

TOWN OF WINTHROP



PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

Winthrop Town Council

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VISION

WINTHROP AIMS TO PROVIDE QUALITY RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS CITIZENS THROUGH PROACTIVE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

The Parks and Recreation Plan is intended to:

- ❖ Establish goals and objectives for improving and maintaining Winthrop's parks and recreation resources.
- ❖ Identify the community's current and future needs and priorities for park facilities and recreational programs.
- ❖ Recommend specific parks and recreation projects for consideration and action.
- ❖ Explore sources and methods for financing improvements to recreational facilities.
- ❖ Establish grant eligibility with the Recreation and Conservation Office and other entities.

By adopting this Plan, Town officials express their commitment to providing a comprehensive approach to the development and management of parks and recreation programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on community input, the following recommendations are central to implementation of this Parks and Recreation Plan:

- ❖ Submit the updated Winthrop Parks and Recreational Plan to the Recreation and Conservation Office for review and approval.
- ❖ Foster partnerships with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and volunteers in support of the operation, maintenance, and improvement of parks and recreation opportunities that serve our community and visitors.
- ❖ Use Action Priorities established in this plan to allocate resource (staff time, consultants, and funds) for park improvements and projects.
- ❖ Establish the Kay Wagner Historic Riverwalk through downtown as a top priority based on continued public engagement.
- ❖ Support ongoing partnerships with Winthrop Rink and Methow Trails to operate, maintain, and improve the Rink and Trailhead.
- ❖ Support the efforts of the Winthrop Kiwanis to develop the Family Activity area within Mack Lloyd Park.
- ❖ Support ongoing partnership with Methow Conservancy to develop a trailhead and ADA facilities at Meadowlark Natural Area.
- ❖ Install new playground equipment at Mack Lloyd Park and Heckendorn Park.
- ❖ Continue to prioritize development of trails and other bike and pedestrian facilities that provide key connections through town and to key destinations. Support extension of trails outside of Winthrop such as the TWIN trail and a connection to Pearrygin Lake State Park.
- ❖ Explore new park facility ideas that arose from the 2023 survey, including an outdoor play area at the Winthrop Library and separate courts for pickleball and tennis.
- ❖ Maintain Winthrop's existing parks and trails in excellent condition.
- ❖ Prepare applications to appropriate agencies for funding improvements identified in the Parks and Recreation Capital Improvement Plan.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

With the adoption of this Parks and Recreation Plan, the Town of Winthrop affirms the importance of our parks and recreation facilities to area citizens and visitors. This plan functions as the Parks and Recreation element of the Town's Comprehensive Plan and maintains consistency with the overall goals and action priorities expressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan. Updating the plan gives the Town an opportunity to express our vision and elaborate priorities in light of shifts in local demographics, needs, and recreational preferences. In keeping our plan current, we maintain our eligibility for Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grants, which have been the major source of funding for park and recreation improvements.

Winthrop's parks and recreation facilities benefit our community by offering inviting places where people of all ages and abilities can gather, relax, play, and exercise. The recreational activities available through our parks and trails play a role in building community spirit, cultural understanding, and family cohesiveness. Mack Lloyd Park, the Barn, and the downtown Confluence Park function as central gathering places for everything from family outings to community events; the Ballfield, tennis courts and Rink facilitate outdoor recreation for all ages; Mack Lloyd Park and Heckendorn Park offer children's play areas; and our ADA compliant trail encourages people to walk, roll, or bicycle.

This is the most recent iteration of a plan that was first adopted in 1987. The document was subsequently revised in 1989, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2012, and 2018. Over the course of time, updates have reflected many accomplishments in Winthrop's park system, most of which have are made possible through significant partnerships with organizations such as Kiwanis, Methow Trails, Winthrop Rink, and the Methow Conservancy. We have improved Mack Lloyd Memorial Park; developed Heckendorn Park; purchased property and developed the Rink and Trailhead; completed two phases of the Susie Stephens Trail; advanced toward construction of the RiverWalk; and, in 2016, accepted the generous donation of Confluence Park by the Pigott family. Meadowlark Natural Area became the newest addition to our parks in 2021 through a collaboration with the Methow Conservancy.

This plan sets forth an inventory of existing park facilities, a summary of citizen input and participation, parks and recreation goals and objectives, and an analysis of demand and need which serves as the basis for a Parks and Recreation Six Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The CIP identifies specific projects, providing cost estimates and potential funding sources for each. By following (and periodically updating) the CIP, the Town will continue to meet our highest priority recreational needs over time.

Description of Planning Area

Nestled in the heart of the Methow Valley at the east slope of the North Cascades mountain range, our immediate planning area consists of the Town of Winthrop, a small town of around 580 (OFM population estimate for 2023) people. Winthrop is located Okanogan County, one of the largest, yet most rural counties in the US. Okanogan

County consists of two major watersheds, the Okanogan Valley and the Methow Valley. Winthrop is one of two small towns, ten miles apart, which provide services to a broader valley-wide population. Our estimated school district population takes in around 7,300 full time residents and 4,200 part-time residents. In addition to the resident population, Winthrop draws thousands of visitors year-round who come to enjoy a host of outdoor recreation opportunities.

Because Winthrop serves the valley-wide population and plays the role of a major recreation hub, the Town actively plans for more than the residents living within the incorporated limits. These larger planning efforts support the Town's success as a key destination along the North Cascades Highway (State Route 20). The Town's western architectural motif, geared towards the late 1800s, is a major attraction. Visits by those seeking recreation, shopping opportunities, and lodging provide an important year-round economic influence on the Town.

While the incorporated limits of Winthrop constitute the official planning area considered in this plan, we recognize that our service area is in fact much larger. Methow Valley Elementary and Liberty Bell Jr/Sr High schools are located between Twisp and Winthrop, and valley residents shop, seek services, and recreate in both communities. We know that our parks and recreation facilities are used as much by people living throughout the Methow as they are by Winthrop citizens.

Beyond the population of the Methow Valley, Winthrop serves an even wider population of visitors. Winthrop is the hub or "trailhead" for a multi-faceted recreational paradise that stretches from the Columbia River and Lake Chelan to the south, to the Canadian border to the north, the North Cascades to the west and the Okanogan Valley to the east. In fact, Winthrop is one of the highlights of the Cascades and International Loops, two scenic driving tours through the North Cascades.

The Town was founded in the late 1890's by pioneer Guy Waring. The townsite is situated on a series of terraces at the confluence of the Chewuch and Methow Rivers. The community is bisected by State Route 20 (also called the North Cascades Highway) which forms the main arterial through the Town as well as the primary link to the rest of Okanogan County and the State. Commercial development is concentrated in downtown on the east side of the Chewuch and Methow Rivers, and a highway commercial district to the south, on the west side of the Methow River. Downtown sits at the confluence of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers and adheres strictly to Winthrop's "Old West" Theme. To the south is the more recently developed highway commercial area which also contains several new residential developments. To the east lies a terrace where most of the developed residential area exists.

Winthrop's climate is strongly influenced by the nearby Cascades Mountains. Marine moisture is intercepted by the higher slopes resulting in precipitation amounts of around 15 inches per year, falling mostly in the winter as snow. Temperatures range from an average low of 15 degrees in January to an average high of 86 degrees in July and August ("Climate Winthrop Washington." *US Climate Data*. Web. 7 Jan. 2024. <http://usclimatedata.com>).

Population Information

Approximately 7% of the total population of the Methow Valley lives in Winthrop. Our 2020 census population was 504, representing an average of 2.5% growth each year over the decade. The Washington Office of Financial Management (OFM) estimated the 2023 population to be 580, showing that population growth ramped up to slightly over 3% per year. From Lost River to Pateros, there are an estimated 7300 full-time and 4289 part-time residents. The split between part-time (40%) and full-time (60%) residents has remained fairly constant over the past two decades.

Table 1.1 shows our population history since the 1960 census.

TABLE 1.1 - POPULATION HISTORY

Year	Population	% change over decade	Yearly growth rate for decade
1960	375		
1970	488	30.1%	2.66%
1980	413	-15.4%	-1.65%
1990	322	-22.0%	-2.42%
2000	350	8.7%	0.85%
2010	394	12.6%	1.2%
2020	504	28%	2.5%

With the relatively small population base and fluctuations in growth rates over the past five decades it remains a challenge to project Winthrop's future growth. While the population declined over the 70s and 80s, growth has trended distinctly upward since 1990. Based upon this trend and on-going development permits and new home construction in Winthrop, we anticipate that Winthrop is likely to grow at a rate of 2 - 3% per year over the coming decade. These projections, based on the 2020 census produce the following results:

TABLE 1.2 - POPULATION PROJECTIONS

	2020	2023	2030	2040	2050
2% / year	504	580	614	749	913
3% / year	504	580	677	910	1223

Table 1.2 indicates that the Town's population could increase by 114 to 173 people by 2030, which is the term of this plan. If these trends continue, we could see the population of Winthrop double by 2050. While this is a rudimentary projection, it does indicate the importance of continuing to provide facilities for a growing population.

Looking to the 2020 US Census, we get a picture of who lives in Winthrop. According to the decennial census (in 2020), 94% of the Methow Valley is White, 5% Hispanic, and less

than 1% Black, Asian, and Native American. (Due to small sample size, the numbers for Winthrop appear to be skewed.)

Winthrop has a high proportion of older residents, with 31% over the age of 60, 50% between 20-59, and 19% under the age of 19. In-migration of older, empty-nester, and retirement-age households is high and is a factor in the age distribution.

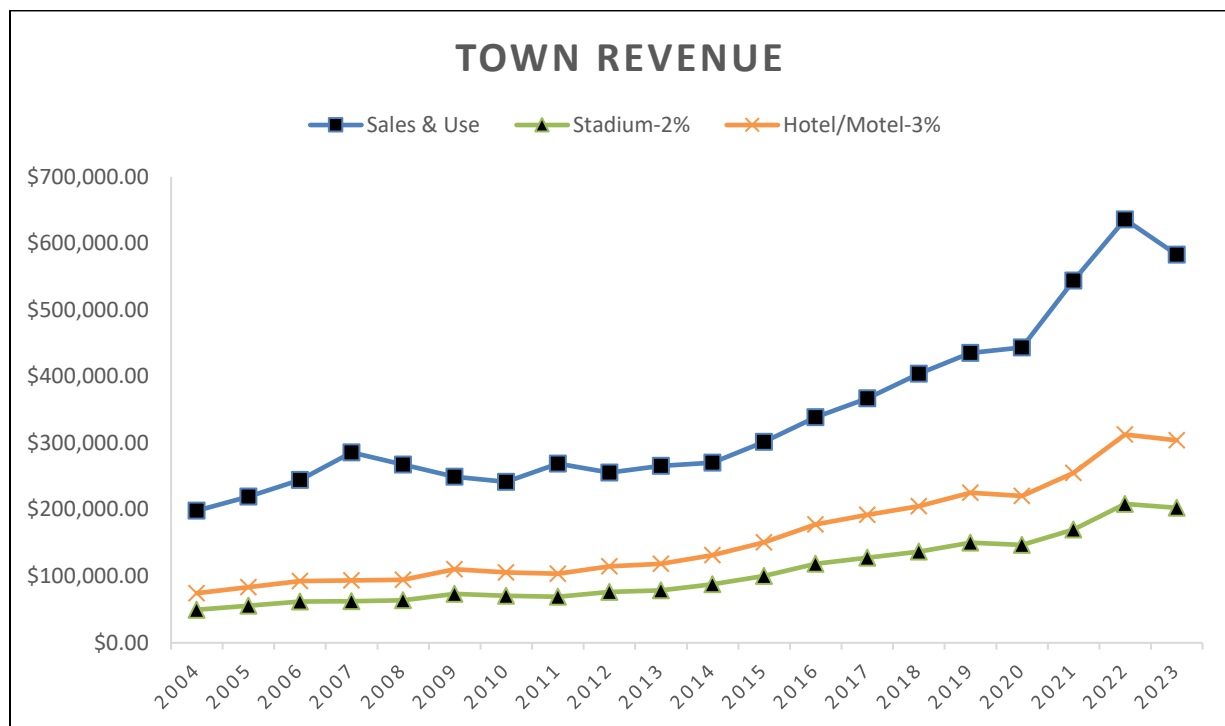
With an average household size of 1.8, Winthrop is composed of mostly one- and two-person households (~70%). Less than half of Winthrop households are families (46%), with the remainder (54%) in non-family households, mostly comprising elderly and young individuals. Winthrop's proportion of non-family households is higher than Twisp and the Methow Valley at large, as well as Okanogan County and Washington State.

