



Clark County Parks Advisory Board



Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, April 14, 2026, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin St, Vancouver, WA 98660
In Training Room 679 and Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

PAB Members:

John Rafanelli
Janis VanWyhe
Jessica Barksdale
James Kautz
Russell Malburg
Jordan Hamann
Brandon Erickson

School District

Liaisons:

Cale Piland (Evergreen)
AJ Panter (Vancouver)
Rachel Best (Camas)

Parks Foundation:

Sean Janson

Next Meeting:

May 12, 2026

****Motion Needed**

CALL TO ORDER

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

1. Meeting structure guidelines for Teams
2. Roll call / **New members welcome and introductions** / guest introductions
3. Approve previous Minutes. Copies can be found on the website, via: <https://clark.wa.gov/public-works/parks-advisory-board>.
 - **March 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes****

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. None.

The public is encouraged to participate in the following ways:

- Microsoft Teams link:
- By phone: 213-262-7043 and enter access code: 253 980 054#
- Submit public comments to: amy.arnold@clark.wa.gov

MANAGER'S REPORT

1. Departmental updates.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Action: Regional Parks Funding report for Council recommendation** - Ross Hoover and Evelyn Ives**
2. **Informational: Picnic shelter rentals for 2027, time expansion, and onboarding for temporary staff - Ross Hoover**
3. **Informational: New rates for picnic shelters - full day price - Ross Hoover**
4. **Informational: PAB Guidance/Goals for end of 2026 - Ross Hoover**

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION (PAB Members)

ADJOURN

Parks Advisory Board meetings are recorded and the audio will be posted on the [Parks Advisory Board website](#)



Regional Parks Funding

Draft Task Team Report

April 2026



Clark County Public Works - Parks & Nature Division
4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver, WA 98665
www.clark.wa.gov/public-works/clark-county-parks

Introduction

Clark County Parks and Nature Division has grown into a large, developed park system over decades. As the County population continues to grow, the funding sources for parks operations and maintenance budgets have not kept pace with rising costs and growing community needs. Without a new source for operations and maintenance, the County will not be able to develop new parks. And eventually will have to make difficult decisions to close parks where safe and clean conditions cannot be maintained.

In 2025, Clark County Council directed the formation of a regional parks task team to tackle current and future challenges presented by lack of adequate park funding options. The regional task team is made up of city council representatives and staff from: Vancouver, Ridgefield, Battle Ground, Camas, Washougal and La Center as well as representatives from Clark County. The task team set out to understand the needs of each local park system and evaluate dedicated park funding options for the Clark County region based on a review of models in other regions throughout the Country. The team convened a total of nine meetings between October 2025 to March 2026 and developed this report summarize the information discussed during that time.

Clark County's urgent need

Clark County's Parks and Nature Division funds park operations and maintenance from three main sources: 1) The Greater Clark Parks District (GCPD) Levy; 2) park-generated revenue from paid parking, shelter reservations, and sport field rentals; and 3) the County's general fund. These funding sources have generally not kept pace with expenses. The costs of utilities, labor, materials and supplies are increasing rapidly. This is due to many factors including inflation and changes in the labor market. Additionally, because of constraints on funding sources, some of our park properties are getting more attention than others, which has caused an imbalance within our system.

The Greater Clark Park District (GCPD) is a voter-approved Metropolitan Park District (MPD) created in 2005. The district is not County-wide, rather it encompasses just the unincorporated urban growth boundary of Vancouver, that at the time had grown quite rapidly and had few developed park properties. Funding generated within the park boundary can only be used for parks within the boundary. The GCPD levy enabled the County to build 30 new parks and operate and maintain those parks over the last 20 years. It is a stable and parks-dedicated funding source, but is capped at \$0.27 per \$1,000 of

assessed home value. The main challenge is that these funds cannot be used outside of the GCPD.

