
**City of Castle Rock
&
Castle Rock School District
Park & Recreation Plan**

DRAFT

March 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter I:	Introduction.....	1
Chapter II:	Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives	3
Chapter III:	Planning Area and Inventory	8
Figure 1:	Service Areas.....	9
Table 1:	Percent Population Change, 2005-2010, Various Service Areas	11
Table 2:	Castle Rock population projections 2010-2010	11
Table 3:	Castle Rock population distribution by age and sex, 2000.....	12
Table 4:	Age distribution by Census Tract with the City of Castle Rock’s population removed from the counts for Census Tract 20.02	13
Table 5:	Existing recreation facilities in and around the City of Castle Rock.....	14
Figure 2:	Recreational Facilities within City Limits by Type.....	17
Figure 3:	Trail System & Major Amenities	18
Figure 4:	North County Service Area	19
Figure 5:	Cowlitz Riverfront Master Plan	20
Chapter IV:	Demand and Need Analysis.....	37
Figure 6:	Tot Lot or Mini Park Opportunities by Sub Areas	42
Table 6:	Castle Rock 2000 Census age stratification based on subarea classification	44
Table 7:	Percent distribution of age groups by study area.....	44
Figure 7:	Survey Respondents by Zip Code	47
Table 8:	Estimated increases in outdoor recreation compared to current levels.....	49
Chapter V:	Capital Improvement Program and Funding Options.....	51
Table 9:	Capital Projects 2011 – 2016.....	52
Chapter VI:	Public Involvement & Plan Adoption.....	57

Prepared by the Castle Rock Parks Board and Public Works Staff

Board Commissioners:	Roy Henson Linda Moody Lynda Frantsvog Marguerite Ogden Mark Damschen
Director:	David Vorse
Public Works Secretary:	Barbara Roller
City Planner:	TJ Keiran

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This document represents a substantial update of the 2011 Park and Recreation Plan completed jointly by the City of Castle Rock and the Castle Rock School District under the auspices of the Castle Rock Park Board. According to Washington State requirements, park and recreation plans must be updated every six years to retain eligibility for a variety of grant and funding opportunities. Besides the statutory requirement, the six-year timeframe also provides a means to set realistic goals and objectives based on a relatively short temporal scope.

This plan was developed by the Castle Rock Park Board (in conjunction with the Castle Rock School District) using the results of the 2010/11 City of Castle Rock/Castle Rock School District Park and Recreation Survey (see Appendix A for more information) and other public outreach/planning efforts. It is designed to meet or exceed all Washington State requirements as listed in the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Planning Policy Guidelines and will be updated on a regular basis.

Working on this plan was particularly exciting because a great number of projects have been completed over the last six years, proving the validity of park planning and providing a push to accomplish more. The following list provides a brief outline of the specific accomplishments made between 2005 and 2010:

- Constructed the two-lane Al Helenberg Boat Launch on a four acre tract of land along the Cowlitz River within the North County Recreational Facility for the purposes of providing a recreational and emergency services boat launching site to the region. The first phase of access and parking was also completed.
- Extended trails and added fields and a concession structure to the Sports Complex within the North County Recreational Facility.
- Extended the Riverfront Trail on the east side of the river. Improvements include enhancing the ADA accessible ramp and constructing a trailhead parking lot and a viewing platform by the river. Plans call for adding a restroom and signage.
- Improvements were made to the Skate Park and BMX Park.
- Began incorporating welcoming Entrance Features at Lions Pride Park (2 of 3 phases completed).
- Private developers constructed a paved, lighted multi-purpose trail extension and a mini park as part of a two residential subdivisions. The city negotiated a \$25,000 fee-in-lieu of park land dedication for a third subdivision. Those funds will go towards playground equipment at the North County Recreational Facility.

- Constructed habitat enhancement in and along Whittle Creek.
- Adopted a Fee In Lieu of Land Dedication (FILO) ordinance providing developers an option to address potential impacts associated with provision of recreational opportunities when subdividing land for residential purposes.
- Partnered with Pathways 2020, Cowlitz County, Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, the National Park Service and Cowlitz on the Move to draft *The Castle Rock to Lexington Loop Trail* conceptual plan, which was then adopted as part of the Regional Trail Plan. The city endorsed Cowlitz County's efforts to fund and develop the Cook Ferry Trail just outside city limits as the first phase of this regional loop trail system.
- The city is in the process of annexing approximately 275 acres west of the Cowlitz River including the properties where the Castle Rock fairgrounds, the Castle Rock Race Park, and Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) dredge spoil site referred to as "The High Banks" are located. A new Parks, Recreation and Open Space zoning district was drafted to help property owners, elected officials and citizens manage the recreational-based properties.

