

## **Our Commitment to the People of Ashland**

### **By the APRC Board of Commissioners**

#### **August 2021 Park Views**

Our land and rivers are our connection to everything. Likewise, Ashland's parks and open spaces are the heart and soul of our city. It is because Ashland offers so much access to the great outdoors that many of us made sacrifices to live and raise our children here. Think back to the happiest moments of your time in Ashland—how many of them happened strolling through Lithia Park? Splashing with the kids in Daniel Meyer Memorial Pool? Having dinner with friends on Calle Guanajuato?

Over the past year and a half, respite from the pandemic came for many of us by getting outside. Ashland Parks and Recreation Commission (APRC) was delighted to provide the space to make these outdoor activities possible. During this time our community has doubled or even tripled its use of APRC facilities, parks and open space. Here you can safely practice yoga, play pickleball, hike, run or bike the trails, even conduct business phone calls. We know that for many in our community, these places of refuge are a critical part of making the challenges of recent years bearable.

APRC offers 781 acres of parkland comprised of 18 parks and 591 acres of undeveloped open space. Our parks include beloved Lithia Park, many neighborhood parks, a skate park, a dog park, and seven multi-use sports fields. A handful of our parks also have community gardens. We co-manage 53 miles of trails in and around Ashland. We manage multiple sports courts (tennis, pickleball, basketball, bike polo and bocce ball), a municipal golf course, 16 playgrounds, a swim reservoir, a senior center, a nature center, picnic areas, and a seasonal ice rink and swimming pool.

Movement, nature and fresh air contribute to our well-being. APRC has a range of opportunities to feed your soul, from the solitude of hiking or biking a trail to gathering with friends and family on the front lawn of Lithia Park on a warm afternoon. Recreation programs and events, such as the Ashland World Music Festival or the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Run contribute to the vibrancy of our community. Our VIP program, Volunteer in Parks, gives people a chance to contribute to their community. These types of connections play an important role in our emotional health.

Much of APRC's day to day work is made possible through property tax funds. Land acquisitions and improvements are made with Food & Beverage (F&B) tax funds, a surcharge on prepared meals in our local restaurants. In recent years, these dollars afforded the resurfacing on the Calle Guanajuato, renovation of the Garfield Park splash pad, and the purchase of Briscoe School Park. Other projects currently underway include the East Main Park development. This land was purchased with dollars from the sale of the YMCA park and will replace that park for this neighborhood. East Main will provide opportunities for mountain biking enthusiasts, community gardeners, and dog lovers who will be able to enjoy a second dog park on the southeast side of town. East Main will also complete the City's longstanding Comprehensive Land Use Plan of offering a park or open space within a ¼ mile of all Ashland residents. VICTORY!!!

Other APRC projects are grant-funded. For example, Lithia Park's Japanese Garden renovation is primarily funded by Jeff and Rebecca Mangin and the Marechal family of France. Projects like this promote tourism and increase property values.

This is our commitment to you: We will continue to dedicate our energy, time and passion to ensuring these special places remain open, safe and accessible to all who depend on them. We will continue to provide quality and value, and work to equitably serve a diverse population. We will focus on resilience and adaptability—striving to get our community outdoors whenever possible.

We depend on feedback from the public to do our work. Let us know what you like about your parks and recreation opportunities. Let us know what we can do to make things better. If you feel the way we do about APRC's work, please let your friends, community leaders and elected officials know that these quality-of-life issues are a priority for you.

“Fun, it’s in our Nature!”

– AshlandParksandRec.org | @AshlandParksandRec #AshlandParksandRec #APRC  
ParksInfo@ashland.or.us | 541.488.5340