

Appendix A

Community Needs Assessment

This appendix includes the community profile, summaries of the community and youth workshops and parks commission interviews, regional outdoor recreation trends, and household survey findings. The community profile presents demographic, economic, and housing trends considered in the parks planning process. The community and youth workshop summaries describe the methodology for conducting the workshops and the key findings for each workshop. The parks commission interview section summarizes the strengths, weaknesses and vision elicited from the interviews with Parks Commission members. The outdoor recreation trends section identifies national and state trends in recreation participation. The household survey section includes the survey, survey responses, and a summary of the open-ended questions and comments portion.

Community Profile

When designing a parks system, a community needs to know exactly how many people use the system currently, and how many people will use the system in the future. Examining the population's characteristics such as age, race, and income will help give an idea not just of the number of people using the park, but the types of parks they will want to use. Different people use parks differently. This section provides a brief history of the location and setting of Talent to place the park system and community features into a larger context. This section concludes with a brief analysis of building trends and types of future growth expected in the City. All of these factors, when considered together, present a complete picture of the type, location, and priority for park development and maintenance in the city's park system.

Location and History

Talent is located in Jackson County and the Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon. Its closest cities are Medford, which is seven miles to the north, and Ashland, which is four miles to the south. Talent is located along Interstate 5, which provides strong connectivity for the town. The city is surrounded by the Cascade Mountains to the east, and the Siskiyou mountains to the south and west. Bear Creek flows along the east side of the City, and Wagner Creek flows through the center of the city. The mountains and creeks are natural resources, and are considered in the parks planning process.

Early settlers saw the natural resources of the area as an asset. Several attempts were made to claim the Bear Creek area near Talent, but it was not until Joseph Wagner arrived in 1852 that the area was formally claimed. More settlers followed, and in 1910, Talent became an incorporated town.

Talent enjoys moderate Oregon temperatures, with average temperatures of 20-65 degrees in the winter, and 65-110 degrees in the summer. The average annual precipitation is 19.76".

Demographics

Population Trends

Analyzing population trends helps to project current and future population needs and is an important part of designing a park system. Talent has a much higher rate of population growth than Jackson County or Oregon as a whole. Between 1990 and 2004, Talent's population grew 80%. In comparison, Jackson County grew by 30% while the state grew by 26%. The average annual growth rate (AAGR) for Talent during this time period is 4.3%, more than twice the rate of Jackson County (1.9%) and the state of Oregon (1.7%). Both the overall growth rate and the AAGR show that Talent is growing more than twice as fast as either the county or the state. Since Talent is growing at a greater rate than Jackson County, it is not surprising that Talent now comprises a larger percentage of Jackson County's population. In 1980, Talent housed 1.9% of Jackson County's population. By 2004, Talent was home to 3.4% of Jackson County's population. Table A-1 shows population trends in Talent, Jackson County and Oregon between 1980 and 2004.

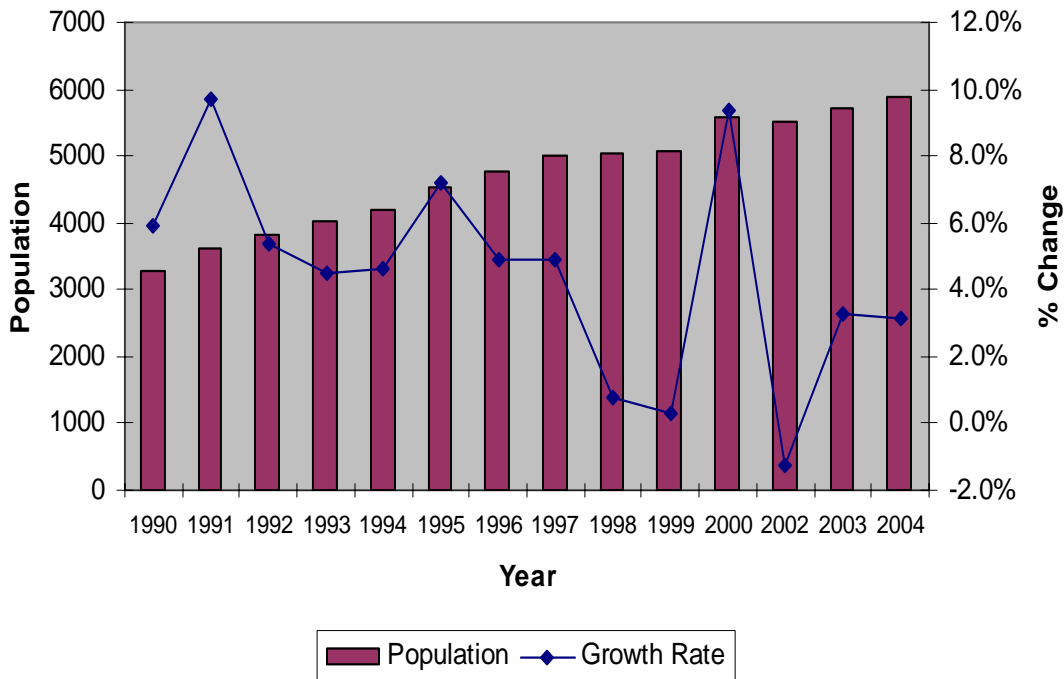
Table A-1. Population Trends in Talent, Jackson County and Oregon, 1980, 1990-2004

