



# Parks & Recreation

## INTRODUCTION

The use of parks, school facilities, and natural resources for recreation purposes by residents and visitors alike has long been an established part of Leavenworth's lifestyle and business interests. The City of Leavenworth has become nationally and internationally recognized as a destination or stopover for special events, festivals, and year-round outdoor recreation with over 3.4 million visitors annually.<sup>1</sup> The continuing growth in visitors and residents puts a strain on recreational amenities including parks, trails, schools, and other natural outdoor recreation features.

The Parks and Recreation Element of this Comprehensive Plan is implemented through the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan, included as [Appendix D](#). The PROS Plan addresses a broad range of issues to ensure that parks and recreational opportunities are accessible to all community members. It prioritizes the needs of those who live and work in Leavenworth while continuing to maintain and enhance facilities and year-round opportunities for residents and visitors alike. The goals and policies of this Element reflect these priorities and have been developed to reflect extensive community outreach.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan implements the Parks and Recreation Element by establishing the framework for the acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks, trails, recreational facilities, and open space serving the City and its service area. The Plan documents existing facilities, community needs, and regional coordination efforts, and sets forth a six-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to guide system improvements and implementation of the Parks and Recreation Element goals and policies. The PROS Plan also supports eligibility for recreation and conservation funding through the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to implement identified priorities.


Please reference the Leavenworth PROS Plan in [Appendix D](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Leavenworth Chamber of Commerce, [2025 Annual Economic & Visitor Report](#).

# Goals and Policies

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The following goals and policies have been identified based on the gaps in parks and recreational facilities, and to reflect and support the Public Outreach and Demands and Needs sections of the City's Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS Plan). Goals and policies with a mountain icon  contribute to the Climate Resilience Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

## PARKS & NATURAL AREAS

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### **Goal PR 1. Establish new parks in residential areas that are underserved and lack walkable access to outdoor recreation.**

- Policy PR 1.1.** Prioritize land acquisition for new parks within watershed gaps as identified in the Parks Dispersion Map to increase the availability of parks in proximity to residential neighborhoods.
- Policy PR 1.2.** Establish a framework for the temporary use of vacant lots as pocket parks or dog parks, such as through public-private partnerships or temporary land use agreements.
- Policy PR 1.3.** New public parks and open space should be zoned Recreation Public District.
- Policy PR 1.4.** Provide incentives or standards within the Subdivision Code to guide the design, location, and connectivity of parks and open spaces to enhance access, usability, and integration with the City's overall park system.

### **Goal PR 2. Develop plans to improve existing parks and ensure new and redeveloped parks, open spaces, trails, and other recreational facilities reflect community interests.**

- Policy PR 2.1.** Ensure new parks feature amenities most requested by the community and specifically kids, such as playgrounds and swings, splash park or aquatic play areas, nature play areas, bike racks, drinking fountains, ADA accessible and covered picnic shelters, and adequate shade.
- Policy PR 2.2.** Engage community members and stakeholders (e.g., Wenatchee River Institute, Leavenworth Winter Sports Club, rafting/tubing companies, recreation leagues, etc.) in planning for parks projects and recreational facilities at events such as the City's quarterly Community Engagement Night.
- Policy PR 2.3.** Build on previous planning efforts and support the implementation of redevelopment plans for the Osborn Property and Front Street Park, ensuring these projects enhance community access and recreational opportunities.
- Policy PR 2.4.** Prioritize improvements to existing parks and amenities rated 1-2 in the Conditions Assessment.

- Policy PR 2.5.** Improve the East Leavenworth Boat Launch to enhance user experience and safety, such as by adding picnic tables, a picnic shelter, and upgrading the parking lot.
- Policy PR 2.6.** Periodically evaluate maintenance needs for all parks, open space, and recreational facilities, including but not limited to trails, playgrounds, ballfields, and supporting facilities like restrooms and parking lots.
- Policy PR 2.7.** Acquire undeveloped properties to create new parks, trails, and open space within the UGA.
- Policy PR 2.8.** Establish pocket parks or open space on City-owned parcels or unimproved rights of way.
- Policy PR 2.9.** Preserve public park and recreational facilities by preventing the conversion of existing facilities to non-recreational uses.

