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APPENDIX B: RECREATION TRENDS

INTRODUCTION

This report captures all currently available data regarding relevant outdoor recreation and analysis of what this means for Spokane's recreation planning. Key information from this memorandum was included in the Master Plan document to highlight trends that inform recommendations for the future. Some information was also used to express the existing conditions and broad overview of opportunities in public engagement/information efforts.

This report addresses the following:

- Key Findings
- Recreational Offerings
- Parks and Open Space Provisions
- National Activity Trends
- Washington and Spokane Activity Trends
- Economic Impacts of Recreation
- Demographics and Recreational Trends
- Recreational Challenges and Opportunities

KEY FINDINGS

- According to data provided from the City of Spokane's trail counters, Spokane's bike and trail network has had significant use in 2020, more than 1.2 million total users compared to 387,000 in 2019. It should be noted that the increase in use is, at least in part, attributed to the addition of new trail counters in new parts of the city. In general, trail use has seasonal fluctuations, with the highest use between April and September.
- According to the Outdoor Industry Association, when asked about which activities they are most interested yet do not participate in, younger individuals (ages six to 24) predominantly chose fishing

and camping. People 45 and older expressed more interest in bicycling and swimming. Interestingly, this trend is similar when demographics are dissected by income. Fishing and camping are the two activities people of lower income expressed most interest in, compared to bicycling and swimming for fitness on the other side of the income spectrum. This information is important in understanding Spokane's diverse outdoor and recreation needs.

- Information released through the Sports and Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2020 Topline Report on Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities reveals that the most popular sport and recreational activities include walking for fitness, treadmill, free weights, running/jogging, and hiking.
- Nationally, the most heavily participated individual and team sports for 2019 were bowling (45.4 million), golf (33.5 million) and basketball (24.2 million).
- The Outdoor Industry Association report showed that in 2019, outdoor recreation in Washington generated over \$12.3 billion, which accounts for 2 percent of the state's gross domestic product (GDP). This made Washington's outdoor recreation industry the eighth largest in the country. In 2019, outdoor recreation provided more than 130,000 jobs in the state of Washington, which is about 2.8 percent of the state's employment.
- Washingtonians spend over \$1.2 billion yearly on recreational vehicles and fees, and sports, recreation, and exercise equipment; residents of Spokane spend nearly \$25 million. Spokane residents spend approximately \$52 on average per year on sports equipment, with most spending on equipment for exercise and/or hunting and fishing; the average Washingtonian spends around \$75.
- The 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington

State (RCO) report states that the top activities in Washington based on participation rate were walking; visiting rivers, streams, beaches, or tide pools; attending outdoor concerts or events; and gathering or collecting things in a nature setting.

- Experts predict that participation rates of organized sports will look different next year when the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are realized. Activities that are suspected to show a decreased rate of participation are team sports, activities that take place indoors, and those that require close contact. When asked what activities people expect will resume to "normal" post-COVID-19, The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) found that most respondents listed individual and outdoor sports. Only 37 percent of respondents anticipate that the return of youth sports will return in 2021 or later. The pandemic is creating a disconnect in continuity of participation in sports and programs, and it is having a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged populations. Other recreation activities that take place outdoors have in some cases witnessed an increasing level of participation. In fact, many national parks reported unprecedented numbers of visitors the summer of 2020.

RECREATION OFFERINGS

INTRODUCTION

Washington State has long been known for its vibrant and abundant outdoors scene. In fact, Washington's 124 state parks, that include islands, forests, mountains, and other geographic features, attract more than 40 million annual visitors, making the state a prime destination for many outdoors enthusiasts. That is also true to the Northeast region of the

state where the City of Spokane is located. The region is the state's only incursion with the Rocky Mountains and enjoys plenty of pristine wilderness and small-town spirit. Outdoor recreation is arguably one of the highlights that brings people to Northeast Washington. The diverse and refreshing landscapes of the region contribute to a high quality of life and are a good reason why many visit or choose to live there. Spokane, the most populated area in the region, has the potential to not only serve as the region's recreation center point but also to offer an even higher quality of life to its own residents.

SPOKANE AND RECREATION PROFILE

The City of Spokane supports passive and active recreation for its residents and visitors in a variety of ways. Much of Spokane's properties focus on recreational opportunities that are desirable and compatible with their open spaces and natural settings. These include passive recreation activities, like hiking, walking, and biking which can offer constructive, restorative, and enjoyable opportunities outdoors.

Today, Spokane's parks, open spaces, and trails offer a broad variety of outdoor recreation activities that are growing in diversity. Some of the outdoor recreational offerings include kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddleboarding, hiking, and rafting. The City's parks and facilities also offer other activities like sports, arts, event space, and therapeutic recreation services. Residents and visitors can enjoy over 87 city parks, 4,100 acres

of protected green space, gardens, sports facilities, skate parks, dog parks, 4 golf courses, and community centers. Some of the key parks and open spaces in Spokane include the newly redeveloped Riverfront Park, Manito Park, Gaiser Conservatory, and botanical gardens such as Finch Arboretum. The City offers a plethora of recreation programs - 2,595 as of 2019, with 205 of these programs considered to be new. Spokane County also has a network of trails that offer recreation opportunities and connect to the broader region, such as Beacon Hill and Camp Sekani, the Trails at the Dwight Merkel Sports Complex, Spokane River Centennial Trail, Riverside State Park Connector Trail, Perimeter Trail, Ben Burr Trail, and Fish Lake Trail.

The City organizes their recreational offerings into seven categories.

Aquatics

The City operates six outdoor aquatic centers and 19 splash pads. It also offers a variety of programs including Swim Lesson programs, American Red Cross Lifeguard Training, and Water Safety Instructor courses.

Sports

Spokane provides a variety of sports programs and activities including Softball & Baseball, Basketball, Flag Football, Soccer, Volleyball, Tournaments, Gymnastics, Martial Arts, and the Cornhole League.

Corbin Art

The Corbin Art Center provides fine arts and crafts programs for children and adults. Activities offered in the center include painting, drawing, fiber

arts, crafts, skincare, soap making, photography, language, writing, personal enrichment, and cooking.

Outdoor Recreation

Numerous lakes, streams, and rivers in the area serve for exceptional canoeing, kayaking, and rafting. The nearby mountains are home to ski resorts that host downhill and cross-country skiing along with many snowshoe trails. The Spokane hiking, biking, and climbing areas are spectacular and the City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Program offer activities in each of these categories.

