



**Meeting Date:** 9.20.2017  
**Agenda Item:** # \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mission Statement**

To provide our growing dynamic community excellent municipal services to make Fernley a great place to live, work, and play. Together, we enhance the desirability, safety, friendliness, aesthetics and quality of life in our city.

## **CITY OF FERNLEY CITY COUNCIL MEETING STAFF REPORT**

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**REPORT TO:** Mayor & City Council  
**REPORT THRU:** Daphne Hooper, City Manager  
**REPORT BY:** **Colleen Unterbrink, Assistant to the City Manager**  
**REVIEWED BY:** Brandi Jensen, City Attorney  
**REVIEWED BY:** Denise Lewis, Finance Director  
**AGENDA ITEM:** Discussion and Possible Action to adopt the City of Fernley's Parks Master Plan.

**ACTION REQUESTED:** \_\_\_ Consent \_\_\_ Ordinance \_\_\_ Resolution  X  Motion \_\_\_ Receive/File

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### **RECOMMENDED ACTION BY CITY COUNCIL**

**"I move to adopt the City of Fernley's Parks Master Plan."**

#### **Key Points:**

1. The primary purpose of the parks master plan update is to ensure the City's fiscal resources are appropriately utilized and that parks, trails and open spaces meet the needs of the community and enhance the quality of life for residents.
2. Analyses indicate Fernley parks are too small and the parks have limited diversity in their offerings. Fernley has an ample supply of neighborhood parks, it lacks larger community parks or regional parks. The data shows that although Fernley will require just over 50 acres of additional parkland in the next 10 years, the City should look for opportunities to reduce the number of small parks that do not provide a variety of amenities, and focus on providing larger community parks.
3. Fernley's annual budget for parks and recreation is almost 70% lower than the average per capita budget of comparable communities. In addition, the revenue generated is 98% lower than other communities.
4. Fernley currently has three full-time equivalent (FTE) staff. In comparison to similar-sized communities, this is significantly below the average of 14 FTEs. Fernley has approximately one maintenance worker for every 27 acres of park. Fernley staff maintain 35% more park area per person when compared to the benchmark communities used in this plan.
5. The top rated most desirable park improvements are: more shade; more/better play equipment; more/better sports fields; more/improved restrooms.
6. Overall, it is recommended that highly used sports fields be developed in sports complexes (such as Out of Town Park). Relocating the Rodeo Grounds to another location would allow Out of Town Park to accommodate additional fields. Based on the existing level of field use, projected increased demand, and the trend of more year-round sports additional sports fields should be provided over the 10-year planning horizon.

## **POLICY REFERENCE**

*Nevada Statutes:*

*Fernley Municipal Code:*

*Policies & Procedure Manual:* N/A

*Community Assessment:*

*Other:*

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

In FY 2014/2015, the Fernley City Council directed staff to prepare a Parks Master Plan. During 2016, City staff interviewed and chose a consultant, Design Workshop, to prepare the Parks Master Plan. Many hours of staff and consultant time were spent over approximately eleven months reaching out to the community to provide input for the development of the Parks Master Plan. With the adoption of the Parks Master Plan document, staff believes the framework will be in place to serve the needs of the community while also improving the quality of life for residents.

The 2017 Fernley Parks Master Plan reflects the vision and goals of the City of Fernley and provides direction for the City's decision-making over a planning horizon of 10 years. An evaluation of the City's current offerings was required to identify the needs of Fernley's growing population, to accommodate changing recreation trends and to ensure the City's limited resources can be maximized and focused to provide a quality parks and trails system. The primary purpose of this master plan update is to ensure the City's fiscal resources are appropriately utilized and that parks, trails and open spaces meet the needs of the community and enhance the quality of life for residents. This plan also provides recommendations for funding, a list of improvements for short and long-term implementation, and a high-level review and recommendations for operations and maintenance.