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**▲▲ Goal PR 3. Conserve, protect, restore, and enhance sensitive areas and open spaces to expand opportunities for passive recreation and climate resilience.**

- Policy PR 3.1.** Expand opportunities for wildlife viewing, education, conservation, and low impact recreational activities by preserving open space and natural areas for public enjoyment.
- Policy PR 3.2.** Examine the feasibility of obtaining easements on private land for public open space and passive recreational use.
- ▲▲ Policy PR 3.3.** Enhance the public use and enjoyment of sensitive areas as permitted by the City's Critical Areas Ordinance, such as developing pervious trails through wetland buffers.
- ▲▲ Policy PR 3.4.** Preserve, restore, and plant native vegetation and trees in public parks and open spaces, while managing and controlling the spread of noxious weeds.
- ▲▲ Policy PR 3.5.** Ensure the long-term resilience of parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities by continually assessing and addressing climate hazards and impacts, such as wildfire risk or flooding.
- ▲▲ Policy PR 3.6.** Utilize water conservation methods, native plantings and xeriscaping, and climate-smart irrigation systems within parks and recreation areas to reduce water usage, increase stormwater management, and enhance climate resilience.
- ▲▲ Policy PR 3.7.** Strengthen the Subdivisions Code and establish development standards that specify minimum requirements for common open space or recreational amenities in new subdivisions and set dimensional standards to ensure open spaces are usable, can accommodate passive or active recreational uses, and retain mature trees to preserve tree canopy.

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**Goal PR 4. Improve parking availability and access for community members.**

- Policy PR 4.1.** Maximize the availability of parking lots at City parks for community members.
- Policy PR 4.2.** Manage parking demand created by commercial rafting/tubing activities to maintain capacity in public parking lots for access to parks and trails.

**Policy PR 4.3.** Study whether a paid parking model would reduce parking lot spillover and use of parking lots as “free parking” by visitors to the downtown core.

**Policy PR 4.4.** Integrate public transit options with outdoor recreation to attract more users, reduce parking spillover, and manage overcrowding in popular areas.

## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES & PROGRAMS

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### **Goal PR 5. Increase pool safety, opportunities, and programming to serve all community members who recreate at different times throughout the day.**

**Policy PR 5.1.** Maintain the existing municipal pool and explore improvements to enhance public use and longevity of the facility.

**Policy PR 5.2.** Expand adult and youth aquatic opportunities and programming by extending operating hours to better accommodate working schedules and diversifying fitness options, such as lap swimming, water aerobics, and other classes for people of all ages and abilities.

**Policy PR 5.3.** Establish a consistent and reliable pool schedule to improve predictability. Explore the possibility of opening the pool for the season earlier in the year.

**Policy PR 5.4.** Study the feasibility of the development of an indoor pool to promote year-round access.

**Policy PR 5.5.** Evaluate and pursue opportunities for the future relocation of City pool facilities to better meet community needs and improve accessibility, functionality, and safety.

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### **Goal PR 6. Work with other agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, and coordinate internally to enhance recreational programming.**

**Policy PR 6.1.** Incorporate recreational facilities into public works projects by the Public Works Department, such as bike lanes, pedestrian improvements, and trails.

**Policy PR 6.2.** Coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service and Chelan County to plan, develop, and maintain trails that connect City parks and open spaces to National Forest lands, enhancing public access, recreational opportunities, and sustainable trail management.

**Policy PR 6.3.** Partner with the Cascade School District to support public access to school grounds and recreational facilities, such as ballfields, playgrounds, trails, and natural areas like Rattlesnake Hill.

**Policy PR 6.4.** Partner with the Wenatchee River Institute (WRI) to further common goals, enhance trails, improve ADA accessibility, and strengthen connectivity between the WRI property and public parks.

**This partnership aims to expand accessible nature-based recreation and education through potential projects such as:**

- ◆ Maintaining trail linkages between City parks and the WRI campus
- ◆ Enhancing ADA accessibility, prioritizing upgraded restroom facilities, parking access, and trail improvements
- ◆ Supporting development of a nature playscape on the WRI campus
- ◆ Supporting development of a bike parking and service station

**Policy PR 6.5.** Engage local nonprofits and stakeholders through a collaborative approach to resource management to address public land concerns and leverage resources and expertise.

**Policy PR 6.6.** Collaborate with regional partners to explore the feasibility of establishing additional recreational opportunities in the City or surrounding region, such as an ice skating rink, indoor pool, sport courts (e.g., volleyball, basketball, pickleball), and dog park, among others.

**Policy PR 6.7.** Support partnerships with other public agencies and private entities, such as the Upper Valley Parks and Recreation Service Area, the Winter Sports Club, Trout Unlimited, and others, which provide recreational facilities within the UGA and the region.