Wellness and Enrichment

The city offers affordable programs that help participants attain personal enrichment, self-improvement, and skill-building.

Therapeutic

The City's Therapeutic Recreation Services (TRS) provides specialized and adaptive recreational activities for a broad range of people with developmental and/or physical disabilities. Though activities in other recreation departments are open to individuals with disabilities, the TRS can help facilitate the process of helping people with disabilities participate in these activities.

Centers (Community and Senior Centers)

The city's affiliation with Five Community Centers, five Senior Centers in Spokane, and several non-profits brings many recreation opportunities that benefit different members of the community.

Spokane's initial parks plan was created with the intention that the City will be a model of modern park planning. That plan was the work of the John Olmsted whose firm had designed New York City's Central Park along other parks in the late 19th Century. Olmsted presented Spokane City's Park System plan to the commission in 1908 and to the public in 1913. Olmsted's vision was to transform Spokane into the "City of Parks." This helped the City effectively establish an entire system of parks and even reserve over 2000 acres of parkland by 1920. At that point Spokane was well known as a "park city" as the Parks Commission had successfully developed one acre of park per every 58 city inhabitants. The city has maintained that legacy and commitment to its parks; its 2010 Parks and Recreation Department's plan's vision was:

"The City of Spokane Parks and Recreation Department will collaboratively provide the following services for the benefit of a community of people who live, work and visit the city of Spokane:

- clean, safe and eco-friendly parks, trails, conservation lands, and recreation facilities
- accessible leisure and recreational opportunities
- an enhanced urban forest.

These services will be facilitated and delivered through passionate, professional and proactive response to community issues, interests, and identified values."

The City's Parks and Recreation's Division goals are to:

- Provide and promote a parks and recreation system advocating healthy lifestyles, accessibility, and the value of play
- Develop and manage the responsible, efficient, and equitable use of resources leading to the sustainability of a strong and viable parks and recreation system
- Stimulate the local economy through the provision of venues, events and activities which draw visitors and keeps local citizens close to home; well maintained and managed greenspaces that enhance property values; and the creation of employment opportunities
- Honor the history and legacy of the Spokane parks system through celebration, preservation, and restoration
- Demonstrate accountability and a collaborative culture through open communication, stakeholder participation, and transparent management practices
- Encourage a sense of community and pride through the provision of a parks and recreation system that affords citizens social gathering places and spaces.

The City has different sponsors, donors, and partnerships that help them better engage their community and more successfully utilize their assets to offer the best recreational opportunities. Table 1 shows the sponsors or donors that have offered contributions, grants, donations and in-kind support.

Table 1: Spokane Parks, Open Spaces, Centers and Programs with some Sponsors and Donors

Park/Location Name	Sponsor/Donor	Contribution
System Wide	Spokane Parks Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therapeutic Recreation Adaptive Ski Equipment & Services Finch Arboretum Lid Program Sponsored Swim Passes & Swim Lesson Scholarships Coeur d'Alene Park Gazebo Restoration Havermale Restoration Quigley Memorial Bench Doggie Bags Comstock Entrance Enhancements
Dutch Jake's Park Fairview Park, Emerson Park, Latah Creek, Harmon Park, Huntington Park, Rochester Heights Park, Hays Park, Emerson Park, Mission Park, Redband Park, Peaceful Valley Park Lighting, Glass Park, Byrne Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Spokane Community Development Block Grant Program and Neighborhoods The Trust for Public Lands The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation Avista Utilities Spokane Indians Youth Baseball The Spokane River Forum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Improvements at Fairview Park Emerson Park Playground 2019 CDBG Park Pathways Dutch Jake's Park Renovation Mission Park Ability Ballfield Rochester Heights Park Pathways Emerson Park Latah Creek Viewpoint Bench Harmon Park Electrical Service Improvements Redband Park Sculpture Plaza Redband Park Boat Launch Downriver Park Boat Takeout
Corbin Art Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spokane City Credit Union; Washington Trust Bank 	
Finch Arboretum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associated Garden Club – Dwarf Junipers Frances Kinkade – Arbor Day Arboretum Care Endowment Inland Empire District Garden Club
Manito Park	The Friends of Manito	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirror Pond Water Quality and Emergent Plant Project Bench & Plaque Sidewalk Repair on 25th Tekoa Beautification Project Gaiser Conservatory Renovation Design Project Associated Garden Club – 4 Grills
Moore-Turner Heritage Gardens	Friends of Moore-Turner Heritage Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plants
Centennial Trail	Greenstone Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements to the Centennial Trail Through Veterans Court & Kendall Yards
Liberty Park	Hoopfest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basketball court
Aquatic Centers	Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> U.S.A. Swimming Foundation-Swimming Lesson Scholarships Andres Memorial Fund-Aquatics Program

Park/Location Name	Sponsor/Donor	Contribution
Riverfront Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principal Financial Washington Trust Bank Wheatland Bank Downtown Spokane River Park Square Athleta Tomato Street Nordstrom Numerica Credit Union Senske First Night Spokane Spokane Art School Spokane Humane Society Innovia Foundation Providence Medical Group Brett Sports Spokane Arts Foundation Hooptown USA Roskelley Foundation Garco Construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providence Playscape Numerica Skyride Numerica Skate Ribbon Hooptown USA Basketball Court Great Floods Playground Climbing Boulder
Comstock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council President Ben Stuckart Council Member Jon Snyder Council Member Michael Allen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorial benches
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel GRS Associates, Inc DW Sales & Marketing Group-Powderhounds Garco Building Inc Costco Safeway Yokes Albertsons Burke Distributing Spokane Horseshoe Association Knight+s of Columbus Urban Forestry Washington Special Olympics Mt Spokane Ski & Snowboard Resort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Therapeutic services
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Washington Department of Natural Resources Utility Billing Customers – General Jubilant HollisterStier – Reforest Spokane The Lands Council – Reforest Spokane Suzie's Forest 	

The City's Parks Planning department oversees the development of park properties. Spokane's Capital budget for their Parks and Recreation department for the year 2021 is over \$8.8 million. That budget will fluctuate each year between 2021 and 2026, but the cumulative value for these five years is estimated at \$38 million; that is about 4.7 percent of the City's overall Capital budget. Some of the larger and more costly projects include the SE Sports Complex Renovations (\$2,400,000), Edwidge Woldson Park/Cliff Drive Improvements (\$2,100,000), and the Merkel Synthetic Field Enhancements (\$1,225,000). Other Capital projects are renovations, replacements, enhancements, demolitions, and improvements for different facilities, buildings, and areas. Other ongoing projects, plans, and developments by the city include:

