Park, Recreation and Open Space Element Chapter 9

INTRODUCTION

The City of Chehalis Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan will be adopted by reference to be an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. It is available online from the City's web site. The information below is the Executive Summary of the full PROS Plan. For the complete element, see the PROS Plan.

Executive summary

Chehalis has grown and changed since the last comprehensive Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan was accomplished by the city in 1986.

The choices that confront Chehalis at the present time are significant and could alter the character and quality of park, recreation, and open space facilities and services if not adequately planned.

This PROS document outlines the choices that are available and the means for implementing preferred actions of most benefit to Chehalis residents. Following are the major findings and recommendations – see the referenced chapter or appendix for more details.

1 Approach

This plan analyzed the supply, demand, and need for public and private open space, trail, and park facilities and recreation services within Chehalis's urban growth area.

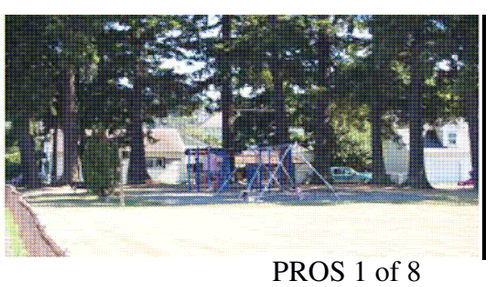
The The proposed implementation strategies are the result of this comprehensive or holistic analysis. Generally, the proposed strategies recommend Chehalis focus its resources where open space, trail, park, and recreation facilities and recreation needs are most critical, and Chehalis resources will be most effective.

2 Inventory implications - Appendix B

- ***Chehalis and other public and private agencies have amassed an impressive amount of acreage*** - that includes every conceivable kind of parkland and recreational facility within the urban growth area (UGA).

- ***Almost every kind of park, recreation, and open space land*** - is presently provided by Chehalis and other public and private agencies within the city's service area.

- ***A significant portion of the inventory are regional facilities*** - that are used by populations who reside outside of the Chehalis service area boundaries even though the maintenance and operation of these sites has been financed by the city.



3 Opportunities – Appendix C

- ***Strategically important sites*** – are owned or controlled by utilities, private landowners, and private commercial operators with every kind of physical and socially valuable park, recreational, and open space characteristic.

- ***A valuable park, recreation, and open space system includes lands that may not be suitable for built uses*** – and developed recreational facilities, but which can provide unique preserves, habitats, cultural, and historical associations. These combined social and physical attributes provide a balanced dimension to the park and recreation experience.

- ***A quality park and recreation system does not have to be implemented strictly by public monies or purchase*** – but by the creative interplay of public and private market resources using a variety of techniques including leases, easements, tax incentives, design and development innovations, and enlightened private property interests. Future park, recreation, and open space acquisition strategies may use traditional purchase options as well as cost effective alternative.

4 Future growth – Appendix D

According to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) and Chehalis's Community Development Department, the city's population will increase to 10,230 persons by the year 2015 and 11,230 persons by the year 2025 – or by another 3,240 persons by 2015 or 46% and 4,240 persons by 2025 or by 61%.

The city's rate of population increase to the year 2015 will be equal to an annual average increase of 3.9% compared to 1.0% for Lewis County, 1.2% for Puget Sound, 1.3% for Washington State, and 0.8% for the US over this 5-year time period.

Most of this projected increase will come from the in-migration of households to live and work in Chehalis. The projected growth will be significant and will increase demand for park, recreation, and open space resources in the city.

Chehalis/Chehalis ELOS value

	2009 supply		Value
Land acres	346.9		$ 10,975,000
Facility units	22284		18,299,154
Total			$ 29,274,154
/capita			$ 4,074
/household*			$ 10,022

* Household of 2.46 persons per unit

Chehalis/Chehalis ELOS (existing level-of-service) requirement 2008-2025

	2009 supply	2025 deficit	2025 cost
Land acres	346.9	195.2	$ 6,178,688
Facility units	22284	12546	$ 10,302,029
Total cost			$ 16,480,717

Under the existing level-of-service (ELOS) for Chehalis-owned park land and facilities in the city, the forecasted population increase will create a city-wide need for an additional 195.2 acres of land and 12,546 facility units (square feet, courts, fields, etc.) by the year 2025.

The continuation of the city's existing level-of-service (ELOS) could require an expenditure of $16,480,717 by the year 2025 simply to remain current with present standards - not accounting for any maintenance, operation or repair costs.