There are eight large, Regional Parks outside of the GCPD that rely only on general funds and park-generated revenue. These Regional Parks are: Lewisville, Daybreak, Lucia Falls, Moulton Falls, Lacamas, Whipple Creek, Vancouver Lake, and Frenchman’s Bar. Not only are these the most heavily used parks in the County system, but also are some of the oldest, largest, and most remote parks. They require more staff time to operations and maintenance to keep the parks safe and clean. Unfortunately, the funding sources for these park have become limited over time. Currently, park-generated revenue only cover about 12% of operating expenses, and the general fund only cover about 23% (see Figure 1).

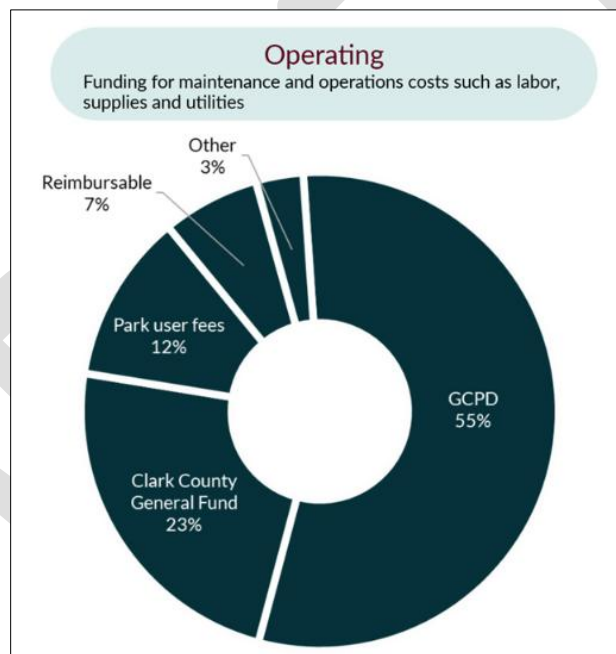


Figure 1: Clark County Parks Operations and Maintenance funding sources.

Over the years, Clark County has taken many measures to reduce costs, including reducing staffing levels. Currently, the County employs 37 operations and maintenance staff to 7,166 acres of park land. Compared to other park agencies of our size, this level of staff is 80% less than the national median. And for all agencies, regardless of size, our staffing level is 92% less than the national median (see Figure 2). Figure 2 shows the ratio of full time employees (FTEs) per 10,000 residents based on data collected by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) in 2024.

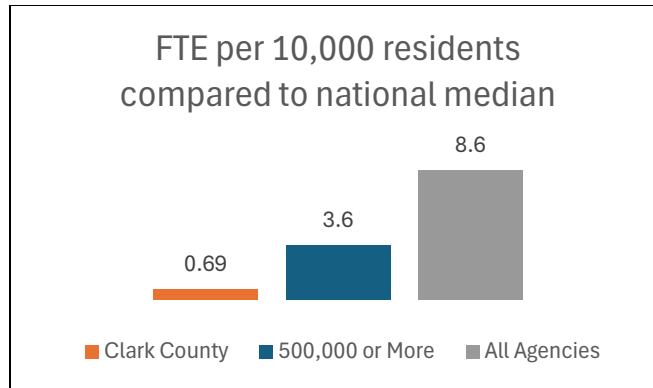


Figure 2: Comparison of staffing ratio to residents for park system reported in the 2024 NRPA database.

Staffing is lower, but the usage of County parks has increased with our growing population. Increased usage means more garbage, more vandalism, and more wear and tear on facilities. Using task tracking software, the County now knows that 33% of daily tasks assigned are not being completed and only the most urgent maintenance and repairs are being done. Graffiti and vandalism can't be addressed as quickly. Bathrooms must be closed more frequently. And the list of deferred repairs continues to grow; and overtime becomes most costly to repair.

With an already lean staff, there are no longer ways to cut costs. For the last six years, the County has had to dip into reserve funds to cover the gap between Regional Parks available funding and their actual operational costs (see Figure 3).