- Don Kardong Bridge Rehabilitation
- Finch Arboretum Master Plan
- Redband Park Renaming Proposal & Survey
- Dutch Jake's Park
- 2014 Riverfront Park Master Plan (which in 2014 was redeveloped through a \$64 million dollar bond)
- Roadmap to the Future
- Sky Prairie Park Master Plan
- Edwidge Woldson Master Plan
- Rochester Heights Park Improvements
- Southeast Complex Master Plan
- Cochran/Downriver Stormwater and Park Draft Master Plan
- Latah Valley Hangman Creek Trail Corridor Concept Study

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PROVISION

Spokane Properties

The City of Spokane "manages and maintains approximately 4,000 acres of land with nearly 1,000 acres in developed green space and facilities. This includes over 80 different park areas and some streetscapes such as parkways and boulevards. Spokane's Operations holds responsibility for over 60 playgrounds, 40 restroom buildings, nearly 200 sports, 25 picnic shelters, 40 miles of trails, an equipment repair shop, and a maintenance facility. The Urban Forestry section oversees all City trees, including those in parks and the right-of-way, and Finch Arboretum. The Horticulture section manages and maintains a variety of formal gardens, Gaiser Conservatory, and greenhouses." Table 2 lists the City's 127 parks and assets.

Table 20: Parks, Open Space, Trails, and Facilities

LIST OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE, TRAILS, AND FACILITIES IN SPOKANE			
A.M. Cannon Aquatic Center	Downriver Golf Course	Herbert M. Hamblen Conservation Area	North Maple Street
A.M. Cannon Park	Downriver Park	High Bridge Park	Northwest Blvd.
Ashland C.A.	Driscoll Blvd.	High Drive	Pacific Park
Audubon Park	Drumheller Springs	Hill, James J. Park	Palisades
Austin Ravine C.A.	Dutch Jakes Park	Hill N'Dale Rotary Park	Park Blvd.
Ben Burr Park	Dwight Merkel Sports Complex	Hillyard Aquatic Center	Parkwater Park
Ben Burr Trail	East Central Community Center	Hillyard Senior Center	Peaceful Valley
Byrne, Patrick S. Park	Edwidge Woldson Park	Indian Canyon Golf Course	Peaceful Valley Park
Campion Park	Elliot C.A.	Indian Canyon Park	Polly Judd Park
Camp Sekani C.A.	Elliot Drive	Indian Trail Park	Qualchan Hills Park
Camp Sekani Park	Emerson Park	John A. Finch Arboretum	Reimer
Cannon Hill Park	Esmeralda Golf Course	Kehoe Park	Rimrock C.A.
Centennial Trail	Fairview Park	Liberty Aquatic Center	Riverfront Spokane
Chief Garry Park	Fish Lake Trail	Liberty Park	Riverside-Cedar
Clark, B.A. Park	Franklin Park	Lincoln Park	Rochester Heights Park
Cliff Drive	Franklin Sports Complex	Logan Peace Park	Rockwood Blvd.
Cliff Park	Friendship Park	Loma Vista Park	Romine C.A.
Coeur d'Alene Park	Garfield Road	Loren Kondo Park	Ruth Park
Comstock Aquatic Center	Glass Park	Manito Blvd.	Shadle Aquatic Center
Comstock Park	Glover Field Park	Manito Park	Shadle Park
Corbin Art Center	Grandview Park	Meadowglen Conservation	Sinto Senior Activity Center
Corbin Park	Grant Park	Meadowglen Park	Skeet-so-Mish Park
Corbin Senior Activity Center	Hamblen Park	Minnehaha Park	Sky Prairie Park
Courtland Park	Hangman Park	Mission Avenue	Skyview Drive
Cowley Park	Harmon-Shipley Park	Mission Park	Southeast Sports Complex
Creek at Qualchan Golf Course	Hays Park	Nevada Park	South Maple Street

Source: Design Workshop, Spokane GIS data

VISITATION AND PARTICIPATION

Spokane's recreation offerings, programs, and services reached a significant number of residents and visitors. In 2019, the City's more than 2,500 programs served about 20,000 participants. The City's six aquatic centers had more than 126,000 visitors, and their sports facilities hosted more than 4,000 softball players and 1,600 volleyball players, along with more players for various other sports. The Corbin Art Center welcomed more than 900 participants in their various camp programs and the 150 Therapeutic Recreation Services volunteers gave a combined 5,000 hours of service in one year. The 10 community centers that the City is affiliated with served more than 720,000 participants with the help of 47,550 volunteer hours.

According to data provided from the City of Spokane's trail counters, Spokane's bike and trail network has also had a significant number of visitors in 2020, more than 1.2 million compared to the 387,000 in 2019. Of the areas where data was collected, the University District hosts the most trail or bicycle activity; approximately 53 percent of the trips counted are in this area of the city (data collected February 2021). The Centennial Trail sees the second highest use in the City, with 700 to 800 average daily riders. In general, trail use is relatively seasonal, with the highest use between April and September.

NATIONAL ACTIVITY TRENDS

OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL TRENDS

Supplementing input from Spokane residents, a study of national recreation trends is helpful for understanding changing needs and informing decisions about the activities that may need additional accommodation in the future. Information released through the Sports and Fitness Industry Association's (SFIA) 2020 (based on data collected in 2019) Topline Report on Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities reveals that the most popular sport and recreational activities include walking for fitness, treadmill, free weights, running/jogging, and hiking. Most of these activities appeal to both young and old alike, can be done in most environments, are enjoyed regardless of level of skill and have minimal economic barriers to entry. These popular activities also have appeal because of the social aspect. For example, although fitness activities are mainly self-directed, people enjoy walking and biking with other individuals because it can offer a degree of camaraderie.

The report also shows that the rate of inactivity in America has been at its lowest point in 2019 for the past six years. Nevertheless, the difference in the level of inactivity between different income groups is still a matter of concern with households making less than \$25K showing an increasing inactivity rate over the past five years.

