



**Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Shawn O’Neil Supporting SB 179:
*Legislation Restores Public Access to Trails and Recreational Facilities***

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 19, 2025, before
the Senate Committee On Judiciary

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying on behalf of the City of Wilsonville in strong support of SB 179, which permanently restores recreational immunity for local governments that allow the public to walk and recreate on their publicly owned properties. This bill follows up on the temporary changes of SB 1576 in 2024 for immunity for landowners who allow public use of land without charge for recreational purposes.

Public access to trails and parks is a top priority for the Wilsonville residents, visitors and employees of Wilsonville businesses. Wilsonville’s park system, which includes sports fields, sport courts, picnic shelters, trails and open spaces, also provides diverse recreational programming for all ages and abilities. The park system has grown by 23% over the past 12 years, from 230 acres in 2013 to 283 acres in 2025 with 18 parks, and is expected to continue to add acreage and facilities as population growth continues. METRO’s 250-acre Graham Oaks Nature Park, located adjacent to the city, features three miles of trails, which connect to the regional Ice Age Tonquin Trail.

The Oregon Public Use of Lands Act passed in 1995 with a goal of encouraging public and private owners of land to make their land available to the public for recreational purposes. The purpose of the Act was to facilitate the ability of landowners, both public and private, that made their land available without charge for recreational use by the public were not liable if a person were to be injured while using the land for recreational purposes. The Act increased the availability of land for free recreation by limiting liability to cities, counties, parks, schools and a wide range of private owners, including farmers and timber companies that allow hunters, anglers, hikers, mountain bikers and other members of the public to use or traverse their lands at no charge.

SB 179 adds “walking, running, and biking” to the definition of recreational purposes (ORS 105.672) and adds improved trails to the recreational immunity provided via ORS 105.688. The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on SB 179.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shawn O'Neil", is positioned above the printed name.

Shawn O’Neil, Mayor
City of Wilsonville

Attachment: City of Wilsonville Parks & Recreation Brochure

Willamette River

The Willamette River originates between the Cascade Mountains and the Coast Range. The area between these two ranges is referred to as the Willamette Valley. While the Willamette River is one of the nation's largest rivers, it also has the unique distinction of being one of only a handful of rivers that flows north. Because of the Chehalem Mountains, the river flows from west to east through the city separating the Charbonneau District to the south. The Willamette has always been a significant resource for Wilsonville. Historically, the Boone's Ferry crossed the river and connected Salem to Portland. This is the reason that Wilsonville was originally established. The river lies within the largest watershed in Oregon and provides a potable water source for the community. On average, 21 billion gallons of water flow past the Wilsonville banks daily. Downstream from Wilsonville, the river flows through Portland to its confluence with the Columbia River.



Memorial Park

Memorial Park is the City's oldest and largest park. The Memorial Park property was acquired by the City in 1968 and is located on the Willamette River with one-half mile of river frontage. The park is comprised of 120 acres of recreational opportunities and natural habitat. It has become a cherished resource for the community and offers a diversity of active and passive recreational opportunities.

Memorial Park is the City's center for active outdoor recreation and organized community team sports. It is a place where people gather for special events, picnics and day camps. There is a very clear distinction between the developed, grassy portions of the recreational core of the park and the forests that form a dense vegetative envelope that surrounds the recreational sports complex. Memorial Park features many amenities including: fields used for baseball/softball/soccer, boat dock, picnic areas, sand volleyball, disc golf, pickleball, drinking fountains, restroom facilities, an off leash dog run, tennis and basketball courts, skatepark, playgrounds and picnic shelters that can be rented for group functions.



Undeveloped portions of the park feature forested areas, stream riparian corridors and open meadow landscapes. Boeckman Creek bisects the park and joins the Willamette River just outside the southeast corner of the park. A pedestrian bridge over the creek provides an opportunity to view the City's first fish passage and stream restoration project. Approximately 50 acres of native forest can be explored in the park. The native landscapes of the park provide wonderful opportunities for walking and observing wildlife.

During the spring of 2015, the park received an updated 10-year Master Plan including: park rehabilitation, enhancement of existing elements and the addition of new recreational features.

Murase Plaza



Murase Plaza has become the community's playground. The interactive water feature and spray deck serve as a gateway into Memorial Park. As visitors move through the park, the amenities create a series of experiences that move the visitor from today to the City's rich past. Park users transition from urban to rural and architectural to nature as they move east across the park towards Boeckman Creek. An old nut orchard and the century old Stein-Boozier barn sit adjacent to the children's play area. Overall, the peaceful setting provides a draw for all ages and activity levels.