Year	Talent			Jackson County		Oregon	
	Population	% Change	Talent as a % of Jackson County	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
1980	2577	n/a	1.9%	132,456	n/a	2,633,156	n/a
1990	3274	27.0%	2.2%	146,389	10.5%	2,842,321	7.9%
1991	3625	10.7%	2.4%	150,930	3.1%	2,927,800	3.0%
1992	3830	5.7%	2.5%	154,940	2.7%	2,990,610	2.1%
1993	4010	4.7%	2.5%	159,020	2.6%	3,059,110	2.3%
1994	4205	4.9%	2.6%	163,490	2.8%	3,119,940	2.0%
1995	4530	7.7%	2.7%	167,330	2.3%	3,182,690	2.0%
1996	4765	5.2%	2.8%	170,660	2.0%	3,245,100	2.0%
1997	5010	5.1%	2.9%	173,460	1.6%	3,302,140	1.8%
1998	5050	0.8%	2.9%	176,570	1.8%	3,350,080	1.5%
1999	5065	0.3%	2.8%	179,610	1.7%	3,393,410	1.3%
2000	5589	10.3%	3.1%	182,200	1.4%	3,421,399	0.8%
2001	n/a	n/a	n/a	184,700	1.4%	3,471,700	1.5%
2002	5520	n/a	2.9%	187,600	1.6%	3,504,700	1.0%
2003	5705	3.4%	3.0%	189,100	0.8%	3,541,500	1.1%
2004	5890	3.2%	3.1%	191,200	1.1%	3,582,600	1.2%
% Change 1990 to 2004		79.9%	n/a	n/a	30.6%	n/a	26.0%
AAGR 1990 to 2003		4.3%	n/a		1.9%		1.7%

Sources: US Census, 1980, 1990, 2000 Summary File 1, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, Portland State University Population Estimates

Talent's population grew most rapidly between 1999 and 2000, growing 10.3% in that year. In 2002, Talent actually experienced a negative growth rate, the only instance in the 1990-2004 time period in which the city did not have a positive population growth. This may be due to the building moratorium in existence from 1998 to 2002. Figure A-1 shows the population trends in Talent from 1990 until 2004. The bars indicate actual population size, while the line indicates the growth rate, expressed as a percentage of change (shown on the right axis).

