



Parks Levy: Financial FAQs

What is the cost of the Parks levy to the average homeowner?

The Parks levy is 27 cents per \$1,000 assessed property value. This means if you own a \$330,000 home (the median home value in Spokane County), the Parks levy would cost an additional \$7.43 per month.

Combined with the School Bond (2 cents per \$1,000), the Together Spokane initiative is a total of 29 cents per \$1,000, or \$7.98 for the median home.

Why a levy vs. a bond for Parks?

A levy allows for both capital and operational investments. For Parks, this means we can hire additional Park Maintenance caretakers, significantly increase our Park Ranger staff, and purchase maintenance equipment to care for public assets. It also allows for renovating existing Park facilities, and building new Parks where there are gaps. A bond would only allow Parks to build facilities, but would not allow allocation of funding to care for those properties.

Whereas a bond can be issued in full in one lump sum, a levy is a steady stream of funding collected from taxpayers each year.

Why a 20-year levy?

Much of the feedback we heard from our Master Plan outreach (www.SpokaneParks.org/masterplan) was, 'we love our parks, but we'd like to see them better maintained.' That work correlates with hiring more maintenance staff and Park Rangers, and a long-range plan for increased staffing levels for a better level of service.

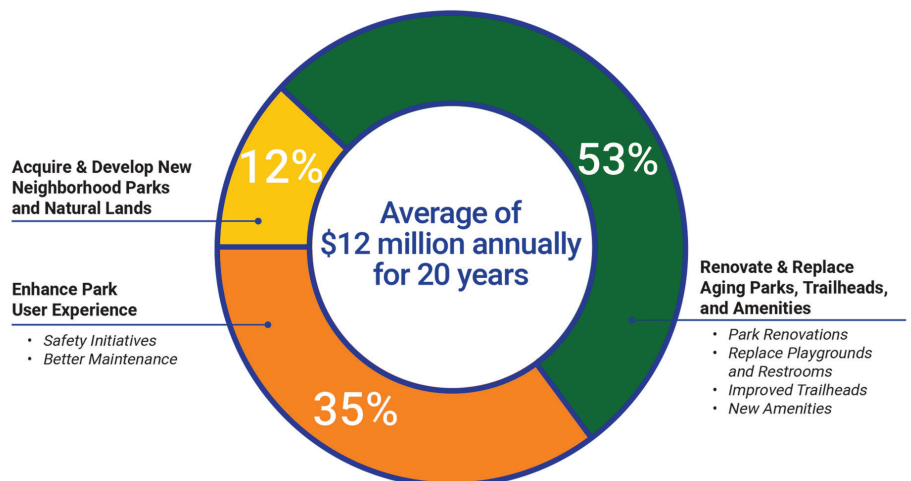
The consistent, forward-looking funding model provides that stability and longevity to both take better care of our existing parks and to slowly build out our community's top requested additional park spaces and features.

To maintain accountability and transparency over 20 years, the Park Board committed via resolution to an annual work plan, in alignment with the 20-year levy program manual that outlines all projects to be completed with this levy (available at www.SpokaneParks.org/levy).

How is the levy funding allocated?

The Parks levy spends 88% of funding on taking better care of what we have, and 12% on filling in gaps by building new Park assets. This model directly reflects the priorities identified by the community in our master plan outreach.

Each year, approximately \$7.5M in levy funding will be allocated to capital repairs & improvements, and the remaining +/- \$4M will be allocated to additional maintenance staff and park ranger staff.





How is Parks & Recreation currently funded?

The Parks division receives approximately 2.3% of the City's budget (representing 8% of the general fund expenditures). Program revenues and grants bring in additional money. Combined, the annual Parks & Recreation budget is about \$25 million. These funds are used to care for 100+ properties across 4,000 acres, and offer hundreds of free and low-cost recreation programs.

If approved, the levy would account for about 25% of the Parks budget.

Are there any other funding sources for levy projects?

Parks estimates \$20M in matching state grants over 20 years, and has already secured \$3.2M in matching funds for two projects (contingent upon levy passage) – Meadowglen Park development and Coeur d'Alene Park improvements.

Having local dollars allocated to a project helps bring matching state and federal money back to Spokane – money that would otherwise get allocated to other cities.

Together Spokane also leverages funds from other organizations with aligned goals – both through cash donations to complete capital projects (fields, indoor rec centers, Boys & Girls Clubs) and in-kind contributions (SCC's pool, volleyball courts from the Pacific Northwest Qualifier). These contributions save taxpayers money.

Will more tax requests be coming soon for Parks & Recreation?

The levy is designed as a 20-year plan to support Parks & Recreation long term, with a balance of capital improvements and maintenance dollars. There is no plan to ask for additional funds over the next 20 years at this time.

The 2014 Riverfront Park bond will be paid off in 2034, and at that time, the community will have a choice to decrease their tax bill for Parks or request a renewal for additional Parks projects.

What's the value for me and my family?

It's the question every voter needs to ask themselves. If you are the owner of a home at the median value in Spokane County (\$330,000), and the Together Spokane initiatives will cost you under \$8 per month, are the projects either going to save you that much money or be of that much value?

The map and tools at TogetherSpokane.org help you identify projects either by location (near your home, school, or work), or by project type (like sport courts or playgrounds).

www.SpokaneParks.org/levy
www.TogetherSpokane.org