The approximate cost of sustaining the city's existing level-of-service (ELOS) standard would be equal to about $4,074 per every new person added to the city's population or about $10,022 for every new housing unit. ***This assumes Chehalis would continue to maintain the same ratio of parklands and facilities for the future population that the city has in the past.***

Composite PLOS (proposed level-of-service) requirement 2008-2025

	2009 supply	2025 addns	2025 cost
Land acres	346.9	308.6	$8,545,909
Facility units	22284	67026	$42,650,512
Total cost			$51,196,421
Chehalis cost			$17,333,489
Chehalis %			34%

Under the composite agencies proposed level-of-service (PLOS) for all public and privately-owned park land and facilities in the city, the forecasted population increase will create a city-wide proposal for an additional 308.9 acres of land and 22,284 facility units (square feet, courts, fields, etc.) by the year 2025. ***This assumes these agencies would supplement the existing inventory as described within this chapter rather than simply extending the same ratios into the future.***

The realization of the composite agencies proposed level-of-service (PLOS) for the city could require a total of $51,196,421 by the year 2025 - not accounting for any maintenance, operation or repair costs. ***Based on the project proposals described in the plan chapters, Chehalis's park, recreation, and open space share of the cost would be $17,333,489 or 34%.***

Built encroachments

However, if these proposals are not realized soon the present trend of increasing developments may:

- ***encroach upon*** - or preclude the preservation and public accessibility of the more sensitive and appealing environmental sites, particularly those proposed for cross city trail corridors and additional sensitive land preservations along riparian corridors and shorelines, and
- ***develop*** - or otherwise preclude the purchase and development of close-in, suitable lands for playgrounds, picnic shelters, waterfront access, and other neighborhood facilities.

Forcing city residents to:

- ***use crowded*** - picnic areas, and hike and bike on crowded trails,
- ***commute to play*** - at overcrowded existing facilities in the city and/or organized athletic programs may have to be reduced for local youth, and
- ***commute to use*** - available facilities in other jurisdictions regional and/or programs may have to be curtailed to prevent severe overcrowding conditions in the facilities that do provide such services.

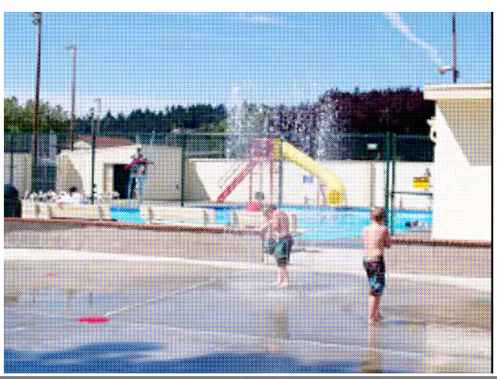
5 Financial implications Appendix D

Such actions would be to the detriment of city residents who have paid the costs of developing and operating these facilities

These levels of facility investment may not be solely financed with the resources available to Chehalis if the city pursues an independent delivery approach or uses traditional methods of funding.

Chehalis will not be financially able to develop, manage, and maintain a comprehensive, independent park, recreation, and open space system using only traditional financing methods in light of the needs projected.

These needs require a city-wide financing approach by Chehalis and where appropriate in partnership with Chehalis School District, as well as possible non-profit or for-profit partners.



A city-wide approach may use a combination of shared user fees, excise taxes, joint grant applications, impact fees, and voter approved property tax levies to maintain and improve facilities in the face of continued city population increases.

6 Role recommendations – Chapter 2

This plan recommends Chehalis undertake a modified strategic approach to open space, trail,

park, and recreation facilities and recreation services where Chehalis assumes responsibility for functions of citywide interest where there are no other viable sponsors, and helps coordinate or support functions and activities that have other viable sponsors. For example:

Coordinating activities

Chehalis will take the lead role in providing information and coordinating services for open space, trail, park facilities, and recreation program activities on a citywide basis.

Chehalis's role will include updating future population growth estimates, inventorying existing and proposed facility developments, identifying probable citywide and local neighborhood facility and program needs, and proposals of citywide facility and program solutions.

Planning and development assistance

Chehalis will provide detailed planning and development assistance when:

- there are no other designated agencies or organizations who can, or
- the activity involves site controversies or environmental consequences that may not be equitably resolved otherwise within the Chehalis urban growth area.

Development, operation and maintenance

Chehalis will develop, operate or maintain open space, trail, park, or recreational facilities or recreation program activities provided:

- the facility will have broad benefits for a large proportion of the citywide population and will be financed using resident approved methods, or
- facility development and operating costs will be recaptured from direct charges of the populations who use the facility, or
- facility development and operating costs will be compensated in some manner through inter-local agreements with the using agency, area or benefiting user group, particularly where the demands will originate from a community service requirement, or
- the site or facility has intrinsic value apart from traditional operation and maintenance needs, such as a passive natural area or wetland preservation.

7 Recreational programming clearinghouse – Chapter 3

The following goals and objectives are based on a strategic approach to citywide services, an analysis of existing open space, trail, park, and recreation conditions, and the results of workshop planning sessions and surveys.

Chehalis will operate an internet web-based clearinghouse coordinating recreational program offerings that include as wide a variety of activities as there is an interest by city residents, regardless of age, skill level, income – or program provider.

