

Chapter and Policy Update

The City has completed the first round of review and edits to several Comprehensive Plan chapters. The following document provides the updated goals and policies meant to guide growth and development in the City of Spokane through the lens of the **Parks & Recreation** element.

As part of the [PlanSpokane 2046 Periodic Update](#), drafts of the non-technical chapters of the Comprehensive Plan are now available for public review and comment. **Please send all comments and recommendations to PlanSpokane@spokanecity.org.** We encourage the public to include the Chapter name and Goal/Policy number(s) as applicable for ease of comment consideration.

Each of the available chapters have been updated from the [current Comprehensive Plan](#) to reflect recent plans and studies, updated state legislation, and extensive community feedback, seeking to create a streamlined plan that will be easier to read and implement.

Updates throughout the draft chapters include the removal of unnecessary text as well as new, moved, or removed policies. Also included are minor edits to the language to ensure clarity and consistency throughout the Plan. Not all minor edits have been marked, but icons and notes (shown in the sidebar on the right) provide additional insight into larger changes. Any policies removed from the chapter are highlighted at the end.

Additional changes to each chapter are likely to occur based on continued [Climate Planning](#) and [Racially Disparate Impacts Analysis](#) as well as public feedback and the selection of a preferred alternative for the final Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). See PlanSpokane.org for more information on all the ongoing work for PlanSpokane 2046.

In summary, to date, this chapter has seen the following changes:

Parks **REPORT CARD**



Action	Number of Policies
New Goals & Policies	4
Removed Goals & Policies	2
Changed Goals & Policies (Moved, Change in Direction)	5

To help track where changes have been made, the following icons will appear where:



General information or notation is provided, clarifying changes to the existing text.



Language was streamlined or condensed. Minor changes won't be marked.



New text or policy was added, not sourced from the current plan.



Two or more policies in the existing plan were combined into one.



A policy or language was added because of a change in state law requirements.



Climate and Resiliency work might impact this language in the future.



Racially Disparate Impacts or Displacement work may impact this language in the future.



Text, goals, or policies were removed—a reason will be provided.

Parks & Recreation

Introduction

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan covers the many parks and recreation facilities and opportunities throughout the city. The opportunity for relaxation, recreation, and the enjoyment of natural features and landscaping provided by parks and open spaces has long been recognized as important in the City—even during its earliest days. The Park Board has been an integral part of City government since the City was first incorporated. Throughout its history, Spokane’s residents have encouraged and supported the development of a park system superior to that of most other cities.

Today, changing recreational pursuits and demographic characteristics of the population have made the provision of parks and open spaces even more challenging and important. Seeking to explore and understand the new environment in which Parks and Recreation will operate in the future, the Parks and Recreation Department adopted a new Master Plan for the City in 2022. Known as “Preserve & Play: The City of Spokane Parks and Natural Lands Master Plan,” this important document outlines the challenges and opportunities the City faces when providing an integrated and interconnected network of parks and recreational opportunities available for all in the City of Spokane.

The Parks Master Plan is incorporated by reference in this Comprehensive Plan, as it provides important guidance and background information the City should use in decision making and the development of funding, programs, and development in the near future. However, as this document is a 10-year plan and the Comprehensive Plan has a longer timeline (20 years), the following goals and policies are also provided—intended to inform decision making from a parks and recreation perspective into the distant future, commensurate with the overall vision and values the community has identified.

Goals and Policies

Goals and policies provide specificity for planning and decision-making. Overall, they indicate desired directions, accomplishments, or aims in relation to the growth and development of Spokane as it relates to the development, maintenance, and operation of parks and recreational uses in the city.

Goal: PR-1, Preservation and Conservation

Assure the preservation and conservation of unique, fragile, and scenic natural resources, and especially non-renewable resources for the enjoyment and use of the public.



The introduction has been rewritten to reflect the current situation as well as the recently adopted Parks Master Plan.



Readers should note that the order of these goals (and their attached policies) has changed somewhat to flow better and to correspond more closely to the format and layout of the Parks Master Plan.

