



# City of Tigard: Funding Options for Park Maintenance

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## **About SCI**

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

## **About SCYP**

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and a partner in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with a public entity on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future. SCY includes courses in Architecture; Business; Geography; Historic Preservation; Journalism; Landscape Architecture; Law; and Planning, Public Policy, and Management.

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# Table of Contents

Background.....	6
Research Report.....	6
Table 1. Comparison of Three Oregon Cities .....	9
A. Revenue Generating Options .....	9
1. User Fees .....	9
2. Naming rights .....	10
3. Taxes.....	10
4. Donations .....	12
5. Use resources from other funds .....	13
B. Community involvement options.....	14
1. Volunteer groups .....	14
2. Park adoption .....	15
3. Specific user groups .....	16
C. Other options .....	16
1. SDCs .....	16
2. Outside contractor .....	17
3. Creating a separate parks department or separate parks district.....	17
Conclusion .....	18

*This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the City of Tigard. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.*

## Background

In November 2010, voters in the City of Tigard passed a \$17 million bond to fund parks acquisition and development. The bond, Measure 34-181, did not fund park maintenance, however, and the City of Tigard now needs to identify further funding mechanisms to support ongoing park maintenance.

Many other cities in Oregon are also looking for ways to fund park maintenance, as well as looking for other sources of revenue in general, whether to balance the general budget or fund a specific area, such as public safety. In fact, the 2014 League of Oregon Cities conference included a session titled “Creative Revenue Streams for Municipalities.”

## Research Report

It is helpful to look at other cities to see what ideas have been used or are being developed to fund park maintenance. In addition to looking at the parks departments of other cities, it is useful to take into consideration the overall size and budget of the city. This document focuses on the Cities of Eugene and Ashland.

As of 2014, Eugene had a population of 160,775 people.<sup>1</sup> The City’s total adopted budget in fiscal year 2015 was \$567.5 million.<sup>2</sup> Parks and Open Space, in the Public Works Department, had a budget of approximately \$11.2 million.<sup>3</sup> The approximate number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in Parks and Open Spaces is 80.<sup>4</sup> Parks and Open Space assets in 2014 included 3,129 acres of parks and natural areas.<sup>5</sup> This includes 394 acres of developed park areas, 2,507 acres of natural areas, and 229 acres of parkland “banked” for future developed parks.<sup>6</sup> There are 46 neighborhood parks, 13 community parks, 46 grass sports fields, and 53 miles of trails.<sup>7</sup>

In the last 17 years, park acreage in Eugene has almost doubled, as a result of land acquisition through a pair of voter-approved bond measures.<sup>8</sup> The increase in land, combined with “a park maintenance budget that has remained at virtually

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<sup>1</sup> Population Research Center, *Certified Population Estimates 2014*, Portland State University College of Urban & Public Affairs (Dec. 15, 2014), [http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014\\_Certified\\_Pop\\_Est\\_Web.xlsx](http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014_Certified_Pop_Est_Web.xlsx).

<sup>2</sup> Jon R. Ruiz, *FY15 Adopted Budget*, City of Eugene, page 30 (July 24, 2014), <https://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=1623>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, page 291. Exact budget: \$11,298,718.

<sup>4</sup> Telephone interview with Craig Carnagey, Director of Eugene’s Parks and Open Space Division (July 27, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Eugene Parks and Open Space, *The State of Eugene’s Parks and Natural Areas*, page 2 (2014) at <http://www.eugene-or.gov/parks>.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> Edward Russo, *Eugene weighs levy and fee to revive some library, parks services*, *The Register-Guard* (June 14, 2015), <http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/33164653-75/eugene-libraries-and-parks-look-for-more-money.html.csp>.

the same pre-growth 1998 funding levels,” has led to “a situation in which the dollars to adequately care for Eugene’s parks and natural areas have not kept pace.”<sup>9</sup> Due to budget reductions, deferred maintenance, and an increase in illicit activities (such as vandalism, graffiti, and illegal camping), Eugene Parks and Open Space has a \$2 million annual operations and maintenance gap.<sup>10</sup> Also accumulating is a \$24 million capital repair backlog in delayed maintenance.<sup>11</sup>

As of 2014, the City of Ashland had a population of 20,340 people.<sup>12</sup> In 2013, the City of Ashland produced its first biennial budget rather than an annual budget.<sup>13</sup> The total adopted 2013-2015 biennium budget was approximately \$202.1 million.<sup>14</sup> For the purposes of this document, all figures from the City of Ashland’s budget will be divided in half in order to make comparisons with cities that budget annually, thus Ashland’s total budget was approximately \$101 million.