Recreation program offerings that could be offered through the clearinghouse will include activities providing health, education, social, recreational, and other welfare activities for children, teens, adults, seniors, and special populations.

To the extent possible, practical, and consistent with the city's mission, programs will be conducted by city staff or contractors. However, depending on demand, cost, and feasibility, the clearinghouse will also coordinate with programs to be conducted by other public, nonprofit, or for-profit organizations and even vendors.

To the extent possible and practical, program offerings will include activities that will be conducted in city parks, city pool, and trail facilities. However, depending on demand, the clearinghouse will also include program offerings that may be conducted in schools and other public facilities inside or out of the city, as well as at non-profit and for-profit sites and facilities.

Vision

The internet web-based recreational clearinghouse may be realized through the coordination of:

- ***Chehalis programs*** – where there is sufficient demand to meet Chehalis's park and recreation mission and pricing and delivery objectives; • ***other jurisdictions*** – including Centralia, Chehalis School District, Lewis County, Washington State Parks & Recreation Commission (WAP&RC), and Department of Fish & Wildlife (DFW);
- ***non-profit organizations*** – such as the Boys & Girls Club, Boy and Girl Scouts, Campfire USA,

Lions, Rotary, and Kiwanis Clubs, VFW, and Granges, 4-H Clubs, Chehalis Historical Commission, Chehalis Foundation, Southwest Washington Fairground, Chehalis-Centralia Railroad Association, Veterans Memorial Museum, proposed Chehalis Children's Museum, Centralia-Chehalis Airport, Port of Chehalis, and others; and

- ***private for-profit entities and vendors*** – such as the FitLife Center, Riverside Country Club, Newaukum Valley Golf Course, and others.

The proposals outlined in this document concerning elements of the open space, trail, and park plan are based on the results of environmental inventories, field analysis, demand analysis, workshop planning sessions, and the mail-out/phone-back survey of resident households. The proposals outline the vision developed for open space, trails, and parks within Chehalis for the next 20 years.

The proposals are CONCEPTUAL, in some instances, subject to further study and coordination with

public and private participants that may modify the eventual project particulars.

The proposals are described referring to a site or property that may provide a major type of open space, trail, or park activity. Any particular site or property may include one or all of the described element plan features. The proposals in each section describe the improvements that will be accomplished under each major type of plan element - see each plan element for a composite description for any particular site.

9 Mail-out/phone-back survey Appendix F

See Chapter 5 describing the current condition of each park and conservancy property, along with possible future improvements.

A random sample was conducted of resident voter households in Chehalis in December 2009 to participate in a controlled survey concerning park, recreation, and open space needs and priorities. The survey results are accurate to within +/-10% of the opinions of the general population.

The results of the mail-out/phone-back survey indicate resident city voters will support the projects and programs indicated in the survey and chapters 3-6 of this document.

10 Recommendations – Appendix E

Approximately 57% of the respondents will also ***support a special property tax levy*** as an optional means of financing parks, recreation, and open space improvements for specific projects or the programs in general.

Under this proposal, City Council could submit a special dedicated property tax levy for voter approval to finance ***acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance*** of all city parks, recreation, and open space improvements ***and programs***.

The property tax levy would provide a continuous, dedicated source of funds with which to finance all requirements over a specified levy period (typically in 6-year increments).

A feasible 6 and 15-year Chehalis financial strategy lies between alternative 2 and 3 where:

- ***General Fund and other revenue contributions*** – from the property tax contribution would decline an average -2.0% per year as a result of proposition 747 or the 1% tax limitation,
- ***Growth impact fee*** – would be *adopted to capture between 60%-75%* of the $4,074 cost per person of maintaining Chehalis's existing level-of-service (ELOS) standards through additional population increases equal to *$2,444-3,055 per person or $6,013-7,516 per dwelling unit* where the typical unit averages 2.46 residents,
- ***Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) 1 & 2*** – which would allow two $0.0025 increments per $1.00 of

sales value would provide *between 50-60% of the annual proceeds* be devoted to park capital development,

- ***Property tax levy lid lift*** – would be sought to finance remaining costs necessary to realize combined administration, recreation programs, swimming pool operations, park maintenance, deferred renovations, and the city's portion of the combined proposed level-of-service (PLOS) standard equal to an annual property tax levy payment of between *$83.43-49.43 per $100,000 house value for 6-15 years*.

If the amount of monies provided from the General Fund are increased (through a levy lid lift), then the amounts that must be generated from recreation program cost recovery, growth impact fee assessments, REET allocations, and a special duration property tax levy may be lower.

Conversely, if the amount of monies provided from the General Fund is lower than the reducing -2% allocation and the amounts to be generated from recreation program cost recovery, growth impact fee assessments, REET allocations, and a special duration property tax levy is also lower;

• then some or most of the proposed level-of-service (PLOS) enhancements will have to be reduced - or extended beyond the next 6 and 15-year programming time period.