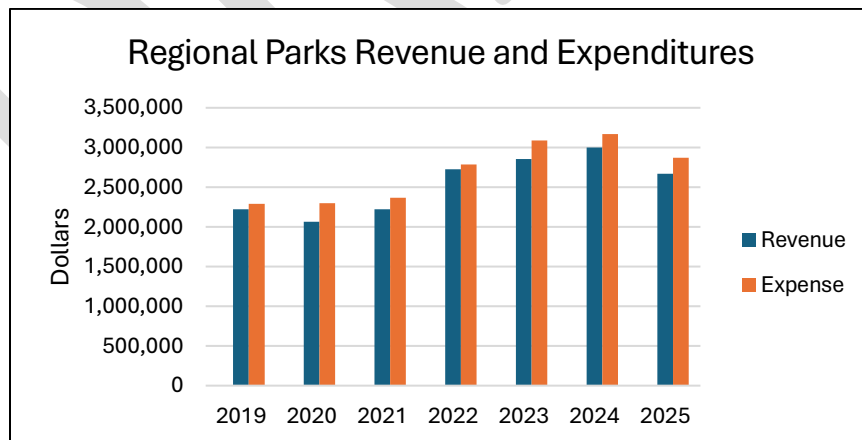


Figure 3: Regional Parks revenue and expenditures between 2019 and 2025, without the Council-approved subsidy from reserve funds.

Cities and County data evaluation

To better inform County Council on a possible regional solution to parks funding, the task team learned about each agency’s unique park system.

Together, the task team members compiled data from each of their park systems to benchmark against national metrics. Benchmarking metrics were pulled from the National Recreation and Parks Association 2024 Annual Report. Each park system compared their metrics to the national median for communities of their size. In the figures below, park system data are plotted in orange and the gap to meet the national median is plotted in blue.

One shared strength of our region are the amount of open spaces and natural resources. The amount of park-owned properties, including open spaces or natural areas is high compared to National levels. Figure 4 shows little to no gap existing for the metric of total parkland per 1,000 residents. For Clark County and the City of Camas, their metrics are significantly above national median levels.

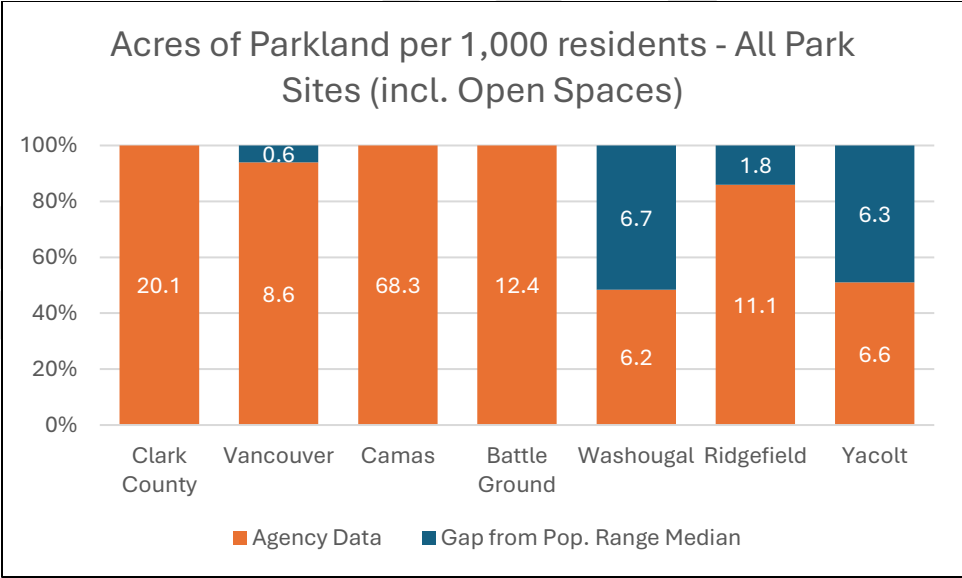


Figure 4: The percentage gap between agency data and national median data (based on population size) for acres of Parkland per 1,000 residents.