Household incomes in Winthrop are about 2/3 of the state, with median household income in Winthrop being \$60,263 in 2023 compared with \$91,306 across Washington State. Area median income for Okanogan County was \$66,800 for a household of two in 2023. According to the most recent ACS data, 64% of Winthrop's residents were employed, with the bulk of jobs being in construction, services, and retail sales.

Economic Information

Along with the population trends, consideration of local economic fluctuations may be useful in accessing the Town's needs for parks and recreation. The chart below shows the Town's revenues from three sources, sales and use tax, stadium tax, and hotel/motel tax over the past 20 years.

TABLE 1.3 – TOWN REVENUE



Although there was a significant dip in sales and use tax from 2008 to 2010, that source of revenue began to climb again in 2011, with a dramatic uptick in 2021 and 2022. Sales revenues fell in 2023 but stayed well above the trend line of the past two decades. Concurrently, both the stadium and hotel/motel taxes have continued a gradual climbing trend indicating that even in the face of the 2008 recession and the 2020 Covid pandemic, visitors remained interested in Winthrop. It appears from this information that Winthrop offers a good mix of amenities to continue to attract tourism; our park facilities and proximity to a world of outdoor recreation could be a strong factor in helping our community survive widespread economic challenges.

Chapter 2 - Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of this plan were crafted to guide Town staff and Winthrop's Town Council to make decisions that reflect community needs and priorities.

Goal statements provide general statements of intention. Following each goal is a statement of intent, which is provided to minimize confusion that may arise in the minds of future decision makers, and a listing of objectives required to attain the stated goal. The goals and objectives in this Plan have been carefully developed and updated through citizen involvement and have been structured to provide clear planning criteria against which implementing actions may be developed.

Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1: Provide recreation opportunities and facilities for all ages and abilities.

This goal emphasizes the need for Winthrop's parks and recreation facilities to work for all age groups and abilities. The more accessible our facilities are to a diverse array of people, the better we meet the public needs.

Objectives:

- Maintain and improve existing parks and trails to foster their use and enjoyment by people of all ages and abilities. As parks and trails are improved, ensure that ADA standards are fully integrated into project design.
- Continue efforts to expand and diversify parks and recreation facilities that serve all ages and abilities in accord with public input and funding availability.

GOAL 2: Coordinate and partner with public and private entities to provide recreation opportunities.

Our existing parks and recreation facilities exist because of the generous contributions from both public and private entities and individuals. Generous families donated park lands; countless individuals have shared time and resources to build our park system. We benefit tremendously from partnerships and funding from public agencies and private organizations that enable us to enjoy a much more diverse array of recreation opportunities than we otherwise would. Winthrop benefits from working with the WA Recreation and Conservation Office, WA State Parks, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, Okanogan County, Kiwanis, Methow Trails, Winthrop Rink, Methow Conservancy, Winthrop Chamber of Commerce, Methow Trails Collaborative, and other groups. This goal suggests coordinated planning, development, management, and use of recreational resources.

Objectives:

- Foster partnerships with public agencies, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and volunteers in support of the operation, maintenance, and improvement of recreation opportunities in Winthrop and the surrounding area.
- Work with other agencies and organizations to promote the development of trails to the Methow Valley public schools, Twisp, and Pearygin State Park.
- Support the partnership with Winthrop Rink and Methow Trails for ongoing operation, maintenance and improvement of the Rink and Town Trailhead.
- Utilize and honor contributions from volunteers and businesses to implement priority parks and recreation projects.
- Honor donations of land, time, and resources that make our parks system possible.

GOAL 3: Maintain and improve our parks and recreation facilities in a manner that supports positive recreation experiences for residents and visitors.

The community recognizes the importance of recreation-oriented tourism to Winthrop and the Methow Valley. This goal seeks to balance recreational opportunities that enhance tourism in the Valley with the needs of area residents.

Objectives:

- Prioritize improvements to existing facilities and completing existing recreation projects. (Rink and Town Trailhead, Riverwalk, Susie Stephens Trail, Meadowlark, Mack Lloyd Park and Barn)
- Maintain parks and recreation facilities in excellent condition.
- Strive to ensure that parks and recreation facilities offer adequate restrooms, parking areas, lighting, walking connections, benches, trash receptacles, etc. to provide a quality recreation experience.
- Focus on improvements that are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and regional recreation opportunities.
- Seek to ensure that parks in the downtown area reflect Winthrop's Old West theme.

GOAL 4: Foster the development of Winthrop as a walkable community and trailhead for the Methow Valley.

The Methow Valley is well known for its multi-use trails. The intent of this goal is to focus efforts towards developing Winthrop as a trailhead for people accessing the Methow Valley trails without needing to drive to remote trailheads.

Objectives:

- Construct a pedestrian trail system within the community that provides safe and convenient access to key features in the Town and links to regionally significant recreation opportunities.
- Support options for open space recreation areas in or close to Winthrop, to enable opportunities for walking, biking, and passive enjoyment of the natural landscape without a need to drive.
- Continue the cooperative effort to develop the Town Trailhead with restrooms, parking, and other amenities that foster enjoyable recreation experiences.
- Encourage the development of education and interpretive opportunities that provide information on the Valley's human and natural history.
- Develop coordinated signage for trails and trail access points that provide a readily identifiable and unifying element for these important community assets.

GOAL 5: Foster the development of water access points to and along the Chewuch and Methow Rivers.

Although Winthrop sits at the confluence of two scenic rivers – the Methow and Chewuch – they are not very accessible visually or physically. Our parks and recreation surveys show that people would like to be able to see and access the rivers.

Objectives:

- Complete development of the river access point at Mack Lloyd Park to prevent further erosion and facilitate access for tubing, kayaking, or similar activities. (funded project)
- Develop the Riverwalk to provide recreational access along the shoreline of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers.
- Maintain Confluence Park for visual access to the confluence of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers and to ensure ADA access to the Riverwalk when it is developed.
- Work with other public and private agencies to identify additional opportunities for river access that protect habitat and encourage public access.

GOAL 6: Recognize the importance of neighborhood parks, and support development of neighborhood or pocket parks where opportunities and need exist.

This goal addresses the fact that neighborhood parks play a unique role in that they largely serve local residents, offering a place for kids to play. Winthrop only has one neighborhood park but has one additional parcel of land in the Summerset addition that could be developed as a neighborhood park. The Town should analyze residential subdivision and development proposals to determine where and when additional neighborhood parks may be needed.

Objectives:

- Maintain Heckendorn Park in excellent condition.
- Encourage donations of open space/park land where needed for the expansion and/or development of neighborhood parks.

Chapter 3 – Inventory

Winthrop offers some fantastic parks and recreation facilities given our small local population. While the community still envisions improvements and new facilities, we have much to celebrate. In 2006, volunteers were erecting a temporary ice rink in the Barn parking lot, and the Mack Lloyd Park was the primary recreation hub. In the past 16 years, recreation options have dramatically expanded to include an Ice Rink, Town Trailhead, the Susie Stephens Trail, Confluence Park, and the Meadowlark Natural Area. Now our park system includes numerous unique amenities: open space, paved and unpaved trails, a sports field, pump track, rink, and community gathering space.

This chapter provides an inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities, describes maintenance and repair needs, and points to capital projects.

Mack Lloyd Park

In 1928, nearly 100 years ago, a donation by families Brinkerhoff, LaRue, and Garrett established the bulk of this central town park complex. Mack Lloyd Memorial Park was later named to honor the memory of Mack Lloyd, a local logger and businessperson who gave generously to the development of the Barn and surrounding park. In the late 1990s, the Town made several improvements to the park, supported by a grant from RCO (then known as IAC) and local fundraising. The park is centrally located just west of downtown and receives heavy use by both locals and visitors. The 18-acre park offers a range of recreation opportunities as described below:

Main Park Area - This central park area offers approximately two acres of grassy respite close to downtown, well used by locals and visitors. The lawn area is bordered by the Visitor Information Center to the west, an overflow channel of the Methow River to the south, the Barn to the east, and SR 20 along the north edge. Large Ponderosa Pines dot the lawn



area, and newer lines of deciduous trees were planted along the southern and eastern edges. Support facilities include twelve picnic tables (donated by Backcountry Horsemen), a 17' x 33' picnic shelter and drinking fountain (provided by local donations of labor and material), a bandshell donated by Cascadia and playground area purchased and installed by the Winthrop Kiwanis Club. The park also features a memorial plaque dedicating the park in memory of Mack Lloyd, and a recently added wildland firefighter memorial. Adjacent paved parking can accommodate about forty vehicles.

The Barn - The Barn, a 6,500 square foot community auditorium owned by the Town and operated by the non-profit Winthrop Auditorium Association, sits prominently at the eastern edge of Mack Lloyd Park. The Barn stands apart as Winthrop's most heavily used parks and recreation facility. Our Parks and Recreation surveys consistently indicate heavy use of the Barn during. The Barn offers a year-round venue for a wide variety of community events including meetings, concerts, weddings, fundraisers, dances, and a host of other private and public celebrations. It contains seating for 450 with a stage and sound system, restrooms, and a commercial kitchen. Support facilities include a large parking area shared with the entire park, and two outdoor restrooms. A paved path provides access from the Barn to Downtown Winthrop.



Sports Field Area - The four-acre Sports Field Area consists of a single softball/baseball field with bleachers, restrooms, and a small pump track. Although limited by the shortness of the outfield, the ball field receives consistent use from local league players and provides space for community baseball and softball practice, games, and tournaments.

Tennis Court “Expansion Area” – This four-acre add-on to Mack Lloyd Park was donated to the Town in 1995. This area features tennis courts and informal overflow parking. The area is used most intensively during the Winthrop Forty-niner Days and other special events. A small handful of private properties are accessed by easements that traverse through the parking area. The tennis courts are now also used by local pickleball players.

River Area - The River area consists of the lands along the southern boundary of the property, accessed by a pathway from the main park area. This portion of the park lies within the 100-year floodplain and channel migration zone of the Methow River. At the southeast corner, the park borders the Methow River. A small grassy triangle has been established at the river's edge, bordered by trees and the paved pathway from the main park area. This triangle is now often used for weddings in conjunction with the Barn.

The riverbank beside the grassy triangle has been used informally for many years as a water access to the Methow River. However, the riverbank suffers from severe erosion that is eating back into the overflow channel. The asphalt path has begun to slide down the bank. The Town has funding to install a new water access pathway for tubing and other hand launch uses. A project partner will help to recontour the bank and plant native vegetation with the intent to limit further erosion.

A swath of undeveloped riparian land stretches eastward from the paved path to the tennis courts. This area contains an overflow channel of the Methow River and forested wetlands.

Connections - An accessible path begins by the Visitor Center and follows the border of the central park area (the drainage canal), also providing access to the parking area, the Methow River and the Barn. A second trail was developed as a short interpretive loop through the riparian area, accessed by a footbridge crossing the overflow channel. Interpretive signs were developed for this portion of the trail highlighting some of the natural history, particularly the value and functions of riparian areas. The planning and construction of the interpretive trail was coordinated by the Methow Valley Citizens Council with a grant from the Department of Natural Resource's Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account and funding support from the Winthrop Barn Association and labor from the Methow Valley Ranger District.

Mack Lloyd Park Improvements and Maintenance Needs - With the high level of use Mack Lloyd Park receives, ongoing maintenance is key. In addition to regular maintenance the following items have been identified as important repairs and facility improvements:

- Construction of water access in the River Area, including bank stabilization to slow erosion of the shoreline. (Funded and anticipated for construction in '24).
- Kiwanis Family Activity area improvements in the Ballfield area.
- Replacement of playground equipment.
- Ongoing maintenance and repairs to the Barn.
- Tree maintenance throughout the park.
- Upgrades to the existing public restrooms.
- Improve parking areas to accommodate their heavy use.
- Repairs to tennis court surface.
- Park furnishings: Drinking fountains, trash cans, recycling and pet waste receptacles

Town Trailhead and Rink

The Town Trailhead and Ice Rink are relatively new recreation features in Winthrop, developed through community partnerships with two local non-profits, Winthrop Rink and Methow Trails. The Town Trailhead and Rink form a second major community recreation hub. Grant funds from RCO and Okanogan County enabled the Town to assemble 3.7 acres of new park property through 3 separate purchases. The Town Trailhead sits on an upper plateau above the Rink area. The two distinct areas are joined by the Susie Stephens Trail and a set of stairs, allowing the Town Trailhead to function as primary parking area for the Rink.