The plan supports a vision for the future of parks, open space, and trails that can be accomplished over the planning period; however, the City should continue to adapt to changes in the community and seek to capture opportunities as they arise. The recommendations represent a potential future based on the vision, not an absolute promise. While some recommendations can be completed within a matter of months, others will require coordinated community efforts over a number of years that may exceed the life of this plan. The recommendations are based on an evaluation and analysis of the current state of the system and changing demographics, an understanding of community values and priorities, and contemporary trends in parks and recreation. The plan reflects the need to maximize the value of the current parks system while being forward thinking to plan for future needs and changes.

The vision for the Parks Master Plan (PMP) focuses on key ideas and new approaches that will help Fernley maximize the value of its current resources while continually improving the quality of life for residents. This plan outlines a long-term vision and establishes the community's current values to guide decision-making. Over the next 10 years, the City of Fernley will seek to:

1. Improve parks with features that meet the needs and desires of residents of all ages, abilities and interests.
2. Improve the City's capacity to care for parks, trails and open space in order to improve their condition and offerings. Minimize maintenance needs and reduce the number of small parks. Identify the capital and staffing resources necessary to maintain a quality parks system.
3. Provide trail offerings and connectivity and diversify the types of trails available.
4. Capture opportunities to utilize open space to allow residents to have the chance to enjoy nature; partner for success in being stewards of the city's natural resources and beautiful landscapes; look for opportunities to connect open spaces, retain scenic views and support agriculture.
5. Ensure new development contributes to the parks, trails and open space system to maintain a high level of service and accommodate Fernley's residents.
6. Ensure fiscal sustainability of the parks system in order to provide a quality park experience.

## **WHAT DO WE HAVE?**

Fernley has a variety of parks and open space facilities. In total, the park system includes approximately 166 acres of parks, open space and landscaped areas. The City owns and manages 14 park properties, seven open space sites and almost one mile of off-street shared use paths. See Table 2 for the existing inventory summary.

Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the individual City-owned parks and open space parcels and how each was

categorized into different park types, landscaped areas, or open space. The Rodeo Grounds, located within the Out of Town Park, is categorized as a Special Purpose Park since it provides a unique facility that would not typically be considered part of the sports complex. The open space parcels are broken down further to show a distinction between open space and landscaped areas. Open space is designated as an area that is usable or has the potential to be usable by the community, whether that is a greenway, community garden or nature preserve. The landscaped areas are generally parcels that offer little to no usable or accessible space yet still provides an important aesthetic value to the city. The acreage shown for the Fernley Cemetery includes the full parcel size for the City-owned land. The cemetery does not currently use all of acreage listed.

Table 3 on the following page provides a snapshot of the amenities offered at each park.

**TABLE 1**

PARK	SIZE (acres)	CLASSIFICATION
Autumn Winds Park	4.9	Neighborhood Park
BMX Park	2.1	Special Use
Eagle's Nest Park	0.3	Pocket Park
Fernley Depot	1.2	Special Use
Green Valley Park	6.3	Neighborhood Park
In-Town Park	4.1	Neighborhood Park
Johnson Memorial Park	10	Neighborhood Park
Main Street Park	1.9	Special Use
Millennium Grove Park	1.6	Special Use/Greenway
Out Of Town Park	34.5	Sports Complex
Out of Town Park (Rodeo Grounds)	10.5	Special Use
Piccetti Park	0.25	Pocket Park
Ponderosa Park	1.9	Neighborhood Park
River Ranch Park	1.0	Neighborhood Park
Silverland Open Space	35.2	Open Space
Autumn Winds Open Space	12.7	Open Space
Cloud Drive Open Space	0.2	Open Space
Jessica Lane Open Space	0.04	Landscaped Area
Walgreens Open Space	0.1	Landscaped Area
Round-a-bout Open Space	0.5	Landscaped Area
Fernley Cemetery	36.5	Landscaped Area

