

City reveals updated Parks Master Plan



The Big Toy at Keizer Rapids Park.

Submitted photo

I will say that the results reinforced the public's desire in maintaining and taking care of what we have. The main input was we want our parks taken care of.

— **BILL LAWYER**

Keizer Public Works Director

BY JOEY CAPPELETTI
Of the Keizertimes

In 2008, one acre of parkland existed in Keizer for every 1,000 residents. The 10 city parks totaled only 41 acres for the nearly 35,000 residents in the city. That same year, Keizer's Parks Department updated their parks master plan for the first time in 15 years and planned to substantially increase the amount of parks in the area.

Thirteen years later, the 19 parks in Keizer total 246 acres of parkland — or six acres per 1,000 residents. Keizer Rapids and Wallace House parks have been developed in that time as were three other special use sites. When compared to similarly-sized communities, however, Keizer's park system continues to fall short. For cities with similar populations, the median park acreage per 1,000 residents is 9.6 — one-third more than what Keizer provides.

On Nov. 3, the city of Keizer released their first updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan since 2008. The 92-page plan outlines \$28 million in park improvements and added amenities that they hope to implement over the next 10 years.

The plan has been in the works since December of last year when the city first began conducting questionnaires, surveys and interviews with local stakeholders. Results showed that there was a desire for an improved trail system and more river access at parks.

"I will say that the results reinforced the public's desire in maintaining and taking care of what we have. The main input was we want our parks taken care

of. That's not new, we just saw it again," said Public Works Director Bill Lawyer.

Additionally, responses from a pop-up event in August showed that a splash pad and dog park were the two top amenities community members wanted built at parks.

The city also conducted their own research to compare their level of service with cities of similar populations. What they

found was that the city of Keizer's Park Department is underfunded and understaffed comparatively.

Currently, the department has four full-time employees working in the Park Department, which is seven times less than the median for cities with Keizer's population. Additionally, the department's annual operating budget is \$660,300, while the median budget is \$2,885,847. Lawyer later said this annual operating budget was incorrect and would be amended in the master plan.

The department also reported that while the city of Keizer provides no recreation services, over 90% of other cities do.

"Up until 2018, when the council enacted a parks fee, our budget was about \$350,000 a year. Now, it's a little more than a million so we are able to do things throughout the park system that I'd never imagined," said Public Works Director Bill Lawyer. "It's still lower compared to nationally but Keizer historically hasn't put a lot of emphasis on national averages. We do what makes sense for our community with the funding that we have."

The city used their own findings, in addition to community responses, to outline six areas of improvement. These areas, which the department calls "guiding principles" includes an increased support of park maintenance, updating worn park equipment, diversifying recreational activities, improving river access, using trails to connect parks and supporting expanded community gatherings and events.

Some of the specific improvements listed include installing fishing platforms at Keizer Rapids Park, three new trail corridors, picnic shelters and pavilions for large group gathering and adding sport courts for pickleball, basketball and volleyball. There is also an emphasis on improving ADA accessibility at all parks.

The Master Plan also identifies several underserved areas in the community that lack access to nearby parks. The 10-year plan doesn't recommend any current land acquisitions to improve these underserved areas but said the city should

"consider any new opportunities that may arise to better serve City residents."

In total, the department estimates that it will cost \$25 million over 10 years to build the suggested facilities and another \$4 million to repair worn and broken equipment. They are also seeking an increase of \$112,000 to their annual operating budget.

The public can view the entire Parks Master Plan on the city's website. The plan will also be discussed at a Nov. 29 Keizer City Council work session and the Dec. 20 council regular session.

brainfood

Animal Hues

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16		
17				18						19		
			20			21			22			
23	24	25		26		27			28			
29			30		31			32			33	
34				35			36			37		38
39								40		41		
42				43		44		45				
	46		47			48			49			
			50			51			52		53	
54	55				56			57		58		
59				60			61			62	63	64
65				66				67				
68				69					70			

CREATORS NEWS SERVICE

By Charles Preston

ACROSS

- 1 Legal claims
- 6 Pulitzer-winning dramatist
- 11 Norm
- 14 Acclaim
- 15 1944 Gene Tierney role
- 16 A Gershwin
- 17 Alice's wonderland lagomorph
- 19 Tang
- 20 Shout of approval
- 21 Charged particle
- 22 Card game
- 23 In readiness
- 26 Madison Avenue professional
- 28 Attuned to
- 29 Gold Coast language
- 31 Gingham dog's adversary
- 34 Rockefeller Center entertainment
- 36 Preserve
- 37 Not then
- 39 Aesop, for one
- 40 Platforms
- 42 Dresden Ms.
- 43 Roman household god

DOWN

- 45 Roasted
- 46 Gelett Burgess creation
- 49 Companion of 37 Across
- 50 Goddess of dawn
- 51 Flavor
- 53 Retinal cell
- 54 French ecclesiastic
- 56 Rocky peak
- 57 Ribbed fabric
- 59 Avril follower
- 60 Andersen's fabulous fowl
- 65 Legendary hockey player
- 66 Memphis idol
- 67 Birch relative
- 68 Depressed
- 69 Garden spots
- 70 Shade of green

- 9 Ireland, poetically
- 10 Ingest
- 11 Mancini theme music
- 12 Puccini solo
- 13 Engrossed
- 18 Marine jewel source
- 22 Like some wines
- 23 Unbending
- 24 Steep slope
- 25 Maeterlinck work
- 27 Crop
- 28 Meritorious award
- 30 Hl, e.g
- 32 Haggard
- 33 Matador
- 35 Lends a hand
- 38 Got one's feet wet
- 41 Educational inst.
- 44 Fixed intention
- 45 Explosive sound
- 47 Caviar
- 48 French designer
- 52 Majestic
- 54 Old Testament book
- 55 Vamp of silent films
- 56 Recounted
- 58 Equestrian sport
- 60 ___ whiz
- 61 Sigma
- 62 Peculiar
- 63 Bishopric
- 64 Seabird

crossword
answers pg A22