## TRAILS & CONNECTIVITY

**Goal PR 7. Promote equitable access, connectivity, and public safety for all residents by establishing a system of trails, pedestrian facilities, and bike lanes between public parks, open spaces, trailheads, and recreational facilities.**

**Policy PR 7.1.** Coordinate infrastructure and transportation planning for new pedestrian facilities, bike lanes, and street crossings with recreational facilities to promote pedestrian and bicycle safety, access, and connectivity.

**Policy PR 7.2.** Coordinate with public agencies, such as the Washington State Department of Transportation, to establish safe pedestrian and bicycle connections across and along Highway 2 and other high-volume roads, including highly visible crosswalks, bike lanes, well-lit sidewalks, and protected shoulders where appropriate.

**Policy PR 7.3.** Engage the Cascade School District to identify infrastructure improvements necessary to establish and support safe walking routes for children traveling between residential neighborhoods, public schools, and City parks.

**Policy PR 7.4.** Support implementation of the Upper Valley Regional Trails Plan and prioritize projects that align with the Recommended Trails Plan, including:

- ◆ On-road trails to accommodate pedestrian and bicycle users on Ski Hill Drive and Titus Road
- ◆ Sidewalk connections from residential areas to park & ride facilities, schools, downtown, and the waterfront
- ◆ Golf Course Shoreline Trail
- ◆ E Leavenworth Optional Trail near the Boat Launch
- ◆ WDFW Shoreline Trail connecting to the Boat Launch

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**Goal PR 8. Promote active living by increasing total trail mileage and reducing gaps in the City's existing trail system through partnerships, land acquisition, or use agreements.**

**Policy PR 8.1.** Partner with property owners, such as the Wenatchee River Institute and Housing Authority of Chelan County and City of Wenatchee, to expand the City's trail system along the Wenatchee River. Consider access easements or use agreements.

**Policy PR 8.2.** Advance the east-west wetlands trails project by:

- ◆ Developing a route design and infrastructure that prioritizes environmental protection while providing opportunities for interpretive signage.
- ◆ Partnering with current property owners to procure access, ensure a contiguous trail network, and expand the City's green infrastructure.

**Policy PR 8.3.** Support regional planning, partnerships, and funding efforts to establish connections between Leavenworth's trail system and regional trails, including but not limited to those identified in the Upper Valley Regional Trails Plan and Chelan-Douglas Transportation Council Pathways Mater Plan.

# TRIBAL COLLABORATION

**Goal PR 9. Acknowledge tribal lands and collaborate with tribal partners throughout the planning and implementation phase of any PROS project.**

- Policy PR 9.1.** Partner and collaborate with local tribes to enrich cultural and historical resources within park and recreation facilities, and to ensure Indigenous perspectives lead the development of educational signage, programming, and the preservation of tribal heritage.
- Policy PR 9.2.** Proactively engage Tribal leaders and communities throughout the parks planning process to protect and acknowledge cultural heritage sites, and to identify opportunities for education, stewardship, and interpretation of historical, cultural, and natural resources.
- Policy PR 9.3.** Advance the planning of the p'squosa Heritage Site at Waterfront Park, which includes updated interpretive signage, new benches, artwork, and native plantings.
- Policy PR 9.4.** Engage Tribal leaders and communities when naming new parks, trails, and recreational facilities to recognize and honor cultural heritage, history, and traditional place names.



# COMMUNITY BUILDING & EDUCATION

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## Goal PR 10. Establish recreational facilities and programs that foster social interaction and community engagement.

**Policy PR 10.1.** Pursue the development of a Community Center, such as proposed by the Osborn Property Vision Report, or other shared and multi-use facilities that host athletic events, performing arts, community meetings, and other community events or amenities (e.g., a gym or seasonal ice skating rink).

**Policy PR 10.2.** Encourage the development of a Parks and Recreation Program.

**Policy PR 10.3.** Support the use of public parks and open spaces for youth programming and outdoor education to foster a love for nature and build community ties, collaborating with the school district and local organizations (e.g., Wenatchee River Institute) where appropriate.

**Policy PR 10.4.** Support the inclusion of public art in parks and encourage the development of art walks throughout the community.

**Policy PR 10.5.** Support the temporary use of City parks for a farmer's market and/or food truck events.

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## Goal PR 11. Balance increased community density and tourism with the preservation of nature and park facilities through proactive management and public education.

**Policy PR 11.1.** Encourage the development of ambassador and educational initiatives to enhance community and visitors' awareness around environmental stewardship, responsible outdoor recreation, and responsible river usage.