**TABLE 2**

EXISTING PARKS SUMMARY		
PARKS CLASSIFICATION	ACRES	NUMBER OF SITES
<i>Pocket Park</i>	<i>0.55</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	<i>28.2</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Sports Complex</i>	<i>34.5</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Regional Park</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>Special Purpose Park</i>	<i>17.3</i>	<i>5</i>
<b><i>Parks Total</i></b>	<b><i>80.55</i></b>	<b><i>14</i></b>
OPEN SPACE SUMMARY		
OPEN SPACE	ACRES	NUMBER OF SITES
<i>Open Space</i>	<i>48.1</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Landscaped Areas</i>	<i>37.14</i>	<i>4</i>
<b><i>Open Space Total</i></b>	<b><i>85.24</i></b>	<b><i>7</i></b>
TRAILS SUMMARY		
TRAIL TYPE	MILES	
<i>Existing Shared Use Paths</i>	<i>0.9 miles</i>	
<i>Future Shared Use Paths</i>	<i>1.9 miles</i>	
<i>Future Bike Lanes</i>	<i>28.1 miles</i>	
<i>Future Marked Shared Lanes</i>	<i>4.5 miles</i>	
<i>Future Trails</i>	<i>24.8 miles</i>	
<b><i>Trails Total</i></b>	<b><i>60.2</i></b>	

TABLE 3

PARK	SIZE (acres)	FACILITIES						AMENITIES													FURNISHINGS									
		Concession Building	Restrooms (doesn't include sanihuts)	Off-Street Parking	On-Street Parking	Lighting	Picnic Shelter	Plaza/Hardscape Area	Basketball Court	Tennis Court	Swings	Kids Play Equipment	Skateboard Park	Dog Park	Horseshoes	Baseball/Softball	Multi-Use Field	Soccer	Football	Swimming Pool/Spray Park	Volleyball Court	Exercise Equipment	Equestrian	Trails	Special Use	Benches	Bike Racks	Picnic Tables	Drinking Fountain	Trash Receptacles
Autumn Winds Park	4.9		X	X			X		1/2		X	X			X							X		X		X	X	X	X	X
BMX Park	2.1					X																		X	X	X			X	
Eagle's Nest Park	0.3				X						X																X			
Fernley Depot	1.2			X		X																		X	X		X		X	
Green Valley Park	6.3		X	X	X	X	X				X	X		X	X	X	X	X								X	X	X	X	X
In-Town Park	4.1	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X										X	X	X	X	X
Johnson Memorial Park	10			X							X	X		X	X						X	X				X		X		X
Main Street Park	1.9			X																			X	X						
Millennium Grove Park	1.6				X																		X		X		X		X	
Out Of Town Park (includes Rodeo)	45	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Piccetti Park	0.25						X																			X			X	
Ponderosa Park	1.9				X		X				X	X		X		X										X	X	X	X	X
River Ranch Park	1				X	X	X				X			X													X			

## **WHAT DO WE NEED?**

A survey was conducted by the City and Design Workshop to gather input regarding how the community uses the parks and to understand the successes and shortcomings of the current park system from the user perspective. Over 200 responses were collected in total. A non-probability sampling method was used to collect responses (not statistically valid), this type of non-probability sampling method is typically used in this type of exploratory research as way to gain a general understanding of community interests. Efforts were made to engage a broad number of people; the results should not be generalized to the City of Fernley population as a whole. Rather, the findings provide useful insight and information and are used as only one of several data points for the Master Plan.

The top rated most desirable park improvements are:

- 1) More shade
- 2) More/better play equipment
- 3) More/better sports fields
- 4) More/improved restrooms

For those residents who would not recommend Fernley's parks, they were asked "why" – the top themes include:

- 1) Better maintained parks
- 2) More shaded areas
- 3) And more/better upkeep of restrooms

Out of Town Park was by far survey respondents favorite park. The quality of the play equipment, availability of fields and open lawn areas, location and shade were all positive attributes that were noted. In Town Park, Autumn Winds Park, Ponderosa Park and Green Valley Park also received positive feedback. Including Out of Town Park, these facilities are the City's largest parks. The smaller parks were negatively rated. In addition to the survey that was conducted, Design Workshop attended the quarterly park users meeting, during this meeting, the various representatives from the park user groups were offered the opportunity to participate in a charrette. The feedback from this charrette was also included in the evaluation criteria and analysis.