Policy: PR-1.1, Open Space System

Partner with regional park and open space providers to create a regional system as well as to provide an open space system within the urban growth boundary that connects with regional open spaces and maintains habitat for wildlife corridors.

Policy: PR-1.2, River Corridors

Recognize, enhance, and preserve access to the Spokane River and various waterways for the recreational enjoyment and use of the public, recognizing the health, social, and cultural benefits access to the waters of Spokane provides, while maintaining consistency with preservation and protection standards.

Policy: PR 1.3, Connecting the River and Adjacent Uses

Study and develop ways to enhance and preserve the river by coordinating access and use of the waterways in Spokane with access to adjacent uses and opportunities, such as providing river access for both people and watercraft adjacent to shops and restaurants.

Policy: PR-1.4, Explore Opportunities for Acquisition of Natural Areas

Acquire and preserve natural lands that provide and support opportunities for passive recreation while preserving the land in its natural state and helping to preserve and provide wildlife and habitat protection.

Policy: PR-1.5, Developers and Open Space Dedication

Implement and maintain development standards calling for required natural open space and parks dedication and development within new developments while working cooperatively with property owners and developers to secure and preserve open spaces between developments where possible.

Policy: PR-1.6, Open Space Buffers

Establish standards for and encourage the use of both developed and undeveloped open space buffers between conflicting land uses and infrastructure, including provisions and incentives for clustering of development.

Goal: PR-2, Parks and Open Space System

Provide a park system that is an integral and vital part of the open space system, taking advantage of the opportunities for passive and active recreation provided by a comprehensive open space network.



Policy 1.1 was reworded to make collaboration a stronger part of the sentence.



A cross-reference to Chapter 9, Natural Environment, will likely be included here, as that chapter deals heavily with surface waters.



A new policy was suggested by the Chapter Review Subcommittee, tying business and river access together.



Policy 1.4 was updated to focus more on acquisition and less on finance.



A cross-reference to Chapter 3, Land Use, is likely to be included here as well as to the Parks Master Plan.



A cross-reference to Chapter 9, Natural Environment, will likely be included here, as that chapter deals with open space as well.

Policy: PR-2.1, Amenities Within City Boundaries

Provide open space and park amenities throughout the city that serve all residents, as determined by the level of service standards.

Policy: PR-2.2, Access to Open Space and Park Amenities

Provide equitable public access to linkages and connected open space and park amenities, including features such as sidewalks, trails, bicycle paths, and mass transit.

Policy: PR-2.3, Parks and Recreation Amenities

Continue to develop parks and recreation amenities, including but not limited to interpretive areas, sports complexes and fields, structured play areas, public gardens, and entertainment venues, amenities that provide benefits to both residents and visitors and enhance the local economy.

Policy: PR-2.4, Urban Forestry Program

Coordinate with and consult the urban forestry program when developing parks and recreation facilities throughout the City.

Policy: PR-2.5, Historic and Cultural Value in Parks

Encourage and showcase the preservation of the cultural integrity and historic character of the parks and the park system.

Policy: PR-2.6, Efficient Property Management

Assess unimproved park land holdings within the city and, considering level of service standards, develop actions which maximize net benefits to the park system.

Goal: PR-3, Recreational Programs and Facilities

Maintain and ensure an indoor and outdoor recreation program in the city, providing well-rounded recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities.

Policy: PR-3.1, Inclusive Recreational Access

Provide and improve recreational opportunities that are easily accessible to all people in Spokane and that reflect the diverse needs and socio-economic status of people in the city.

Policy: PR-3.2, Public-Private Partnerships

Create public-private partnerships and develop funding and incentives for community-oriented recreational programs responsive to diverse needs and encouraging participants of all ages and abilities.



A cross-reference to applicable parts of Chapter 9, Natural Environment, is likely here.



A cross-reference to applicable parts of Chapter 8, Urban Design & Historic Preservation, is likely here.