The Ashland Parks and Recreation Department is overseen by a Parks Commission with a five-member elected board. Within the department, there are three divisions: Parks, Recreation, and Golf.<sup>15</sup> The overall budget for the Parks and Recreation Department was approximately \$7.9 million.<sup>16</sup> Specifically, the Parks Division’s budget was approximately \$3.7 million,<sup>17</sup> the Recreation Division’s budget was approximately \$1.3 million,<sup>18</sup> and the Golf Division’s budget was approximately \$506,440.<sup>19</sup> Ashland has nearly 44 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees in the Parks and Recreation Department.<sup>20</sup>

The Parks and Recreation Department oversees 785 acres of parkland, 463 acres of forestland, and 30 miles of trails.<sup>21</sup> There is also a horticulture program that maintains trees within the urban setting and manages healthy, diverse, and functionally effective natural areas including riparian corridors and swales.<sup>22</sup> The Recreation Division oversees the Daniel Meyer Pool, Ashland Rotary Centennial Ice Rink, North Mountain Park Nature Center, Ashland Senior Center, indoor and outdoor facility rentals, and adult and youth recreation programs.<sup>23</sup> The Golf

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<sup>9</sup> Eugene Parks and Open Space, *The State of Eugene’s Parks and Natural Areas*, page 2 (2014) at <http://www.eugene-or.gov/parks>.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> Population Research Center, *Certified Population Estimates 2014*, Portland State University College of Urban & Public Affairs (Dec. 15, 2014), [http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014\\_Certified\\_Pop\\_Est\\_Web.xlsx](http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014_Certified_Pop_Est_Web.xlsx).

<sup>13</sup> Dave Kanner and Lee Tuneberg, *Adopted 2013-2015 Biennium*, City of Ashland, page 1-2 (July 1, 2013), <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=15521>.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* Exact budget: \$202,124,365.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at page 3-124.

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at page 3-127.

<sup>17</sup> *Id.* at page 2-128.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.* at page 3-135.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.*

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at page 3-123.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.* at page 3-124.

<sup>22</sup> *Id.* at page 3-130.

<sup>23</sup> *Id.* at page 3-131.

Division operates, maintains, and constructs facilities and provides professional services for the nine-hole Oak Knoll Golf Course.<sup>24</sup>

At the same time that Ashland switched to budgeting biennially in 2013, this was also the first year that the City did not record the primary revenue source in the Parks Fund as property taxes, instead recording that revenue as a payment for services from the General Fund.<sup>25</sup> Prior to this time, “Parks revenue was shown as property tax in the amount of \$2.09 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation.<sup>26</sup> Over the years, this resulted in a very large unappropriated balance in the Parks fund, nearly \$2 million in the current fiscal year.<sup>27</sup> Rather than continuing to budget Parks Fund revenue as property tax, the unappropriated fund balance [was] budgeted as beginning working capital, the ending fund balance [was] reduced to 12.5 percent of operating expenditures (down from 25 percent) and money [was] transferred from the General Fund to balance the Parks Fund.”<sup>28</sup>

As of 2014, the City of Tigard had a population of 49,140.<sup>29</sup> The City’s total adopted budget in fiscal year 2015 was approximately \$244.7 million.<sup>30</sup> Parks and Grounds, in the Public Works Department, had a budget of approximately \$1.9 million.<sup>31</sup> Tigard employs 10.75 FTE in Parks and Grounds.<sup>32</sup> In 2014-2015, Parks and Grounds managed 253 acres of parkland, weekly maintained 12 miles of pedestrian paths, renovated nine sports fields, and weekly inspected 15 playground areas.<sup>33</sup> The City of Tigard’s parks inventory list includes 544 acres of parks (including community parks, future parks, linear parks, neighborhood parks, open spaces, pocket parks, small open spaces, and special use parks), 15.99 acres of Tigard city facilities, and 1.81 acres of right-of-way. The City of Tigard’s Parks and Trails website states Tigard has more than 452 acres of parks, greenways, and natural areas.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Id.* at page 3-135.

