

City of Stanwood



City Council Packet

Stanwood City Council Special Workshop Meeting

Thursday, March 10, 2022



CITY OF STANWOOD CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING

City Council Workshop
Thursday, March 10, 2022- 5:00 p.m.

This meeting will be conducted by telephone and online via Zoom,
Connection information will be posted on City Website—
<https://www.stanwoodwa.org>

AGENDA

1. Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study
2. American Recovery Plan Act, State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
Discussion
3. Adjourn



CITY OF STANWOOD COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

ITEM NUMBER: 1

DATE: March 10, 2022

SUBJECT: Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study

CONTACT PERSON: Patricia Love, Community Development Director

ATTACHMENTS: A – Park and Recreation Feasibility Study
B – Presentation Materials

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agenda item is for Council consideration of the Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study prepared by Berk Consulting and the proposed staffing organization charts.

BACKGROUND

For several years, the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (PTAC) and members of the public have been requesting that the city hire a full time Parks and Recreation Director. This pressure appears to be coming from the desire to improve park aesthetics and communication with the city. However, prior to hiring a director and/or staffing a new department, the city needs a plan and vision for what the future of parks and recreation may look like in the city, what types of service models should be considered, and a funding mechanism to support recreational programming.

A community survey conducted in 2019 placed a high priority on future parks and recreation program planning in Stanwood. Top priorities included trails and waterfront access. With the growth of Stanwood and the community's desire for a robust parks and recreation services and facilities, a Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study was included in the 2021 / 2022 biennial budget and associated work plan. Berk Consulting Inc. was hired to guide the City through the process of evaluating existing conditions and needs and then to help identify options to provide improved park and recreational services to Stanwood's residents.

The attached report summarizes findings and recommendations based on comparisons with similar cities and discussions with city boards and commissions.

ANALYSIS

The City's current parks and recreation service model is decentralized with multiple City departments responsible for discrete parts of the City's current parks and recreation operations.

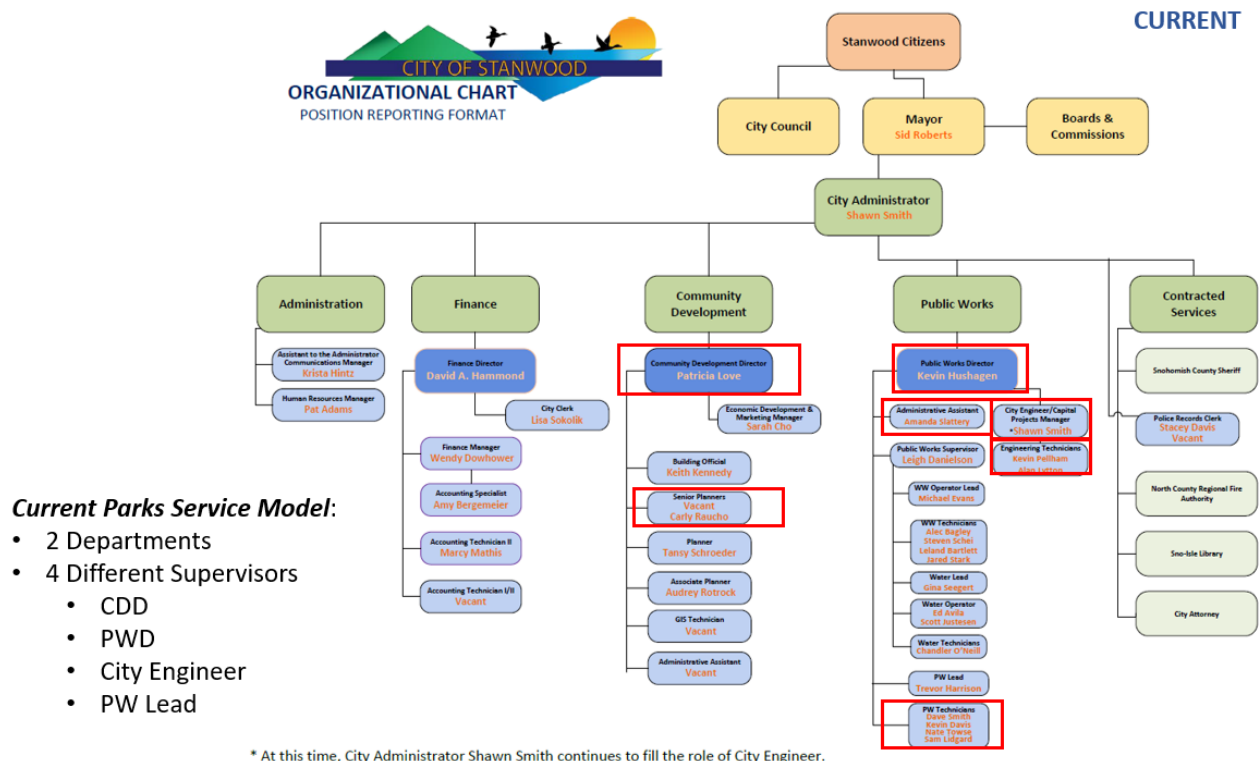
City of Stanwood Park and Recreation Operational Categories and Responsible City Departments