Figure A-1. Population Growth, Talent, 1990-2004

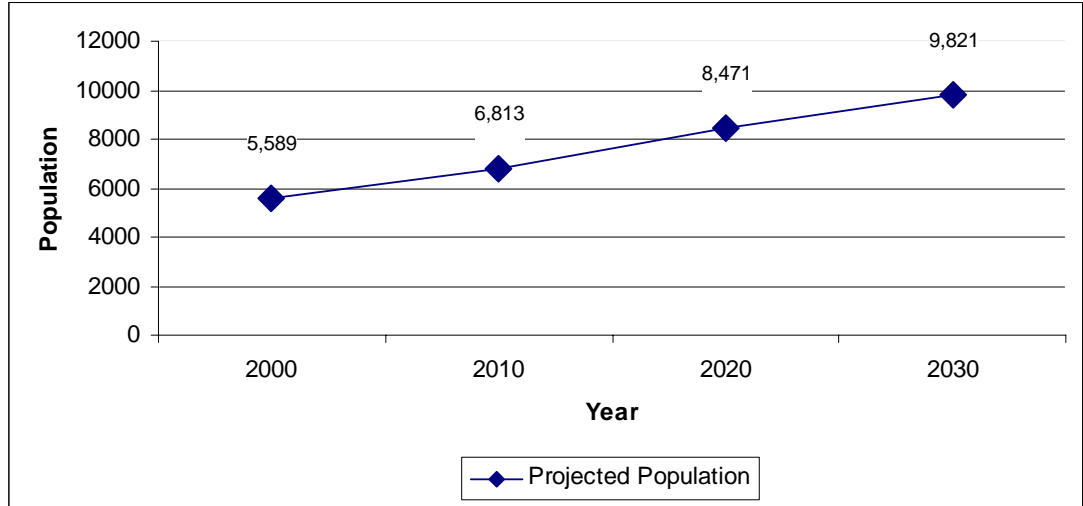


Source: Portland State University Population Research Center

According to population projections in the Our Region report produced by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, and based upon the 2000 Census population figures, Talent will continue to experience significant growth over the next 20 years.

By 2030, the population of Talent is projected to almost reach 10,000, nearly double the 5,589 population recorded by the US Census Bureau in 2000. To ensure that the 20-year park master plan will meet the needs of citizens in 2026, the city will need to consider future population growth when developing its system priorities. How the city is growing, the population trends, economic trends, and building trends will help to create a picture of the types of growth the city will need to plan for. Figure A-2 shows the population projection for Talent from 2000-2030.

Figure A-2. Population Projection, 2000-2030



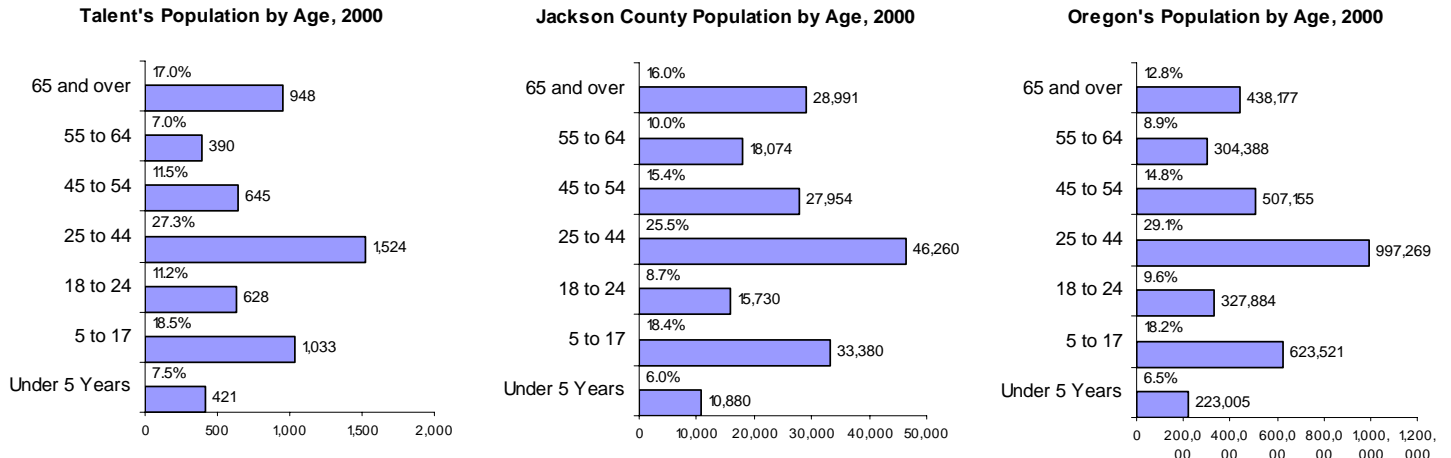
Source: Rogue Valley Council of Governments, 2001

Age Characteristics

It is important for a park system to meet the recreational needs of all a city’s residents. Age is an important factor to consider when looking to meet recreational needs, because different age groups have very different recreational habits. Parks serve as playgrounds, exercise spaces, places to relax and enjoy nature, picnic, barbeque, and engage in group sports. Looking at the current and future age projections for Talent helps to determine the types of recreational needs that are important to address in a park master plan.