As evident from above, the entire community has many reasons to celebrate the expanded park and recreation opportunities available to them. Despite the highlighted successes, there are still numerous projects that deserve attention, are very much needed and will hopefully lead to a fully integrated park and recreational network unique to a city this size.

This document will ensure that adequate facilities exist for current and future Castle Rock residents, providing a new/updated set of goals, objectives and guiding principals for the prioritizing, funding, acquisition and development and/or rehabilitation of parks and recreational facilities/opportunities in and around Castle Rock. Hopefully, six years from now, a series of accomplishments such as those listed above will be included in the next plan.

Organization

The next chapter represents the heart of the plan and includes the goals and policies that will direct park and recreational development in and around Castle Rock for the next several years. Subsequent chapters include the background information that was used to derive and support the stated goals and policies. While it may seem more logical to place the goal and policy chapter immediately after discussing demand and need, it is often customary and/or desirable to place the goal/policy section at the front of a plan, since it is viewed most often and is of chief importance.

CHAPTER II

MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Castle Rock Parks – Mission Statement

To provide Castle Rock residents, students and visitors alike, with a variety of recreational and leisure opportunities designed to enrich their physical health, social wellbeing and overall quality of life.

Goals

City of Castle Rock Goals:

- A. To provide, improve, maintain and facilitate a variety of year-round recreational opportunities for all age groups in the City of Castle Rock and outlying areas.
- B. To provide more areas for active and passive recreation and educational opportunities by identifying possible locations for park expansion and land acquisition.
- C. Provide for a system of parks, linear open spaces and trails oriented to urban waterways.
- D. Make recreation and tourism a building block of Castle Rock's economic development in concert with the Castle Rock Community Action Plan.
- E. Seek a variety of funding sources to fully implement the capital improvement program, including recreation and economic development funds, donations and other grant programs.
- F. Collaborate with citizens, volunteers, community groups, committees, partnering agencies, and organizations to maintain, improve, develop and promote recreational facilities and opportunities in and around Castle Rock.
- G. Utilize the Castle Rock Riverfront Park Master Plan as a guide to the phased development of the so-called "recreation corridor," including development plans for the large dredge-spoil sites on both sides of the Cowlitz River.
- H. Strive to ensure that developers set aside land or provide sufficient fee in lieu of land dedication so there are recreational facilities and opportunities throughout the city, regardless of physical barriers.
- I. Seek a variety of funding sources to support the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities so that an acceptable level of service is achieved.

- J. Continue to promote the enhancement and extension of the Riverfront Trail network. The trails should also connect to the regional system identified in the Cowlitz Regional Trails Plan, to Sequest Park, and to the central business district.
- K. Promote the use of the Exhibit Hall / Visitor Center.
- L. Promote the recreational component of the Castle Rock Library.
- M. Work with the Castle Rock School District concerning converting the Middle School into a facility for city services and a community / senior center.
- N. Work with other local cities / county officials on collaborating efforts to provide better facilities and service in a cost efficient manner.
- O. Collaborate with the Castle Rock School District and other interested groups on bicycle routes and safety information.
- P. Identify and work with the equestrian community on trails, activities and facilities for their users.

Castle Rock School District Goals:

1. The district encourages full community use of all school facilities, provided that the educational and extra-curricular functions of the district are supported at the level designated by the Board.
2. The district supports community/economic development activities in the region by making school facilities available when possible as host or support facilities.
3. The district intends to utilize real property to its fullest potential. Land that is not targeted for long-range building program needs will be properly maintained and/or developed to support additional district and community activities.
4. The district will work with other agencies to support projects that expand avenues for education, instill civic pride and provide opportunities for meaningful community service.
5. The district will work with the city to foster partnerships between youth and city, taking the lead in getting students to be involved with city planning and support groups (chamber of commerce, city council, park board, etc.)

Objectives

City of Castle Rock Objectives:

