

Appendix C

Park Design Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to the design of parks, open space areas and trails in Talent. These guidelines are based on the need for safe, easily maintained spaces, that area accessible to the community as a whole. Once adopted by the City, they will provide direction to the Park Commission, the City Council and Public Works Department in both the design of new parks and the review of proposed parks.

The following general areas are covered:

- Safety
- Plantings
- Mowing and Turf Maintenance
- Parking
- Restrooms
- Play Areas
- Site Furnishings

Specific Park Design Guidelines include:

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Regional Parks
- Open Space/Greenways
- Trails and Connections
- Dog Parks

Safety

Spaces need to be designed to deter transient, illegal, or potentially threatening uses in parklands. The following features will help create transparency in public spaces:

- Vegetation that is directly adjacent to pedestrian areas should be greater than 7 feet or less than 2 feet in height. Shrubs located in the formal areas of a park that are taller than 2 feet should be limbed up to provide visual access to users and authorities.
- Built structures should be situated for easy observation from areas of frequent use and convenient access by police.
- Promote the application of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to all park designs.¹
- Vehicle access to the park and amenities should allow authorities to patrol parks with some ease and proficiency. This access can also provide emergency services and maintenance.
- Sidewalks and paths intended for vehicle use should be at least 8 feet wide. Those that are concrete should be at least 7 inches thick.
- Rounded corners at park edges will provide protection from invisible intersections with adjacent areas.

Plantings

The use of native vegetation can enhance park design and support the ecological systems unique to the region. The following vegetation and irrigation guidelines assist in the creation of efficient, distinctive, and lush spaces.

- Vegetation along trail systems, waterways (creeks, rivers, bioswales and storm water) and within linear parks should consist of native plants and flora. The use of non-native species should be buffered by a broad band of native seed (i.e., tufted hair grass) between lawn and native vegetation.
- Non-irrigated areas should be designated and irrigation reserved for areas such as sports fields. The use of native vegetation will reduce the need for irrigation. To establish plants, consider using a

¹ Defined by the Spokane Police Department, "The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life. CPTED is an urban planning design process, which integrates crime prevention with neighborhood design and community development. There is a direct relationship between design and management of the environment to human behavior. Creating behavioral effects that will reduce the incidence and fear of crime will contribute to the improved quality of life. CPTED creates an environment whose physical characteristics, building layout and site plan function will allow inhabitants to become key agents in ensuring their own security. To deter crime, spaces should convey to would-be intruders a strong sense that, if they enter, they are very likely to be observed, to be identified as intruders, and to have difficulty escaping."

temporary irrigation system or hand watering. Design the irrigation system so that irrigation heads spray underneath plants or into them, not above them.

- Trees planted in groups increase the efficiency of mowing and maintenance. When designing tree groups, it is important to provide a flush border around groups to ease irrigation and mowing.
- Planting areas in parking lots should be designed to provide continuous coverage within 3 years. The plants should be hardy, with a track record that indicates their survival in extreme environments. At least 400 cubic feet of the appropriate soil per tree in a planting strip is recommended.
- Trees should not be planted next to restrooms because they may provide unwanted access to the roof as well as create hiding places near the structure. Shrubs surrounding restrooms should be less than 4 feet in height and should be limbed up to allow visual access under them. Plantings should allow maintenance access to the roof.

Mowing and Turf Maintenance

Turf areas allow different experiences in parks. Groomed areas provide field sports, picnicking and free play while rough mowed areas provide an aesthetic to the park while buffering natural and riparian areas. To promote efficient mowing and turf maintenance the following guidelines should be followed:

- Rough mown areas are mowed once or twice a year. There should be 15 feet between vertical obstacles in these areas. Maximum mowing slopes for rough turf or natural areas should be less than 5:1. Use native grasses such as Spike Bentgrass (*Agrostis exarata*), California Oatgrass (*Danthonia californica*) or Tufted Hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*).
- Groomed turf slopes should be less than 4:1, with less being preferable. Irrigation systems should take into account solar aspect, wind and topography to minimize the overuse of water. The minimum distance between vertical objects is 7 feet for mower access. Design for continuous mowing, taking care to avoid the creation of dead ends, tight corners or areas where a mower cannot easily reach. Provide a concrete mowing strip around vertical objects such as fence posts, signs, drinking fountains, light poles and other site furniture with a 12" minimum offset between the object's vertical edge and turf. Also, plant trees in groups (see Planting).
- Providing vehicular access for maintenance personnel is an important consideration. Curb cuts should be provided in logical areas such as turn-a-rounds. Curb edges should have large radial corners to protect adjacent planting or lawn areas.
- Herbicide use should be limited.