Rink - This facility has been developed over a series of phases funded by RCO grants that were matched by local donations of cash, equipment and labor. Phase 1, completed in 2007, included initial construction of the rink and the associated building, plus the grading and installation of stormwater drainage for the trailhead portion of the property. Phase 1 resulted in a "natural ice" rink over a grass surface that was used for "indoor" soccer in other seasons. Phase 2, completed in 2015, replaced the natural grass rink surface with a refrigerated cement slab. The building was expanded with four locker room/skate changing areas, and increased area for skate rentals. In 2022, another grant enabled replacement of the dasher boards. The improvements have

ensured a consistent ice skating season allowing for numerous hockey tournaments and popular open skate sessions.



All phases of rink construction exemplify community spirit. While the Town secured grant funding from RCO, Winthrop Rink (our nonprofit partner) coordinated an army of volunteers and raised over a million dollars in match between the initial construction and the second phase. They not only provided the cash match and sweat equity to make the rink a reality, they have successfully operated and maintained the facility under an agreement with the Town. This project stands as a testament to the commitment of a group of volunteers to provide a unique recreation facility for our community. The Rink continues to prove its worth by providing a wonderful outdoor recreation experience and generating economic benefits to local businesses during winter.

Town Trailhead - The adjoining Town Trailhead functions as much more than a parking lot for the Rink. It highlights another ongoing partnership with Methow Trails, the nonprofit entity that manages a vast network of trails on public and private lands for Nordic skiing, biking, hiking, and equestrian use. The Town Trailhead provides year-round trail access and parking for the Susie Stephens Trail and Winthrop Rink, as well as seasonal Nordic skiing access for the Methow Community Trail. We envision the Town Trailhead becoming a true hub for a vibrant walkable Town; in this vision, the Town Trailhead will be further improved to meet its potential as year-round satellite parking for people accessing downtown via the Susie Stephens Trail and Spring Creek Bridge.

Rink and Town Trailhead Improvements and Maintenance Needs - With the Rink now refrigerated and fully functional, Winthrop Rink, Methow Trails, and the Town have identified improvements that will help this park property meet its full potential:

- Site plan and improvements of the Town Trailhead, to include paved parking, landscaping, lighting, fencing and site furnishings. The site plan needs to work with and improve the existing stormwater drainage system.
- New EPA compliant Ice Plant to replace the used and outdated system.
- Building/site improvements to accommodate increased tournaments and use, including additional covered spectator seating.
- Dark sky compliant lighting analysis and implementation (to the extent feasible for safe use of the rink).
- Comprehensive signage for the Rink, Susie Stephens Trail, Homestream Park, walking route to downtown, and Community Trail access.
- Replacement of equipment as it ages – Zamboni and tractor/plow.
- Tree care, irrigation, landscaping maintenance and weed control.

Trails

The results from parks and recreation surveys conducted in 2005, 2012, 2017, and 2023 show sustained support for development of trails within Winthrop, connecting key features of the town and facilitating seamless access to the Methow Trails system. While ideas abound, five projects stand out:

1. Construction of a Riverwalk, providing an alternate pedestrian route through downtown, along the banks of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers.
2. Extension of the Susie Stephens Trail south to Rabbit House Rd with a highway crossing at the Post Office.
3. The "TWIN" trail vision, led by Methow Trails, extending a trail south to Methow Valley Elementary and Liberty Bell High School and Twisp.
4. A Pearygin Lake Trail, providing non-motorized access between Winthrop and the State Park at Pearygin Lake.
5. An ADA trail along the base of Meadowlark Natural Area, with a viewpoint and picnic area.

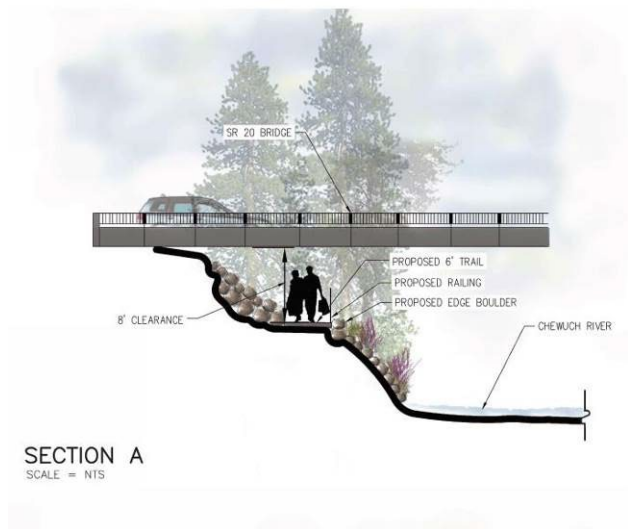


These projects are all in various stages of completion, ranging from conceptual planning to under construction.

Kay Wagner Historic Riverwalk - The Riverwalk is another long-held dream of the community – a pathway along the banks of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers, connecting the Susie Stephens Trail on the south end of downtown with Sa Teekh Wa Park at the north end. The Riverwalk concept gained momentum with a generous

donation by Lawrence Therriault in honor of his father, Paul Therriault, an early Winthrop (European-American) settler. The donation enabled the Town to pursue preliminary engineering, geotechnical assessments, and survey work for a first phase.

The Riverwalk is planned to be a 5-6-foot-wide pedestrian pathway with an undercrossing of the Chewuch River Bridge at the heart of downtown. The initial Chewuch Undercrossing phase is funded through a mix of WWRP Trails money, federal STP and TAP grants. The Town aims to put that portion of the project out to bid in 2024. Additionally, the Town received .09 Infrastructure funds from Okanogan County to complete preliminary engineering and project estimates for two additional trail segments.



Engaged volunteers continue to help shape the project and gain full participation from landowners along the rivers. The Town plans to seek construction funding for more segments towards completing Riverwalk from Sa Teekh Wa Bridge to Spring Creek Bridge. This project is expected to bring the rivers into focus, creating a unique and beautiful way to experience downtown Winthrop.

Susie Stephens Trail – The Susie Stephens Trail provides a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile multiuse path from the Spring Creek Bridge, winding past the Rink and Town Trailhead, and south to a crossing of SR 20 at the Pardner's mini market. It is envisioned to extend further south along the ditch to Rabbit House Rd. The project was the subject of nearly two decades of planning, environmental and feasibility studies, engineering, and right-of-way planning, resulting in two phases of construction. Funding included a state appropriation, federal and state transportation funds, WWRP Trails grants from RCO, and donations of property.

Phase 1 – the Spring Creek Bridge and trail through the Town Trailhead and along Norfolk Road was completed in 2012. The second segment was constructed in the Fall of 2017, but the crosswalks on White Avenue and SR 20 were delayed until 2023. Eventually, a third phase is intended to take the trail just shy of the south town limits. The three phases together will provide a major backbone of pedestrian and bicycle circulation through Winthrop.

Other Trail Projects – Meadowlark Natural Area (described in detail below) offers a 2.5-mile dirt trail. We envision adding an out-and-back ADA trail to a viewpoint and picnic area. The project is an important way to ensure the recreation opportunities at Meadowlark include everyone.

Winthrop has long supported broader community visions for trails to the Methow schools, Twisp, and Pearygin Lake State Park garner significant; however, these trail projects end up largely outside of Winthrop's jurisdiction. The Town would actively

support efforts to plan for these trails by Methow Trails, Okanogan County, State Parks, Methow Valley School District, landowners, or other interested parties.

There is an existing trail through Sa Teekh Wa Park, which is within Winthrop's boundaries, but owned by Okanogan County. Extension of that trail outside of the park to create a loop remains conceptual, but the Town would willingly explore and probably support such an effort.

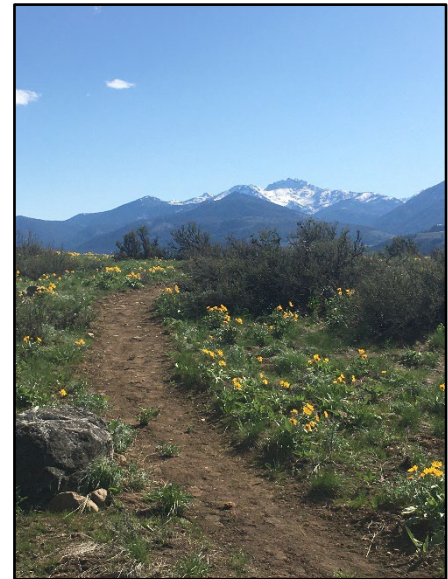
Trail Improvements and Maintenance Needs - Trails are relatively new features in Winthrop, and thus we need to consider their short- and long-term maintenance needs. Maintenance, improvement and development needs include:

- Plan for and construct all Phases of Riverwalk.
- Plan for and construct Phase 3 extension of the Susie Stephens Trail to Rabbit Hutch Road, with crossing at the Post Office.
- Weed control along trails, vegetation maintenance where needed.
- Trash, recycling and pet waste receptacles; benches; landscaping.
- Signage – interpretive, wayfinding and safety signs.

Meadowlark Natural Area

The Meadowlark Natural Area is a 139-acre open space park on the east side of Town, next to the Sullivan Cemetery. Thanks to a generous donation from Tina and Eliot Scull, the Methow Conservancy was able to purchase this land in 2018 and then develop 2.5 miles of walking trails that cross the hillside. The Methow Conservancy held the property until 2021 when the Town was able to get WA State Wildlife and Recreation Program funding to buy the property for a public open space park. Today the Methow Conservancy, in collaboration with the Town, cares for the Natural Area and manages it both for wildlife habitat and public recreation free of charge.

The property contains healthy diverse shrub-steppe habitat, as well as pockets of wetter areas that support trees with a diverse shrub understory. The Natural Area provides critical mule deer winter range, and important habitat for songbirds, small mammals and raptors. As a park near neighborhoods, the land provides opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy walking, running, photography, wildlife watching, scenic views of the north Cascade Mountains, and education on shrub-steppe habitat.



Meadowlark Natural Area Maintenance Needs –

With consistent year-round local use and proximity to growing neighborhoods management and maintenance should be focused on balancing accessible recreation with the important wildlife habitat that the property provides. The Methow Conservancy and the Town have identified maintenance, improvements, and development that will help achieve this balance:

- Design and construct trailhead parking.
- Construct / install restroom.
- ADA trail and picnic area.
- Develop viewpoint and install site furnishings.
- Weed control and trail maintenance.

Confluence Park

Confluence Park is located in the heart of downtown with a view to the confluence of the Methow and Chewuch Rivers. Jim and Gaye Pigott gifted the park to Winthrop in 2016 by in honor of Jon R. Titcomb, Gaye's father. The Pigotts purchased the property and removed the old house on it to make way for an open space park that will eventually become a gateway to the Riverwalk trail. The park is landscaped with trees, shrubs, native plants, and a small grassy area at the center. It is furnished with several benches and a pergola. In the short time since it was created, Confluence Park has become a beloved feature of downtown – a place to pause and enjoy the view, eat lunch, or chat with friends.



Confluence Park Maintenance Needs - As a focal point of downtown, this park needs careful maintenance of the vegetation and weed control. As the Riverwalk comes to fruition, an ADA compliant pathway will need to be constructed to link Riverwalk with the downtown boardwalks. Given the park's central location, it's important to ensure the availability of trash, recycling, and pet waste receptacles to encourage citizens to help in maintaining a clean park.

Heckendorn Park

Heckendorn Park is located on a one-acre site comprised of two lots donated to the Town by the Methodist Church in the early 1990's and a street end right-of-way. The Winthrop Kiwanis took the lead in developing Heckendorn Park. It offers a basketball half court and play area, with playground equipment donated by John and Michelle Larsen. A volunteer group has constructed and maintained a pétanque court in the northwest corner of the park. Our park surveys show that



Heckendorn Park is a deeply valued facility for neighborhood families. Due to its location, it primarily serves locals. Some people use it for water access.

Heckendorn Park Improvements and Maintenance Needs - Overall, the park survey indicates satisfaction with Heckendorn Park. Some potential improvements that were mentioned include:

- Replace old playground equipment.
- Addition of restrooms.
- More site furnishings – picnic tables, benches.