## **HOW DO WE COMPARE?**

A community's park system must meet the individual needs of its residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and the Trust for Public Lands provide park metrics based on national standards. These national standards are helpful to identify where a community may have a surplus or a deficit in park facilities, but often the standards do not adequately reflect a city's population, surrounding open space or the type of desired recreation opportunities. Therefore, six communities with similar population ranges and park systems were evaluated to identify how Fernley compares to cities of similar size, recreation facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities. The cities utilized for comparison in this study include:

- Winnemucca, NV (Pop. 7,887)
- Mesquite, NV (Pop. 17,496)
- Elko, NV (Pop. 20,279)
- Moscow, ID (Pop. 25,060)
- Post Falls, ID (Pop. 30,453)
- Carson City, NV (Pop. 54,521)

See Tables 4, 5, 6 for a comparison of the benchmark communities' facilities, acreage, and spending per resident.

**TABLE 4**

<b>BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES PER CAPITA</b>											
<b>Community</b>	<b># of park facilities (per 1,000 residents)</b>	<b>Acres of parks (per 1,000 residents)</b>	<b>Annual Recreation Revenue (per resident)</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Rec Annual Budget (per resident)</b>	<b># of Fields (per 1,000 residents)</b>	<b># of Basketball Courts per X # of residents</b>	<b># of Dog Parks per X # of residents</b>	<b># of playgrounds per X # of residents</b>	<b>Recreation Centers per X # of residents</b>	<b>Trailheads per X # of residents</b>	<b>Miles of Trails per X # of residents</b>
Fernley, NV	0.72	4.1	\$0.74	\$43	.82	1 per 38,836	1 per 9,709	1 per 1,941	0	0	1 per 17,652
Carson City, NV	0.64	14	\$28.20	\$104	0.55	1 per 10,904	1 per 27,260	1 per 3,028	1 per 27,260	1 per 2,180	1 per 1,090
Post Falls, ID	0.91	15.27	\$19.07	\$83.63	0.49	1 per 4,685	0	1 per 2,768	0	1 per 15,226	1 per 922
Moscow, ID	0.64	4.11	\$23.59	\$97.10	0.40	1 per 3,580	1 per 12,530	1 per 2,278	1 per 25,060	0	1 per 963
Elko, NV	0.84	5.45	\$124.49	\$155	1.78	1 per 4,055	0	1 per 4,055	1 per 20,279	0	1 per 20,279
Mesquite, NV	1.03	5.72	\$28.58	\$160	0.91	1 per 4,374	1 per 17,496	1 per 2,187	1 per 8,748	1 per 8,748	1 per 327
Winnemucca, NV	0.89	12.68	\$31.70	\$102	1.90	1 per 3,943	0	1 per 2,629	0	0	0
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>\$36.62</b>	<b>\$106.39</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>1 per 7,548</b>	<b>1 per 9,571</b>	<b>1 per 2,698</b>	<b>1 per 11,621</b>	<b>1 per 3,736</b>	<b>1 per 5,886</b>

**TABLE 5**

<b>BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES</b>									
<b>Community</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Total # of park facilities</b>	<b>Total acres of parks</b>	<b>Median Park Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Level of Service</b>	<b>Total Parks &amp; Rec FTEs</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Rec Annual Budget</b>	<b>Annual Recreation Revenue</b>	<b>Agency Spending (Per Resident)</b>
Fernley, NV	19,418	14	80.6	10.9	4.1	3	\$843,350	\$14,430	\$43
Carson City, NV	54,521	35	765	22	14	30	\$6,558,833	\$1,537,491	\$104
Post Falls, ID	30,453	28	465	16.6	15.2	21	\$2,546,931	\$580,808	\$83.63
Moscow, ID	25,060	16	103	6.4	4.1	13	\$2,433,510	\$591,215	\$97.10
Elko, NV	20,279	17	110.5	6.5	5.4	6	\$3,143,416	\$2,524,576	\$155
Mesquite, NV	17,496	18	100	5.56	5.7	17	\$2,800,000	\$500,000	\$160
Winnemucca, NV	7,887	7	100	14.3	12.6	6	\$805,000	\$250,000	\$102
<i>Average</i>		<i>19</i>	<i>246.3</i>	<i>11.8</i>	<i>9.1</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>\$2,733,006</i>	<i>\$856,931</i>	<i>\$106.39</i>

