

## IV. RECREATION PROGRAM TRENDS AND NEEDS

This section identifies local, state and national trends in recreation as these affect recreation participation, demands and needs. While some of these trends will increase needs for unprogrammed recreation opportunities, others indicate a need for expanded recreation programs and facilities, as recreation participation changes and the community continues to grow over the next 15 years.

### RECREATION PROGRAM TRENDS

Across the country, park and recreation providers are reinventing their programs and service delivery to meet the demands of the 21st Century American lifestyle. These changing trends affect needs for recreation programs and other opportunities provided by Lake Oswego. To forecast recreation needs, this section discusses major trends that are anticipated to affect program demand in Lake Oswego.

#### LOCAL TRENDS

Key findings from the community involvement process, conducted as part of the Parks Plan 2025 planning process, highlight a number of local trends in recreation. Summarized in the *Public Input Summary Report, January 2011* (available under separate cover), these findings support the following local trends:

##### *Important Programs*

According to the results of the online questionnaire, fitness and environmental programs are extremely important. Aquatic programs/swimming (26%); adult sports (23%); youth sports (20%); fitness (19%); and environmental programs (18%) were the programs that respondents thought were most needed or should be expanded. In addition to these, one of the activities with the highest latent demand (where respondents would participate more frequently if they could) reflects the community's desire to participate in lifelong learning opportunities: education/special interest classes.

##### *Special Events*

The online questionnaire noted activities with the greatest unmet demand—the difference between current levels of participation and desired participation if time, facilities, and resources were available. Two of the activities with the highest latent demand reflect the community's desire to attend more special events: concerts, festival and special events and arts/culture.

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#### *Nature-based Programs*

The online questionnaire noted activities with the greatest unmet demand—the different between current levels of participation and desired participation if time, facilities, and resources were available. Three of the activities with the highest unmet demand are water based. These include rowing, canoeing, kayaking, fishing and swimming.

#### *Self-directed Activities*

According to questionnaire results, recreation participation is strong in Lake Oswego. Residents participate most frequently in self-directed, unprogrammed recreation activities. The top 12 recreation activities in Lake Oswego are noted below based, ranked by how frequently people participate in the related activities.

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Walking for exercise  | 7. Tennis               |
| 2. Walking for pleasure  | 8. Bicycling            |
| 3. Dog walking/dog parks | 9. Volunteer activities |
| 4. Gardening             | 10. Swimming            |
| 5. Jogging/running       | 11. Golf                |
| 6. Nature walks          | 12. Yoga/Pilates        |

As indicated in the list, the responses reflect a desire for activities that support exercise and fitness, nature experiences in nature, and to a lesser extent, specialized recreation opportunities.

#### *Program Participation Obstacles*

The biggest obstacle for increasing recreation participation is related to our busy lives. Online questionnaire respondents reported that lack of time most frequently prevented them from participating more in programs provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.

## STATE TRENDS

In addition to these local trends in recreation, the State of Oregon documents key trends relating to parks and recreation in its 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). As they relate to Lake Oswego, two of the most significant trends are described below:

#### *Health and Recreation Connection*

The 2008-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) recognized the connection between accessible recreation activities and health. Nationwide, the U.S. is experiencing an obesity crisis, and Oregon is no exception. Obesity and overweight increases

the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer. Physical activity reduces the risk of these chronic diseases, regardless of weight. Providing accessible recreation opportunities has been shown to increase activity levels and promote health. To respond to this trend, the Parks and Recreation Department can continue to emphasize programs that are conveniently located and provide a diversity of activity types, and ensure that information about these programs and recreation facilities that support active use are readily available.

### *Connect Children with the Outdoors*

The need to connect youth with the outdoors was one of the key findings of the 2009-2012 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and is a concern nationally. The Oregon Outdoor Children's Bill of Rights is a statewide effort sponsored by the Oregon Recreation and Park Association that encourages recreation providers and families to offer opportunities for children and youth to participate in outdoor recreation activities. These activities can be incorporated as part of the City's recreation program, as well as through the integration of recreation opportunities in natural areas where they can be incorporated without adversely impacting habitat and natural resources.