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at page 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.* at page 1-5.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

<sup>28</sup> *Id.*

<sup>29</sup> Population Research Center, *Certified Population Estimates 2014*, Portland State University College of Urban & Public Affairs (Dec. 15, 2014), [http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014\\_Certified\\_Pop\\_Est\\_Web.xlsx](http://www.pdx.edu/prc/sites/www.pdx.edu/prc/files/2014_Certified_Pop_Est_Web.xlsx).

<sup>30</sup> *FY 2014-2015 Adopted Budget*, City of Tigard, page 30, [http://www.tigard-or.gov/help\\_me\\_to/Document\\_Center.php#](http://www.tigard-or.gov/help_me_to/Document_Center.php#).

<sup>31</sup> *FY 2014-2015 Adopted Budget*, City of Tigard, page 149, [http://www.tigard-or.gov/document\\_center/City\\_Budget/public\\_works.pdf](http://www.tigard-or.gov/document_center/City_Budget/public_works.pdf).

<sup>32</sup> *Id.* at page 147.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.* at page 146.

<sup>34</sup> *Parks and Trails*, City of Tigard, <http://www.tigard-or.gov/community/parks.php>.

**Table 1. Comparison of Three Oregon Cities**

	<b>Tigard</b>	<b>Eugene</b>	<b>Ashland</b>
<b>Population</b>	49,140	160,775	20,340
<b>Total City Budget</b>	\$244.7 million	\$567.5 million	\$101 million
<b>Parks Budget</b>	\$1.9 million	\$11.2 million	\$7.9 million
<b>Parks Acres</b>	544	4,500	785
<b>Parks FTE</b>	10.75	80	43.8
<b>Parks dollars spent per resident</b>	\$38.67	\$69.66	\$388.40

Based on review of information from the Cities of Eugene and Ashland, and other materials, the following are potential revenue sources the City of Tigard could pursue.

## **A. Revenue Generating Options**

### **1. User Fees**

There are a variety of fees the City of Tigard could charge within its park system. One option to generate funds for maintenance is to charge day use fees, similar to the model used by Oregon State Parks. For example, daily passes are \$5 per day per vehicle.<sup>35</sup> People can also purchase 12-month or 24-month passes, for \$30 and \$50, respectively. Lane County Parks charges \$40 for an annual pass and \$4 for a day use pass.<sup>36</sup> This option may not be as popular with the citizens of Tigard and will likely not generate a large amount of money quickly, but over time could be a source of revenue for the City.

Other possible fees include creating/increasing fees to use specific amenities or recreational facilities.

For example, Ashland generates revenues through fees and charges that remain within the Parks and Recreation Department and account for about 17 percent of the fund revenues.<sup>37</sup> Ashland's Recreation Division includes in its goals to "[establish] appropriate fees based on direct costs of activities."<sup>38</sup> The Recreation Division oversees facility rentals for all indoor facilities, including the Ashland

<sup>35</sup> *Day use permits*, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (2015), [http://www.oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=visit.dsp\\_dayuse](http://www.oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=visit.dsp_dayuse).

<sup>36</sup> *Passes and Permits*, Lane County Parks, [http://reservations.lanecounty.org/reservations/pass\\_sales.asp?actiontype=display\\_product](http://reservations.lanecounty.org/reservations/pass_sales.asp?actiontype=display_product).

<sup>37</sup> Dave Kanner and Lee Tuneberg, *Adopted 2013-2015 Biennium*, City of Ashland, page 3-125 (July 1, 2013), <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=15521>.

<sup>38</sup> *Id.* at page 3-131.

Community Center and the Ashland Senior Center.<sup>39</sup> Outdoor facilities managed include ball field and lighting rentals and picnic area rentals in Lithia Park and various neighborhood parks.

In Eugene, the budget notes that “[u]ser fees are the fastest growing source of revenues for the entire budget.”<sup>40</sup>

## 2. Naming rights

Certain parks could be developed or improved with specific facilities in mind that could then have the naming rights sold and the revenue put toward park maintenance. In addition, the naming rights of existing or future parks could be sold to generate revenue. It could be beneficial to the City as well as local or regional businesses that wish to advertise.