Sa Teekh Wa Park

Sa Teekh Wa Park consists of a 12-acre open space area located in a crook of the Chewuch River, just upstream from the confluence with the Methow River. Although located within the Town of Winthrop, the park is owned by Okanogan County, with a portion of the park being dedicated to the Methow band of the Colville Confederated Tribes. The County initially planned to develop the park as part of a linear system connecting the Methow Valley with trails planned in the northern portion of Okanogan County, near Oroville and Nighthawk; to date, that trail system hasn't connected through to Sa Teekh Wa. The park is connected to Winthrop's downtown area by a privately-owned cable-stayed pedestrian bridge, and a walking path with interpretive signs. The park is intended to remain in its natural state. There has been some consideration of the County transferring ownership of Sa Teekh Wa Park to Winthrop.

Homestream Park

Homestream Park is a two-acre, privately-owned park developed to honor the water, the fish, and the Native people of the Methow. The land, much of which is located in the floodway of the Methow River, was purchased and developed by park founders Phil and Cathy Davis, who describe Homestream Park as follows:

Homestream Park exists today only because of the collective will and might of our broader community. Hundreds of volunteer hours and generous support from many individuals, organizations, and businesses enabled this vision to take shape. While Winthrop has effectively centered a theme around the time of its 'westernization' founding and subsequent settlement (late 1800's), Homestream Park integrates a more expansive view of place and history. It has become an important destination for visitors and residents for education, reflection, and inspiration. The annual 'Coming Home' celebration in October brings cultures together to honor our returning salmon and the role they play in our collective wellbeing.

The Park was designed in a way that would minimize the costs of maintenance and stewardship, allowing for a more natural and self-sustaining setting. Park founders Cathy and Phil Davis are in the process of gifting the Park to the Methow Valley Interpretive Center (MVIC) and have seeded MVIC's stewardship endowment with a \$100,000 donation. The goal of the endowment is \$200,000 which will generate sufficient funds in perpetuity for the costs of owning and stewarding the Park. The greatest remaining need that the Town could play a pivotal role in is to integrate access and signage with

its broader pedestrian access and trail objectives.

Water Access

With the Chewuch and Methow Rivers being central features of the Town of Winthrop, it stands to reason the community would benefit from more developed water access. Past park surveys asked specifically about water access within Winthrop for recreation boating and tubing. While a few different projects and locations were considered, it became clear that the most feasible access was at Mack Lloyd Park. The Town has funding from RCO and is ready to move forward with project construction for a hand launch facility in 2024. While there is some ongoing interest in other locations such as Heckendorn Park, there is no active planning for additional projects at the time of this plan.

Other Town Property

The Town owns other properties that have potential for parks and recreation development. Town-owned land near the sewer lagoons has been described in past plans as a possible location for additional sports fields and related uses which would not impact future expansion of the wastewater treatment system. The community has not shown a significant interest in pursuing such park development at this time. In addition, the Town owns a lot in the Summerset subdivision that has never been developed; the lot is expected to remain an open space area until sufficient interest is generated for developing a neighborhood park.

Valley-wide Recreation Opportunities

The Methow Valley as a whole offers an incredible mix of recreation opportunities that are provided and supported by various public, nonprofit and private entities. These recreation opportunities are available within a short drive from town, amplifying Winthrop's status as a recreation destination. Some key opportunities include:

- Methow Valley School District facilities, including three gymnasiums, two tennis courts, two baseball/softball/soccer fields, and a Nordic ski trail.
- The 200-kilometer Methow Trails system offers opportunities for Nordic skiing, hiking, biking, and horseback riding. Methow Trails recently acquired an 18-acre new campus and annexed the land into Winthrop. They have developed the campus with offices, maintenance facilities, public parking and a trail through the property that connects to the Susie Stephens Trail. Methow Trails aims to connect their campus via trail to existing networks. They are leading the effort route a trail from Winthrop to Twisp (TWIN trail)
- Wagner Memorial swimming pool, located in Twisp. The Wagner Pool has been the only public swimming pool in the Methow Valley since its construction in 1966. Despite numerous repairs, the pool is at the end of its useful life. A dedicated Friends of the Pool commissioned an extensive feasibility study for replacing the pool. The study and public consensus support maintaining the location of a public pool in Twisp. A new pool will require a significant fundraising effort and plan for long term operation and maintenance support.

- Pearrygin Lake State Park, which offers camping, trails, swimming, fishing, and boating. Pearrygin is one of the most popular state parks in the system, and generates many recreation-oriented visits to Winthrop.
- Extensive public lands encompassed by the Okanogan National Forest, Pasayten Wilderness Area, Lake Chelan/Sawtooth Wilderness Area, and the North Cascades National Park, offering vast spaces for hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and enjoyment of nature.
- Bear Creek Golf Course.
- Loup Loup Ski Bowl offering alpine and Nordic skiing, a luge sled course, mountain biking, and other summer season activities.
- Wildlife and game areas owned and operated by Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, including the Rendezvous, Big Valley, and Methow Wildlife Areas within a few miles of Winthrop.
- Over 300 miles of groomed snowmobile trails and six Sno-Parks.

Maps in Appendix B depict Winthrop's parks and recreation facilities, as well as the location of many valley-wide recreation opportunities.

Chapter 4 - Citizen Involvement

This plan is only as valuable as it is representative of the input, values, and priorities of Winthrop area residents. In updating this plan, the Town sought to invite a broad spectrum of participation, with the idea that citizen involvement gives life to a shared vision for the parks and recreation facilities at the heart of our community.

To craft this update, we sought focused input on the use, needs, and priorities for parks and recreation through a survey and active participation in a Park Stakeholders Committee. We found further context through planning processes such as *Winthrop in Motion*, which focused on multimodal transportation, the downtown Winthrop streetscape, and ADA planning, and our 2023 Housing Action Plan.

We consistently involve community stakeholders in planning for specific projects identified in both the Parks Plan and Comprehensive Plan. We often learn what citizens think from public comments at Planning Commission and Town Council meetings, and through participating in conversations at other community meetings. Whether the input is gathered formally on a survey, or through listening to open ended comments at a meeting, it helps us true our goals and set our priorities.

A Parks Stakeholders group was formed in the later part of 2023 to advise the Town on this Park Plan update. Participants represented a variety of park interests, and we added anyone who came forward with an interest in the conversations. The group remained super-engaged in drafting and distributing the survey; reviewing and analyzing survey responses; and helping to form recommendations for this plan. Active participants included representatives of the Winthrop Planning Commission, Methow Trails, Winthrop Rink, Methow Conservancy, Riverwalk volunteers, Planning Commission, Methow Valley Trails Collaborative, Kiwanis, Methow Valley Flyfishers, and Methow Valley Interpretive Center/Homestream Park.

The Planning Commission reviewed the updated plan, and recommended adoption. The final draft of the plan was presented to the Town Council for Public Hearing and Adoption on February 21, 2024.

2023 Parks and Recreation Survey

The survey instrument was prepared by Town Planner Rocklynn Culp in December 2023 with input from the park stakeholders committee. The survey instrument included information about the Town's parks and trails, with brief descriptions of anticipated projects. The survey was available online through Survey Monkey. A postcard with a link and QR code for accessing the survey was mailed to all utility customers. The link was also shared with the park stakeholders committee, and subsequently broadly distributed by several local organizations, including Methow Trails, the Methow Conservancy, Winthrop Rink, Winthrop Chamber, Kiwanis, and the Friends of the Winthrop Library.

A total of 521 responses were received, which is the most ever in our history of doing park surveys. By comparison, there were 152 responses in 2017. The findings of the survey were notably consistent with prior all prior park surveys. The results are

summarized in Chapter 5 - Parks and Recreation Needs. A complete compilation of the results is included in Appendix D.

Winthrop In Motion

The *Winthrop in Motion* planning effort addressed multimodal transportation, the downtown streetscape, and ADA needs. While not focused on parks specifically, this planning effort focused on the transportation connections that facilitate park use and recreation access. Beginning with a "Walking Audit" and "Big Ideas Workshop on September 28, 2017, we sought to understand how people of all ages and abilities get around in Winthrop, and particularly how they access high traffic areas such as Mack Lloyd Park, the Barn, the Rink and Town Trailhead, and the Susie Stephens Trail. The Walking Audit drew significant participation and led to creative engagement with two sets of design concepts that significantly overlap and bolster the Parks and Recreation Plan. These design concepts were presented to a stakeholder/advisory committee, the Planning Commission, Town Council, the Winthrop Chamber of Commerce, and at a public workshop. At the time of this update, an online survey was prepared for distribution to further collect input on the design concepts so they can be refined into a three-pronged plan for multimodal transportation in Winthrop.

Putting it Together

To make the most of the public input received for the purpose of updating this plan, we sought to compare it with the findings that informed the 2006, 2012, and 2018 Park Plans, as well as the continuous input we have received in various community forums over the past decade. By looking at the feedback residents have given us over time, we see the true long-term priorities for our community. In aggregate, our parks surveys provide a consistent picture. We continue to see emphasis on the same projects and park improvements over the years, and this is valuable information for setting our compass.

At the culmination of this planning process, citizens were invited to comment on the draft plan as it was developed and considered for adoption. The process culminated with a Public Hearing held before the Town Council, which allowed one final forum for citizen comment prior to adoption.

Citizen involvement is critical to crafting a useful plan and should not be limited to once every 5 or 10 years. As recommendations are implemented it will be important to provide for ongoing public dialogue on the Town's progress in meeting parks and recreation needs. Annual review of the capital project list should occur during the Town's budget development process.

Chapter 5 - Parks and Recreation Needs

Parks and recreation needs can be determined with a range of methods from quantitative assessments to more qualitative measures. Larger communities may benefit from assessing their park systems against a “level of service” standard. In our case that leads to the impression that we have more park land and recreation facilities than our small community needs. We find that using more localized tools such as surveys and citizen input give us more realistic feedback on the demand for local park facilities.

On the qualitative side, surveys and other public participation forums allow locals and visitors to weigh in with input regarding how they spend their leisure time and the extent to which existing sites and programs meet their desire to recreate. These methods also provide valuable information with which a community can identify high priority projects or programs. Winthrop considered our park facilities through the lens of RCO’s Level of Service Tool, but our assessment of demand and need relies most heavily on our parks and recreation surveys and other local input.

Demand

We have learned that our planning for parks and recreation needs to reflect a broader picture of demand than what we would supply based on Winthrop’s small population. Because of Winthrop’s central location in the Methow Valley and our tourist economy, we serve a larger population than just the town’s residents. In assessing the demand, we have looked to a variety of indicators that help paint a picture of who is showing up to use Winthrop’s parks and recreation facilities.

Over the past decade, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, we see that our tax revenues (sales, hotel/motel, and stadium taxes) increased strongly and steadily; in fact, the revenue from these sources increased by nearly 200% over twenty years. Since the stadium and hotel/motel revenue represents “heads in beds”, the growth tells us we have more people visiting and recreating in Winthrop than ever before.

Another telling piece of documentation of the growing demand for the Valley’s recreation facilities comes from the Methow Trails. This organization is responsible for the maintenance and operation of more than 200 kilometers of trails, all of which are groomed for Nordic skiing during the winter months. From the inception of the organization in the early 1980s until now the number of daily trail passes sold during the Nordic ski season has increased dramatically. Over the past ten years, Methow Trails has seen an average of 12% growth in recreation users per year (statistic provided by Methow Trails based on an Economic Impact of Trails study.)

When we added refrigeration to our Rink, we were able to dramatically increase the length of the skating season. This has meant a marked increase in the number of people enjoying the ice. In the first season with refrigerated ice, the rink saw a 23% increase in the number of public open skate visits over the best year on natural ice (13/14). The Rink was able to host six hockey tournaments, which generated an estimated \$275,000 extra dollars to local businesses. Those numbers have continued to grow, and we see much steadier revenue through the winter.

Aggregating the evidence we see in our local economy, we see that Winthrop has an active local population, and an ever-growing number of tourists and part time residents coming here specifically to enjoy outdoor recreation. Available data confirms our sense that Winthrop experiences a far higher demand for recreation opportunities by a much larger user population than our local population and demographics would otherwise indicate.

Survey Results

Winthrop has conducted parks and recreation surveys for the past three park plan updates, including surveys in 2005, 2012, and 2017. Initially we used only paper surveys; however, we added an online option through Survey Monkey in 2012 and 2017 (same information and survey language). The 2023 survey was entirely online through Survey Monkey. This most recent survey received the highest rate of response to date, with 521 responses. This represents a 245% increase over the 151 responses in 2017.