**TABLE 6**

<b>BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES</b>							
<b>Community</b>	<b>Number of Fields</b>	<b>Number of Basketball Courts</b>	<b>Number of Dog Parks</b>	<b>Number of Playgrounds</b>	<b>Recreation Centers</b>	<b>Trailheads</b>	<b>Miles of Trails</b>
Fernley, NV	16	0.5	2	10	0	0	1.1
Carson City, NV	30	5	2	18	2	25	50
Post Falls, ID	15	6.5	0	11	0	2	33
Moscow, ID	10	7	2	11	1	0	26
Elko, NV	36	5	0	5	1	0	1
Mesquite, NV	16	4	1	8	2	2	53.4
Winnemucca, NV	15	2	0	3	0	0	0
<i>Average</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>23</i>

On average, Fernley's parks are smaller than comparable communities. Average park size for the comparables is 9.3 acres per park. The large number of smaller parks increases maintenance costs and reduces the ability to incorporate a variety of amenities in the parks.

Table 7 summarizes the deficiencies and surpluses of Fernley's park system based on both the comparable communities and NRPA standards and projected population increases. The data shows that although Fernley will require just over 50 acres of additional parkland in the next 10 years, it has too many small individual parks. The City should look for opportunities to reduce the number of small parks that do not provide a variety of amenities and focus on providing larger community parks. This adjustment will also allow for more efficient maintenance and improve operations.

One of the existing tennis courts was recently replaced with a basketball court to meet the existing need. Three additional courts could be provided in the future as part of new park development. An adequate supply of tennis courts exists. To address the growing national and regional demand for pickleball, the City may consider adding striping one tennis court to allow for both tennis and pickleball. This has been done in many other communities to economically accommodate the use.

Fernley has significantly less miles of trails and trailheads in comparison to regional and national standards. Although the community is surrounded by public lands, access is not clearly identified and the checkerboard pattern of federal lands complicates trail development. Coordination with the BLM, BOR, TCID and NDOT will be required to create a regionally connected system.

**TABLE 7**

Facility	Facility Standard adjusted for Fernley, NV	Facility Standard per 1,000 Residents Served	Existing Facilities (2017)	Need based on current population	Current # Deficient Facilities	Estimated Facility Need Based On 2027 Population	Projected # Deficient Facilities	Notes
Total Park Facilities	1 facility per 3300 res.	0.3	14.0	5.8	-8.2	6.7	-7.3	<i>There are too many individual parks</i>
Total Acres	1 acre per 111 res.	6.0	80.55	117	36.45	133.2	52.65	<i>Additional park acreage is needed over the next 10 years</i>
Trailheads	1 park per 10,000 res.	0.1	0.0	1.9	1.9	2.2	2.2	<i>The City should provide trailheads to open space</i>
Trails	1 mile per 2,000 res.	0.5	1.1	9.7	8.6	11.1	10.0	<i>Additional trails should be provided</i>
Basketball Courts	1 court per 5,000 res.	0.2	1.5	3.9	2.4	4.4	2.9	<i>The City should look for additional opportunities to provide basketball courts</i>
Volleyball Court	1 court per 10,000 res.	0.1	1.0	1.9	0.9	2.2	1.2	<i>An additional volleyball court may be incorporated into new park facilities as the city grows over the next 10 years</i>
Tennis Courts	1 court per 10,000 res.	0.1	2.0	1.9	0.1	2.2	0.2	<i>Consider adding pickleball striping to one tennis court to accommodate both tennis and pickleball</i>
Dog Parks	1 park per 10,000 res.	0.1	2.0	1.9	-0.1	2.2	0.2	<i>No new facilities needed</i>
Playgrounds	1 playground per 3300 res.	0.3	10.0	5.8	-4.2	6.7	-3.3	<i>No new playgrounds needed</i>
Swimming Pool	1 per 34,686 res.	0.03	0.00	0.58	0.58	0.67	0.67	<i>Need is met by the Fernley Pool District facility</i>