One example is the City of Medford’s U.S. Cellular Community Park. The park is described as “a \$32 million, 132-acre state-of-the-art sports park owned by the City of Medford and operated by the Medford Parks and Recreation Department.”<sup>41</sup> In 2007, U.S. Cellular purchased facility-naming rights as part of a six year, \$650,000 agreement.<sup>42</sup> It was the largest public facility per-year naming rights agreement in Oregon history.<sup>43</sup>

The U.S. Cellular Community Park was a very large capital investment for the City of Medford, but smaller sports fields, community pools, or event pavilions could be developed and the naming rights sold to generate funds for the City of Tigard.

## 3. Taxes

It is important to note the distinction between a tax and a fee. As mentioned above, the 2014 League of Oregon Cities conference included a session titled “Creative Revenue Streams for Municipalities.” Panelist Harvey W. Rogers of Hawkins Delafield & Wood LLP discussed this distinction, “[a] fee is a charge that government imposes when it provides a particular service.”<sup>44</sup> The amount of a fee has to be commensurate with the cost of providing the service.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, “[a] tax is a charge that is imposed to raise general revenues that are used for purposes not directly related to the asset or activity that is taxed.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> *Id.* at page 3-134.

<sup>40</sup> Jon R. Ruiz, *FY15 Adopted Budget*, City of Eugene, page 44 (July 24, 2014), <https://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=1623>.

<sup>41</sup> *About USCCP*, Medford Parks & Recreation Department (2015), [http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about\\_usccp](http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about_usccp).

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*

<sup>44</sup> Harvey W. Rogers, “The Distinction between a ‘tax’ and a ‘fee,’” slide 14, League of Oregon Cities 2014 Conference Archive (Sept. 26, 2014), <http://www.orcities.org/portals/17/conference/2014/handouts/friday/4CreativeRevenue926pm2.pdf>.

<sup>45</sup> *Id.*

<sup>46</sup> *Id.*

The difference is important because fees can be relatively easy to impose, but their uses may be limited, whereas taxes can be relatively difficult to impose, but the revenue can be used for nearly anything.<sup>47</sup>

In the previous discussion of naming rights, the City of Medford was able to build the U.S. Cellular Community Park in part because certain tax revenues were used. In the late 1990s, the plans to build the park were initiated.<sup>48</sup> In June 2000, the City Council approved *Resolution R2000-115*, which submitted to the voters the question amending the Medford Charter “to authorize the Council to impose a Transient Lodging Tax not to exceed 9 percent on gross room receipts, and distributed 50 percent to the General Fund, 25 percent to debt service for the sports park, and 25 percent to the Travel Medford contract.”<sup>49</sup> In November of 2000, the voters approved the hotel-motel tax, which generated park funding. Additionally, the City also increased system development charges. In June of 2005, the Medford City Council approved *Ordinance 2005-119* implementing a five percent rental on vehicles at the Rogue Valley International Airport.<sup>50</sup> In December of 2006, the Medford City Council approved *Ordinance 2006-274*, increasing the Park Utility Fee (PUF) by \$2.56 per month and per unit for debt service payment to provide for Phase Two and Three funding of the sports park.<sup>51</sup> The naming rights were purchased in June 2007 and in May 2008, the five-field softball/baseball complex opened, with the multi-sport complex of six fields opening in May 2009.<sup>52</sup> In October 2013, the City Council approved *Ordinance 2013-137*, increasing the tax on rental vehicles to 12.5 percent at the Rogue Valley International Airport.<sup>53</sup>

This project was a very large capital investment for the City of Medford, and the City of Tigard may not want to invest in a project that requires as much revenue and time. The City could, however, consider the possibility of using a portion of certain taxes, such as the hotel-motel tax, car rental tax, or meal tax to fund park maintenance.