The Parks and Recreation Survey has become our primary tool for assessing demand and needs. The surveys have sought input on existing opportunities and gauged the level of support for improvements to Winthrop's parks and recreation facilities. Because we did not control the distribution of the online survey, we can't ascertain how representative the responses are; but this plan places the survey in the context of public input in various forums over time. Across 18 years, we've seen remarkably consistent survey results, indicating solid support for our parks system, and setting clear direction for maintaining and improving a full range of recreation opportunities.

Who responded? As with previous surveys, most respondents reported that they live either in Winthrop (30%) or the Methow Valley (59%); 11% of respondents lived outside the Methow. This survey had more than three times the number of responses than the previous survey, which means the number of responses from Winthrop citizens increased from 73 to 155 – around 27% of residents.

The largest response came from the 65+ age groups (37%). Responses among the three age groups between 35 and 64 was evenly divided (18-20%). 5% respondents were age 25-34. One apparent weakness of the survey was a limited response from youth in the community; only 1% of the surveys were from people under age 25. This is an area where coordinated outreach would be useful to determine whether younger residents share the same priorities.

The majority (58%) of respondents live in two person households; 19% live in four person households; 11% in 2 person households; 8% in single person households, and 5% in household of 5 or more. Only 32% of respondents had children living in their homes, which aligns with the high percentage of older respondents.

Park Use. After establishing those basic demographics of the respondents, the survey sought to determine how often people use our facilities and which facilities are most important to them. We started by asking whether people know where our various facilities are located. Overall, yes, they do! Everyone knows where the rink is, while the location of Sa Teekh Wa and Heckendorn Park remained unknown to about a quarter of respondents. About half of respondents overall, and 77% from outside the Methow,

said mapping and signage would be helpful in accessing our parks.

Table 5.1 below shows frequency of use for our facilities, and to tease out more information, we followed this with a narrative question asking people to tell us which facilities are most important to them.

Table 5.1 – Park Use

How often do you use the following facilities?	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Parking at Town Trailhead	52%	41%	7%
Parking at the Barn/Park	42%	53%	5%
Winthrop Barn	15%	76%	9%
Methow Trails Facilities in Winthrop	34%	49%	17%
Susie Stephens Trail	36%	44%	20%
Ice skating at Winthrop Rink	29%	40%	31%
Meadowlark Natural Area	28%	45%	27%
Play Area in Mack Lloyd Park	17%	48%	35%
Sa Teekh Wa Park (North Village)	16%	47%	37%
River Access in Mack Lloyd Park	12%	62%	26%
Tennis courts (including for pickleball)	15%	22%	63%
Summer activities at Winthrop Rink	10%	33%	57%
Homestream Park	7%	58%	35%
Heckendorn	9%	37%	54%
Ballfield	7%	58%	35%

Frequent use was defined as 12 or more times per year (equal to once a month or once a week during a three-month season); occasional use was defined as one to 12 times per year. Overall, the facilities that see the highest use are parking at the Barn or Town Trailhead and the Barn itself. This is the first survey in which we asked specifically about use of the parking areas, and it is clear they receive heavy use. Among the Town's facilities, the Rink, Susie Stephens Trail, Mack Lloyd Park and Meadowlark Natural Area all receive significant, regular use. People also reported regular use of Methow Trails facilities, Sa Teekh Wa, and Homestream Park – all owned by other entities, but accessed in Town. The tennis courts, ballfields, and Heckendorn Park serve smaller, more specific user groups.

When sorted by where people live, there is some variation in which facilities are used most. Predictably, respondents who live outside of the Methow use our parks at lower rates; however, they “occasionally” use most parks at similar rates to local. Winthrop residents use Meadowlark and the Susie Stephens Trail much more heavily than people who live outside Winthrop.

464 respondents took the time to tell us specifically which parks or in-town trails are most important to them. From those responses it is clear that people value all the local

recreation options. In terms of the number of mentions, trails were called out most frequently. The Rink, Town Trailhead, Meadowlark and Barn/Mack Lloyd Park all stand out as widely used and valued amenities. The comments made it clear that even those less used facilities such as the tennis courts and ballfield remain important to the overall system of parks and factor into the overall quality of life in Winthrop. Generally, respondents rated our parks and trails as being in good condition, except for playground equipment.

Our final question in assessing use asked people their reasons for not using parks. This question received minimal response (19% of respondents), and the most common responses were: recreate elsewhere, don't have time, and no facilities that interest them.

How should we prioritize around parks and trails? As with past iterations of the survey, we sought input on how we should prioritize park and trail project ideas. This time we tried a new tactic, asking respondents to rank a list of six project ideas described as follows:

- **Kay Wagner Historic Riverwalk:** A proposed new trail situated along the Methow and Chewuch Rivers, the Riverwalk will include art installations and historical learning in a natural setting. This project will be designed and funded in sections from Spring Creek Bridge to Sa Teekh Wa Park, increasing walkability and pedestrian safety while enhancing the overall experience of Winthrop's downtown corridor.
- **Meadowlark Natural Area:** Our newest park is a hidden treasure. It needs a defined parking area and restroom. We would also like to develop a gentle ADA compliant trail and picnic area so that Meadowlark can be enjoyed by everyone.
- **Winthrop Rink:** The Rink has become central to our winter economy. The rink's chiller was purchased used and needs to be replaced with a new system that complies with newer codes. We envision upgrades that offer covered spectator seating.
- **Town Trailhead:** The large dirt parking lot serves the rink, trail access, and the new library. Our vision is for a paved, lighted, and functional satellite parking area that serves the many recreation uses around it.
- **Kiwanis-Led Improvements to Mack Lloyd Park:** Winthrop Kiwanis aims to improve the area next to the ballfield with a larger pump track, walking path, climbing areas, picnic space and half-court basketball. The plan also includes increased parking space.
- **Upgrading Play Equipment:** This project would replace play equipment in Mack Lloyd Park and Heckendorn Park.

Overall, regardless of where people lived, Riverwalk was the top ranked project. Here is how the rankings played out:

Table 5.2– Project Rankings

All Responses	Winthrop Residents	Methow Valley Res.	Outside Methow
Riverwalk	Riverwalk	Riverwalk	Riverwalk
MLP Improvements	MLP Improvements	MLP Improvements	Rink Chiller
Town Trailhead	Rink Chiller	Rink Chiller	MLP Improvements
Rink Chiller	Town Trailhead	Town Trailhead	Town Trailhead
Meadowlark	Meadowlark	Play Equipment	Meadowlark
Play Equipment	Play Equipment	Meadowlark	Play Equipment

Trails consistently emerged as a top priority in all our prior surveys. Since we now have the Susie Stephens, Meadowlark, and Sa Teekh Wa trails, we wanted to assess support for where to direct our attention in the coming years. We asked respondents to indicate their level of support for a selection of trail projects, including Riverwalk and Meadowlark trails listed above. Two of the trails we asked about are outside of town, so not directly in the Town's purview. In Table 5.3 below, we see that support for trails projects remains strong, with Riverwalk and a trail to Twisp receiving the most notable support. While support for an ADA trail at Meadowlark appears lower in this question, it should be noted that in the narrative questions, many respondents wrote about the importance of accessible ADA facilities, and voiced support for this project.

Table 5.3 – Trail Projects – Level of Support

Level of Support for Trail Projects:	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Do Not Support	No Opinion
Complete Susie Stephens Trail	58%	28%	2%	12%
Riverwalk Trail in downtown	72%	19%	3%	6%
ADA Trail at Meadowlark	33%	43%	9%	15%
Trail to schools and Twisp	78%	15%	3.5%	3.5%
Trail to Pearygin State Park	65%	26%	4%	5%

Next, we asked an open-ended question, "Are there any other park or trail projects that you don't see listed here that we should consider?" 185 respondents answered, and several suggestions emerged:

- Walking access throughout town and connecting to other existing trail networks stands out as a common vision. People want sidewalks and trails that make it easier to walk and bike through town and to common destinations. Several people wrote that Riverwalk should be our top priority. Several comments suggests trail routes outside of town.
- Development of a play area at the Winthrop Library.
- Separate facilities for pickleball and maintenance of the tennis courts. There appears to be tension between the two uses of the existing tennis courts.

- Many people would like to see a pool in Winthrop. (This wasn't included in the survey because the valley-wide effort has focused on a location in Twisp. Municipal pools are very expensive to construct and operate, making them difficult to sustain.)
- Some people expressed concern about the Rink's lighting and urged action to reduce light spillover.
- Some responses mentioned the need for better maintenance of Sa Teekh Wa Park, and a desire for the Town to take responsibility for the park and bridge. The park is owned by Okanogan County and the bridge is owned by the North Village POA. The Town has an easement over the bridge.
- A handful of responses advocated for a skatepark and soccer facilities.

Prioritizing new projects solicits lots of interest; but it remains important to take care of what we have, so we asked, "What maintenance needs do you think we should prioritize for our parks and trails?" This open-ended question received 248 answers. Items that stood out include:

- Replace old playground equipment at Mack Lloyd and Heckendorn Parks
- New ice plant to support ongoing operation of the Rink.
- ADA access – making sure our parks and trails are serving all people.
- Town Trailhead – grade and pave it.
- Repair tennis courts.
- Restrooms – more and maintained.
- Snow removal from sidewalks.
- Weed control and maintaining landscaped areas.
- Trash cans and pet waste receptacles.

While much of this list looks consistent with prior surveys, the appearance of ADA concerns stands out as a growing concern.

Based on input from the Stakeholders group, we added a couple of new questions focus on understanding how people get to our parks – vehicle, on foot, or by bike - and whether the lack of pedestrian or bike facilities is a barrier to them getting around town. We learned that most trips to our parks are in a vehicle, but more than 50% of respondents do walk or bike to parks. 47% noted barriers to walking or biking in town, and the following routes and needs stood out of the 210 narrative responses:

- Addressing downtown pedestrian connections from Spring Creek Bridge to Sa Teekh Wa, especially the area from Spring Creek to the boardwalks.
- Riverwalk as a downtown connection.
- Sidewalk along SR 20 from Homestream Park to Post Office.
- TWIN trail – Winthrop to Twisp and Winthrop to Mazama.
- Trail or sidewalks to Fish Hatchery.
- Trail to Pearygin Lake.
- Sidewalks/defined ped/bike access to Heckendorn neighborhood.
- More bike racks.
- Bike lanes and safer bike routes through town.

- Accessibility of boardwalks and other facilities. Better ADA accommodations.

The final survey question offered people an opportunity to provide additional comments. 210 respondents offered responses that generally reiterated their priorities or concerns already expressed in other questions. There were no significant themes that emerged. Many respondents offered thanks for the Town's parks and the effort it takes to maintain them.

A summary report, plus the complete survey results is included in Appendix C.

Community Forums

Winthrop routinely reaches out to understand public needs and priorities. While some of the forums listed here occurred several years ago, they indicate a building trend in envisioning Winthrop as an area-wide trailhead, and an outdoor recreation hub for the Methow Valley.

2005 Community Assessment with USDA Rural Development - A Community Assessment was completed in March of 2005, and although not specifically focused on parks and recreation, it yielded a wealth of information about the priorities of people within the community. The assessment was conducted by a team of 4 observers from the Washington Rural Development Council. During the listening forums, people identified important projects to help build the community of their vision: Community trails, the Riverwalk, the Rink, parks and other community amenities; planning and communication; and dealing with pedestrian and parking needs. Clearly through this process, conducted by outside observers, the same set of needs and vision rose to the surface.

2008 Town Visioning Workshop - On May 13, 2008, the Winthrop Planning Commission and Town Council held a joint public workshop to gather public input on zoning code and comprehensive land use issues. Fifty-four people (not counting Town Staff) attended. Pedestrian mobility stood out as probably the most frequently mentioned and highly supported single topic in the workshop and written comments. This encompassed development of trails (the Susie Stephens Trail, Riverwalk, and others) and otherwise promoting pedestrian and bicyclist safety. The area around the metal bridge & the SR 20 corridor raised particular concern, giving utmost priority to the Town's efforts to construct the Susie Stephens Trail and Spring Creek Bridge.

2015 Comprehensive Plan Update - The Winthrop Planning Commission worked intensely over three years to complete a wholesale update of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. The planning process reached out to the Winthrop Chamber and public at large to craft a vision, goals and policies reflective of the community. The resulting plan places high priority on Winthrop's recreation attributes, and on growing our network of trails.

