

# June 2024: Parks and Green Space



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# The Importance of Parks and Green Spaces



## Parks and Green Space

Lakewood is dedicated to expanding and maintaining its parks and green spaces. The City is home to many types of native flora and fauna including the beloved protected Garry Oaks. Parks and green spaces are necessary for a healthy community, providing residents with beautiful natural places to recreate and spend time with loved ones.

Parks incentivize private development and are a high priority for the Lakewood City Council. The community, leadership, developers, and contributors to the subarea planning process identified a strong need for parks, especially in the Downtown Subarea. Parks add beauty to the City and attract future development. Open space for residents and visitors further enhances place-making, encourages cultural and creative endeavors, and attracts professional services and boutique shops. Park space is also required as a part of any multi-unit development project. Please visit the City's [Parks & Recreation department page](#) for more information about parks.

## Trees and Tree Code

In November of 2022, the Lakewood City Council adopted [Ordinance 775](#) instituting new tree preservation rules. These rules include guidelines on how trees are classified, when they are allowed to be removed, and what remediation steps must be taken when trees are removed. The ordinance also outlines penalties for removing trees outside these parameters.

## Urban Forestry Program

In May of 2023, the Lakewood City Council approved \$340,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to create an Urban Forestry Program for the City. The Urban Forestry Program aims to preserve and expand tree canopy across the City in order to provide the benefits of healthy tree cover for all residents.



## Ft. Steilacoom Park

Fort Steilacoom Park is Lakewood's largest and most popular park, drawing more than one million visitors each year. The park includes Waughop Lake, a large playground, baseball and soccer fields, and a lot of green space! The City hosts many events and gatherings at Fort Steilacoom Park including Summer Nights at the Pavilion, the Lakewood Farmer's Market, Fiesta de la Familia, and Lakewood's yearly city celebration - SummerFEST!

## NCAA Baseball Field Upgrade

The most recent project completed at the park is a new NCAA baseball field and support facilities to serve as the new home field of the Pierce College Raiders. These upgraded facilities will also host large tournaments, bringing players, families, and spectators to Lakewood. Pierce College covered all costs associated with the NCAA field and facilities upgrades. The City owns the facility and has priority access when the field is not in use by Pierce College.



## Nisqually Indian Tribe Partnership

Lakewood and the Nisqually Indian Tribe are collaborating to develop interpretive installations that feature the unique history and current culture of the Nisqually Indian Tribe. The intent of this project is to add signage, art, and interpretive information throughout the park to honor the Nisqually people. The signage will include information in the Lushootseed language.

## Tenzlor Log Relocation

The City agreed to take ownership of a beloved Douglas Fir known as “The Big One” or the “Tenzler Log” that was located in front of the Flora B. Tenzler Memorial Library in Lakewood since the 1960s. The log will be moved to a new location in Fort Steilacoom Park where it will remain on display to the public.

## Park Pavilion Acoustics

The Pavilion in the Park was created to provide an area for community gatherings and celebrations. Based on feedback from current use, it has been determined that acoustic treatments are necessary to improve the space for meetings and events. These improvements will be completed in 2024.

## Springbrook Park

Springbrook Park is the main green space area in the southwestern part of the City. It is the only Lakewood park east of I-5 and serves the population that has limited access to other City parks. The most recent project restored 400 linear feet of shoreline to improve the water quality of Clover Creek and created more green space for Springbrook residents. Improvements include walking paths, viewpoints, picnic areas, a dog park, basketball court, community garden updates, a bike pump track, and other site furnishings.



## Wards Lake Park

Lakewood has utilized a variety of funding sources to acquire several contiguous parcels of land to create the Wards Lake Park property. Now over 38 acres, Wards Lake is a beautiful natural area in a densely populated part of town. Planned improvements are focused on improved access, diversity of recreation, environmental health, storm water function, and improved safety and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED). Improvements include removing invasive plant species, additional landscaping and natural habitat improvements, a loop trail, updated pathways and bridges, expanded parking, a Portland Loo to replace the existing restroom, a new park and playground area, a dog park, pump track, dirt bike skills track, and updated signage. Public Works will be improving traffic indicators and pedestrian crossings near the park to support more traffic to the park.



## Oakbrook Park

Oakbrook Park is the only neighborhood park in the northwestern residential area of the City. The playground equipment was replaced in 2019. Future improvements include a circulation path around the park, a pickleball court, picnic shelter, and other site furnishings.



## American Lake Park

American Lake Park is one of Lakewood's most popular and photogenic parks, despite being only 5 acres in size. It is used heavily in the summer season due to limited public waterfront access across the City. Improvements include ADA access from the parking areas to the shoreline, replacement of restrooms, repairing or replacing deteriorating retaining walls and bulkhead, a new picnic shelter, and other site furnishings.



## Chambers Creek Trail Phase 2

Lakewood has been working in partnership with University Place and Pierce County on a Chambers Creek Trail Project since 2018. The land is owned by Pierce County with sections of the trail and trailheads located in both University Place and Lakewood. The completed trail will be 2.5 miles long. Phase 1 completed the first bridge and included connections from Phillips Road and Kobayashi Park. Phase 2 will complete the remaining bridges, trail, boardwalks, and trailheads through Chambers Creek Canyon including a connection to Zircon Drive.



## Harry Todd Park

Lakewood applied for funding through the Deferred Maintenance Grant Program created in 2023. Though these types of grants are rare and generally have a highly competitive grant process, Harry Todd Park was selected as the #1 project to receive grant funding. The park was selected due to aging infrastructure, safety concerns, and neighborhood demographics. Improvements will include parking improvements, basketball court striping, grading and leveling, landscaping, and seasonal staff to address deferred maintenance at the site.



## Future Projects

### Camp Murray Boat Launch

Representatives from both Lakewood and Camp Murray discussed how to improve and fund access at the Camp Murray boat launch. This includes the City supporting and/or partnering on state grants and legislative opportunities. The project aims to address long standing inequalities in public waterfront access for the residents of the Tillicum and Woodbrook neighborhoods. \$100,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding has been approved to develop a master plan for the Camp Murray boat launch.



## Ft. Steilacoom Park

Partners for Parks (PFP) is a nonprofit focused on improving parks for Lakewood residents. PFP is leading an external fundraising campaign to support this public-private partnership project. Multiple fundraising strategies are being used to encourage private financial support of the project from 2023-2025. The project intends to support historic preservation of the H-Barn and create a regional event space that will also support local use and generate economic impact for the City.



## Downtown Park

The Legacy Plan and [Downtown Subarea Plan](#) (Central Business District) includes a variety of projects to support desired change and development in the City. One of the improvements is to acquire 2-4 acres of land in the Downtown Subarea to develop a downtown 'central park' to provide recreation and cultural opportunities for residents. The park will connect to the planned Green Street Loop. Potential improvements could include multi-use plazas, courtyards, walkways, landscaped areas, public art, a spray park, public restrooms, a dog park, and connections to other civic points of interest like community centers, theaters, and libraries.

## Street End Improvement Pilot Project

In 2023, the City updated its 2009 Street Ends Report. The updated report reviewed existing conditions and potential for public access and development at 12 street end sites. The report outlines design and program goals in partnership with current policy documents, city codes, and feedback from staff. [Click here to view the updated report.](#)