As Figure A-3 shows, Talent has a higher percentage of youth under the age of 17 and a higher percentage of citizens over the age of 65 than Jackson County or Oregon as a whole.

Figure A-3. Age Distribution of Talent, Jackson County and Oregon, 2000

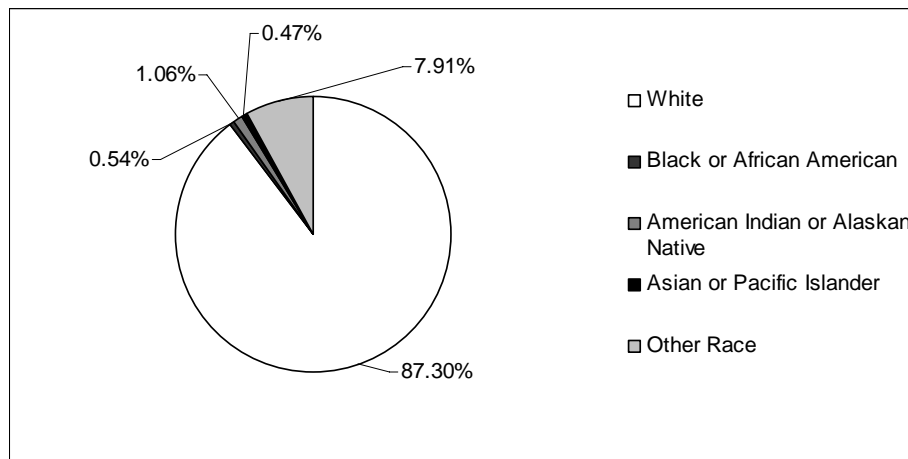


Source: US Census Summary File Tape 1, 2000

Racial Characteristics

Talent is predominantly a white community, as is much of Jackson County and Oregon. Between 1990 and 2000, citizens of Hispanic origin grew from 7.9% to 12.4%, making Hispanic or Latino ethnicity the fastest growing minority of the region. Other studies have shown that different ethnic or racial groups use parks and recreation services in different manners. The city will want to consider the ways in which these groups may use the parks and recreation services in this area. If the city continues to grow racially and ethnically more diverse, then further efforts should be made to ensure that the park system is meeting the needs of more diverse populations.

Figure A-4. Racial Composition of Talent, 2000



Source: US Census Bureau Summary Tape File 3, 2000

Table A-2. Racial Composition and Hispanic Ethnicity for Talent, Jackson County, Oregon, 1990 and 2000

Race or Ethnicity	Talent		Jackson County		Oregon	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	91.8%	87.3%	95.8%	91.6%	92.8%	86.6%
Black or African American	0.2%	0.5%	0.2%	0.4%	1.6%	1.6%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	1.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	1.3%
Asian or Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.5%	1.0%	1.1%	2.4%	3.2%
Other Race	6.6%	7.9%	1.8%	2.9%	1.8%	4.2%
Two or More Races	n/a	2.7%	n/a	2.9%	n/a	3.1%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	7.9%	12.4%	4.1%	6.7%	4.0%	8.0%

n/a = data not available

source: US Census Summary File Tape 1, 1990 and 2000

Economic Characteristics

It is important to consider economic characteristics of a city when determining priorities for a parks plan. A community's support of, desire for, and willingness to pay for parks and recreation is often directly related to the strength its economic base. Knowing a community's economic profile will also aid the city in preparing

grants and applying for alternate funding sources to help pay for the parks and recreation projects.