Parking

Parking lots should be representative of the experience the user will have at the park. The entrance to the parking area should be the entrance to the park itself, with trees and planting included. The following will help to carefully situate parking in the landscape to provide both accessibility and views:

- A minimum of 3 to 5 spaces per acre of usable active park area should be provided if less than 300 lineal feet of on-street parking is available.
- Park design should encourage access by foot or bicycle.
- Provide bicycle racks at each primary access point and at restrooms.
- The size of planting areas within the parking lot should be as large as possible with adequate room for maintenance to be performed safely.
- Water runoff should be diverted into a bioswale before entering the storm water system to reduce the impact of pollution on stream and creek systems. To achieve water purification and cooling, bioswales should be planted with native vegetation (see Planting).

Restrooms

Restrooms are an important public amenity in high-use park facilities. The components, design, and placement of restroom structures are important decisions to consider when specifying facilities. The following guidelines are intended to ensure that restroom facilities are safe, easy to maintain, and consistent with the park system vision:

- Interior surfaces of restrooms should be glazed tile and the exterior surfaces should be non-porous for easy cleaning (i.e., glazed block, glazed tile, painted block or painted concrete). The use of heavy concrete partitions between stalls is recommended. Specify only stainless steel restroom fixtures.
- The drain inside the structure should always operate correctly. If the facility is near an athletic field, such as volleyball courts or a spray park, there should be an area outside the restroom with a faucet/ shower and drain for users to rinse off sand and chlorine.
- Including separate storage areas adjacent to the restroom structure can increase efficiency. Storage areas may house recreation equipment for fair weather activities and maintenance supplies for park crews.
- Skylights can maximize the use of natural light. Minimizing light fixtures helps prevent tampering, destruction and keep costs down. Facilities that are open in the evening should have lighting that is designed with vandalism in mind.

- A 5 to 6 foot apron around the structure should be provided to protect the building from debris and water. Trees should be avoided next to the restroom (see Plantings).

Play Areas

Playgrounds in Talent should meet the needs of children of different ages and abilities. The following will help create facilities that ensure accessibility and safety for children of all ages.

- Parks that have playground equipment, sports fields and spray parks should be accessible to all children under sixteen.
- Play areas should be level to reduce the surface substance from slumping to low points. Consider using beach sand as a cost-effective, low-maintenance playground surface. Do not use engineered wood chip surfaces because decomposition will result in regular and expensive replacement.
- Play structures and equipment come in many different materials. Avoid specifying wood because: wood footings will rot, they are prone to termite infestation, the shrink/ swell defect of moisture loosens bolts and creates a safety hazard, and pressure treated wood contains chromate copper arsenate (CCA), a carcinogen.
- Wooden play structures that exist presently should be sealed every two years to prevent arsenic leaching.
- Natural play areas created from boulders, logs and land forms and playground equipment made from 100% recycled plastic or steel is recommended. Steel can become very hot in the summer months. If it is necessary to use steel, planting trees or other structures to shade the play area is recommended.

Site Furnishings

The selection of site furnishings (i.e., benches, trash receptacles, light poles, etc.) should be based on an established standard for Talent. The water fountains, benches, light fixtures and posts, signage and bike racks used in the parks should be consistent with those used in City civic spaces, along streets, and vice versa. Consistency in site furnishings will help establish an identifiable civic image, through the use of repeatable aesthetic elements, for Talent and the park system as a whole. These furnishings should offer comfort, aesthetic beauty and be of formidable stature to prevent vandalism.

- Seating should be made from a material that is comfortable both in winter and the heat of summer while being able to withstand vandalism. Benches should be provided to offer places of rest, opportunities to experience views, and congregate.
- Drinking fountains should be available at a ratio of 1 per acre with the exception of mini parks (typically smaller than 1-acre) which

should have one. Drinking fountains should be complementary to other site furnishings, such as benches, and be operational in freezing conditions. Consider drinking fountains that are friendly not only to human users but to canines as well.

