

CLARK COUNTY

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Two boys play in the playground at Chinook Neighborhood Park in the Salmon Creek area.

Columbian files

Updated parks plan in the works

Clark County seeks public comment for 'road map to future'

By **KAITLIN GILLESPIE**
Columbian staff writer

Clark County is turning to the community for help in developing the future of its parks.

Clark County Public Works is updating its Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The plan was last updated in 2007, when the county operated a joint parks department with the city of Vancouver.

A plan revision could mean new parks and trails, and updates to existing parks in unincorporated Clark County, parks manager Bill Bjerke said.

"It's a road map to the future," Bjerke said of the plan updates.

Whether it's more horse trails, children's playgrounds, access to water or

Public meeting

■ **What:** Clark County Parks Advisory Board work session for the parks plan.

■ **When:** noon Friday.

■ **Where:** Luke Jenson Sports Complex, 4000 N.E. 78th St., Vancouver.

■ **Web:** www.clark.wa.gov/parks

park safety, Clark County Parks and its advisory board are asking community members to share in an online survey what they would like to see.

About 750 people already have responded, and more than 100 people have attended three open houses throughout Clark County. Parks advisory board co-chairwoman Barbara Anderson, however, said the board wants to hear more input before presenting the plan to

the Clark County council.

"The plan is truly made for the neighborhoods," Anderson said. "It's so much better if we don't have to use a crystal ball."

Parks advisory board co-chairman Kelly Puntney said the board is working on the public's behalf to produce the comprehensive plan.

"I just want to make sure that we have a road map that the public really appreciates and can visualize," he said.

Apart from those issues, however, there's also the legal side of producing the comprehensive plan, public works spokesman Jeff Mize said.

The parks plan represents one component of the county's Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, Mize said. The county is updating its growth plan, which is set to be completed in early 2016. The parks plan is expected to be finished by August.

Under the Washington Growth Management Act,

the county cannot legally apply for grant funding until the parks plan is implemented, Mize said. Funding is short for parks, so grants enable the county to get the most "bang for the buck," he said.

"Grants are a way we can maximize the benefit," he added.

The survey is available by clicking "online community survey" at www.clark.wa.gov/parks. Comments can also be emailed to parks@clark.wa.gov with "Comp Plan" in the subject line, or mailed to Clark County Parks, Attn: Comp plan, 4700 N.E. 78th St., Vancouver, WA 98665.

More information about the parks plan is available at www.clark.wa.gov/parks.

"The more people who respond, the better vision that we can put together for them," Anderson said.

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