Note that the figures from this report on national participation of organized sports will look different next year when the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic are realized. Activities that we suspect to show a decreased rate of participation are team sports and activities that take place indoors and those that require close contact. The pandemic is creating a disconnect in continuity of participation in sports and programs, and it is having a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged populations. Other recreation activities like the outdoors have in some cases witnessed an increasing level of participation. In fact, many national parks reported unprecedented numbers of visitors the summer of 2020.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN FITNESS SPORTS

The SFIA Report groups together aerobic, conditioning, and strength activities under Fitness Sports. This category includes activities such as walking for fitness, Cross-Training, running/jogging, yoga, and free weights. National participatory trends in fitness have experienced some strong growth in recent years. According to the SFIA report, fitness sports' participation rates have been the highest for five consecutive years with the participation rate increasing yearly throughout that time frame. In 2019, Fitness was the most popular activity with 67 percent of survey participants indicating that they had participated in some form of fitness activity; the second most popular activity (outdoor sports) had a 51 percent participation rate. Many of these activities have become popular due to an increased interest

among people to improve their health by engaging in an active lifestyle. These activities also have very few barriers to entry – they are relatively inexpensive to participate in and can be performed by nearly anyone with no time restrictions. The most popular fitness activity by far is fitness walking, which had over 111 million participants in 2019 according to the SFIA report's inferred forecasts. Over five years, the activities that grew most rapidly were the rowing machine (up six percent), kettle bells (up five percent), aquatic exercise (up four percent), cross-training style workouts (up four percent) and yoga (up four percent). The increased interest in certain activities might be considered as parks aim to meet recreation needs.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN OUTDOOR RECREATION

The second most popular of the activity groups was outdoor sports/recreation, with more than 51 percent of people reporting that they have participated in such activities in 2019. Much like the general fitness activities, outdoor recreation activities encourage an active lifestyle, can be performed individually or with a group, and are not limited by time restraints. In 2019, the most popular activities in the outdoor recreation category include hiking (49.6 million according to the SFIA inferred forecasts), road bicycling (39.3 million), freshwater fishing (39.1 million) and camping (28.1 million). Outdoor recreation activities that have had large increases in participation over the past five years are BMX bicycling (up nine percent) and day hiking (up seven percent). Most activities had an increase in participation over a five-year period; only five out of the 23 activities in

the report showed a slight decline in participation rates. These activities include wildlife viewing that went down one percent over the past five years.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM SPORTS

The most heavily participated individual and team sports for 2019 were bowling (45.4 million), golf (33.5 million) and basketball (24.2 million). The number of participants for each of these activities is well above the other activities in the other sports category. The popularity of golf and basketball can be attributed to the ability to compete with a relatively small number of participants. Golf also appeals to a wide age spectrum and is considered a life-long sport. Basketball's success can also be attributed to the limited amount of equipment needed to participate and the limited space requirements necessary, which makes basketball the only traditional sport that can be played at many American dwellings as a driveway pickup game.

Other notable individual and team sports that were popular in 2019 include baseball, soccer, tennis, and table tennis. The activities that have seen strong growth in the past five years were cardio tennis (up nine percent), trail running (up eight percent), and pickleball (up seven percent). Ultimate frisbee experienced the largest decline in participation rates – 13 percent over the past five years. It is important to note that team sports as a category was highly popular among the Gen Z age group (people born after 2000), with participation rates of 56 percent; the second highest participation rate was

27 percent for Millennials (people born between 1980 and 1999). The Baby Boomer generation recorded the lowest participation rates in individual and team sports with participation rates reaching as low as 23 and four percent, respectively.

NATIONAL NON-PARTICIPANT INTEREST

The SFIA report also includes a chapter that shows which sports interest non-participants. For most age segments, fishing, camping, biking, and hiking were aspirational activities. Swimming for fitness was also a popular activity that people older than 25 years aspired to get into. When aspirational activities were viewed by income, fishing, camping, bicycling, and swimming were the top four for all income groups. Fishing and camping were most popular amongst lower income groups, whilst bicycling and swimming were at the top for higher income groups.

NATIONAL TRENDS IN YOUTH SPORTS

According to a National Study - Project Play: State of Play 2020 Trends in Youth Play Report – the “Top 5 Popular Sports” among youth were basketball (85 percent included it within their top 5), baseball/softball (81 percent), soccer (73 percent), football (58 percent), and volleyball (34 percent). In 2018, 16 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 12 participated in bicycling on a regular basis; that number was at 27.7% in 2008. When these activities are viewed based on participation rates on a regular basis, the activities with the highest participation rates were basketball (14 percent), baseball (14 percent), and soccer (seven percent).

Soccer participation continues to decline, while the other most popular sports for kids ages 6 to 12 either grew in participation in 2018 (baseball) or only slightly decreased (basketball).

In recent years there has been a sharp decline in the number of children playing team sports. Only 38 percent of kids aged 6 to 12 played team or individual sports on a regular basis in 2018, down from 45 percent in 2008, according to data from the Sports and Fitness Industry Association. According to the National Survey of Children's Health, only 24 percent of youth aged 6 to 17 engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, down from 30 percent a decade earlier. Boys (28 percent) are slightly more likely than girls (20 percent) to meet this daily physical activity recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

According to data presented by the Aspen Institute, lacrosse is growing in popularity among children. Between the 14 team sports that were evaluated by the Sports and Fitness Industry Association in 2018, lacrosse had the highest percentage of newcomers and return participants (55 percent) among kids aged 6 to 12. Lacrosse is taking steps to promote multisport sampling. Even as the sport had lost 36 percent of its players from 2017, it remained with a net gain of 19 percent which was higher than any other sport, surpassing track and field (16 percent) and wrestling (11 percent).

NATIONAL TRENDS IN PARKS AND RECREATION

The NRPA looks annually at hot topics and trends that parks and recreation departments may see become a focus in their localities in the coming year, citing those elements in the annual Top Trends in Parks and Recreation Report. The 2020 list includes some interesting topics that may apply to Spokane:

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

The NRPA states that certain areas will face climate crises from extreme heat. Future heat waves are predicted to bring about temperatures that will exceed 115 degrees in many U.S. cities, and the NRPA claims that the “unsustainable future is not so far away.” According to numerous experts and organizations, there are plenty of challenges for parks and open space that will arise due to the extreme heat, but there are also plenty of opportunities that these spaces can offer when facing climate change. Trees and green infrastructure are recognized not only for their recreational uses but also for their importance to health and well-being, specifically in a climate-changing world. The NRPA reiterates that parks provide natural infrastructure that help communities reduce urban heat island effect and mitigate the impacts of extreme heat. They also predict that new parks, linear green spaces, and trail corridors will be designed to cool communities, as well as to provide recreational benefits. According to data from ProPublica, Spokane is among the areas that will be affected by climate change, but far less critically than others. Nevertheless, Spokane County is expected to encounter some degree of heat

changes which would yield more farm crops and perhaps benefit the region economically .