**Policy PR 11.2.** Collaborate with local and regional organizations and programs, such as the Leavenworth Recreation Ambassador program, to develop educational campaigns and interact with users at trailheads and shoreline access areas.

**Policy PR 11.3.** Enhance signage at City parks and trailheads to inform users about responsible recreation practices (e.g., pet leash requirements, leave no trace, etc.) to minimize negative impacts such as trail erosion, improper waste disposal, and habitat destruction.

**Policy PR 11.4.** Balance public access with conservation efforts to protect shorelines and wildlife habitat, utilizing monitoring systems such as beach and nature area stewards to prevent resource abuse, overuse, and ensure user safety.

**Policy PR 11.5.** Encourage the development of new interpretive trails and maintain and periodically update existing interpretive signage.

# ACCESSIBILITY & SAFETY

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## Goal PR 12. Provide safe, accessible, and well-maintained recreational facilities for all users.

- Policy PR 12.1.** Increase the lighting at all parks to enhance safety, extend usability of recreational facilities, and increase accessibility, while adhering to dark skies principles to reduce light pollution and protect ecosystems.
- Policy PR 12.2.** Provide, maintain, and periodically upgrade support facilities—including restrooms, parking areas, lighting, and other security features—to ensure safe, accessible, and convenient use of the park and recreation system.
- Policy PR 12.3.** Monitor restroom cleanliness and respond to maintenance needs on a frequent and regular basis.
- Policy PR 12.4.** Install animal-proof trash and recycling receptacles and pet waste stations at trailheads and in parks.
- Policy PR 12.5.** Maintain up-to-date trail maps, trail markers, and wayfinding throughout parks and trails to help users navigate safely.
- Policy PR 12.6.** Maintain and enhance trails, sidewalks, and other park pathways; improve ADA accessibility; reduce wildfire fuels; and manage weeds and litter, coordinating with local ambassador programs and community partners where appropriate.
- Policy PR 12.7.** Improve the winter maintenance of parks, trails, and pedestrian facilities, including timely snow removal and the removal of hazardous trees, to ensure users can safely access facilities and recreate year-round.
- Policy PR 12.8.** Improve facilities at the Icicle Bridge Put-In to ensure safer, ADA-accessible river access.

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## Goal PR 13. Provide a variety of year-round active and passive recreational activities for all users, regardless of age and ability.

- Policy PR 13.1.** Ensure safe ingress/egress points that are accessible – for user safety, emergency response, and to enhance the overall outdoor experience.
- Policy PR 13.2.** Establish alternative park entrances for pedestrians and differentiate the pedestrian entry experience from that of a driver arriving at a parking lot.
- Policy PR 13.3.** Study the experience of a pedestrian entering a park from the perspective of a variety of users, such as a person in a wheelchair or pushing a stroller, to inform ADA improvements.
- Policy PR 13.4.** Ensure recreation opportunities are accessible to people of all ages and abilities by creating new facilities or expanding existing facilities with consideration for ADA accessibility, diverse usership, and specialty user groups.
- Policy PR 13.5.** Develop new or expanded facilities, such as interpretive trails, designed for diverse age groups and abilities.

**Policy PR 13.6.** Provide a variety of trail experiences by locating trails of varying lengths and difficulty through diverse terrain, scenery, and points of interest to draw a variety of users.

## MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

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**Goal PR 14.** Explore diverse funding sources to secure the necessary resources to maintain and improve outdoor recreational infrastructure and ensure the long-term stability of these resources for the community.

**Policy PR 14.1.** Fund parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities through a variety of funding sources, including grants, tax levies, and fees.

**Policy PR 14.2.** Partner with neighboring jurisdictions to pursue regional grant opportunities, leveraging shared resources to secure funding that enhances regional trail and park connectivity, diversifies recreational opportunities, and supports environmental protection.

**Policy PR 14.3.** Require a long-term maintenance and funding plan prior to the development of new park or recreational facilities to ensure they remain safe and functional for their entire lifecycle.

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**Goal PR 15.** Establish a park management framework that prioritizes equitable community access while ensuring commercial revenue is reinvested into the local community.

**Policy PR 15.1.** Establish a tiered fee structure for park facilities that distinguishes between commercial (e.g., paid fitness classes or ticketed events) and non-commercial use, offering reduced rates for local residents hosting private, not-for-profit events such as a birthday party or family gathering.

**Policy PR 15.2.** Consider implementing a day-use permit system to manage park and trail capacity, accompanied by community outreach and education to communicate benefits and address potential concerns.