However, citizens may resist tax increases, so it may help to show how the tax increase will benefit the community in measureable ways. In the U.S. Cellular

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<sup>47</sup> Harvey W. Rogers, “Tax or a Fee: who cares?” slide 15, League of Oregon Cities 2014 Conference Archive (Sept. 26, 2014),

<http://www.orcities.org/portals/17/conference/2014/handouts/friday/4CreativeRevenue926pm2.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> *About USCCP*, Medford Parks & Recreation Department (2015),

[http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about\\_usccp](http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about_usccp).

<sup>49</sup> Brian Sjothun, “Funding U.S. Cellular Community Park” slide 40, League of Oregon Cities 2014 Conference Archive (Sept. 2, 2014),

<http://www.orcities.org/portals/17/conference/2014/handouts/friday/4CreativeRevenue926pm2.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> Brian Sjothun, “Funding U.S. Cellular Community Park” slide 40, League of Oregon Cities 2014 Conference Archive (Sept. 2, 2014),

<http://www.orcities.org/portals/17/conference/2014/handouts/friday/4CreativeRevenue926pm2.pdf>.

<sup>51</sup> *Id.*

<sup>52</sup> *About USCCP*, Medford Parks & Recreation Department (2015),

[http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about\\_usccp](http://www.sportsmedford.com/ssp/about_usccp).

<sup>53</sup> Brian Sjothun, “Funding U.S. Cellular Community Park” slide 40, League of Oregon Cities 2014 Conference Archive (Sept. 2, 2014),

<http://www.orcities.org/portals/17/conference/2014/handouts/friday/4CreativeRevenue926pm2.pdf>.

Community Park Annual Report of 2013, it was reported that the park hosted 41 tournaments or events that attracted 1,325 teams, which spent an estimated \$5.1 million.<sup>54</sup> In order to arrive at this economic impact amount, spending data was collected from tournament directors about the approximate amounts each team spent on entry fees, food and beverages, entertainment, retail shopping, transportation expenses, and lodging.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. Donations

The City of Tigard could consider allowing people to memorialize their loved ones with a remembrance bench, plaque, or plant. The person would pay an amount to have the bench or plaque installed in the park of their choice. Alternatively, a donor could pay to commemorate a person with a bench that already exists in a park. People could also pay for a memorial plant, such as a tree or rhododendron, which would then be planted in a park.

These ideas do not have to be exclusively for remembrances, but could also be promoted as a way for individuals and businesses to contribute to the parks as a charitable and tax-deductible gift, if the City chooses this particular model.

In Eugene, the Parks and Open Space Division has the Eugene Park Stewards Legacy Program, which was established to “encourage individuals, businesses, and community organizations to participate in enhancing Eugene’s vibrant parks and natural areas.”<sup>56</sup> Sponsorships range from benches and trail renovation to natural area restoration and playground equipment. These charitable gifts can be tax-deductible.

Currently, the Eugene Park Stewards Legacy Program is focused only on “existing and available standard-style commemorative benches within the park system, and on helping fund capital renovation projects that will reduce ongoing maintenance costs.”<sup>57</sup> In addition to benches, picnic tables are also available to sponsor.

At this time, Eugene has two types of benches available for people to sponsor. These cost between \$1,000 and \$2,500 depending on which park they are in and the type of bench.<sup>58</sup> Depending on the type of bench, a bronze plaque is either inset into the backrest or into the bench face.<sup>59</sup>

The bronze plaques are 2 inches by 10 inches and the inscription is three lines with a 45 characters per line maximum, including spacing and punctuation.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Medford Parks & Recreation Department, *U.S. Cellular Community Park Annual Report*, page 6 (2013), [http://playmedford.awssports.com/multimedia/docs/2013\\_USCCP\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](http://playmedford.awssports.com/multimedia/docs/2013_USCCP_Annual_Report.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*

<sup>56</sup> *Donate*, Eugene Parks and Open Space, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=631>.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

<sup>58</sup> *Bench Adoptions*, Eugene Parks and Open Space, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=631>.