TECHNOLOGY

Another theme that continues to prevail in the NRPA's trends report is technology. For the past three years, the Association has continued to feature and discuss advancements that present parks and open spaces with opportunities and challenges. In 2020, their website discussed Micromobility Devices in Parks, such as self-balancing devices, e-rollerblades, and e-bikes, and how "mobility culture" is profoundly impacting urban design and personal transportation. According to NRPA, the traditional ways that people access parks today has been completely upended. This, in turn, has affected park planning and design standards in a plethora of ways. E-scooters, e-mountain bikes, and other motorized personal mobility devices that may be bothersome to some administrators and visitors, have opened new recreation opportunities in parks and bridged access barriers for beginners, elders, and/or people with disabilities. This has triggered different administrative actions across the nation; responses range from introducing technology barriers such as geofences while others that embraced new technologies and are even developing amenities like shared bicycle docks.

Technologies that have emerged for park administrators include beacon counters, geofencing, and drones. These technologies have shown their capacity to work as monitoring systems in parks thanks to their simplicity and relatively low cost. Many parks are free to access and

without staff; this technology can offer administrative services such as monitoring and counting park users. This data can also help administrators understand high-use areas and times of the day that visiting the park is most popular. With advances in technology, reduced prices, and greater public acceptance, drones are presenting some form of tech recreation opportunities. Nevertheless, concerns over privacy intrusions, safety violations, and disruptive activities persist. The NRPA predicts that park and recreation agencies will continue to embrace the use of technology for a variety of purposes.

PETS

Pets are another topic of importance to parks, according to the 2019 NRPA trends report. Dog parks are one of the fastest growing types of parks in the country, as the United States has more than 90 million dogs as pets. Larger dog parks have become popular destinations that contribute significantly to agency revenues and tourism.

WASHINGTON AND SPOKANE ACTIVITY TRENDS

WASHINGTON RECREATION TRENDS & POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The 2018-2022 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State (RCO) serves as Washington's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The plan's findings indicate that at least 90 percent of Washingtonians participated in some form of outdoor recreation in 2018. The report's complementary State of Washington 2017 Assessment of Outdoor

Recreation Demand Report states that 22 percent of people surveyed claim there were problems with the facilities for outdoor recreation in their community and 16 percent reported problems with opportunities for outdoor recreation in their community.

Table 21: Top 10 Activities Overall Based on Participation Rate

ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION RATE
Walking - Park or trail setting	84%
Visiting rivers or streams Nature Activities	66%
Visiting a beach or tide pools Nature Activities	60%
Attending an outdoor concert or event (e.g., farmer's market, fairs, sporting events)	58%
Gather or collect things in a nature setting (e.g., rocks, shells, plants)	54%
Day-hiking Hiking	53%
Sightseeing - Scenic or wilderness area	51%
Wildlife or nature viewing	50%
Swimming/wading at a beach - freshwater	50%
Driving or motorcycling for pleasure (note: this is on a paved surface and does not include WATV or off-roading)	46%

The report states that the top activities in Washington based on participation rate were walking; visiting rivers, streams, beaches, or tide pools; attending outdoor concerts or events; and gathering or collecting things in a nature setting, as seen in Figure 3.

Figures 4 shows data from ESRI that breaks down the participation rates of several recorded activities. The table includes Market Potential Data (MPI) that measures the probable demand for a product or service in a certain geography (in this case for Washington State), or the likelihood that an adult resident of the area will participate in certain activities when compared to the U.S. national

average. For the purposes of this metric, the national average is 100 and therefore numbers below 100 represent a lower-than-average participation rate, while numbers above 100 represent a higher-than-average participation rate. MPI data also provides a comparison between the estimated percentage of the U.S. population and local population that participate in each activity. High index numbers (100+) are significant because they demonstrate that there is a greater potential that residents will participate in programs and have a need for related facilities. The MPI and estimated participant numbers are helpful tools for estimating resident participation in identified activities

and projecting the need for facilities in the future. Readers should use caution when reading this data; the number of expected adults is not precise and excludes the important youth demographic. While the top 10 activities at the top of the table are important to note, the later 10 activities show the activities that are more popular in Washington than the national trend. These include activities like skiing, backpacking, pilates, canoeing/kayaking, and tennis.

TOP 10 ACTIVITIES BY # OF PARTICIPANTS AND 10 OTHER ACTIVITIES WITH HIGH MPI VALUES			
Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected # of Adults Participated in Last 12 months	Percent	MPI
Top 10 Activities by Participation			
Walking for exercise	1,523,489	25%	106
Swimming	1,016,837	17%	109
Hiking	853,618	14%	116
Jogging/running	833,125	14%	112
Weight lifting	707,833	12%	114
Fishing (fresh water)	675,755	11%	102
Bicycling (road)	631,129	10%	112
Yoga	579,176	10%	116
Bowling	567,768	9%	107
Golf	544,219	9%	112
Activities more Popular in Washington than National Trend			
Skiing (downhill)	181,412	3%	121
Backpacking	243,704	4%	118
Pilates	180,211	3%	116
Canoeing/kayaking	440,501	7%	114
Tennis	248,790	4%	114
Bicycling (mountain)	277,599	5%	112
Boating (power)	286,621	5%	111
Ice skating	190,498	3%	111
Soccer	279,646	5%	109
Aerobics	462,665	8%	108

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Sports + Leisure Market Potential Report and Recreation Expenditures Report 2020

SPOKANE SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

The table below produced from data by ESRI Business Analyst provides an input into the most popular activities in Spokane. The top section of the table marks the 10 most popular activities by number of adults who have participated in them in the past 12 months. Walking for exercise is the number one activity in Spokane. Though not as popular within the city compared to the nation, more than 41,000 individuals participate in walking for exercise, or nearly 23 percent of the population. The other activities that many adults participate in are swimming, jogging/running, fishing, weightlifting, and hiking. Most activities listed in the Sports and Leisure Market Potential report have participation rates that are lower in Spokane when compared to the national average. The second section of the table shows other activities that are also quite popular in Spokane, even though the percentage of participation is relatively low. Some of the activities that residents of the city are typically more engaged in than the national average includes softball, tennis, bowling, frisbee, soccer and baseball.