Fernley has a mix of diamond and rectangular, multi-use fields. The fields are in high demand and regularly reserved throughout the year from February to November. Leagues also use open lawn areas and small diamond fields in other smaller city parks as well. Leagues reserve fields in 24-hour blocks, seven days a week, even though they may not use the fields for all of that time. All of the sports leagues play in the evenings and weekends. For example, High Desert Little League uses all four of the Out of Town Park fields from 2:30pm until 10:00pm on weekdays, and on Saturdays they hold games from 7:00am until the evening. With the current reservation schedule, all of the available fields are fully reserved from morning until evening.

Field quality is a direct relationship to hours of play. When fields receive too much play time without adequate maintenance, patches appear in the turf and the surface can become compacted which negatively affects the safety and quality of play. The level of maintenance can help address impacts caused from overuse, but at a certain point, maintenance cannot overcome the impacts of too many hours of play. At this point, a city needs to determine how to meet the field demand, either through developing new fields or converting fields to artificial turf. Synthetic fields are expensive to construct and require special maintenance. Where additional land is available, it is generally more cost effective for a community to add additional fields and gain eight to ten hours of usage than to convert natural turf fields to synthetic fields and only gain two or three additional hours of use. Below is a breakdown of the number of hours a field can be anticipated to be used per year and the associated field quality:

Hours of Use per Year	Field Quality
200 hours or less	Excellent
400-600 hours	Good with some thinning and localized wear
800-1,000 hours	Fair

In Table 8 below, you will see the total scheduled hours of use per field, along with the hours of overuse, and additional fields needed.

**TABLE 8**

Field Type	Existing Facilities (2017)	2016 Scheduled Annual Usage (hours)	Hours of Overuse Based on 600 Hours of Recommend Per Year	Hours of Overuse Based on 1,000 Hours of Maximum Use Per Year	Additional Fields Needed
Diamond Fields (Baseball/Softball)	OTP Softball A (at soccer fields)	440	N/A	N/A	N/A
	OTP Softball B (at soccer fields)	440	N/A	N/A	N/A
	OTP Softball Field	1,660	1,060	660	1-2
	GVP Diamond	880	280	N/A	0-1
	ITP Field	2,200	1,600	1,200	2-3
	OTP Babe Ruth Field	3,388	2,788	2,388	3-5
	OTP Majors Field	3,388	2,788	2,388	3-5
	OTP Minors Field	3,388	2,788	2,388	3-5
	OTP Farm Field	3,388	2,788	2,388	3-5
	Number of additional diamond fields needed				
Rectangular (Soccer/Football/Lacrosse)	OTP Soccer Field	636	36	N/A	0-1
	GVP Grassy Area	200	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Autumn Winds Park Grass Area	180	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Number of additional rectangular fields needed				

**SPORTS FIELD OPPORTUNITIES**

Fernley’s young, family-oriented demographic supports a need for active park amenities such as sports fields. As described in the previous sections, the current fields are overbooked which results in conflicts with user groups and degradation of the playing surface. The lack of available, high quality sports fields also limits the economic opportunity associated with sports tournaments. Overall, it is recommended that high use sports fields be developed in sports complexes (such as Out of Town Park). Relocating the Rodeo Grounds to another location would allow Out of Town Park to accommodate additional fields. Potential locations for the relocation include north of Hwy 50A near the Out of Town Park, in Silverland Open Space, and in the Bureau of Reclamation parcel south of Royal Oaks Subdivision. The multipurpose field at Green Valley Park could be expanded to accommodate football.