The median household, family, and per capita income in 2000 were lower in Talent than in Jackson County and Oregon. Accordingly, the percentage of families and individuals living below the poverty level in 2000 were higher in Talent than in Jackson County or Oregon. Table A-3 shows income and poverty data for Talent, Jackson County and Oregon in 2000.

Table A-3. Income and Poverty, Talent, Jackson County, and Oregon, 2000

	Talent	Jackson County	Oregon
Median Household Income	29,063	36,461	40,916
Median Family Income	33,333	43,675	48,680
Per Capita Income	16,271	19,498	20,940
% of Families below the Poverty Level	10.6%	8.7%	7.9%
% of Individuals below the Poverty Level	4.8%	3.8%	3.7%

Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000 Summary Tape File 3

The average wage for the Medford – Ashland area is \$14.13/hour. The average wage in the Eugene – Springfield area is \$15.26 per hour, and the average wage in the Portland – Vancouver area is \$17.43 per hour. Compared to other areas in Oregon, Talent, located between Ashland and Medford, has a smaller average hourly wage of \$13.76 per hour.

Housing

Data about housing characteristics create a picture of how new construction is being added to a community, where it is being added, and the types of families or homes that are being built. For a parks plan, this provides useful information regarding the location and development of parks in the system, and possible funding sources from System Development Charges and taxes to purchase or maintain the parks.

Housing Tenure

The percent of owner-occupied housing in Talent has dropped from 67% in 1990 to 55% in 2000. This drop in owner-occupied housing units has been accompanied by a rise in renter-occupied housing, from 29% in 1990 to 40% in 2000. As shown in Table A-4, Jackson County’s percentages of owner- and renter-occupied housing have stayed constant. This move towards a higher renter population is not a county trend, but a city trend. Vacant homes are not common, at an average 5% for both Talent and Jackson County over the 1990-2000 year period.

Table A-4. Housing Tenure, Talent and Jackson County, 1990 and 2000

	Talent				Jackson County			
	1990		2000		1990		2000	
	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	%	Housing Units	%
Owner Occupied	965	67%	1,332	55%	37,920	63%	47,574	63%
Renter Occupied	422	29%	976	40%	19,318	32%	23,958	32%
Vacant Housing	51	4%	112	5%	3,138	5%	4,205	6%
Total Units	1,438	100%	2,420	100%	60,376	100%	75,737	100%

Source: US Census, Summary Tape File 3, 2000

Housing Type

Talent's housing in 2000 consisted primarily of single-family detached homes (see Table A-5). At 45.9%, single-family housing is by far the largest housing type. Mobile homes, at 25%, are the second largest housing type. Recent growth and an increase in building permits issued (Table A-6) indicate that the number of single-family detached housing units is continuing to grow.

Table A-5. Housing Type, Talent, 2000

	Number	Percent
Units In Structure	2,420	
1-unit, detached	1,110	45.9%
1- unit, attached	76	3.1%
2 units	121	5.0%
3 or 4 units	231	9.5%
5 to 9 units	106	4.4%
10 to 19 units	30	1.2%
20 or more units	123	5.1%
Mobile home	605	25.0%
<u>Boat, RV, van, etc.</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0.7%</u>
Total Housing Units	2,420	100.0%