Table 22: Spokane's Sports and Leisure Market Potential

TOP 10 ACTIVITIES BY # OF PARTICIPANTS AND 5 OTHER ACTIVITIES WITH HIGH MPI VALUES			
Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected # of Adults Participated in Last 12 months	Percent	MPI
Top 10 Activities by Participation			
Walking for exercise	41,003	23%	95
Swimming	26,233	14%	94
Jogging/running	20,826	11%	93
Fishing (fresh water)	20,667	11%	104
Weightlifting	20,538	11%	110
Hiking	20,236	11%	91
Bowling	17,201	9%	108
Bicycling (road)	16,971	9%	100
Golf	15,137	8%	104
Yoga	14,865	8%	99
Activities more Popular in Spokane than National Trend			
Softball	6,169	3%	119
Tennis	7,139	4%	109
Frisbee	7,250	4%	107
Soccer	8,034	4%	105
Baseball	7,505	4%	103

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Sports + Leisure Market Potential Report and Recreation Expenditures Report 2020

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF RECREATION

The outdoor recreation industry has a significant role in the State of Washington’s economy. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, in 2019, outdoor recreation in Washington generated over \$12.3 billion, which accounts for 2 percent of the state’s gross domestic product (GDP). This was up almost three percent from 2018. This added value to the state’s GDP ranks Washington’s outdoor recreation industry as the eighth largest in the country. In 2019, outdoor recreation also provided more than 130,000 jobs in the state of Washington, which is about 2.8 percent of the state’s employment. This amounts to about \$6.5 billion in wages and salaries, and \$2.3 billion in State and Local Tax Revenue.

Washingtonians spend over \$1.2 billion yearly on recreational vehicles and fees, and sports, recreation, and exercise equipment; residents of Spokane spend nearly \$25 million. Residents of the state spend most on equipment for exercise, hunting and fishing; the average amount spent per individual yearly on each of these is around \$75. Residents of Spokane spend about \$52 for similar equipment.

DEMOGRAPHICS AND RECREATIONAL TRENDS

Spokane is a city that is socially and culturally diverse and, as the research into demographics reveals, economically diverse, as well. The City is growing at a modest pace – data from Business Analyst shows that the population will grow by 0.95

percent annually between 2020 and 2025, which is slower than the state average of 1.3 percent. Spokane has an aging population. The City’s median age will rise to 38.1 in 2025 compared to 35 in 2010; the 3.1-year difference is larger than the state’s 2.1. Nevertheless, the country’s median age is roughly around 38 which makes Spokane’s median age relatively common compared to the nation. Almost a third of the City’s population that is over 25 has either a bachelor’s, graduate, and/or professional degree. This number is slightly lower than that of the state. Spokane is also slowly growing in diversity, as racial and ethnic minorities continue to grow in population size. The Hispanic population is expected to reach 8.2 percent of the of the total population by 2025 (up from seven percent in 2020). Other racial/ethnic groups that are growing include the Asian and Black communities (predicted to make up 3.1 percent and 2.9 percent of the total population in 2025, respectively). By 2025, the Cities’ Diversity Index is predicted to increase to 42.1, up from 38.5 in 2020; the State of Washington’s diversity index is significantly higher at 61.7 in 2020. To meet the needs of the anticipated growth and demographic variety, Spokane should devise targeted strategies to reach user groups who enjoy getting outside and using parks and trails close to home.

RECREATION TRENDS ACROSS GENERATIONS AND INCOME LEVELS

The Physical Activity Council’s 2020 annual study for sports, fitness, and recreation participation shows that fitness, outdoor, and individual sports have the highest participation rates among Americans for the

past six years at rates reaching 67 percent, 51 percent, and 45 percent, respectively. Of note, when broken down by generation, there is a significant difference in team sports popularity. Among people under 20 and people between 20 to 40 years of age, participation rates for team sports are 56 percent and 27 percent, respectively. Team sport participation is only 12 percent among people between 40 and 55 years of age and 4 percent for the individuals between 56 to 75 years of age. When asked about which activities they are most interested yet do not participate in, younger individuals (ages six to 24) predominantly chose fishing and camping. People 45 and older expressed more interest in bicycling and swimming. This information is critical in understanding Spokane’s large young and elderly populations’ outdoor and recreation needs. The report also shows how inactivity is reversely proportional to income, with individuals earning under \$25,000 showing an inactivity rate as high as 46 percent. Fishing and camping were the two activities people of lower income expressed most interest in, compared to bicycling and swimming for fitness on the other side of the income spectrum. This should influence the City’s decisions towards facilitating access to recreational opportunities to lower income communities and allocating different offerings in a more equitable manner.

According to the 2017 Healthy Aging in Parks Survey by the NRPA, 9 in 10 Parks and Recreation Agencies dedicate facilities, activities, and programming to older adults. Almost 91 percent of these agencies offer exercise classes. Other activities include arts and crafts classes

TOP 10 STATES’ OUTDOOR RECREATION VALUE ADDED		
State	Total Outdoor Recreation Value Added	Percent of Total Value Added
California	\$57.4 Billion	1.8%
Florida	\$49.1 Billion	4.4%
Texas	\$35.9 Billion	1.9%
New York	\$29.2 Billion	1.7%
Illinois	\$15.6 Billion	1.8%
Pennsylvania	\$13.2 Billion	1.6%
Georgia	\$12.4 Billion	2.0%
Washington	\$12.3 Billion	2.0%
Colorado	\$12.2 Billion	3.1%
North Carolina	\$12.1 Billion	2.0%

. Based on state level data published on bea.gov, GDP estimates were published on October 2, 2020, compensation and employment estimates were published on September 24, 2020.

(offered by 67 percent of agencies), special events and festivals specially geared for older adults (offered by 58 percent of agencies), and group walks (offered by 53 percent of agencies). These park and recreation agencies also offer many evidence-based programs for older adults; 38 percent of them offer Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance, 29 percent offer Enhanced Fitness, and 23 percent of them offer Walk With Ease. Many agencies form outside partnerships to support these offerings. Some of these partnerships are with area agencies on aging, retirement communities, senior meals providers, hospitals and doctors, and local health departments.

YOUTH RECREATION PARTICIPATION RATES

Youth are the most active cohort; inactivity rates in 2019 were around 18 percent for people between 6 to 17 compared to other age groups where inactivity was as high as 38 percent. This group, which today can be grouped under Gen Z, also has the highest participation rates in most sports except for fitness and water sports. The one sport category where their participation rates significantly exceed that of other groups is team sports. In 2019, 56 percent of people below the age of 20 stated they participated in team sports. The second age group after them, people between 20 and 40 years of age (Millennials), had a 27 percent team sport participation rate.

