# Chapter Nine

## Parks and Open Space Element

BACKGROUND

Pullman's public parks and recreational facilities provide a variety of recreational opportunities to residents (see Table 3-7). These amenities are supplemented by facilities at WSU, school district properties, and the Community Center located at City Hall.

Existing park and recreation facilities in the community have a strong, positive impact upon residents' quality of life. Maintaining these facilities for the continued enjoyment of citizens should continue to be a priority.

Access to public recreation facilities is also important. In order to maximize access, the city should consider park locations when planning pedestrian and bicycle trails, and transit lines.

User fees for programs can also work to restrict access. While it is important for programs to offset their costs to the greatest extent possible, user fees should be realistically structured to ensure access by lower income residents.

Recreational programs operated by the Public Services Department have proven to be popular among city residents. These programs should continue, but the department should evaluate them on an ongoing basis, in order to assure that they continue to reflect the interests of the community.

The city's teen center, located in the Gladish Building, reaches a special segment of the population in need of positive activities. These and other programs for youth should continue to be a priority.

The development of new recreational facilities will be needed to accommodate a growing population. The city will need to explore options to ensure the financial feasibility of new recreational facilities. Some of these options may include:

- private sector sponsorship of some recreational activities
- pursuit of state, federal and foundation grants for park development or expansion
- current city revenues or bond financing
- requirements for developer contributions, such as provision of park land or payment of fees to a fund for subsequent acquisition of park facilities

Riparian corridors and other open space areas represent unique recreational opportunities. Some of these areas could be used to connect current and future parks with pedestrian and bicycle trails, for the quiet enjoyment of residents. The shoreline of the South Fork of the Palouse River holds special significance to the community, and

the city should place a priority upon acquiring parcels of land along the shoreline, as they become available.

Agreements to protect sensitive areas may be possible. The city should explore the possibility of providing regulatory and financial incentives to property owners and developers, in exchange for the protection of these areas.

Although there are parks in each of the residential neighborhoods (College, Pioneer, Sunnyside, and Military Hills) and downtown, they vary in size and development. Some neighborhoods have access to fewer recreation facilities than others. In order to accommodate expected growth without reducing the level of service to existing residents, it will be important to identify new park sites and develop them in a timely fashion. Towards this end, the city has acquired separate parcels of land on Military and Sunnyside Hills to eventually establish parks at these sites.

The Public Services Department is working to maintain existing parks and continue to offer recreation programs at current levels as demand increases due to growth. However, inflation and limited city funds make this increasingly challenging. Recreation participants are increasing approximately seven percent per year, depending upon the activity. The following goals and policies are aimed to meet the rise in demand, maintain and enhance local parks and recreational opportunities, and preserve natural resources.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES

**GOAL P1: Maximize the quality of life in Pullman by providing open space, trails, parks, and recreational opportunities and facilities throughout the community.**

Policy P1.1: Establish level of service criteria for park land needs in the city.

Policy P1.2: Maintain flexibility about park size and facilities in order to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

Policy P1.3: Disperse parks throughout the city to make parks available to the greatest number of people. Cooperate with public schools and other agencies to develop joint facilities where appropriate.

Policy P1.4: Attempt to acquire land for parks or recreational facilities that is accessible by public transit or pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Policy P1.5: Maintain recreation program user fees as low as possible in order to permit lower income households equal access as more affluent households.

Policy P1.6: Develop a network of recreational trails and bikeways throughout the community that will be accessible to all residents of Pullman, and offer a range of recreational challenge and scenic experience.

Policy P1.7: Cooperate with developers to provide parks and recreation facilities, including trails, at the time that development occurs in low- and high-density residential areas.

Policy P1.8: Extend city trails to connect to regional trails.

Policy P1.9: Retain neighborhood facilities at various locations in the city to help serve the cultural, recreational, and social needs of community residents.

**GOAL P2: Assure the preservation and conservation of unique, fragile, scenic, and non-renewable natural resources.**

Policy P2.1: Pursue funding sources for the acquisition and improvement of shoreline parcels within the city.

Policy P2.2: Develop the river park area from City Playfield to Grand Avenue to preserve the shoreline and provide recreational opportunities.

Policy P2.3: Explore the acquisition of significant habitat areas within the city on a case-by-case basis.

Policy P2.4: Work cooperatively with property owners and land developers to protect privately owned land with significant environmental features through the use of easements, zoning conditions, land trust agreements, or other appropriate means.

Policy P2.5: Require buildings to be set back from stream channels to provide open space for riparian areas.

**GOAL P3: Maintain city parks and recreational facilities in good condition.**

Policy P3.1: Consider operation and maintenance costs in the design of all park improvements and recreation facilities. These costs should be considered prior to acquiring new facilities.

Policy P3.2: Maintain a nursery for annual, perennial, and shrub production to reduce the cost of park maintenance.

Policy P3.3: Consider creative solutions to the ongoing costs of maintaining parks and recreation facilities, including sponsorship by business and civic groups and WSU internships and practicums.

Policy P3.4: Maintain and expand city cemetery facilities as necessary.

Policy P3.5: Periodically review the design of existing parks and renovate park facilities to reflect changing needs and desires of residents.

**GOAL P4: Complete and protect a system of green belts, centered on streams and wildlife corridors, to protect natural resources and provide passive recreation.**

Policy P4.1: Attempt to restore the South Fork of the Palouse River to a more natural appearance and function.

Policy P4.2: Protect riparian corridors along perennial streams from the adverse effects of development. Maintain a buffer of vegetation (preferably native vegetation) along all streams.

Policy P4.3: Whenever possible, establish greenways to link open space areas located in close proximity to one another.