Source: City of Talent

Building Permits

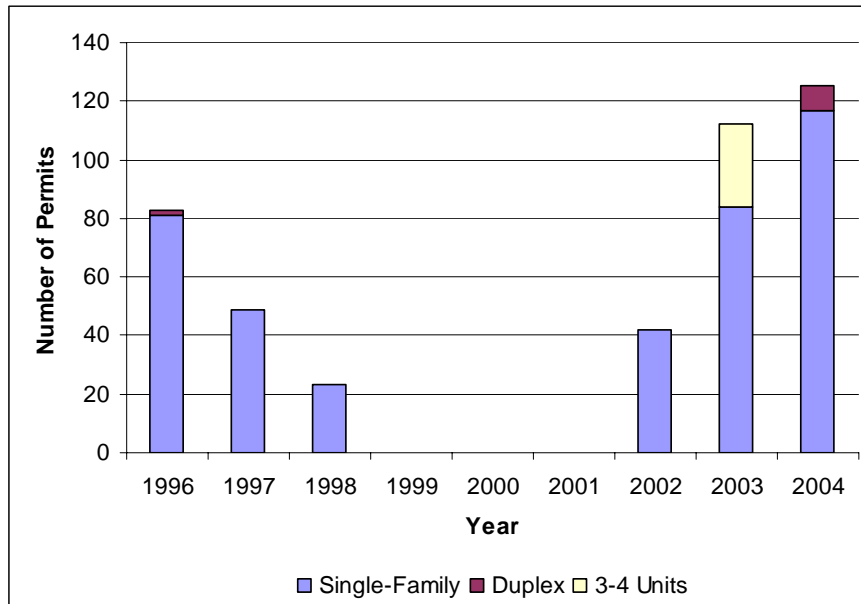
The number and types of building permits issued can also be an indication of growth trends. As Table A-6 shows, Talent is primarily issuing permits for single-family housing construction. During the 1999-2001 years there were no permits issued at all, due to the building moratorium. However in 2003, one year after the building moratorium was issued, the number of building permits issued (182) was greater than the total amount issued during the previous six year period. Another 133 building permits were issued in 2004.

Table A-6. Dwelling Units Permitted by Type, 1996-2004

Year	Single-Family	Duplex	3-4 Units	Total Estimated Dwelling Units Permitted
1996	81	2	0	83
1997	49	0	0	49
1998	23	0	0	23
1999	0	0	0	0
2000	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	0
2002	42	0	0	42
2003	84	0	28	112
2004	117	8	0	125

Source: ECO Northwest, US Census Current Construction Reports

Figure A-5. Number of Building Permits by Type, 1996-2004



Source: EcoNorthwest, US Census Current Construction Reports

Summary Findings and Key Trends

Talent is growing at nearly twice the rate as Jackson County or Oregon and this trend is expected to continue. The community profile shows six key trends:

- **Population:** Talent is growing at a faster rate than Jackson County or Oregon, and projections show that Talent will continue growing at nearly twice the rate of Jackson County or Oregon. New residential growth is primarily single-family, and the number of building permits issued has increased steadily since 2002.
- **Age:** Talent has a larger percentage of the population in the 65 and over, and the 17 and under age categories. Making sure that the park system responds to the needs for youth and elderly populations will be important.

- **Income / Poverty:** Talent has lower median household, family, and per capita incomes than Jackson County or Oregon. Talent also has a higher poverty rate than Jackson County or Oregon. Talent will need to consider this when looking at the financial base for park system development and maintenance.
- **Racial / Ethnic Diversity:** Talent is growing more racially diverse and has a higher (12%) percentage of individuals of hispanic ethnicity than does Jackson County or Oregon. Talent needs to make sure that the park system meets the diverse needs of different racial and ethnic groups.
- **Housing Trends:** Renter-occupied housing is growing in Talent, while owner-occupied housing is declining. This trend is not a county or a state trend, but unique to the city. Talent will want to consider renter versus owner uses and involvement in parks systems.
- **Natural Resources:** Talent is located in an area with significant natural resources. Bear Creek and Wagner Creek Greenways and the surrounding Cascade and Siskiyou mountains are unique to the City. The City will want to consider using the natural resources to both preserve these important features of the community and provide recreational opportunities for current and future populations.

Each of these key trends will impact the types of populations using the park, the financial base for the park system, and the types of residential growth that the park system will need to service. Reviewing and updating these trends will help ensure that the park system continues to best meet the needs of the community.

Workshop & Interview Summaries

Purpose of Workshops and Interviews

As part of the parks planning process, CPW conducted three workshops and interviewed members of the parks commission. The ideas and recommendations generated in the youth workshop, community workshop, and the Parks Commission interviews were used to formulate the vision and goals for the parks system and identify specific actions to be incorporated in the Parks Plan.

Youth Workshop Summary

On April 10th, 2006 CPW conducted two workshops with leadership students at the Talent Middle School. Because youth and adults use parks differently, it is important to actively engage youth in the planning process to better understand their park system needs and uses. To maximize available time two separate activities were conducted, one with each youth group.