This new policy was added to help Parks & Recreation begin to improve and adjust their unimproved land holdings to maximize efficiency and effectiveness.



Diversity was added here in reference to RDI and public engagement discussions.



Diversity was added here as well.



A cross-reference to Chapter 10, Social Health, is likely to be added also.

Policy: PR-3.3, Parks for All

Upgrade parks and facilities to be accessible, culturally inclusive, and responsive to the needs of all Spokane residents, regardless of income, age, gender, or ability, including but not limited to addressing American Disability Act (ADA) accessibility.

Policy: PR-3.4, Community Outreach

Promote parks and recreation programs, services, and facilities through an effective and inclusive community outreach program and marketing campaign, utilizing a variety of communication methods and ensuring language access.

Policy: PR-3.5, Indoor Recreational Facilities and Programs

Provide facilities and programs that afford the public the opportunity to participate in a broad range of indoor recreational activities year-round.

Policy: PR-3.6, Outdoor Recreational Facilities

Provide facilities and programs that allow the public the opportunity to participate in a broad range of outdoor recreational activities, including expanding the hours and dates these locations are available where feasible.

Policy : PR-3.7, City Golf Courses

Provide for and maintain the public golf courses in Spokane as appropriate.

Goal: PR-4, Trails in Parks and Open Spaces

Provide a convenient and pleasant open space-related network for walking, rolling, hiking, and biking circulation throughout the City of Spokane and the region through coordination with local partners.

Policy: PR-4.1, Trails and Linkages

Provide trails and linkages between and among parks, open spaces, and nearby communities in accordance with City plans and programs, prioritizing people-oriented transportation in natural areas while considering special needs like equestrian use.

Policy: PR-4.2, Trail Corridor Development and Enhancement

Include landscaping, revegetation, and reforestation in trail corridor development where appropriate and desirable, providing a pleasant trail experience, compatible with adjacent uses, and in consideration of the natural environment found in the region.

Policy: PR-4.3, Innovative Trail Development Techniques

Incorporate innovative techniques into trail design, including but not limited to Low Impact Development, natural drainage patterns, native landscaping,



The concept of equity was added to Policy PR-2.2 per public engagement input.



Policies 3.5 and 3.6 may be modified by ongoing climate and resiliency work.



A policy here relating to the river was removed, as it was redundant with Policy 1.2. Accordingly, a cross-reference to that policy is likely to be included here.



Policy 4.1 is a combination of two original policies that both dealt with trails and circulation. (Original policies. 3.1 and 4.2) Connections to nearby communities was suggested by Parks staff.



This new policy (4.3) was formerly found in the discussion of another policy. It warrants highlighting in its own policy here.

protection of natural features, and porous pavement to further protect and enhance the natural environment.

Goal: PR-5, Coordination and Cooperation

Encourage and pursue cooperation between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and private business in providing open space, parks facilities, and recreational services that are beneficial for the public.

Policy: PR-5.1, Avoiding Duplication of Recreational Opportunities

Facilitate cooperation and communication among government agencies, non-profit organizations, school districts, and private businesses to avoid duplication in providing recreational opportunities within the community.

Policy: PR-5.2, Joint Park and Open Space Planning

Ensure that parks, open space, and trails are planned and funded in coordination with Spokane County prior to allowing urban development within the city's Urban Growth Area (UGA), yet outside city limits.

Policy: PR-5.3, Cooperative Planning and Use of Recreational Facilities

Coordinate and cooperate with local private and regional entities when planning and operating recreational facilities to ensure efficient, integrated, and cooperative uses and operations.

Goal: PR-6, Quality Parks and Recreation Services

Provide the community with a parks and recreation system that is enjoyable, efficient, financially responsible, and a source of local pride.

Policy: PR-6.1, Up-To-Date Management Practices

Employ state-of-the-art techniques in the park and recreation profession by providing staff training, labor-saving equipment, automatic systems, durable materials, effective facility design, and responsive leisure services.