## **NATIONAL TRENDS**

In addition to state and local trends, a variety of national trends have emerged in park and recreation planning. Many of these are similar to the local trends noted through community involvement activities conducted as part of this planning process.

### *Programs for Children*

One of the greatest challenges cities nationwide are facing is how to retain and support families in the urban environment. This challenge includes fostering child development—including physical, social and cognitive development—for children and youth of all ages from birth to young adults. It also includes supporting and fostering family connections. Programs that support child and youth development and family interaction address these trends.

### *Outdoor Programs*

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, 159 million people over the age of 16 participate in outdoor activities in America today. These activities promote wellness, social interaction, and a connection to the outdoors. Not surprisingly, the Baby Boomer generation (people aged 42-60) and the millennial generation (ages 27 and younger) are the largest segments driving this new outdoor lifestyle trend. People are looking for ways to be outdoors in urban areas. Due to time demands

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of family and jobs, convenience and accessibility are critical. Cities that can deliver programs that include compelling, close-to-home outdoor activities will have a competitive advantage in retaining and attracting residents.

#### *Technology and Programming*

Technology is offering parks and recreation providers improved opportunities for program outreach and enrollment. Use of the right technology can improve affordability, accessibility and efficiency of community facilities and services. Finding the right balance and appropriate use for technology has become a focus of many recreation program departments. The City of Lake Oswego already relies on technology to help administer recreation programs and offer technology based activities. Currently, 74 percent of those enrolling in recreation programs register online allowing staff to manage programs more efficiently. Websites and social media are also used for marketing programs and events.

#### *Senior Programs*

One of the strongest trends throughout the United States and the region is the aging of our population. This trend requires that parks and recreation providers consider and develop facilities and programs that will serve older adults who possess a variety of needs and interests. Seniors can no longer be lumped into a single category and be effectively served. With healthier lifestyles, people live longer and have more active lives than ever before. Parks and recreation providers need to consider seniors' diverse interests and multiple life stages. Programs must provide for:

- Developing new skills;
- Learning new activities;
- Engaging in volunteerism;
- Helping those with some health issues and access concerns;
- Providing passive and contemplative activities;
- Offering intergenerational interactions; and
- Providing affordable activities.

#### *Community Events*

Nationally, over 90% of park and recreation providers offer performing arts, cultural festivals and community events (NRPA, 2009). These events appeal to a range of age groups and income levels, build community, and attract residents, visitors and tourists. Naming rights, space for vendors, and other advertising options provide additional

opportunities to generate revenue. Lake Oswego has already benefited from these events by building on event themes and through increased sales that result from attracting more people to business districts. The City also has a Special Events Division devoted to promoting a range of community events throughout the year.

### *Alternative and Challenge Sports Programs*

Indoor or outdoor alternative and challenge sports, such as lacrosse, skateboarding, rock climbing and mountain biking, have growing appeal, especially for teens and younger adults. Because these activities have limited availability, they generally have a regional draw. Many of these activities require expert instruction at different skill levels which can be provided through programming. Continuing to accommodate these activities, and providing updated facilities and programs in this area are ways that Lake Oswego can capitalize on this trend while encouraging healthy activity among teens and young adults.

### *Indoor Programming*

Multi-use community, recreation and wellness centers that satisfy a broad range of needs, such as classroom space and meeting rooms, fitness classes, aquatics, social services, child care and senior services, are the current trend. With the growing popularity of multi-use centers, many communities have steered away from free-standing, age-specific facilities, such as senior or youth centers. Often these facilities are solely operated by a city, a non-profit organization, or in partnership with a commercial fitness provider. The goal of these facilities is to serve the entire community and all ages by balancing low or no cost services with revenue generating programs and fees.