The Murase playground contains two large play structures with one of the structures being fully accessible.

Coffee Lake Wetlands

Coffee Lake Creek originates in the Tualatin-Sherwood area and flows south through Wilsonville to the Willamette River. The wetland habitat along the creek supports many important species of migratory and resident wildlife and native wetland plants. The Coffee Lake Wetlands is a part of the larger Tonquin Geological area whose unique landscape includes formations such as kolk ponds and basalt hummocks that were formed during the Missoula Floods some 13,000 to 15,000 years ago. In 2008, Boeckman Road was extended over the wetlands with a pedestrian side walk providing wildlife viewing opportunities. The impact of development with wetland mitigation and wildlife passage structures. A variety of wildlife including great blue heron, osprey, bobcat, raccoon, black-tailed deer and Northern red-legged frogs have been observed in this unique ecosystem.



Town Center Park and Oregon Korean War Memorial



Town Center Park, an urban park located in the heart of the city, is a popular destination for people of all ages. One of the highlights of the park is a water feature where kids can play and splash on hot summer days. The park includes a large grassy area, kids play area, half-court basketball court, picnic areas and is home to community concerts and festivals. The Parks and Recreation Administrative Offices are also located within Town Center Park.

The Oregon Korean War Memorial was dedicated in Town Center Park on September 30, 2000. The memorial centerpiece is a 94 foot long 'Wall of Honor' containing the names of 287 Oregon service men and women killed in the Korean War. A bronze statue honoring General Douglas MacArthur is also located at the Memorial.

Boones Ferry Park

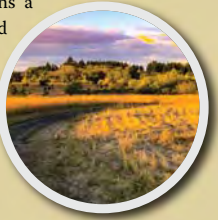
Boone's Ferry Park is located along the Willamette River at the terminus of Boone's Ferry Road in Old Town. The park is the former location of the Boone's Ferry which crossed the Willamette River. River ferries crossed here for 107 years, transporting thousands of horses, cows, buggies, automobiles and pedestrians across the river connecting Salem to Portland prior to the completion of Interstate 5. Boone's Ferry ceased operations in 1954. The Tauchman House, located in Boone's Ferry Park, is a turn-of-the-century house available for private events. From Boone's Ferry Park, a trail under the Boone bridge connects to Memorial Park.



During the fall of 2018, the park received an updated Master Plan including: greater river access, a dog park, a new playground, increased trails and a landing site for the French Prairie Bridge.

Graham Oaks Nature Park

Adjacent to the western city limits, the 250-acre Graham Oaks Nature Park is a part of the regional open space system. Owned and operated by Metro, the site improvements provide visitors with opportunities to interact with nature. Graham Oaks showcases sustainable development practices and includes a small parking lot along Wilsonville Road, a hierarchy of trail types with miles of walking and cycling paths, a picnic shelter, restrooms, interpretive nodes with seating, educational information and areas for quiet contemplation. The site was completely restored in 2007, with over 150,000 trees and shrubs being planted in six different habitat types. The site contains a mix of forested terrain, seasonal wetlands and Oregon white oak savanna offering rich wildlife viewing opportunities. Paths traverse the site connecting to existing neighborhoods and schools and the CREST environmental education center, providing visitors with opportunities to interact with diverse habitats and wildlife.



Natural Areas and Native Habitats

A diversity of native habitats can be found within Wilsonville's park system. In the Willamette Valley, landscapes and plant communities have been influenced by geologic events, climate and cultural history. Glaciations, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes and floods have shaped the landscape and created distinct soils and landforms. Native people maintained open pasture through periodic burns and settlers cleared extensive areas for agriculture. Native habitats such as meadows, coniferous forests, mixed deciduous woodlands, riparian corridors and wetlands are all accessible in local parks. Take a moment to visit the Oregon Ash forested wetland at Park at Merryfield or the mixed coniferous/deciduous forests of Memorial Park.