Based on the existing level of field use, projected increased demand, and the trend of more year-round sports; additional sports fields should be provided. The City staff should work with the leagues to further evaluate the final number and type of fields needed and when they are needed.

**PARK ACCESS NEEDS**

Providing well distributed and accessible parks is important to encourage use. Research demonstrates that people tend to utilize facilities near their homes. However, park distribution should be balanced with the size of the park provided and the density of development. For example, too many small parks that do not provide adequate facilities may allow people to walk to the park, but they do not provide the space to provide adequate park amenities and can be costly to maintain. In addition, smaller parks are not as beneficial in rural residential neighborhoods with large lots and access to public lands. Households may incorporate play equipment on their property instead of walking to a small park.



Overall, the City is fairly well served by the existing distribution of parks. However, the neighborhood north of Hwy 50A and south of I-80 is isolated from being able to walk to any the city's larger parks and is therefore underserved. When new parks are developed, consideration should be given to locate the park in an area that is walkable and can serve existing and future residents that are not currently served. For the neighborhood previously mentioned, this might include acquiring land from a community-minded property owner, working with the County to provide a park near the community center, or connecting via the I-80 pedestrian underpass to a park near the city cemetery.

## **WHERE ARE WE HEADED? RECOMMENDATIONS**

**PARK FACILITIES GOALS** – for a complete list of objectives by goal can be found beginning on page 40 of the PMP. See Appendix A for a complete list of potential park improvement diagrams.

Fernley has 80.55 acres of developed parkland, with additional acreage of undeveloped open space. Benchmark and level of service analyses indicate Fernley parks tend to be too small and the parks have limited diversity in their offerings. The need for additional parks and park acreage will grow as Fernley's population increases. While Fernley has an ample supply of neighborhood parks, it lacks larger community parks or regional parks.

Goal 1.1: Diversify the amenities available in the overall park system while continuing to maintain park facilities to maximize their value to residents.

Goal 1.2: Create a system of parks that are larger, support more recreation, and are more efficient to maintain.

Goal 1.3: Create a sports complex at Out of Town Park. Track and quantify field usage to clearly support and provide recommendation regarding the investment of additional fields, lighting or development of artificial turf fields.

Goal 1.4: Support water conservation and sustainability through park design and renovations.

Goal 1.5: Use parks to shape the community's character, the vitality of its neighborhoods and the visual character of the city's streets and public spaces.

**TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE GOALS** - Trails were identified by the public as an important priority for investment. Trails consistently rose to the top of the list during community conversations. Survey respondents identified better connectivity to trails and more trails in general as desired improvements. The themes that emerged from the planning process included emphasizing connections and continuity in the trail system, the need to focus on trails for their recreation and transportation value and enhance accessibility for all types of users.

Goal 2.1: Create an interconnected parks, trails and open space system that creates a comprehensive trail system to all recreation resources, including parks, open spaces, schools and backcountry trails.

Goal 2.2: Develop an open space system that provides for outdoor recreation activities that meet community needs.

Goal 2.3: Capitalize on backcountry access and Fernley's quality of life to set Fernley apart as an outdoor sports destination.

## **IMPLEMENTATION GOALS**

Goal 3.1: Seek permanent and reliable funding sources for parkland acquisition, capital improvements.

Goal 3.2: Develop procedures for community-built projects in parks.

Goal 3.3: Explore the feasibility of gaining funding from new sources and developing partnerships to accomplish park improvements, trail development and open space access.

Goal 3.4: Pursue grant opportunities related to Master Plan goals and recommendations.

Goal 3.5: Provide adequate staff and resources to meet existing needs and to provide high quality parks, trail and open spaces.

## **BUDGET AND REVENUE**

Fernley's annual budget for parks and recreation is almost 70% lower than the average per capita budget of comparable communities. In addition, the revenue generated is 98% lower than other communities. Sources of revenue that may increase the City's current cost recovery rate from less than 2% to a more sustainable percentage include:

- Adjusting user fees for picnic and field reservations.
- Exploring opportunities for sponsorships and concessionaires.
- Evaluating the opportunity to provide programming in the future.