- Signage should be located in every park in areas visible to all users. For example, place a sign at the entrance of the park that is visible to vehicular traffic, also place signs along greenways and trails to inform pedestrians and bicyclists. Signage should be easy to read and informative. Interpretive signs fall into this category as well. They can be useful in natural and historic areas. When used in natural areas these signs should be placed outside environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., wetlands and endangered habitat) and should be placed in areas that are accessible to all.

Specific Park Guidelines

Mini Parks

Mini parks can be expensive to construct and maintain on a per unit basis but can be very valuable in neighborhoods that do not have parks or open space in close proximity. Following are design guidelines that will help to create spaces that have appropriate visual access and provide areas for community gathering.

- Mini Parks should be connected to a sidewalk and preferably a bike path. Housing should have direct access to the park through a path that is at a minimum of six feet wide.
- Fencing should offer privacy to residents abutting the park property line while still providing transparency. A four foot fence lined with trees that are limbed up 4 feet and shrubs that are generally 2 to 3 feet high will create a barrier for the park neighbors while still allowing the neighbors to enjoy the view of the park from their yard. Adjacent neighbors of the park should have a lockable gate to allow them direct access to the park from their yards.
- Appropriate facilities in mini-parks include children's playgrounds, open grass play areas, shelters, and picnic tables.
- Furnishings should include one drinking fountain, a street light, seating, and a sign that is recognizable to passers by.
- Restrooms are not required in these parks unless community events are proposed for the park (i.e., along a parade route).
- Dog parks and sports fields/courts should not be included.

Neighborhood Parks

A neighborhood park should accommodate the needs of a wide variety of age and user groups. These spaces are designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. The guidelines will help ensure these parks are desirable to the surrounding neighborhood and offer activities that provide a daily pastime for all residents neighborhood children.

- The pedestrian is more important than the car in this situation and should be thought of foremost in the overall plan. Connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood is vital to these parks. Sidewalks, bike paths, crosswalks and connections to larger trail systems should be established.
- Fencing should maintain privacy for residents but also provide some transparency to increase resident visibility into the park. Fencing should not be greater than 6 feet in height. Vegetation can be used as a screen to allow neighbors privacy while preserving views into the park.

- Housing developments adjacent to the park boundary should have direct access to the park through locked gates.
- Appropriate facilities in a neighborhood park include: children's play equipment, outdoor basketball courts, tennis courts, sand volleyball courts, un-programmed play space, and accessible pathways.
- Furnishings include, but are not limited to: drinking fountains, picnic tables and benches, trash receptacles, signage at entrances and all major trail intersections and utilities.
- Restroom buildings should be discouraged unless community wide activities (i.e., festivals, parade routes) are located in the park. Another consideration is providing portable toilets when needed to support programs or special events. Seating and screening portable toilets is advised.

Community Parks

The size of these parks provides opportunities to offer active and structured recreation activities for young people and adults. There is also an opportunity to provide indoor facilities because the service area is much broader and therefore can meet a wider range of interests. These guidelines will help to create spaces that will be useful to people of all ages and create facilities that will be valuable to Talent's growth.

- Approximately two-thirds of a community park should be reserved for active recreation uses such as: ball fields, tennis, basketball and volleyball courts, open grass area for free play, children's playgrounds and space for outdoor events.
- Viewsheds should be highlighted by the placement of picnic areas (some should be reserveable), benches, gardens and natural areas. Vegetation can be thinned or planted on the site to accentuate or hide scenes of the surrounding valley.
- Paved pathways should direct users to areas within the park as well as to adjacent trails, greenways, streets and sidewalks.
- Facilities that are appropriate in community parks include: children's play equipment, outdoor basketball court, sports fields, un-programmed play space, off-leash dog play areas, utilities and accessible pathways. It is recommended that one community park in the Talent Park System provide a community center or natural learning center to hold community events.
- Housing developments need to create access to parks if they are located on the boundary of a park. To promote further connectivity, these developments should connect to other neighborhoods as well, especially if those other neighborhoods are connected to a park.
- Furnishing include, but should not be limited to, drinking fountains, picnic tables and benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, and signage

at entrances and at all major trail intersections and utilities. Drinking fountains should be provided at intersections of larger trail systems. Drinking fountains should be designed for human and canine users.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks provide opportunities to preserve unique cultural and natural areas as well as provide features, facilities, and events that attract users from the entire Rogue Valley. Regional parks should be designed to connect with the community and the region via trails, sidewalks, bike lanes and roads.