<sup>59</sup> *Id.*

<sup>60</sup> *Id.*

The costs noted above for each bench includes the bench purchase, inset plaque, and limited maintenance agreement.<sup>61</sup> Beyond that time any necessary repair or replacement becomes the responsibility of the donor.<sup>62</sup> The City of Eugene’s policy is that it takes no responsibility, at any time, to replace stolen or vandalized plaques.<sup>63</sup>

The City of Eugene also accepts donations through the Eugene Park Stewards Legacy Program.<sup>64</sup>

In Eugene, the budget includes special revenue funds, which are used to account for the proceeds of certain revenue sources that are legally restricted to expenditure for specific purposes.<sup>65</sup> Two park-related funds receive donations. There is the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (185), which includes donation and grant revenue for recreation equipment or scholarship purposes.<sup>66</sup> The resources in this fund “are appropriated to honor the intent of the granting agencies or the donor request.”<sup>67</sup> There is also the Parks Maintenance Fund (187), which includes donation and grant revenue for capital projects specific for park maintenance and development.<sup>68</sup>

In Ashland, revenues for the Parks and Recreation Fund include charges for services, interest, and donations.<sup>69</sup> In 2012, the City had \$9,556 in donations.<sup>70</sup>

## 5. Use resources from other funds

Usually there is a connection between parks and the need to filter stormwater. The City could consider increasing stormwater fees and using that revenue to finance park maintenance. Currently, the City of Eugene is considering an increase in the stormwater utility charge paid by residents and businesses to meet its park maintenance backlog.

Eugene Parks and Open Spaces has come to realize a gap of \$2 million in annual operations and maintenance due to budget reductions, deferred maintenance, and an increase in illegal activities.<sup>71</sup> By increasing the stormwater fees, Eugene Parks and Open Spaces hopes to raise about \$500,000.<sup>72</sup> The

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<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> *Id.*

<sup>63</sup> *Id.*

<sup>64</sup> *Donate*, Eugene Parks and Open Space, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=631>.

<sup>65</sup> Jon R. Ruiz, *FY15 Adopted Budget*, City of Eugene, page 110 (July 24, 2014), <https://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=1623>.

<sup>66</sup> *Id.* at page 121.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.*

<sup>68</sup> *Id.*

<sup>69</sup> Dave Kanner and Lee Tuneberg, *Adopted 2013-2015 Biennium*, City of Ashland, page 4-87 (July 1, 2013), <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=15521>.

<sup>70</sup> *Id.*

<sup>71</sup> Eugene Parks and Open Space, *The State of Eugene’s Parks and Natural Areas*, page 2 (2014) at <http://www.eugene-or.gov/parks>.

<sup>72</sup> Telephone interview with Craig Carnagey, Director of Eugene’s Parks and Open Space Division (July 27, 2015).

current estimate on how much to increase the fee is about \$1 per household per month.<sup>73</sup>

In Eugene, the owner of a medium-sized home now pays approximately \$146 a year in stormwater fees.<sup>74</sup> For example, if the City boosted the rate by 3 percent, to raise about \$450,000 annually for parks maintenance, the bill for the owner of a medium-sized home would increase more than \$4 a year, to an annual rate of nearly \$150.<sup>75</sup> Exact rates, however, have yet to be determined and the Eugene City Council will be discussing the proposal with more analysis likely later in the year.<sup>76</sup>

This option would likely be unpopular with the citizens of Tigard, and the City should consider taking a wait-and-see approach in order to evaluate how such a plan might work in Eugene.

## **B. Community involvement options**

### **1. Volunteer groups**

The City of Ashland has a program called “Volunteers in Parks” or “VIP.” A Volunteer and Events Coordinator was hired in November 2010 to develop the VIP program.<sup>77</sup> The City budget states, “[v]olunteers continue to play a pivotal role in the success of programs and services offered throughout the department.”<sup>78</sup> The program goals include, (1) supporting the City’s integrated pest management policy (pesticide-free parks); (2) managing all volunteers utilized throughout the department; and (3) safely allowing volunteer opportunities with staff management (tracking waivers and checking in/out).<sup>79</sup>

Volunteers in the City of Ashland accumulated approximately 8,681 hours in 2011, the equivalent to 4.17 full time employees.<sup>80</sup> In 2012, volunteers logged 12,126 hours, the equivalent to 5.84 full time employees.<sup>81</sup>

The City of Eugene’s volunteer program is called the Eugene Park Stewards. Its mission is to “build an informed and engaged community dedicated to addressing the needs of Parks and Open Space through ongoing stewardship.”<sup>82</sup> The City employs three volunteer coordinators, one of whom is dedicated to

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<sup>73</sup> *Id.*

<sup>74</sup> Edward Russo, *Eugene levy would allow restored library hours*, The Register-Guard (June 14, 2015), <http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/33190273-75/eugene-council-to-consider-library-tax-levy.html.csp>.