Many youths are introduced to sports and recreation through physical education and sports programs in schools. On average, American families spend \$693 per child for one sport each year. Youth who

engage with sports not only are more physically active and confident, but also gain long-term benefits including better health outcomes, greater educational attainment, and success at work. These benefits can follow them throughout their lives. Youth sports are linked to lower levels of depression; new research shows that for people with childhood trauma, playing team sports as a child can significantly reduce the likelihood of depression and anxiety later in life.

EQUAL ACCESS TO RECREATION

Equity is at the heart of access to youth sports. National studies demonstrate that gender, household formation, and income correlate with the likelihood and level of children’s engagement with organized sports, what sports they may play, and how long they engage in those activities. In fact, 42 percent of lower-income families cited cost as the reason their children do not play sports.

Unfortunately, across the nation there are significant disparities in who has access to youth sports opportunities, both in terms of proximity to sports fields and courts and the ability to afford registration fees. Kids from lower-income homes face increasing participation barriers. In 2018, 22 percent of children aged 6 to 12 in households with incomes under \$25,000 played sports on a regular basis, compared to 43 percent of kids from homes earning \$100,000 or more. Kids from the lowest-income homes are more than three times as likely to be physically inactive. Further, the difference between inactivity among households of the lowest and highest income grew by 140 percent

between 2012 and 2018, showing an even greater challenge to equal access to recreational opportunities.

Not all parks and open space agencies succeed at closing gaps in youth sports opportunities. For example, a third of park and recreation professionals indicate that their agencies are not always successful in locating leagues close to where kids live. This suggests that a significant number of youths who do not live within proximity to sports activities face a persistent barrier in accessing such opportunities — a situation aggravated in areas with inadequate public transportation. The result is reduced participation rates in youth sports among children living in lower income households. Furthermore, almost 95 percent of park and recreation agencies require a registration fee for youth participation in select or all organized activities; about two-thirds of agencies offer reduced fees to lower income residents. The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated these funding challenges and put extra pressure on the ability of park and recreation agencies to offer or partner with other providers to offer low-cost youth sports programs to everyone.

OTHER CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO YOUTH RECREATION

The NRPA’s Youth Sports at Park and Recreation Agencies report highlights challenges for youth sports administrations in providing better recreational opportunities for their communities. Topping the list was the fact that these agencies did not have enough volunteer coaches or sports fields/courts. Another point was that

these agencies had to also compete with private travel sports leagues.

Other challenges picked up from the Aspen Institute’s report are highlighted in the table below, along with their corresponding responses (“The Play”). These sections suggest innovations like “prescribing” physical activity to kids, creating spaces that are tailored for free play, and even providing community-based, low-cost leagues and programs that are accessible to all kids — not just youth with the resources and ambition to participate on travel teams. The report also cites the importance of multisport as it encourages no specialization until 14 or 15 years old.

Table 23: 8 Strategies for 8 Challenges in Youth Sports

CHALLENGE	THE PLAY
Youth sport is organized by adults	Ask Kids What They Want
Overstructured experiences	Reintroduce Free Play
Sameness and specialization	Encourage Sport Sampling
Rising costs and commitment	Revitalize In-Town Leagues
Not enough places to play	Think Small
Too much, too soon	Design for Development
Well-meaning but untrained volunteers	Train All Coaches
Safety concerns among parents	Emphasize Prevention

Source: The Aspen Institute - Project Play. State of Play 2020 Trends in Youth Play Report

RECREATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Outdoor recreation is an important sector in Washington that touches many other business sectors. It is very much a part of the state's identity and culture. Given how vital outdoor recreation is to the state's identity and continued economic prosperity, SCORP identifies the state's top priorities for outdoor recreation to ensure that it continues to grow successfully. Those priorities are connectivity, community, innovation, accommodation, and stewardship. SCORP also details the top five barriers that are negatively impacting parks and open spaces across the state, hindering participation in outdoor recreation. These are: Income Inequality, Physical Impairment, Lack of Free Time, Nobody to Go With, and Feeling Unsafe. SCORP suggests addressing these hindrances through four points:

- Understanding how different barriers can impact outdoor recreation.
- Reviewing which barriers have been identified in the SCORP.
- Investigating your community to identify existing barriers.
- Engaging your community to create an action plan for removing these barriers and preventing future barriers from occurring.

DEMOGRAPHIC OPPORTUNITIES

While there are challenges for outdoor recreation, there are also trends that point to opportunities. In the last few years, there has been a recognizable increase in the population's median age in Washington and throughout the United States. Even in Spokane,

the 65 and older age group accounts for 17 percent of its population and is expected to grow the fastest of any age segment, accounting for 18.5 percent of the population by 2025. This increase will impact how parks and recreation facilities are programmed in the future. People over the age of 65 tend to gravitate toward opportunities for socialization and serving their larger communities. Focusing on providing recreational and outdoor opportunities for these residents, especially to help them stay healthy and active, has the potential to infuse parks and open spaces with dedicated participants who can help teach the next generations how to be good stewards of our public spaces.

Spokane Parks is experiencing a significant increase in the request for court sport improvements by individuals over 50, primarily for pickleball use. The Department has also experienced significant increases in requests for dog park facilities and are currently only providing two such facilities for the entire city. There is also a continual request for the addition of walking paths and trails within parks citywide. Lastly, Lacrosse has increased in demand, but advocates are less vocal than some other sport participants.

The fact that in the last 12 months about 35,000 adults in Spokane spent money on sports and recreation equipment provides an opportunity to continue to educate residents and visitors on the importance of these spaces, encourage volunteer and conservation efforts, and provide opportunities for people to spend even more time outdoors. Utilizing public/private partnerships to support and enhance outdoor recreation is another

opportunity to provide a safety net for when and if one type of funding for parks and open spaces might not be available. Figure 8 displays a breakdown of Spokane resident's expenditure on sports and recreation equipment, revealing that residents are more likely to spend between \$250 or more for sport and recreation equipment. This information may help the City better tailor their recreation offerings to meet their resident's expenditure trends.