Other metrics varied widely between agencies, depending on the size of the agencies, the size and number of parks each agency maintains and the level of development within the City. But, one thing all the park agencies have in common is that they are **funded and staffed below the National Median for agencies of their size.**

As shown on Figure 5, all park systems are below the national median for operating expenditures from similar populations. To keep the chart comparable across agencies, the operating expenditures do not include recreational programming costs, where applicable.

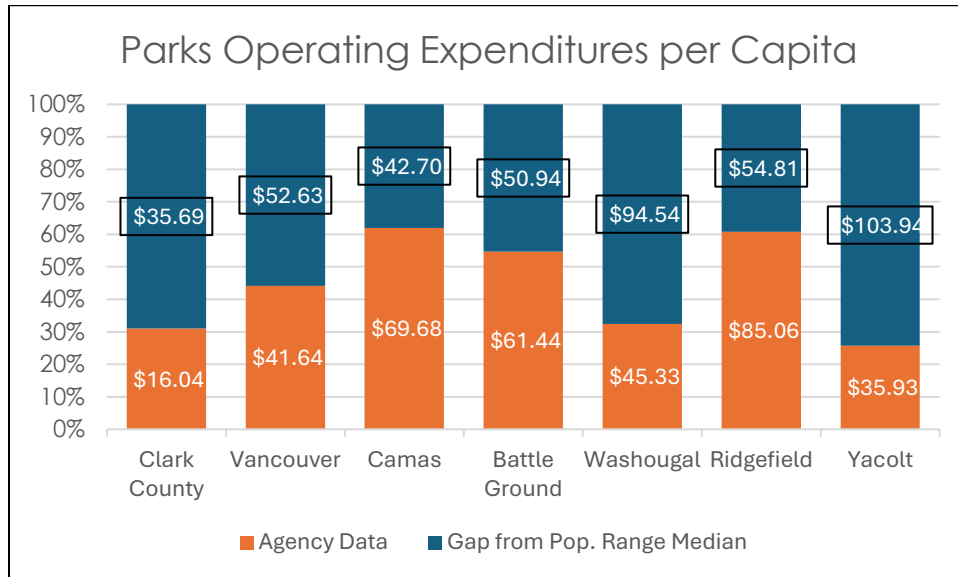


Figure 5: The percentage gap between agency data and the national median data (based on population size) for operating expenditures per capita for parks only (does not include recreation expenses)

In addition to operating expenditures, **staffing levels are also all below national median levels.** As shown in Figure 6, the ratio of full-time park employees (FTE) per 10,000 residents in each agency is below the national median for similar populations.

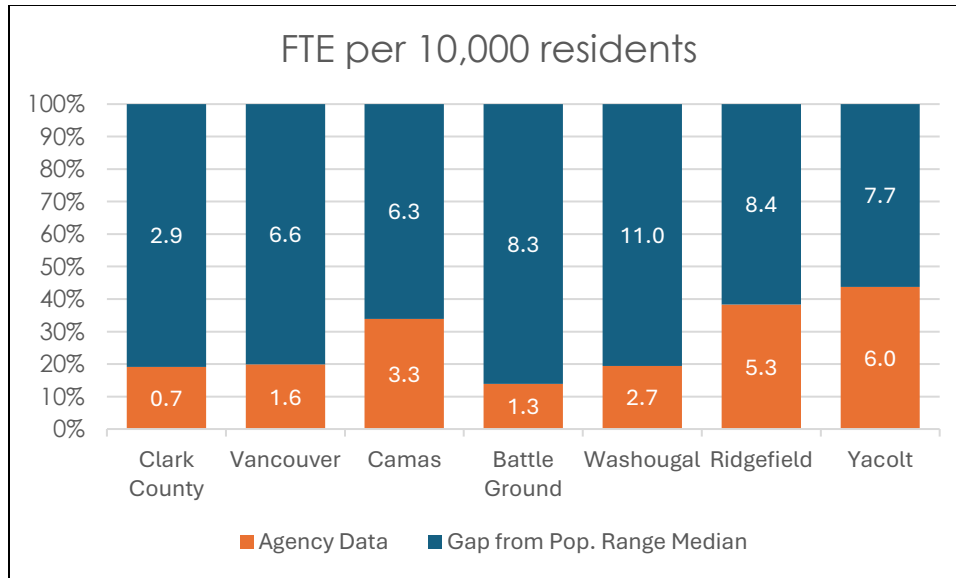


Figure 6: The percentage gap between agency data and the national median data (based on population size) for full-time employees (FTE) per 10,000 residents for parks only (does not include recreational programming staff)