Policy: PR-6.2, Standards and Policies

Address areas of the city where parks and recreation facilities and opportunities do not meet current level of service standards, maintaining open communication and utilizing collaborative planning processes that help define service levels based on good management practices while providing quality service to the public.

Policy: PR-6.3, Community Volunteers

Encourage and recruit volunteers to serve on advisory boards for program and facility design, leadership in program offering, and community service stewardship.



In essence, Goal 6 (originally goal 7) and the first policy (now removed) had the same effect. The policy is unnecessary and was combined into the goal.



A cross-reference to applicable parts of the Governance chapter may be added here.

Policy: PR-6.4, Evaluations and Monitoring

Conduct periodic monitoring of the Spokane Parks and Recreation Department services, facilities, and programs through staff, participant, and public evaluations.

Policy: PR-6.5, Master Planning

Continue to develop and implement periodic updates to the park master plan to ensure effective maintenance and operation of existing parks while exploring needs for new and updated parks and recreational opportunities.

Goal: PR-7, Maintenance and Funding Programs

Recognize and update Spokane's existing park resources by continuing preventative maintenance and exploring various funding possibilities for both construction of new parks and maintenance of the City's existing facilities and resources.

Policy: PR-7.1, Maintenance Management Program

Implement an ongoing maintenance management program that will include preventative and ongoing maintenance, efficient and comprehensive facility management, and funding for replacement facilities and equipment.

Policy: PR-7.2, Park Sign Plan

Implement and maintain a park signage and wayfinding plan that standardizes all park signs, enhances clarity in direction, and integrates universal accessibility. Features should include entrance, direction, and rules signs and exclude historic park signage where appropriate.

Policy: PR-7.3, Park Funding

Consider all potential funding sources to maintain and enhance the adopted level of service standards for parks, seeking funding in addition to the general fund contribution to Parks and Recreation.

Policy: PR-7.4, Opportunity Fund

Create an "Opportunity Fund" to protect open space or acquire parkland, which would be lost if not immediately purchased, targeting valuable open space lands that would otherwise be swallowed up by development of other uses, ensuring that funding is sustainable for long-term stewardship of these areas as well.

Policy: PR-7.5, Funding for Open Space and Shoreline Land Acquisition

Ensure that any funding for the purchase of open space and shoreline land maintains sufficient balance and flexibility to nimbly and rapidly acquire and protect land when it becomes available, as delays may mean that the land is lost to other uses and development.



Maintenance as a topic may have some connection to ongoing climate and resiliency work.



The policies here are not new—they have been moved into this topic from various other goals in the existing chapter. Some language has been updated.



While not strictly new, policies 7.4 and 7.5 were reworked in consultation with the Chapter Review Subcommittee to be more robust and to better consider their original intent.

Consultation with the Parks and Recreation department is needed to ensure these are achievable as worded.

Policy: PR-7.6, New Development Funding Needed Parks

Adopt development fees and development requirements ensuring public park land dedication and improvement occurs at the time of development or redevelopment, commensurate with adopted levels of service.



Policy 7.6 was added per the Parks Master Plan, calling on development to help fund the parks needed because of new growth.

POLICIES REMOVED FROM THE TEXT:

The following policies have been removed from the text, largely due to redundancy, unclear goals/success, and similar factors.

Policy: PR-7.3, Capital Improvement Program

Prepare and update annually a six-year capital improvement program for implementation of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces Plan.



A CIP is a requirement of state law for all capital projects by the City. Repeating it here adds nothing to the process and is redundant.

Policy: PR-7.1, Quality of Service

Provide high quality service to the community in all parks and recreation programs, services, and facilities.



Policy 7.1 was incorporated into its overarching goal, as it provided no additional detail in its original form (see Goal 6)

Policy: PR-7.7, Public Participation

Ensure that decisions regarding the city's park and open space system encourage the full participation of Spokane's citizenry.



Policy 7.7 is already covered substantially by the Governance Through Civic Participation Chapter.