No community has full cost recovery for their park system, but a cost recovery closer to 10% would be comparable to Elko, Nevada. Programming not only would provide an opportunity for revenue generation, it also allows residents to associate parks and recreation with the City of Fernley. For reference, the NRPA's 2017 Agency Performance Review shows that per capita, parks and recreation agencies typically spend \$77.32 per resident. This would represent a budget of \$1,469,080 for the City of Fernley. Fernley's 2016/2017 parks budget was only \$843,350 (\$625,730 less than the national average). It should be noted that the national average numbers include recreation programming. In June 2017, the Nevada legislation passed AB 379 which enables local communities to create park districts. This statewide enabling legislation provides a viable long-term strategy for communities to use in the management of local park, recreation, open space and natural resources, and trails. As an example, Sun Valley General Improvement District serves a similar population and has a \$3.50 fee per parcel per month to fund parks and recreation. Larger fees can be collected on larger parcels. Similar models should be evaluated and considered for Fernley.

## **MAINTENANCE STAFF**

Fernley currently has three (3) full time equivalent (FTE) staff. In comparison to the comparable communities, this is significantly below the average of 14 FTEs. When evaluating the number of FTE's by acres of park, Fernley has approximately one (1) maintenance worker for every 27 acres of park. On average, the other communities have one (1) maintenance worker for only 18 acres of park. In other words, Fernley staff maintain 35% more park area per person.

Adding 1.5 to 2 FTEs would bring Fernley more in alignment with other communities based on current park acreage. That number would increase with additional park development to satisfy future needs. For reference, NRPA's 2017 Agency Performance Review shows that typically jurisdictions have 7.3 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents (for Fernley that would equate to 14.2 FTEs). It should be noted, that this metric includes staff for recreation programming.

**FUNDING, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE GOALS** - See page 92 of the PMP for a list of objectives identified per goal.

Goal 3.1: Seek permanent and reliable funding sources for parkland acquisition, and capital improvements.

Goal 3.2: Develop procedures for community-built projects in parks.

Goal 3.3: Explore the feasibility of gaining funding from new sources and developing partnerships to accomplish park improvements, trail development, and open space access.

Goal 3.4: Pursue grant opportunities related to master plan goals and recommendations.

Goal 3.5: Provide adequate staff and resources to meet existing needs and to provide high quality parks, trail, and open spaces.

Goal 3.6: Continue to improve the capacity for staff to maintain parks, trails, and open space to desired maintenance levels.

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

1. Is There A Fiscal Impact? Yes
2. Is it Currently Budgeted? No
3. If Budgeted, Which Line Item/Account?

**FISCAL SYNOPSIS:**

The plan includes a recommended capital improvement project and long term vision project list (pages 86-87). These projects are broken down by priority and project cost.

**PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION/REVIEW**

On April 8, 2015 City Council unanimously approved a motion to “approve an increase in the Parks Professional Services line item for \$75,000 for a comprehensive community parks master plan to be funded by the committed funds balance reserved for water.”

On May 19, 2015 City Council approved the FY2015/2016 budget, which included the \$75,000 set aside for a comprehensive community parks master plan.

At the June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 Fernley City Council meeting, City staff and the selected consultant, Design Workshop, presented the Parks Master Plan proposal and contract for approval. Council expressed concerns over the proposal, and made recommendations to staff to come back to Council with a revised proposal. Councilwoman Whalen made a motion to “Direct staff to renegotiate the proposal, specifically to have the outreach section to include a committee that will include staff members, a city council person, and community members meeting regularly; and would also like to have an A and B that would identify the bare bones plan and the fancy schmancy plan.” This motion passed unanimously.

On September 7, 2016, Staff presented Council with a revised contract for the Parks Master Plan project with Design Workshop, with an amount not to exceed \$43,745.

**ATTACHED INFORMATION**

Appendix A - Potential Park Improvement Diagrams, Imagery, Potential Rodeo Relocation Diagrams  
City of Fernley Parks Master Plan