2017 Walking Audit and Big Ideas Workshop - This workshop drew 30 people over the course of two segments. The focus was on multimodal circulation and downtown streetscape; however, it focused substantially on connecting to our major recreation facilities: Mack Lloyd Park and the Barn, the Rink and Town Trailhead, the Susie

Stephens Trail, and Riverwalk. The focus on walking and biking dovetailed substantially with the findings of our parks and recreation survey. Above all, Winthrop residents and visitors desire a community where it's easy to get on a trail, to walk or bike to parks and key community sites. The findings of the workshop were refined into design concepts and will ultimately wind up on an action-oriented plan to improve people's experience of moving around in our community. This workshop and planning process also specifically aims to address ADA compliance, ensuring that people of all ages and ability can get around Winthrop.

Conclusion

Together, the Town, School District, Town of Twisp, Methow Trails, and many other public and private entities provide Winthrop area residents and visitors with a variety of recreational opportunities. The community's desire and documented demand for year-round recreational opportunities remains strong as shown by public input used in updating of this park plan. These findings inform the goals and objectives and 6-year capital improvement program proposed later in this plan.

Parks and recreation improvements are rarely, if ever, self-supporting from a financial standpoint. The costs required to construct and maintain park improvements will entail ongoing collaboration between the Town, Winthrop Rink, Methow Trails, Kiwanis, Winthrop Auditorium Association, Methow Conservancy, and other partners if the goals and recommendations found in this plan are to be realized.

Chapter 6 - Capital Improvement Program

This chapter aims to define park action priorities, consider the Town's financial capabilities, and offer a six-year plan for parks and recreation improvements. The goals, objectives and recommendations of this plan represent large and long-term visions for Winthrop; they must be weighed against the Town's ability to generate partnerships and procure grant funding. They also must be considered in light of the Town's ability to support ongoing operations and maintenance costs. Because this Capital Improvement Plan needs to be financially realistic, some action priorities may be deferred until funding and demand align.

Our parks survey shows that the community is satisfied with our operation and maintenance of park facilities, except for deteriorated playground equipment. As the financial discussion in this Chapter illustrates, the Town has significantly increased spending on operations and maintenance of our park facilities over the past decade. In addition to local revenues, we depend on active partnerships with Winthrop Rink, Methow Trails, the Methow Conservancy, and Kiwanis to keep everything maintained. Improvements to what we already have, or new projects require substantial cash outlays that are only possible with grant funding and partnerships.

The Six Year CIP formalizes the Action Priorities by including estimated costs, potential funding sources and year project/activity is to be completed. An important premise is that no project or program should be implemented until operation and maintenance costs are known.

Because the Action Priorities and CIP are limited to facilities owned and operated by the Town, we encourage other local jurisdictions and entities that provide recreation opportunities to review this plan and consider aligning their plans with it. Shared priorities help us make a stronger case to RCO and other funding organizations that we are working together to meet the recreation needs of the larger valley community.

Implementation of this plan must be flexible to keep abreast of changes in community needs, partnership opportunities and funding options. For this reason, the list of projects found in the Action Priorities and CIP will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as goals are met, funding opportunities arise, and needs change.

Action Priorities

The following Action Priorities were developed to address the demand and need for parks and recreation improvements, based on input from citizen participation, the Planning Commission, and the Town Council. Priorities are listed by facility. Though they are not ranked, the top priority for each facility is listed first.

Table 6.1 - Action Priorities

Location	Project Description
Mack Lloyd Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete water access and bank stabilization project. • Kiwanis Activity Park improvements (ballfield area). • New playground equipment. • Reconstruct public restrooms. • Improve parking and signage. • Maintenance of existing facilities (Barn, tennis courts, etc.) • Explore options for separate tennis and pickleball courts.
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace Ice Plant, EPA compliant refrigerant. • Design and install spectator seating and improvements for year-round use. • Remodel west end of building to meet facility needs. • Improvements to storage and rink equipment.
Town Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Town Trailhead parking lot with paving, storm water drainage, lighting, landscaping, and signage.
Heckendorn Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New playground equipment • Consider restrooms and picnic shelter. • Maintain park in good condition.
Confluence Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct ADA access to RiverWalk corridor. • Maintenance and weed control.
Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan, permit, design & construct Riverwalk – top priority! • Extend Susie Stephens Trail south to Rabbit House Rd. • Support the efforts of Methow Trails and other entities to extend trails to public schools, Twisp, Pearrygin State Park, and other key destinations.
Winthrop Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore options for play area at Library.
Meadowlark Natural Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and construct trailhead parking. • Construct / install restroom. • ADA trail and picnic area. • Develop viewpoint and install site furnishings.
Signage Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive signage for Trailhead, Rink and Susie Stephens Trail, including route to downtown. • Directional signs and maps for Meadowlark, Sa Teekh Wa, and Homestream Park.
Ped & Bike Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue efforts to improve multi-modal circulation through town, with focus on safe access to parks by bike and on-foot – per <i>Winthrop In Motion</i>. • Add bike racks to park facilities.
ADA Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all improvements and projects include ADA access. • Strive to improve ADA access for all recreation facilities.

Financial Considerations

Park maintenance and operations are financed through the Town's Current Expense Fund, which is the same pool of tax revenue that pays for the Town's administration

and Marshal's department. Substantive improvements to our parks, and new projects such as the Ice Rink and trails require additional funds from grants, partnerships, donations and volunteer contributions.

Operations and Maintenance - Each year, during budget time in the Fall, the Town allots money from the Current Expense fund to operate and maintain the existing park facilities. This money covers Public Works staff time (including a proportional share of payroll benefits), operations money, insurance, utilities, weed control and hazard tree maintenance. Table 6.2 below illustrates the Town's expenditures for Parks Operations and Maintenance over the past six years.

Table 6.2 – Park Operations and Maintenance Expenditures

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
PW Assistant 1 salary (1 month)	\$ 3,131	\$ 3,239	\$ 3,316	\$ 3,776	\$ 4,332	\$ 2,452
PW Assistant 2 salary (.5 month)	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,405	\$ 1,442	\$ 1,667	\$ 1,972	\$ 2,162
PW Assistant 3 salary (2.5 month)	\$ 3,144	\$ 4,492	\$ 4,692	\$ 5,166	\$ 5,724	\$ 7,960
Payroll benefits	\$ 4,503	\$ 5,439	\$ 5,966	\$ 5,889	\$ 5,689	\$ 5,769
Park operations	\$ 2,842	\$ 7,160	\$ 6,756	\$ 9,946	\$ 8,723	\$ 7,269
Insurance	\$ 5,750	\$ 5,750	\$ 7,500	\$ 8,500	\$ 9,500	\$ 9,500
Utilities	\$ 1,954	\$ 2,269	\$ 2,971	\$ 1,871	\$ 4,402	\$ 5,697
Portable toilets					\$ 570	\$ 685
Park Mower					\$ 9,644	\$ 0
Fuel			\$ 279	\$ 276	\$ 839	\$ 585.
Park weed control	\$ 808	\$ 2,488	\$ 0	\$ 781	\$ 0	\$ 0
Hazard Tree Removal	\$ 3,682	\$ 1,516	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,628	\$ 0
Total O&M Expenditures	\$ 29,132	\$ 35,777	\$ 34,942	\$ 39,893	\$ 55,045	\$ 44,102

Of note is the fact that our expenses have more than doubled over the prior six-year period (which had also doubled over the prior period). The cost of operating and maintaining our parks reflects a significant and growing part of our budget. As with previous periods, this reflects a dramatic increase in our insurance rate, added commitment of staff time to parks, and higher operations costs. With the number of facilities the Town supports, and their high importance to our community, the Town Council will need to continue to budgeting adequate funds for operations and maintenance, factoring in rising costs.

Park Projects - Generally, park improvements are considered as funding becomes available through grants, partnerships, community donations, and volunteer efforts. Due to the size of the Town's budget, often only a few hundred to a few thousand dollars are allocated per year, based on specific project needs. The Town supports

park projects through staff time spent on project management and grant administration tasks. The project funds expended in Table 6.3 below come from numerous grant sources and cash donations to the Town. Park project expenditures 2012-2017 totaled \$1,998,000. Over the past six years, we've spent \$759,000 on capital projects. In just over a decade, we've invested enormously in expanding Winthrop's parks and recreation facilities, thanks to generous grants, partnerships, donors and volunteers.

Table 6.3 – Park Project Expenditures

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
SST Construction	\$ 56,627	\$ 13,716				
SST Crossings	\$ 6,289	\$ 22,861	\$ 26,266	\$ 17,609		\$ 23,119
Riverwalk Design	\$ 21,934	\$ 26,355	\$ 17,021	\$ 5,806	\$ 5,888	\$ 7,172
Meadowlark		\$ 2,298	\$ 20,858	\$448,668		
Water Access					\$ 7,435	\$ 26,266
	\$ 86,868	\$67,249	\$64,145	\$472,083	\$ 13,323	\$ 55,557

Park Project Funding Sources

As demonstrated above, capital park projects require funding from sources other than the tax revenues that fund operations and maintenance. This section describes potential funding sources, paying special attention to those sources listed in the Six Year Capital Improvement Program.

Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) - Created by the Washington Legislature in the 1970s, the RCO administers a variety of grant programs that provide funds to state and local agencies, generally requiring a 50% match from grant applicants. RCO funds can be used to acquire property, develop new facilities, or rehabilitate old ones. To establish eligibility, applicants must have an adopted Parks and Recreation Plan that documents the process used to identify the community's recreational priorities. Of the various grant programs available through RCO, the Town has mostly sought local parks and trails funding through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Transportation Funding – Though federal and state transportation funds are not typically available for parks and recreation projects, this plan update identifies the Susie Stephens and RiverWalk trails as action priorities. Trails projects are often eligible for transportation grants. The Town has received funding from the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). The Spring Creek Bridge and Susie Stephens Trail were funded through a one-time legislative appropriation in the 2005 gas tax package. In 2017, the Town also received a “Complete Streets Award” from the Transportation Improvement Board (TIB). The award can be spent on planning and implementation of projects that advance our goals around improving transportation of users of all ages and abilities. Collectively,

these transportation funding sources enable us to combine transportation and recreation objectives to meet our action priorities.

Economic Development Funding – In years past, the Town has successfully combined .09 Infrastructure funds to match other resources and further our parks and recreation project goals. State law apportions .09% of county-wide sales tax revenues for infrastructure projects that benefit economic development. Okanogan County distributes those funds as advised by the Economic Alliance. The Town has used .09 funds to purchase land for the Trailhead, and to pave the lower Rink parking lot. In addition, the Town has sought the support of the regional Economic Development District in furthering our projects.

Private and Foundation Grants – Occasionally the Town identifies grants offered by private foundations or nonprofit organizations that are a fit for our projects. However, award amounts are often small and we have had little success with such applications. Nonetheless, we pay attention to such opportunities and seek them where we have projects that are a good fit.

Donations - Many of the projects in the CIP list donations as a funding source. Donations come to us as land, cash for design and construction, and volunteer contributions of time and resources. Donations have been crucial to the development of Mack Lloyd Park, the Barn, and the Rink. Confluence Park was donated to the Town already developed. Without these generous donations, our Park Plan rapidly becomes an unattainable wish list. Winthrop celebrates the tremendous benefits of working with donors to create vibrant recreation opportunities.

Partnerships – Partnerships are increasingly a cornerstone to envisioning and developing lasting recreation opportunities. Both the Barn and the Rink are owned by the Town but have been operated and maintained by our nonprofit partners. Their dedication and expertise have been essential. Methow Trails has helped with maintaining the Town Trailhead. The Methow Conservancy manages and maintains the habitat and trails on Meadowlark Natural Area. Looking forward, these and other partnerships will remain essential to meeting the goals and objectives of this plan. Partners can bring additional funding sources; donations of time, money, and resources; and valuable assistance operating and maintaining parks and recreation facilities.

Cooperative or Joint Use Agreements - Agreements (a subset of partnerships as described above) are more a way to reduce expenses than a source of funds. Many communities have found that one agency is not able to take on a commitment like a new recreation center or athletic field alone. In many cases, interlocal agreements have been established between neighboring communities, school districts, and other special districts to lay the ground work for cooperative use, staffing, and maintenance. Potential partners for such agreements could include: Okanogan County, State Parks, and the Methow Valley School District.

User Fees - Although rarely significant enough to fund capital projects, user fees are often used to help cover operation and maintenance costs. Care must be taken, however, to make sure increases in user fees do not unintentionally deny Winthrop residents the ability to participate.

