose the presentation of insights gained from the humanities. This program funds the fostering of humanities in local communities with grants to organizations to support conversation-based programming throughout the state. Humanities Washington offers two types of grants. Quick Grants are available year-round to small or rural organizations for program planning or implementation. Project Grants are usually awarded twice a year through a competitive grant process for larger projects. [www.humanities.org/programs/grants](http://www.humanities.org/programs/grants)

### **FEDERAL FUNDING:**

On the Federal level, Congress appropriates funds through direct Congressional Appropriation and a variety of programs that may provide potential funding sources for various capital projects. These include the *Environmental Protection Act (EPA)*, *Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)* Account, *Housing and Urban Development (HUD)*, *Economic Development Funding (EDI)*, and *Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)* (see specifics regarding each grant below). Links to government grant sources can be found at [firstgov.com](http://firstgov.com) and [grants.gov](http://grants.gov).

**Congressional Grants for Neighborhood Initiatives:** Applications are received annually and are by invitation only through a jurisdiction’s congressional Representative or U.S. Senator. Invitations come out in the spring and are administered under the Homes and Communities Division of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Congressional Appropriation:** Annually, U.S. Senators and Representatives accept letters of proposals and applications for appropriation requests. Project descriptions and letters of request for appropriation are due March 1<sup>st</sup> of each year

**The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):** Program funds come through Congressional appropriation in recreation resources including, but not limited to parks, trails, wildlife lands and other lands and facilities desirable for individual active participation. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in cash or in-kind contributions. A portion of the Federal revenue is derived from sale or lease of off-shore oil and gas resources and is re-appropriated to projects through the U.S. Congress to the Department of the Interior under the National Park Service (NPS). The program is administered in Washington State by the RCO. Sites purchased or developed with LWCF funds are deed protected for outdoor recreation purposes and are defined through the use of “6f” federal map delineation.

**Surface Transportation Act (MAP-21)**

In early July 2012, the Surface Transportation Act (MAP-21) was signed into law by the President.

Under previous law, popular programs such as Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to Schools, and the Recreation Trails Program (RTP) were funded as stand-alone programs, which meant they each received dedicated annual funding. MAP-21 eliminates these stand alone programs and creates a new funding category called Transportation Alternatives (TA). TE, Safe Routes to Schools, and RTP projects are now rolled into the TA category within MAP-21. Additionally, many other projects, including expansive environmental mitigation and limited road construction projects, are also included under TA and will now compete for these same funds. A challenge is that funding for TE, Safe Routes to School and RTP has historically totaled approximately \$1.2 billion per year. MAP-21 cuts overall funding for consolidated Transportation Alternatives category by a third, thus only approximately \$800 million will be annually available. TE and Safe Routes to Schools remain eligible for funding, but they must now compete against each other as well as a multitude of other programs for much less money. The states will be distributing TA funds but will retain discretion over the types of projects they will fund-meaning that states may “opt-out” of using 50% of their TA funding for projects such as trails and bike paths. [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/...Safe Routes](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/...Safe%20Routes)

**National Endowment for the Arts Grant:** Grants become available in January through the Washington State Arts Commission. Sign up notification from [webmgr@arts.endow.gov](mailto:webmgr@arts.endow.gov)

**National Tree Trust:** The National Tree Trust provides trees through two programs: *America’s Tree Ways* and *Community Tree Planting*. These programs require trees to be planted by volunteers on public lands. Additionally, the America’s Tree Way program requires a minimum of 100 seedlings be planted along public highways.

**The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** EPA offers *Low Impact Development Storm Water Management Grants* (LID) by providing financial assistance through the Washington State Department of Ecology Water Quality Program <http://www.ecy.wa.gov> One of the most effective ways to manage storm water-runoff pollution is to minimize how much run-off occurs in the first place. LID-designed sites have fewer impervious surfaces and use vegetation, healthy soils, small-scale storage and dispersion/infiltration techniques to manage storm water. This grant program began as a pilot in 2006. If

successful and federal funds continue to support the program, park improvements such as parking, roadway and walkway replacement with pervious surfaces would meet the criteria of the LID grant goals. An example of a successful LID waterfront park grant recipient is Lions Field Park located in the City of Bremerton, which was an original LWCF federally funded development project. Contact:

<http://www.epa.gov/swerosps/bf/rlflst.htm>

In addition to capital facilities plan project funding, grant funding is available from a variety of sources for community recreation programs. Special health and youth related grant information can be obtained from the National Center for Disease Control, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Nutrition Service.

**National Endowment for the Humanities:** /The NEH is an independent grant-making federal agency dedicated to supporting research, education, preservation and public programs in the humanities. View grant opportunities at <http://www.neh.gov>

## **PRIVATE FUNDING:**

**Donations:** The private funds are critical to show commitment of non-government dollars and as a positive result can elevate the standing of the grant proposal. The donation of labor, land or cash by service agencies, private clubs, corporations or individuals is a popular way to raise small amounts of money for specific projects. Such service agencies as the *Kiwanis* often fund small project improvements in partnership or provide the donated labor match to bring the project to fruition. Environmental groups organize and in partnership provide volunteer labor for habitat restoration, which can serve as a value for consideration toward the local match requirement on specific grants. Principal property tax payers in the city area such as small businesses or retail sales are sources of local contributions for civic and environmental benefits. As a partnership opportunity, they should be contacted, provided with collateral project information and approached with regard to an initial request for partnership support funding. As with all grant programs, grant agencies are looking to local communities to work with local advocates, sponsors and private partners to bring the project to a funding level. Community advocates can elevate the level of project scores in a competitive funding cycle. In some grant programs, grants require private partnerships as a condition of application.

**Corporate Funding:** Example: The Nick “Let’s Just Play Giveaway”: Nickelodeon is a unique grant-giving program that brings much needed dollars to enhance recreation. A community nominates a project and each month 20 winners receive a grant that includes funding to build playgrounds. Contact [publicaffairs@nick.com](mailto:publicaffairs@nick.com)

## **FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS**

**Private grants and foundations:** Many private foundations provide money for a wide range of projects. Grants are available for children, cultural enrichment and heritage preservation. In many cases, foundations require grant requests from non-profit 501c3

organizations. On all phases of park projects, staff should work with, or create a partnership with, private non-profit organizations and seek opportunities to secure grant funds from private non-profit foundations.