- Arrowhead Creek Park
10350 SW Arrowhead Creek Lane
- Boones Ferry Park
31240 SW Boones Ferry Road
- Canyon Creek Park
26610 SW Canyon Creek Road
- Courtside Park
7665 SW Wimbledon Circle South
- Edelweiss Park
28970 SW Costa Circle West
- Engelman Park
29987 SW Montebello Drive
- Graham Oaks Nature Park
11825 SW Wilsonville Road
- Hathaway Park
29455 SW Meadow Loop
- Memorial Park
8100 SW Memorial Drive
- Murase Plaza
8300 SW Memorial Drive
- Palermo Park
28732 SW Costa Circle East
- Park at Merryfield
29778 SW Camelot Street
- Piccadilly Park
28870 SW Costa Circle West
- River Fox Park
11249 SW Champog Drive
- Sofia Park
28836 SW Costa Circle West
- Town Center Park
29600 SW Park Place
- Tranquil Park
10580 SW Brown Road
- Trocadero Park
28400 SW Paris Ave
- Willow Creek - Landover Park
28350 SW Willow Creek Drive

Park Amenities	Soccer	Baseball	Basketball	Sand Volleyball	Tennis	Pickleball	Skate	Play Area	Water Feature	Dog Area	Trails	Picnic	Restroom	Shelter	Parking
Arrowhead Creek Park															
Boones Ferry Park															
Canyon Creek Park															
Courtside Park															
Edelweiss Park															
Engelmann Park															
Graham Oaks (Metro Owned)															
Hathaway Park															
Memorial Park															
Murase Plaza															
Palermo Park															
Park at Merryfield															
Piccadilly Park															
River Fox Park															
Sofia Park															
Town Center Park															
Tranquil Park															
Trocadero Park															
Willow Creek - Landover Park															

- Soccer Fields
- Baseball/Softball Fields
- Basketball Court
- Sand Volleyball
- Tennis
- Pickleball
- Skate Park
- Childrens Play Area
- Interactive Water Feature
- Off Leash Dog Area
- Walking Trails
- Picnic Tables
- Public Restroom
- Reservable Shelter
- On-Site Parking

Park Rules

In an effort to keep Wilsonville parks safe and enjoyable for all users we ask that you obey the following:

Park hours are 5:00am to 10:00pm unless otherwise approved.

Alcohol is not permitted in Wilsonville parks unless approved by permit.

All Wilsonville parks are smoke and tobacco-free.

Keep pets on-leash except in the Dog Park located at Memorial Park; properly dispose of pet waste.











Overnight camping is not allowed in Wilsonville parks.

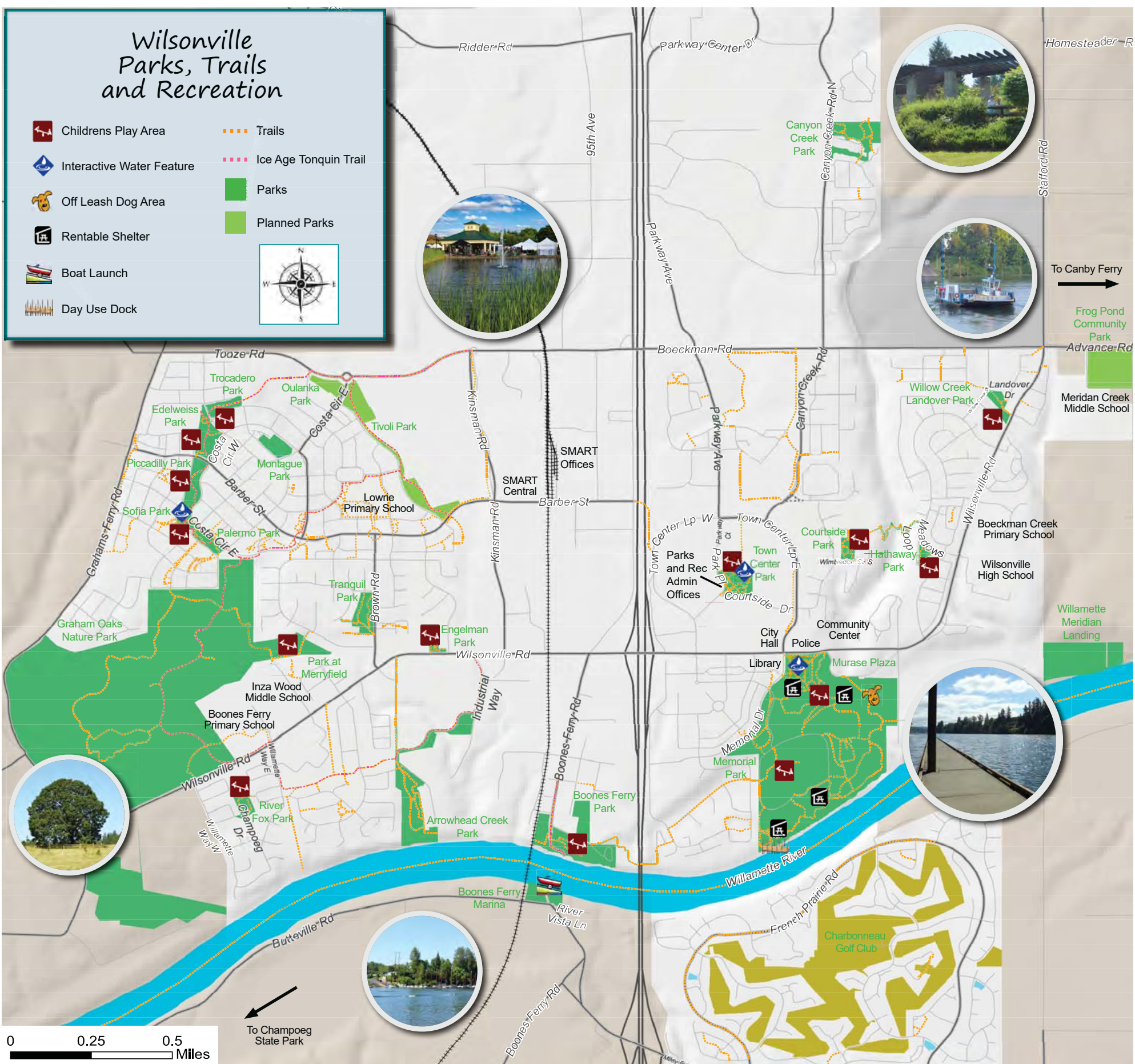
No open flames, fires, charcoal grills or camp stoves shall be allowed. Propane grills may be used but must be kept on paved surfaces.