Debt Financing - Debt financing instruments such as general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, and councilmanic bonds can be used to fund recreational improvements. However, they are more typically used for water, sewer, and street improvements. General obligation bonds require voter approval. They also cannot be used for maintenance and operation.

Special Levies - Special levies are often proposed by taxing districts such as a Parks and Recreation District. They must be voter-approved and can be issued for operation and maintenance (but only for a one-year period). Other types of levies may or may not require voter approval, depending on limits imposed by state statute.

Formation of a Parks and Recreation District – There has been ongoing conversation about the potential benefits of a Parks and Recreation District that could own, operate and maintain facilities that serve the entire Methow Valley. From a statutory standpoint, a Parks and Recreation District is authorized to enter into a variety of activities, including, acquiring and disposing of property; contracting with any local government or private agency for the conduct of parks and recreation programs; and jointly operating recreation facilities with other governmental entities (RCW 36.69.130). Ballot initiatives in 2013 and 2023 sought to form a Parks and Recreation District in the Methow Valley. Both measures were voted down. However, the formation of a district remains the most probably way to fund a pool to replace the aged Wagner Memorial Pool in Twisp and is likely to be pursued again in the future.

Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) -In 1983, the Town began collecting a one-quarter of one percent Real Estate Excise Tax. This is above and beyond the real estate tax collected by the State of Washington. The tax is imposed each time real property changes hands within the Town. After Okanogan County retains a small amount for administration, the Town is provided with the funds resulting from the collection of this tax on a monthly basis. For obvious reasons, the amount received by the Town is proportional to level of real estate activity in the area.

Proceeds from the Real Estate Excise Tax can be used for many things. RCW 35.43.040 as well as the Chapter 3.20 of the Winthrop Municipal Code state that the tax can be used for "local capital improvements". The state statute gives some examples, focusing on improvements that can also be funded through a Local Improvement District (LID): streets, parks, sewers, water mains, swimming pools, and gymnasiums.

The REET cannot be used for items such as fire engines and computers. Projects must be things that can be done to or on a parcel of property. Arguably, the REET also cannot be used for the repair and rehabilitation of existing facilities or the acquisition of park land, unless the Town finds itself planning under the Growth Management Act at some point in the future.

Lodging Excise Tax - Also called the Hotel/Motel Tax, the Lodging Excise Tax is a 2% charge applied at the time hotel rooms, trailer sites, and other accommodations are furnished to visitors. Compared to the REET (above), the purposes for which this tax can be used are severely limited. The funds are typically used for promotion of the area in various publications. Particularly in more populated areas where larger amounts are generated, the tax is also used for the construction of convention

centers, stadiums, and performing art centers. It is thought that "performing arts centers" can be interpreted broadly to mean theaters, stages, and other facilities for dance drama, and music.

Current Expense Fund - Use of the general fund for park improvements is perfectly appropriate in the scope of an overall budget, subject to the approval of the Town Council. Small contributions by the Town in the scope of larger projects often help us meet match requirements and demonstrate local commitment. This plan is intended as a tool to guide general fund decisions regarding park and trail improvements.

Six Year Capital Improvement Plan

The Six Year Capital Improvement Plan reflects the Town's action priorities as filtered by financial considerations and potential funding sources. It is intended to plot a path for achieving our goals and objectives and fulfilling the recommendations set forth at the beginning of the plan. It reflects the demand and needs of our community. It is bold and ambitious and will require ongoing success in securing outside funding. It assumes that the Town's main financial commitment to parks and recreation lies with ongoing staff support, operations, and maintenance.

The CIP is laid out in a series of six tables, one for each year. It is organized by the same grouping of park facilities listed in the Action Priorities. Cost estimates in the near term are closer to reality, while those for projects more than a couple years out are very round estimates. Similarly, project funds for projects that are currently underway are known and secured; funding of future projects requires considering the most likely fit for funding and a willingness to keep all our options open.

A list of funding abbreviations used in the following CIP follows.

RCO -	Recreation and Conservation Office grants
WSDOT -	Transportation grants
Grants -	Grant opportunities - to be identified from public or private sources
Donations -	Donations of time, materials, equipment and cash
Town -	Town funds (including lodging taxes and sales tax), staff time, equipment, materials
Partners -	Donations of time, material and cash from partner organizations

Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2024			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Mack Lloyd Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construct water access project, including bank stabilization. 	120,000	RCO, Town, Ecology, Partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiwanis Family Activity Park - complete path around ballfield, parking, pump track, & batting cages. 	60,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power & water upgrades 	15,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve restrooms 	100,000	
	Subtotal	\$ 295,000	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Sport Project -- Purchase and installation of new court surface. 	125,000	Grants, Winthrop Rink
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice Plant Project -- planning and fund sourcing. 	Staff time 40,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spectator Improvements Project – preliminary design and planning. 	25,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facility repairs and upgrades. 		
	Subtotal	\$ 190,000	
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – complete Chewuch Bridge Underpass. 	800,000	WSDOT, RCO, .09 County, Town
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – preliminary design and environmental work. 	100,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding for next Riverwalk segments & Trailhead development. 	Staff time	
	Subtotal	\$ 900,000	
	TOTAL	\$ 1,385,000	

Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2025			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Mack Lloyd Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiwanis Family Activity Park - dugouts, trees, irrigation, lawn, play areas, paths. Planning for playground, parking, and other maintenance needs. 	<p>100,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	RCO, Town, Ecology, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 100,000	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice Plant Project – planning, permitting, and purchase of equipment. Spectator Improvements Project – Planning, permitting, and source funding. 	<p>1,500,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	RCO, Grants, Winthrop Rink
	Subtotal	\$ 1,500,000	
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – Design and permitting (south segment) Seek funding Trailhead development. 	<p>100,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	RCO, .09 County, Town
	Subtotal	\$ 100,000	
	TOTAL	\$ 1,700,000	

Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2026			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Mack Lloyd Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiwanis Family Activity Park - covered shelter, picnic tables, drinking fountain, benches. Seek funding to renovate playground & parking. 	<p>40,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	RCO, Town, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 40,000	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ice Plant Project – Construction of plant infrastructure and equipment installation. Spectator Improvements Project – Continued planning, permitting, and source funding. 	<p>500,000</p> <p>Staff time</p>	RCO, Grants, Winthrop Rink
	Subtotal	\$ 500,000	
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – Construct south segment Methow Trails – TWIN trail 	<p>1,000,000</p> <p>1,500,000</p>	RCO, Town, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 2,500,000	
Meadowlark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding Trailhead development. 	Staff time	RCO, Partners
	Subtotal		
	TOTAL	\$ 3,040,000	

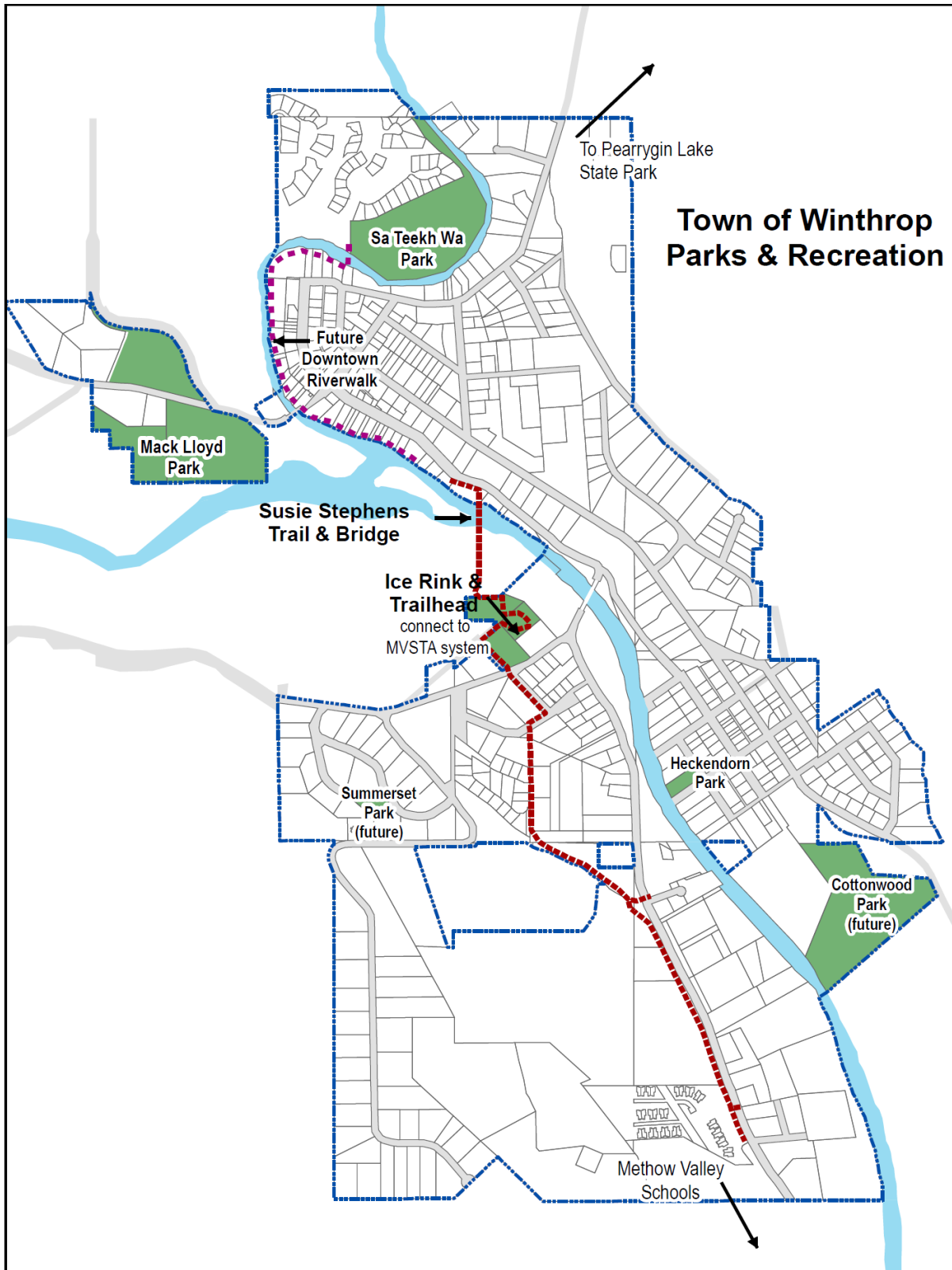
Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2027			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Mack Lloyd Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground and parking renovation. 	300,000	RCO, Town, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 300,000	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spectator Improvements Project – Construction. Purchase second Zamboni 	500,000 80,000	RCO, Winthrop Rink
	Subtotal	\$ 580,000	
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – seek funding for north segment. Trailhead – Pave & construct improvements Methow Trails – Winthrop to Pearrygin 	Staff time 650,000 1,000,000	RCO, .09 County, Town
	Subtotal	\$ 1,650,000	
Meadowlark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design trailhead, ADA trail, & picnic area. 	50,000	RCO, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 50,000	
	TOTAL	\$ 2,580,000	