Activity 1: System as a Whole. The first workshop focused on looking at a system-wide map of existing parks. Youth identified the following items as important for the parks system as a whole:

- Biking and walking routes through the community;
- Activities and play structures for older youth, not merely for elementary age youth. Examples included rock climbing, challenge course, water play areas and places for walking dogs; and
- Restrooms and water fountains located within parks.

Activity 2: Design of Whacker's Hollow/DeYoung Property. The second activity focused on specific design concepts for the undeveloped Whacker's Hollow/De Young properties. Design concepts include:

- Passive uses, such as a walking trail around the existing pond on the DeYoung property;
- Potential expanded use of the pond to include fishing or light boating;
- Active uses on the Whacker's Hollow parcel, including soccer, tennis, and/or basketball;
- Access from Suncrest road;
- Important amenities including a parking lot and restrooms.

Community Workshop Summary

CPW conducted a two-hour community workshop on the evening of April 10th, attended by over 30 community members. The purpose of the workshop was to involve the community in the planning process and to ensure that the future parks system reflects the community vision. The attendees identified the following strengths and weakness of the park system:

Strengths:

- Diversity of current parks
- Potential for connectivity
- Proximity to the Bear Creek Greenway

Weaknesses:

- Lack of connectivity
- Lack of active uses for younger youth
- Lack of community gathering spaces
- No area for walking dogs

Community members used the identified strengths and weaknesses to come up with an overall vision for a parks system. The vision will be used to guide the parks planning process for the next 20 years.

Vision elements identified during the community workshop:

- Focus on connectivity
- Balance active and passive park uses
- Improve access to parks for all areas of Talent

Parks Commission Interviews

Staff conducted phone interviews with members of the Parks Commission in February, 2006. These interviews focused on identifying the strengths and weaknesses, and vision for the parks system.

Strengths: Most commissioners felt that the developed parks were in good condition, and that there exists potential for creating a diverse park system. The commissioners also identified potential areas for new parks that would complement the existing system.

Weaknesses: The city lacks a dog park. Funding shortages to implement and maintain the parks vision was also a concern. More widespread interest in the process may lead to a successful plan. Several commissioners felt that the south end of Talent is underserved by the current parks system.

Vision: Most commissioners agreed on the following components of a parks system vision:

- Expand the parks system to provide a variety of services, both passive and active;
- Improve connectivity throughout the planning area;
- Increase community involvement and ownership of the parks system.

Outdoor Recreation Trends

This section provides an analysis of national, state and local outdoor recreation participation trends. These trends guide the development of recommendations for Talent’s park and recreation programs and facilities.

National Level

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) collects data on national level recreation trends. The NSGA collected participation data for 2004 using a representative household survey, Table A-7 represents the outdoor recreation activities applicable to the Talent area.

Table A-7: Participation Rates for Selected Activities, 1996 and 2004, US.

Activity	1996 Total Participation (in Millions)	2004 Total Participation (in millions)	% increase from 1994 to 2004	% of 2004 US population
Baseball	14.8	15.9	7.4%	5.4%
Bicycling	53.3	40.3	-24.4%	13.7%
Exercise Walking	73.3	84.7	15.6%	28.8%
Fishing	45.6	41.2	-9.6%	14.0%
Football	20.6	17.8	-13.6%	6.1%
Running	22.2	24.7	11.3%	8.4%
Skateboarding	4.7	10.3	119.1%	3.5%
Soccer	13.9	13.3	-4.3%	4.5%

Source: National Sporting Goods Association, 2004.

This national-level data illustrate a slight shift in the recreational preferences of the American public from traditional activities (i.e., soccer, football, and bicycling) to health-oriented activities (exercise walking and running) and alternative sports (skateboarding). The shift is likely attributed to changing demographics (increase in exercise walking, decrease in football), cultural acceptance of “fringe” activities such as skateboarding, and a reduction in bicycling as transportation for youth.

The national level recreation data provides a broad understanding of overall trends, yet state and regional data is needed to provide a better understanding of the types of outdoor recreation which will most directly affect Talent.