The current data supports the larger picture of a rapidly growing region that as time goes on, will continue to provide services to more and more community members. Based on State growth projections, the county will see a projected population growth of 34% over the next 20 years. That equates to about 154,854 people by 2045, which is similar to adding another city of Vancouver (current population of 202,600) to the County. This massive growth will require investment in park systems.

Models and Case Studies

The task team narrowed their focus of two types of funding models: A **Metropolitan Park District (MPD)** and a **Regional Levy**. Either of these models would allow for the County to share part of the tax revenue with cities. This section summarizes each type of model and discusses the potential implications for if either model were used for Clark County.

Metropolitan Parks District

An MPD is a special-purpose local government entity established by voter approval under Washington’s statute RCW 35.61 to fund a defined district that can cross multiple governmental jurisdictions. The MPD funds can be used to acquire, develop, maintain, and operate parks, trails, recreational facilities and other related amenities or programming. Establishment of an MPD allows for a permanent property tax levy that does not require

periodic renewal votes from the public. Once created, the MPD is governed by a board or legislative authority, who would control the property tax levy rate on an annual basis.

Regional Parks Levy

Without the formation of an MPD, a county-wide property tax levy dedicated to parks is allowable, if approved by voters, for a six-year period, per RCW 36.68.525. Washington's statute also limits the levy amount to 60 cents or less per thousand dollars of assessed value of property and requires a voter approval rate of at least 60 percent. Levy revenues may be used to acquire, build, operate, maintain, or regulate parks, trails, recreational facilities and other related amenities or programming. The levy would be governed by County Council, who would be allowed to increase the rate up to one percent annually without voter approval.

Currently, Clark County contains one MPD, the GCPD, which has a boundary limited to Vancouver's unincorporated urban growth area (as defined in 2005 when the MPD was formed). The GCPD was established with a property tax levy with a cap of 27 cents per \$1,000 of assessed home value and County Council was designated as the governing body. As of 2026, the rate of the levy is approximately 14 cents and can be increased by one percent annually without voter approval.

The task team considered formation of a new County-wide MPD, but the new MPD could not overlap with the GCPD. A new MPD would either need to be defined by the entire County except for the unincorporated Vancouver urban growth area or would need to dissolve the GCPD first. The GCPD serves over 150,000 people, which is about one-third of the County's population. Leaving this number of voters out of a petition for a new MPD would likely be unsuccessful. The alternative, of asking voters to first dissolve the GCPD and then approve a new MPD, comes with a risk of losing a very stable funding source that the County relies on for most of their parks operating budget.

The task team also considered how a County-wide property tax levy, without a new MPD, might function. The levy can be applied over an MPD, and therefore the GCPD could remain in-tact. The levy provides more flexibility to cities that might consider a city-wide MPD in the future. The levy's six year term limit might also be more palatable to voters, but would likely require some level of investment in public educational campaigns prior to each new levy vote. Many task team members brought up an equity question regarding overlaying a parks-levy on top of the GCPD. The GCPD populus would be paying two property taxes dedicated to parks, while the rest of the County population would only be paying one.

Without additional benefits within the GCPD, this approach may be seen as inequitable by some taxpayers within the GCPD.

Another scenario considered by the team is proposing the expansion of the GCPD boundary into a County-wide district. This would allow all County residents to vote and would require only one question on the ballot; the expansion of the district boundary. The rate could remain the same during the initial vote. At approximately 14 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value, a County-wide would levy an estimated \$15 million dollars annually.