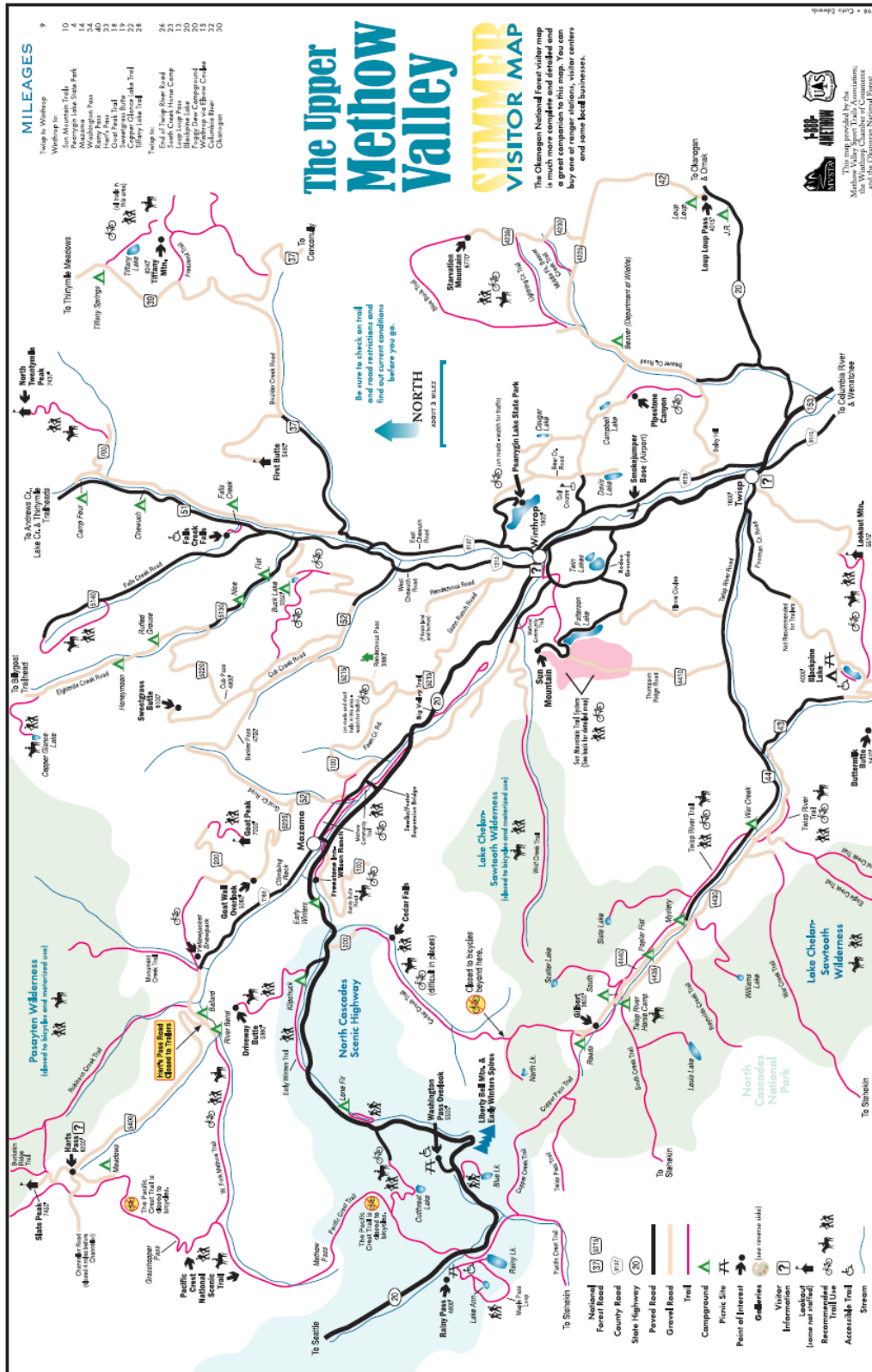
Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2028			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Heckendorn Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek funding for playground improvements. 	Staff time	RCO, Town,
	Subtotal	\$	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Growth Plan – Needs assessment. 	Staff time	Winthrop Rink
	Subtotal		
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – design and permitting for north segment. 	80,000	RCO, Town
	Subtotal	\$ 80,000	
Meadowlark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop trailhead, ADA trail, & picnic area. 	650,000	RCO, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 650,000	
	TOTAL	\$ 730,000	

Six-Year Capital Improvement Plan 2029			
Park	Project	Estimated Cost	Funding Options
Heckendorn Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop playground improvements. 	100,000	RCO, Town,
	Subtotal	\$ 100,000	
Rink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park Growth Plan – Preliminary design and planning. 	40,000	Winthrop Rink
	Subtotal	\$ 40,000	
Trails & Trailhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riverwalk – construct north segment. 	800,000	RCO, Town
	Subtotal	\$ 800,000	
Signage & Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop comprehensive map & signage program 	50,000	LTAC, Partners
	Subtotal	\$ 50,000	
	TOTAL	\$ 990,000	

Appendix A - Resolution Adopting Park Plan

Appendix B – Maps





Appendix C - Parks Survey Summary Report

The survey instrument was prepared by Town Planner Rocklynn Culp in December 2023 with input from the park stakeholders committee. The survey instrument included information about the Town's parks and trails, with brief descriptions of anticipated projects. The survey was available online through Survey Monkey. A postcard with a link and QR code for accessing the survey was mailed to all utility customers. The link was also shared with the park stakeholders committee, and subsequently broadly distributed by several local organizations, including Methow Trails, the Methow Conservancy, Winthrop Rink, Winthrop Chamber, Kiwanis, and the Friends of the Winthrop Library.

The survey was available online from December 20, 2023, through January 8, 2024. A total of 521 responses were received, which is the most ever in our history of doing park surveys. By comparison, there were 152 responses in 2017.

Q1. Where do you live? 30% live in Winthrop (155 respondents); 59% live elsewhere in the Methow Valley (309 respondents), and 11% live outside of the Methow Valley (57 respondents). Where people lived did not dramatically change the answers to the subsequent survey questions, but where distinctions were found, they will be noted.

Q2. What age group do you fit into? Barely 1 % (5 people) age 24 and under responded, leaving young age groups extremely underrepresented in the survey results. Most responses came from people over age 35, with the highest response among the 65+ age group. The age groups break out as follows:

Age Group	% of Respondents	# of Respondents
Under 24	1%	5
25 - 34	5%	25
35 - 44	19%	104
45 - 54	20%	102
55 - 64	18%	94
65+	37%	191

Q3. How many people live in your household? More than half of respondents (300) lived in 2 person households. Household size broke out as follows:

Household size	% of Respondents
1	8%
2	58%
3	11%
4	19%
5 or more	4%

Q4. Are there children in your household? 32 % of respondents had children in their

household. This was consistent across groups living in Winthrop or outside.

Q5. Do you know where these parks are located in Winthrop? Across the board, people seem to know where most Winthrop parks are located. The most recognized location is the Rink (100%). Sa Teekh Wa and Heckendorn parks are the two least known, with about a quarter of respondents unfamiliar with their location.

Q6. How often do you use the following park facilities?

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Parking at Town Trailhead	52%	41%	7%
Parking at the Barn/Park	42%	53%	5%
Winthrop Barn	15%	76%	9%
Methow Trails Facilities in Winthrop	34%	49%	17%
Susie Stephens Trail	36%	44%	20%
Ice skating at Winthrop Rink	29%	40%	31%
Meadowlark Natural Area	28%	45%	27%
Play Area in Mack Lloyd Park	17%	48%	35%
Sa Teekh Wa Park (North Village)	16%	47%	37%
River Access in Mack Lloyd Park	12%	62%	26%
Tennis courts (including for pickleball)	15%	22%	63%
Summer activities at Winthrop Rink	10%	33%	57%
Homestream Park	7%	58%	35%
Heckendorn	9%	37%	54%
Ballfield	7%	58%	35%

In sorting the responses on which facilities people use most frequently it is notable that parking was the top use -whether at the Trailhead/Rink or the Barn/MLP. The Barn itself stands out as a widely used facility.

When sorted by where people live, there is some variation in which facilities are used most. Predictably, respondents who live outside of the Methow use our parks at lower rates; however, they “occasionally” use most parks at similar rates to local. Winthrop residents use Meadowlark and the Susie Stephens Trail much more heavily than people who live outside Winthrop.

Q7. Which parks, amenities within the parks, or in-town trails are most important to you and your family? This was an open-ended response question, which was answered by 464 respondents. It is clear from the number of responses that respondents really value all our parks and recreation facilities. In terms of the number of mentions, trails are listed most frequently. The Rink, Town Trailhead, Meadowlark, and Barn/Mack Lloyd Park all stand out with frequent mentions. The entire list of comments is available.

Q8. If you do not use Winthrop park facilities, what are the main reasons? This question was only answered by 97 respondents (19% of entire response). The three most common reasons

people do not use Winthrop’s Park facilities are: 1) Recreate elsewhere, 2) Don’t have time, and 3) No facilities that interest them.

Q9. Would signage and maps help you use Winthrop’s parks and trails? Response was split fairly evenly with 51% saying yes and 49% saying no. When sorted by where people live, 77% of people living outside of the Methow Valley said signage and maps would be helpful.

Q10. How would you choose to prioritize park projects? This question asked people to rank a list of six projects: Kay Wagoner Historic Riverwalk, improvements to Mack Lloyd Park (Kiwaniis project), new playground equipment, new ice rink chiller and spectator seating, Meadowlark trailhead and ADA trail, and Town Trailhead improvements. Overall, regardless of where people lived, Riverwalk was the top ranked project. Here is how the rankings played out:

All Responses	Winthrop Residents	Methow Valley Res.	Outside Methow
Riverwalk	Riverwalk	Riverwalk	Riverwalk
MLP Improvements	MLP Improvements	MLP Improvements	Rink Chiller
Town Trailhead	Rink Chiller	Rink Chiller	MLP Improvements
Rink Chiller	Town Trailhead	Town Trailhead	Town Trailhead
Meadowlark	Meadowlark	Play Equipment	Meadowlark
Play Equipment	Play Equipment	Meadowlark	Play Equipment

Q11. What trail projects do you support?

Level of Support for Trail Projects:	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Do Not Support	No Opinion
Trail to schools and Twisp	78%	15%	3.5%	3.5%
Kay Wagner Historic Riverwalk	72%	19%	3%	6%
Trail to Pearrygin State Park	65%	26%	4%	5%
Extend Susie Stephens Trail to South	58%	28%	2%	12%
ADA Trail at Meadowlark	33%	43%	9%	15%

Q12. Are there any other park or trail projects that you don’t see listed here that we should consider? This was an open-ended response question that received 185 answers. Several suggestions emerged:

- Walking access throughout town and connecting to other existing trail networks stands out as a common vision. People want sidewalks and trails that make it easier to walk and bike through town and to common destinations. Many of the ideas are for trails that go outside of town.
- Development of a play area at the Winthrop Library.
- Separate facilities for pickleball and maintenance of the tennis courts. There appears to be tension between the two uses of the existing tennis courts. There were several mentions of the town council approving additional pickleball courts.
- Many people would like to see a pool in Winthrop. (This wasn’t included in the survey because the valley-wide effort has focused on a location in Twisp. Municipal pools are

very expensive to construct and operate, making them difficult to sustain.)

- Some people expressed concern about the rink lighting and urged action to reduce light pollution.
- Some responses mentioned the need for better maintenance of Sa Teekh Wa Park, and a desire for the Town to take responsibility for the park and bridge. The park is owned by Okanogan County and the bridge is owned by the North Village POA. The Town has an easement over the bridge.
- Several mentions that the Riverwalk should be our top priority.
- A handful of responses advocated for a skatepark and soccer facilities.

Q13. How would you rate the condition of Winthrop’s park facilities?

	% of Respondents
Excellent	15%
Good	65%
Fair	18%
Poor	2%

Q14. When you use Winthrop park facilities, how do you get there? Respondents were asked to select all that apply: car, bike, on foot. 93% car, 53% bike, and 52% on foot.

Q15. Do you or other members of your household find a lack of pedestrian or bicycle facilities a barrier to getting around town? 47% said yes; 54% said no.

A follow up question asked, If yes, what routes do you think should be a priority? 210 respondents offered suggestions for routes. Routes and needs that stand out include:

- Addressing downtown pedestrian connections from Spring Creek Bridge to Sa Teekh Wa, especially the area from Spring Creek to the boardwalks.
- Riverwalk as a downtown connection.
- Sidewalk along SR 20 from Homestream Park to Post Office.
- TWIN trail – Winthrop to Twisp and Winthrop to Mazama.
- Trail or sidewalks to Fish Hatchery.
- Trail to Pearrygin Lake.
- Sidewalks/defined ped/bike access to Heckendorn neighborhood.
- More bike racks.
- Bike lanes and safer bike routes through town.
- Accessibility of boardwalks and other facilities. Better ADA accommodations.

Q16. What maintenance needs do you think we should prioritize for our parks and trails? This open-ended question received 248 answers. Items that stood out include:

- Play equipment.
- New rink chiller.
- ADA access.
- Town Trailhead – grade and pave it.
- Repair tennis courts.
- Restrooms – more and maintained.

- Snow removal from sidewalks.
- Weed control and maintaining landscaped areas.
- Trash cans.

Q17. Do you have any further comments about any existing or proposed park facilities? 210 respondents provided final comments. For the most part these comments reiterated themes already expressed in other questions. Many respondents offered thanks for the Town's parks and efforts to maintain and improve them.

The narrative answers generally support the ongoing effort to create an in-town trail network and provide top notch parks and recreation opportunities for our community and its visitors. All survey questions, response statistics and complete narrative responses are in the full-length survey print out from Survey Monkey.