A multi-purpose community center has long been envisioned for the City. If support for funding or a partnership was obtained, a multipurpose community center could provide opportunities for increased program stability and expanded programs desired by the community in Lake Oswego.

### *Program Participation Obstacles*

With today's families balancing many roles—parent, worker, and family member—lack of time has emerged as a major barrier to recreation participation. It is the primary reason why residents in Lake Oswego do not participate in recreation programs. To counteract this trend, park and recreation agencies are adopting new program formats, including drop-in activities, short term programs, and on-line programs, to facilitate participation.

## RECREATION PROGRAM NEEDS

Changing recreation trends, results from the community involvement activities, and the technical analysis of existing recreation program together suggest a variety of needs and opportunities for recreation programs provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. As addressed in Section I, the recreation questionnaire served as an effective means to gauge public interest in recreation programs. A statistically significant survey may be needed in the future to verify the relevancy of key recreation trends and outcomes of the questionnaire.

### CURRENT PROGRAM AREAS

As noted in the Existing Conditions Summary Report, the City of Lake Oswego supports six existing program areas:

- Adult and Senior Programming (Adult Community Center)
- Sports and Fitness
- Tennis (Indoor Tennis Center)
- Golf (Golf Course)
- Cultural and Specialized Activities
- Special Events

Needs in each of these program areas are discussed below, followed by program needs in areas not currently provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.

### ADULT PROGRAMS

Lake Oswego has one of the largest 65+ populations in the region, and this population is expected to grow from 14% to 24% of the total population in the UGB during the next 25 years. The Adult Community Center is one of the largest program areas provided by the Parks and Recreation Department, providing more than three times the number of participant hours of Sports and Fitness; the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest program area. Its diverse services help older adults continue to live independently, provide access to basic health needs, and promote social interaction and intellectual stimulation. It also offers a substantial volunteer program.

Given the anticipated growth of the older adult population in Lake Oswego, this age group must continue to be a community priority. However, nationally park and recreation agencies are steering away from providing separate age specific facilities and focusing on providing more flexible and cost effective multi-age facilities. Given

this trend, the City might consider providing these services as part of a multi-age community center if one is developed in Lake Oswego in the future.

### SPORTS AND FITNESS

Enhancing health and well-being is one of the most important benefits of parks and recreation to residents. The sports and fitness program area will continue to be very important in the future. Based on public involvement findings, there are several key areas for program expansion, including:

- Activities for 55+ ranging from modified activities to competitive activities;
- Trail-related activities and special events, such as walk-a-thons, races, and regular trail exercise groups;
- Self-directed trail opportunities and equipment, such as interpretive hikes, par courses, and outdoor exercise equipment;
- Other fitness-related special events and drop-in activities;
- Adult and youth sports; and
- Fitness classes.

### INDOOR TENNIS CENTER

Tennis opportunities enhance health and well-being—one of the most important benefits of parks and recreation to residents. In most communities, tennis typically does not appear in the top 15 activities for greatest recreation participation. In Lake Oswego, tennis is the 7<sup>th</sup> most popular activity in terms of participation. Lack of facilities limits further program expansion. The 2009 Golf and Tennis Feasibility Study noted that tennis participation also increased nationally by 43% from 2000 to 2008. The Lake Oswego tennis program was noted for its highly progressive, well-designed programs. The Tennis Center is self-supporting and regularly returns excess funds to the City's general fund. Its demand for court time and programs exceeds capacity.

The Feasibility Study recommended the development of a new 8-court indoor tennis center which would serve both local residents and the region. The implementation of these recommendations was supported by Parks Plan 2025 public involvement findings.

### GOLF COURSE

Golf programs can provide the valued community benefit of enhancing health and well-being. In most communities, golf typically does not appear in the top 15 activities for greatest recreation participation. In Lake Oswego, golf is the 11<sup>th</sup> most popular activity in terms of participation. The Golf Course programs and events emphasize youth,