Conclusion

Based on the information presented herein, the task team developed the following facts and findings:

Park Systems Value:

- 1) The benefits of parks, trails, natural areas, and recreational facilities extend beyond the land, helping to strengthen the local economy, make our region more desirable for businesses, workers, families, individuals, and visitors, as well as supporting public health and wellness and creating spaces that reflect the needs of all residents.ⁱ
- 2) Community members across our region place high value on parks, trails, and recreation. Parks, natural areas and trails are consistently ranked among the most important public infrastructure in our region.ⁱⁱ

Challenges:

- 1) Every park system in our region is funded below the national median of peer agencies of similar population size.ⁱⁱⁱ
- 2) Communities throughout our region are projected to see continued rapid population growth.^{iv} Currently funding sources are limited and insufficient to meet present needs.^v Due to the continued rapid population growth coupled with existing gaps, agencies across the region will not be able to meet future needs without a new approach and additional funding.
- 3) Clark County has valuable recreational trails, but lacks an interconnected regional trail system, which contributed to our area's health, wellness and future economic development goals.^{vi}

Findings and Next Steps

City- and County- owned parks serve all community members, regardless of their residential location. The Regional Funding Task team finds that it is important to consider a regional funding source to fund all park and recreation systems in our region. Similar regional funding models are utilized around the country.^{vii}

Recommended Actions

The task team reviewed models that might meet this future funding need and identified impacts and implications for proposing each model in Clark County. The task team recommends that County Council take the next steps to explore these funding models further and how revenue could be shared with interested cities, by;

- 1. Conducting market research** to provide the data, feasibility evaluations, and preparatory work needed for County Council to make a decision on a potential future ballot measure.
- 2. Developing a framework for revenue sharing** by directing county staff to continue to work with city representatives so that city park providers can also benefit from a potential revenue source dedicated to parks.

Process for Decision-Making

The potential next steps of this process of outlined below:

- County Council consideration on Recommended Actions
- Present public information on need and benefits of funding dedicated to parks
- Market research 6 months prior to potential ballot measure, with the following outcomes:
 - Ballot measure feasibility
 - Levy price sensitivity
 - Community values and motivations toward parks, trails, and recreation
 - Strategic timing of a ballot measure
 - Accountability benchmarking and baseline data for future evaluations of levy success
- Cities and County staff work to develop a framework for revenue sharing and draft the terms of interlocal agreements (ILA), including:
 - Mechanics of revenue sharing

- Calculation of revenue share
- Clarification of intended use of funds
- Articulation of autonomy within a shared purpose
 - Specific mutual investment (regional parks, regional trails)
 - Synchronization with City goals from County investment
 - County commitments to cities
- Draft interlocal agreements are presented to City Councils for consideration
- Possible ballot measure in Fall 2027

ⁱ Washington State Parks Economic Impact Report: [Economic Benefits of Parks | Washington State Parks](#)
 Earth Economics Report: [Economic Analysis of Outdoor Recreation in Washington State](#)
 Trust for Public Land Report: [The Power of Parks to Promote Health - Trust for Public Land](#)
 UW Report: <https://rco.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/HealthBenefitsOfNature.pdf>

ⁱⁱ City of Camas: [findingsreport_camaswa24120624.pdf](#)
 City of Battle Ground: [2025-Battle-Ground-Survey-Findings-Report](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Regional Funding Task Team, Data Summary Infographic

^{iv} Washington State Office of Financial Management, Growth Projections: [gma_2022_5yr.xlsx](#)

^v Clark County Council Meeting, 3/26/25: [032625-sustainable-future-parks-and-nature_0.pdf](#)

^{vi} Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan: [Clark Cover OCT](#)
 Regional Transportation Council, Active Transportation Plan: [RAP2021-Report.pdf](#)

^{vii} King County Parks Levy: [Parks Levy - King County, Washington](#)
 Sonoma County Parks Levy: [Measure M FAQ](#)