State and Regional Level

The 2003-2007 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is the 5 year plan for outdoor recreation. As a planning and information tool, the SCORP provides data on recreation participation, trends, and links to wider planning goals. Region 5 of the SCORP encompasses parts of Douglas, Josephine, and Jackson County.

SCORP data and recommendations are based on a series of household surveys, community workshops, and input from various recreation program managers throughout the state. To streamline the available information, only the most applicable outdoor recreation activities for this report is prioritized. Table A-8 shows these activities with the corresponding state and Region 5 participation rates as well as the percent change from 1987 to 2002.

Table A-8: Selected Outdoor Recreation Participation Rates, Oregon and Region 5, 2002.

Recreation Activity by Type	Statewide		Region 5	
	Participation in 2002	% Change from 1987-2002	Participation in 2002	% Change from 1987-2002
Baseball	4,479,768	69%	500,746	103%
Day Hiking	4,506,079	0%	765,902	40%
Football Rugby	2,005,697	122%	502,692	242%
Golf	9,635,657	188%	902,052	232%
Hunting: Waterfowl, upland birds and small game	1,499,764	30%	757,367	363%
Nature/Wildlife Observation	17,633,495	170%	3,601,402	226%
Outdoor Photography	4,820,311	4%	856,867	238%
Picnicking	3,998,644	-24%	574,302	51%
RV/Trailer Camping	11,033,241	95%	2,023,958	239%
Soccer	3,339,052	72%	219,137	-11%
Using Playground Equipment	8,846,220	108%	989,793	83%

Source: Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Program, 2003.

Activities which constitute a large user group and show an increase in activity should guide the park planning process. The SCORP data for Nature/Wildlife Observation and the NSGA data for Exercise Walking represent the largest user groups and percent increase across all three area classifications. Complementary activities include Outdoor Photography and Picnicking which increased in Region 5 by 226 percent and 51 percent respectively.

Additional analysis of indirect user groups identifies specific goals or objectives for the Parks Plan. For example, Hunting increased by 363% in Region 5 with a total of 757,367 participants, compared to the same 15-year period statewide it increased only 30% to roughly 1.5 million people. Over half of the state's participation in Hunting came from Region 5. This may represent actual resident usage or visitor recreational hunting; the underlying message is that Region 5 provides exceptional hunting opportunities.

The SCORP summary outlines the following important statewide recreation trends:

- The public is requesting more protection for natural resources and more opportunities for amenities such as quiet natural places, education and information.
- Recreating public has less leisure time which results in an increase for more locally-available recreation opportunities.
- An increase of baby boomer retirees has led to more requests for recreation facilities with higher amenities and accessibility.
- There is an increased need to manage conflicting uses (for example, skateboarders and bicyclists utilize the same skate facilities) as demand increases and available space decreases.

Talent's current and forecasted demographic characteristics combined with identified trends in outdoor recreation provide the basis for this plan's Goals and Objectives.

Community Survey Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the Talent Parks Survey was to capture information from the general public that could not be obtained from community workshops. Additionally, the survey was utilized to reach members of the community who might be unable to attend community workshops.

Methodology

The Community Planning Workshop (CPW) created an eight-page survey comprised of 20 questions regarding potential improvements, opinions on maintenance and acquisitions, important features of parks, willingness to fund parks and activities, as well as demographics. These questions were based upon previous park needs surveys and conversations with the Parks Commission and City staff.

The survey was distributed to 1200 households, randomly selected from voter registration records within the Talent City Limits. Prior to distribution of the survey, selected households were sent a postcard notifying them of their selection to participate. The mailing contained the survey instrument and a cover letter from the Mayor of Talent. The completed surveys were returned to CPW, via prepaid postage. Respondents were originally given two weeks to return the surveys. This deadline was extended for an additional two weeks. Survey respondents were notified of the deadline extension via postcard. Following the deadline extension, previously selected households that had not yet responded were sent a second survey and given an additional two weeks to complete the survey. Of the 1,200 total surveys sent, 56 were undeliverable, and 345 were completed and returned for a response rate of 30%.

CPW conducted the data entry and analysis in-house, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software to evaluate frequency distributions. Following are the survey instrument with frequency percentages included and a summary of responses to open-ended questions.