No person shall possess any loaded firearm; discharge any firearm, pellet gun, bow and arrow, slingshot, or other weapon capable of inflicting injury on any person, bird or animal.

No removal of, or damage to, park grounds, structures or facilities.

Wilsonville Parks, Trails and Recreation

-  Children's Play Area
-  Interactive Water Feature
-  Off Leash Dog Area
-  Rentable Shelter
-  Boat Launch
-  Day Use Dock
-  Trails
-  Ice Age Tonquin Trail
-  Parks
-  Planned Parks



Park Facility Rental

Stein-Boozier Barn

The Stein-Boozier Barn is a rustic barn (circa 1901) located in Murase Plaza, with a main gathering space of 1,325 square feet. Amenities include: clear bulb string-lighting, tables & chairs, and a 10' bar with a sink. The area in front of the barn contains terraced basalt stone seating and both front and rear sliding doors can be opened. Maximum capacity: 96



River Shelter

The River Shelter at Memorial Park sits in the SW corner of the park near ball field 5. This is the largest covered shelter in the park and its amenities include: electricity, water, 16 picnic tables, and a large grassy area suitable for lawn games. River access is just a short walk away. Maximum capacity: 200



Forest Shelter

The Forest Shelter at Memorial Park sits in the SE corner of the park and is a secluded shady shelter near ball field 3. Amenities include: electricity, water, and 20 picnic tables. The surrounding area is very wooded with a small sloping grassy area. Maximum capacity: 150



Field Rental

Memorial Park

Fields are available for rent from April 1st to October 31st depending on weather conditions.

There are 5 baseball/softball fields and 3 soccer fields. The outfield of ball field 4 can be used for small sided soccer games.

Baseball/Softball Fields Dimensions:

Fields 1 and 2: Dirt infields with 60', 65', 70' and 80' base length capabilities

Field 3: Grass infield with pitching mound and 70', 80', and 90' base length capabilities

Field 4: Dirt infield with 60', 65', and 70' base length capabilities

Field 5: Dirt infield with 60' and 65' base length capabilities

Fields 1, 2, and 4 have lights



Wilsonville Parks

Recreational Opportunities

The City of Wilsonville is dedicated to creating community through people, parks, and programs. We strive to enrich the lives of Wilsonville citizens by providing diverse opportunities for personal development and social interaction.



The Parks and Rec Department provides recreation programs, encompassing all age groups from preschool to older adults and offering community members a chance to experience the arts, fitness programs, sports activities, family events and a wide range of classes.

To find out more information about our great program offerings, youth sports or special events please visit the Parks and Rec website.