<sup>75</sup> *Id.*

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> Dave Kanner and Lee Tuneberg, *Adopted 2013-2015 Biennium*, City of Ashland, page 3-132 (July 1, 2013), <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=15521>.

<sup>78</sup> *Id.*

<sup>79</sup> *Id.*

<sup>80</sup> *Id.*

<sup>81</sup> *Id.*

<sup>82</sup> *Eugene Park Stewards*, Eugene Parks and Open Spaces, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=495>.

coordinating the community garden program.<sup>83</sup> Volunteers maintain trails, dog parks, landscape beds, tree wells, community gardens, specialty gardens, and the Native Plant Nursery.<sup>84</sup> They also help remove invasive species and plant friendlier species in their place, as well as water plants and grass.<sup>85</sup> The City provides tools, gloves, and snacks, and keeps a calendar of volunteer opportunities online.<sup>86</sup>

The Eugene Park Steward volunteers gave more than 10,000 hours of service in 2013, amounting to an in-kind donation of more than \$200,000,<sup>87</sup>

When considering organizing volunteer opportunities, the City may want to weigh the benefit of a volunteer group against the cost and time to the City. Establishing a volunteer program and keeping a calendar of regular events would likely encourage the citizens of Tigard to become more involved and could potentially create pride and investment in the City's parks.

## 2. Park adoption

In Eugene, volunteers and service organizations can adopt a park, and in doing so, make a two-year agreement to participate in a certain number of work parties per year.<sup>88</sup>

In addition, there is a program called Park Watch, which is a collaboration between the Eugene Police Department, Parks and Open Spaces, and the Recreation division.<sup>89</sup> The program works with the community to make the parks as safe as they can be for those who use and work in the parks.<sup>90</sup> Members of the public can use the Park Watch website or their mobile phone to report safety issues from bike path hazards to graffiti to irrigation problems.<sup>91</sup> This gives the public a way to report issues they think are important and for the appropriate department to respond.

The City of Tigard could develop a similar park adoption plan to encourage the public to maintain certain areas or particular parks that require less specialized maintenance. In addition, the City could develop a Park Watch type program or a neighborhood group to be the eyes and ears of the park in its area. This could include organizing neighborhood park trash pick up days or weekend weeding parties where the park adopters or neighborhood group spends a certain amount of

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<sup>83</sup> Telephone interview with Craig Carnagey, Director of Eugene's Parks and Open Space Division (July 27, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> *Eugene Park Stewards FAQ*, Eugene Parks and Open Spaces, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/FAQ.aspx?FID=1007&NID=495>.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> *Id.*

<sup>87</sup> Eugene Parks and Open Space, *The State of Eugene's Parks and Natural Areas*, page 10 (2014) at <http://www.eugene-or.gov/parks>.

<sup>88</sup> *Id.*

<sup>89</sup> *Park Watch – Report A Safety Issue*, Eugene Parks and Open Space, <http://www.eugene-or.gov/index.aspx?NID=2411>.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.*

<sup>91</sup> *Id.*

time cleaning the park. This would help the City and encourage public pride and involvement in parks

### 3. Specific user groups

For parks that include infrastructure intended for specific activity types, such as a baseball field, soccer field, skate park, or dog park, the City could consider recruiting community members or school teams that use those facilities for monthly work parties. These days could be devoted to picking up trash, mowing the lawn, weeding flower beds, removing invasive species, planting, and watering. The City could customize these work days to the specific needs of the particular park or sports facility used by the team.