- Signage should be located at the entrance and also at significant locations to provide direction and information for visitors and residents. Along trail systems, signage should be included to inform park users of trail connections that lead to other significant places of interest.
- If the site is proposed to attract large volumes of traffic, access should be via a collector or arterial street.
- Wetland and riparian areas should be protected by a 50-foot native vegetation buffer allowing access for interpretive and educational viewing areas accompanied by signage.
- Passive recreation areas should be separate from active recreation area to create quiet, serene spaces. Passive recreation should be accessible to all users.
- Facilities may consist of: amphitheaters, children's play equipment, court sports, multiple sport fields, un-programmed play space, restrooms, off-leash dog play areas and accessible pathways.
- Furnishing may include, but should not be limited to: drinking fountains, picnic tables and benches, trash receptacles, bike racks, utilities, signage at entrances and at all major trail intersections.
- Pathways should be constructed properly to insure the success of its construction and the reduction of buckling and pot holes. Trails should have a 50 foot buffer to increase green space

Open Space / Greenways

Open Space and Greenways consist of land typically left in its natural state, with passive recreation as a secondary objective. Open space and greenways may include passive recreation facilities such as trails and paths, and interpretive and educational features, in addition to environmental features such as sensitive wildlife habitat, stream and riparian corridors, and wetlands. The following guidelines are intended to preserve the integrity of open space and greenways:

- Sensitive areas such as wetlands, riparian zones and other ecologically sensitive areas should be protected. Trails that pass

through sensitive areas should be designed with site sensitive materials as to not harm the resource. Providing views to these areas can be achieved through proper site layout.

- Wetland and riparian areas should be protected by a 50-foot native vegetation buffer allowing access occasionally for interpretive and educational viewing areas that are accompanied by a sign.
- Improvements should be limited to restorative actions and minimal construction of human made elements with the exception of thoughtfully placed paths. Paths should be natural if possible (i.e., bark mulch or stone).
- The construction and design of paths needs to be carefully planned. Take into account the amount of users, the width of the path, the type of path, the placement in regards to the topography, soils and drainage conditions. All trails do not need to be paved but the system should offer diverse experiences to those who may be more challenged than others. Pathways that are paved with asphalt or concrete should be constructed correctly to achieve the longest lifetime possible.

Trails and Connections

Trails should be looped and interconnected to provide a variety of trail lengths and destinations. They should link to various parts of the community, as well as existing park sites. The following guidelines will help promote the effective design of trails and connections:

- Bikepaths and sidewalks should connect to trails. Trailheads should include parking areas for at least 5 cars.
- Pathways and trails should not be constructed as part of a street roadway. They should be interesting to the user and designed to offer diverse experiences (i.e., views, equestrian paths, mountain bike trails, quiet seating areas, bird watching, etc.).
- The design and construction of paths and trails needs to be carefully planned. Take into account the amount of users, the width of the path, the type of path, the placement in regards to the topography, soils and drainage conditions. All trails do not need to be paved but the system should offer diverse experiences to those who may be more challenged than others. Pathways that are paved with asphalt or concrete should be constructed correctly to achieve the longest lifetime possible.
- To ensure the success of an interconnected trail system, developers need to be encouraged to provide pathways through proposed developments adjoining or surrounding trail segments.

Dog Parks

Dog parks are fenced areas where dogs are allowed, under supervision, to run freely. Dog parks should not be located near incompatible uses such as child play areas, athletic fields, courts and community gardens. The following recommendations will help ensure the creation of dog parks that are safe for the user, respectful of non-dog park users, and respectful of adjoining neighbors:

- The site should have at least 1-acre of accessible land, avoiding flat lands that could otherwise be used for sports fields but also take into consideration the topography to reduce erosion and ensure drainage. A minimum buffer width of 300 feet should exist between the dog park and the nearest residence.
- The placement of a dog park within an existing neighborhood should be planned through community meetings aimed at resolving conflicting uses before implementation.
- Separated play areas for small dogs and large dogs are recommended.
- The dog play area should provide two entrances into a secure fenced area.
- Fencing height should be a minimum of four feet.
- The dog play area should include the following amenities: trash receptacles, shovels, water, trees for shade, picnic tables, and doggie bag stations.
- Retrieve licensed data to assist in the evaluation of dog park placement and how it fits into the overall park system.