- A. Extend the Riverfront Trail on the east side of the Cowlitz River northward to Highway 504 and south to Salmon Creek. Explore partnering with Washington State Parks Commission and Washington State Department of Transportation to connect to Seaquest State Park, possibly utilizing the state's Scenic and Recreational Highways Corridor Management program.
- B. Extend the Riverfront Trail on the west side southward to Arkansas Creek, cross the creek, and link to the Regional Trail System on Cowlitz County land (Camelot area). Explore opportunities to develop equestrian trails near the fairgrounds as part of the multipurpose trail system. Construction will likely occur in phases.
- C. Pursue opportunities to enhance multipurpose trails so they provide recreational uses for the greatest range of population (i.e. walkers, joggers, runners, bicyclists, equestrians, etc.) and also satisfy a transportation component in a multimodal transit management program. Include the safe crossing of the Cowlitz River as part of such a plan.
- D. Work closely with the Castle Rock School District, North County Recreation Association, Castle Rock Fair Board, Mount Saint Helens Motorcycle Club, State Department of Natural Resources (DNR), State Department of Transportation, State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cowlitz County, private individuals and organizations to continue further development of recreational opportunities.
- E. Continue to improve, upgrade and maintain the Skate Park to ensure it meets the needs and desires of the public. Make improvement to the Skate Park by adding additional equipment and utilizing some of the space for ½ court basketball courts.
- F. Continue to improve, upgrade and maintain the BMX Track to ensure it meets the needs and desires of the public. Consider partnering with Growlers Gulch Racing group, a group of local cyclist enthusiasts, to enhance the BMX Track by improving the course and installing a Pump Track facility.
- G. Make improvements to Castle Rock/DNR land (the "High Banks" land) on the west side of the Cowlitz River. Pursue opportunities to partner with a private developer to improve and market a portion of the site as an RV Resort. Other possible improvements include parking facility construction, development of access ramps to public fishing sites on the Cowlitz River and Arkansas Creek and installation of erosion control measures. Fish habitat enhancement and educational opportunities could also result. A day-use area along Arkansas Creek should also be provided. A bridge crossing Arkansas Creek should be constructed or installed in order to extend the city's trails to the Regional Trail System.

- H. Construct restrooms at the trailhead (Riverfront Trail) located behind the high school to serve users of the trail system, the Sports Complex and boat launch.
- I. Promote a strong sense of the community and provide an inviting welcome into the city for visitors and residents through the continuing development of gateway facilities.
- J. Continue the planning and design work on a community center that will tie the community together and house a variety of facilities (including a swimming pool) and events (see Appendix B for more details).
- K. Continue developing and constructing the regional boat launch on the Cowlitz River.
- L. Continue development of neighborhood parks and mini-parks (“pocket parks”). Development of park facilities in the area east of I-5 and northwest of Cowlitz Street around Cherry Street is a priority.
- M. Work towards developing a community park at the city-owned dredge spoil site on the east side of the Cowlitz River in the area known as “The Big Bend” using the Riverfront Park Master Plan as a guide.
- N. Ensure that new residential developments dedicate land for park areas, provide improvements to existing facilities, or provide monetary compensation to the City of Castle Rock for the acquisition, development and maintenance of recreational facilities.
- O. Develop a pedestrian bridge or provide for another means of safe crossing over the Cowlitz River, directly linking the east and west segments of the Riverfront Trail along with other recreational facilities.
- P. Publish a pamphlet and utilize the World Wide Web to promote recreational opportunities in and around Castle Rock for distribution to the public.
- Q. Provide outdoor kitchen areas at Lions Pride and/or “The Rock” Community Park.
- R. Improve “The Rock” Community Park by rebuilding the scenic lookouts and trails alongside the Cowlitz River.
- S. Encourage the private development of a recreational vehicle (RV)/campground on the west side of the Cowlitz River south of Whittle Creek on State DNR land and city-owned dredge spoils. Funds generated from the campground could be used to support park and recreational operations. A public day-use area would also be included. Continue pursuing a land exchange with the DNR.
- T. Add additional features to the Sports Complex including an additional soccer field, basketball courts, expanded concession stand, large picnic areas, play structures, open space/play fields, a community garden, improved trail system, and improved parking.

- U. Add additional features to the Al Helenberg Memorial Boat Launch including a canoe/kayak slip, ADA accessible restrooms, a fish cleaning station and sufficient paved parking.
- V. Improve the Castle Rock Library facility by developing a computer area, complying with ADA standards, adding storage in the basement, upgrading the heating system, paint and repair the interior and exterior, replace windows and promote reading programs.
- W. Initiate discussions with the DNR and State Legislatures concerning the conveyance of the land at exit 48 along the Cowlitz River to the City.
- X. Make improvements to the “Jail” Park and the Lion’s Volunteer Park.

Castle Rock School District Objectives

The Castle Rock School District #401 in partnership with the City of Castle Rock, seeks to accomplish the following Objectives:

1. Continue to improve and expand the community garden, orchard and berry patch.
2. Construct an outdoor classroom.
3. Complete and expand the riverfront trail and exercise stations, adding open and covered picnic facilities and a playground supported by community volunteers, donations and grants.
4. Finish phase 1 of the park plan for fields with the construction of a full size baseball field.
5. To review, evaluate and improve the elementary fields and gym and the middle school fields, gym and fitness center to enhance safe use and access.