## C. Other options

### 1. SDCs

On July 14, 2009, the Tigard City Council adopted a new Park System Master Plan<sup>92</sup> and on July 26, 2011, the Tigard City Council adopted a Trail System Master Plan.<sup>93</sup> On March 23, 2012, the City of Tigard received a Parks & Recreation System Development Study (SDC Study) done by the FCS Group.<sup>94</sup>

The FCS Group study determined that based on its analysis of the City's two master plans, the City did not have excess capacity in its parks system, and therefore no basis for a reimbursement fee.<sup>95</sup>

The FCS Group study also looked at Tigard's population growth. In 2009, the City's population was 47,838.<sup>96</sup> The study noted that the City of Tigard was expected to add 15,204 residents over 19 years at a compound average growth rate of 1.46 percent per year.<sup>97</sup> As of 2014, the City's population was 49,140. Over the course of five years, from 2009 to 2014, the number of residents has increased by 0.54 percent. Since this falls short of the predicted rate, the City may want to consider updating the SDC Study.

General obligation bonds and parks SDCs cannot be used for the operation and maintenance of parks, according to Oregon state law.<sup>98</sup> Capital funding may only be used for projects that result in the creation, expansion, or restoration of park infrastructure and may not be used to maintain that infrastructure.<sup>99</sup> Because of

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<sup>92</sup> FCS Group, *Report for Parks & Recreation System Development Charge Study*, page 1 (March 23, 2012).

<sup>93</sup> *Id.*

<sup>94</sup> See generally FCS Group, *Report for Parks & Recreation System Development Charge Study*, page 1 (March 23, 2012).

<sup>95</sup> FCS Group, *Report for Parks & Recreation System Development Charge Study*, page 5 (March 23, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> *Id.*

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*

<sup>98</sup> Eugene Parks and Open Space, *The State of Eugene's Parks and Natural Areas*, page 4 (2014) at <http://www.eugene-or.gov/parks>.

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

these limitations on funds, any park infrastructure restoration projects should be done with the goal of reducing maintenance.

## 2. Outside contractor

The City may want to consider studying the possibility of cost savings from having an outside company maintain the City's parks. The City could solicit bids as part of an analysis to determine whether or not this should be considered. The City should discuss with City employees the benefits of potential savings against what is likely to be an unpopular idea.

In the meantime, the City could consider mowing the grass, pruning bushes, and picking up trash in parks less frequently than current levels.

## 3. Creating a separate parks department or separate parks district

The City of Tigard could consider creating a separate parks department from the Public Works Department, which would allow the City to dedicate a portion of the budget solely to the maintenance of parks.

Another option would be creating a separate parks district. The City of Ashland has a separate Parks Commission with an elected board of five members. The Commission "has the power to adopt by-laws, rules, and regulations for the proper conduct of public recreation in the City [of Ashland]."<sup>100</sup>

The structure of the Ashland Parks and Recreation Department includes a Director of Parks and Recreation and an Executive Secretary. From there, the department is divided into three groups with a Parks Superintendent, a Recreation Superintendent, and a Golf Manager.

Creating a separate district for parks allows for greater control and the potential for the district to generate its own revenue through property taxes, rather than depending on the general fund.

The City of Eugene has also discussed the idea of establishing a separate parks district.<sup>101</sup> By doing so, it would create a dedicated revenue stream for parks, although the tax base would still be the same.<sup>102</sup> It would create a different type of governing, but not a different revenue source.<sup>103</sup> It is an idea that the City of Eugene will continue to look at as it investigates options for funding its own park maintenance.<sup>104</sup>

In considering creating a separate parks district, the City of Tigard will likely want to consider the political implications of such a decision. It would create a

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<sup>100</sup> *Ashland Parks & Recreation Commission*, City of Ashland, <http://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=12878>.

<sup>101</sup> Telephone interview with Craig Carnagey, Director of Eugene's Parks and Open Space Division (July 27, 2015).

<sup>102</sup> *Id.*

<sup>103</sup> *Id.*

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

different type of governing for parks, but would not necessarily generate more revenue.

## Conclusion

The City of Tigard is not alone in trying to find options to fund park maintenance. There is likely no one method on its own that will be able to fully fund park maintenance. Rather, a combination of options will likely provide the revenue needed. Some of the above options, such as increasing stormwater fees, increasing taxes, looking at the possibility of hiring an outside contractor, and creating a separate parks district have political ramifications that the Tigard City Council will likely want to consider before taking any action. Other options, such as establishing a volunteer program and boosting donations, are not likely to be met with opposition from Tigard citizens. Work that will optimize the value of the City's parks can create pride in the community and encourage parks investment now and in the future.