Table 24: Local Participatory Market Potential Spent on Expenditure for Sports/Rec equipment in last 12 months

SPENDING RANGE	EXPECTED # OF ADULTS	PERCENT	MPI
\$1-99	11,975	6.60%	112
\$100-\$249	9,783	5.40%	96
\$250+	13,119	7.20%	97

Source: ESRI Business Analyst Sports + Leisure Market Potential Report and Recreation Expenditures Report

The economic findings of spending in the future SCORP report may show a dramatically different reality and projection of spending based on the unanticipated outcomes of COVID-19, with more people spending time recreating close to home, but also taking up new recreational pursuits or upgrading existing ones. For example, bicycle sales and repairs to older bicycles soared in 2020, which is not represented in the data reported.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will have a lasting impact on people and how they have come to rely heavily on close-to-home access to nature and outdoor recreation, and there will be an on-going evolution of understanding the impact and impression of the virus on the public

as it relates to public spaces. Parks and trails act as critical infrastructure to the public, serving physical, mental, and emotional needs, and, as such, opportunities for the City exist for public services. Opportunities to respond to the lingering effects of the pandemic include:

- Flexible, adaptive, and expansive outdoor spaces for classes and programming that cannot safely be provided indoors;
- Trails to fill gaps in public transportation;
- Addressing overcrowding by expanding resources in high demand areas and raising awareness of and spreading the love to less popular locations;
- Providing opportunities for “distanced” activities and addressing social isolation for vulnerable populations; and
- Address the disconnect between youth and sports and athletics, fear in managing physical interactions in youth sports, and under-served populations facing the inability to ‘pay-to-play’.

When asked what activities people expect will resume to “normal” post-COVID-19, The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) found that most respondents listed individual and outdoor sports. Only 37 percent of respondents anticipate that the return of youth sports will return in 2021 or later. The NRPA Youth Sports at Park and Recreation Agencies report also stated that 90 percent of park and recreation professionals report that the pandemic had a significant and detrimental impact on their agencies’ youth sports programming during the summer and fall of 2020.

TRENDS IN PRIORITIES

Spokane will also be taking cues from SCORP and identifying its own priorities for outdoor recreation, potentially aligning with the state’s goals. The SCORP report identified five near and long-term priorities for agencies within the state to focus on. These are:

1. Sustain and Grow the Legacy of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands
2. Improve Equity of Parks, Trails, and Conservation Lands
3. Meet the Needs of Youth
4. Plan for Culturally Relevant Parks and Trails to Meet Changing Demographics
5. Assert Recreation and Conservation as a Vital Public Service

Each of the five priorities are met with a series of recommendations that will help the state achieve its eight Unifying Strategy Goals:

1. Build, renovate and maintain parks and trails
2. Conserve habitat
3. Support state plans, strategies, and initiatives
4. Maintain and improve mapped inventory
5. Distribute funds equitably across the state
6. Improve program outreach
7. Changes to the grant programs
8. Implement actions from: State Trails Plan, NOVA Program Plan, State Athletic Facilities Plan, and Boating Programs Plan

The City can also devise its own strategies for contending with challenges specific to Spokane, which include a growing population, housing stress, and crowding of open spaces. Looking forward, the City will have to consider the special opportunities and challenges for outdoor recreation that include:

- The City’s culturally and linguistically diverse residents who are enthusiastic about outdoor recreation in many forms;
- The County’s senior population and outdoor experiences that go beyond walking;
- The County’s youth populations and opportunities for specialized play experiences including connecting with nature and inclusive and accessible environments;
- Consideration of the high interest in nature-based activities (bird watching, “Washington Experiences”, fishing, nature exploration, etc.);
- Distribution of parks and trails across the City and access to parks and open space by different demographic groups
- Trails and regional connections;
- Crowding, which can be better understood through increased tactics in counting visitation.

Some of the unique opportunities that exist in the City include:

- Spokane is experiencing a significant increase in housing construction and development, which could provide opportunities to partner with private development to increase the quantity of parks or the quality of existing parks to improve levels of service. Public private partnerships with private developers has yielded significant improvements at a number of park facilities in the past 5 years (Southeast Sports Complex, Riverfront

Park). Through various forms of cooperation, we should encourage partnerships in expanding park and trail amenities.

- Spokane Parks has an excellent partner agency in Spokane School District 81, which also provides public, outdoor recreational amenities and has been extremely successful in securing bond funding for capital construction. Continuing and expanding this partnership and leveraging each other’s resources may yield improvements for citizens. Spokane School district is actively planning construction of a new sports stadium, which could be located directly adjacent Spokane’s Riverfront Park or Dwight Merkel Sports Complex - pending a decision by the school board of directors.
- Spokane Parks has an excellent partner in the region’s largest utility provider, Avista Utilities, particularly when considering improving public access to and around the Spokane River. Avista has constructed a major urban park for permanent public use directly adjacent Riverfront Park, and is actively engaged in constructing ‘Upriver Park’ within Spokane’s Logan neighborhood. Spokane Parks should look to continue working with Avista Utilities to envision and implement public access and recreation improvements along the entire Spokane River Corridor within the city limits.
- Spokane Parks has a partner agency in Spokane Public Libraries, which is currently constructing new libraries within existing parks. These facilities are ‘kid focused’ and provide a unique opportunity for partner programming, particularly in lower income portions of town where a library + park combination could offer an entire day of programmed activities and recreation at the same location. Spokane Parks should look to increase program offerings

at these locations (Liberty Park, Shadle Park).

- Spokane's downtown businesses and restaurants continue to expand, even despite Covid-19, and are interested in providing more privately managed courtyard and pocket park spaces within the downtown core. There is even discussion of implementing experience-based attractions (a zipline specifically) within the downtown park lands to attract users to come visit the downtown as a whole for not only an experience-based activity but also the surrounding shops. This is an opportunity to expand the reach of parks from Riverfront Park out into the surrounding community.

- Spokane's neighborhood parks are fairly widely distributed and provide good access to public outdoor recreation within reasonable walking distances. Yet some of these facilities are aging and in need of a more significant investment than typical maintenance activity. With input from the community, the age of these facilities may actually be an opportunity to consider changing exactly what services they provide. A neighborhood park 'refresh' may be an excellent quality of life improvement for citizens city wide. Furthermore, the city owns a number of existing 'future parks'. Undeveloped land poised to meet increased need for park lands in rapidly developing portions of the city, particularly in Northwest and Southwest portions of the city. Land within these areas could be developed for significantly less cost to the taxpayer to both acquire and develop park land within developing neighborhoods.

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