Park & Recreation Operational Category	Responsible City Department
Parks Maintenance & Facility Scheduling	Public Works
Parks Planning & Development	Community Development with support from Public Works
Special Events	Community Development / Economic Development

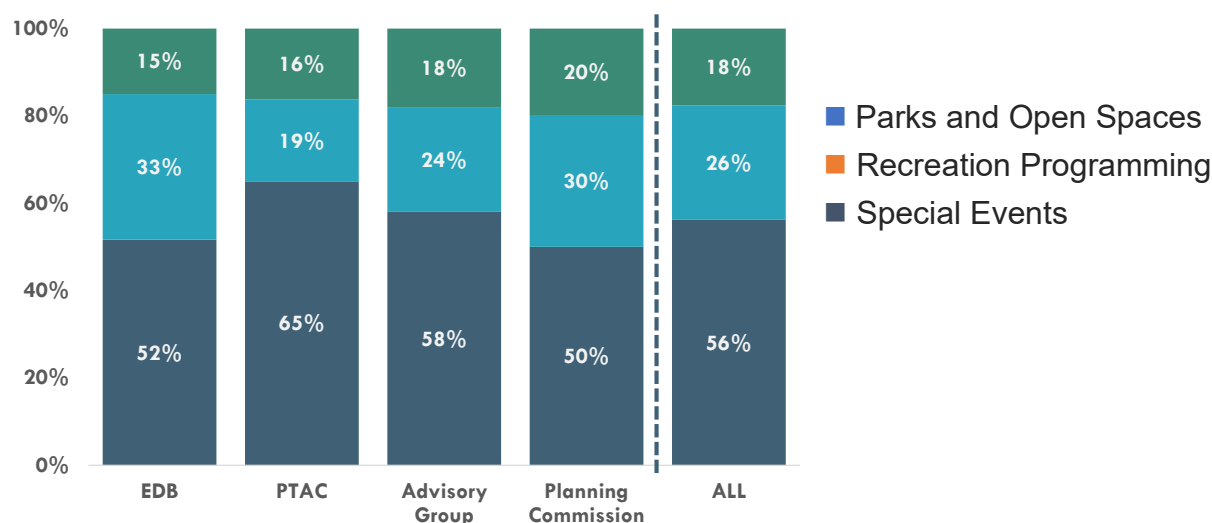
Berk Consulting Inc. conducted several interviews with the Park and Trails Advisory Committee, the Economic Development Board, Public Works Maintenance Staff, City Management Team and a Steering Committee. Across all groups, the following common desires were stated:

- Increase maintenance levels to have tournament-ready ballfields
- Increase signage and wayfinding around the city
- Improve trails and walkability
- Increase parking capacity and improved parking maintenance
- Increase park development and planning

With the current decentralized system of parks planning in the Community Development Department and parks scheduling / maintenance in the Public Works Department there is a communication and policy implementation gap with regards to parks in the City of Stanwood. Identifying this key inefficiency in the city is a major step forward towards improving City parks for the community.



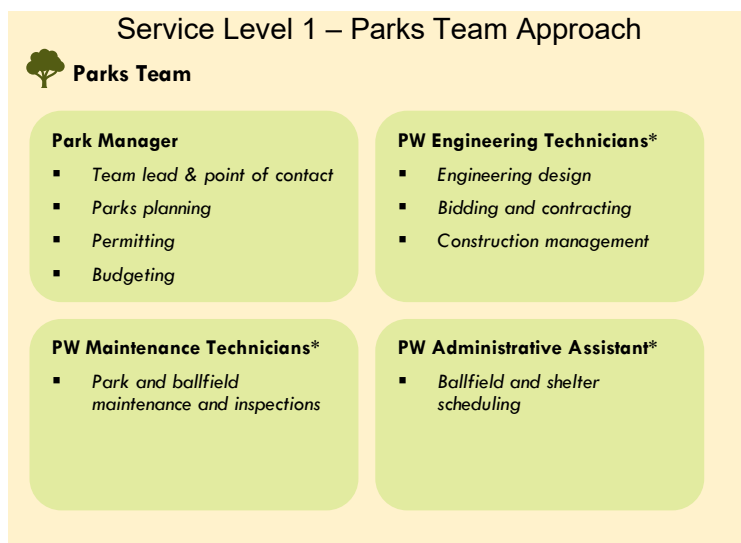
Boards and commissions were asked to complete a short exercise in how they would choose to allocate \$100 among parks and open spaces, recreation programming, and special events. The stakeholder allocation exercise results are as follows:



Sources: BERK, 2021.

Most respondents indicated a desire to concentrate resources in parks and open spaces, with respondents across all groups indicating they would allocate an average of 56% of resources towards parks and open spaces. Respondents who added comments to their submissions indicated that they viewed parks and open spaces as the prerequisite for growth in recreation programming and special events. These findings align with discussion feedback that the City's park system should be the main focus with recreational programming and special events being secondary concerns.

The draft report recommends applying a phased and scalable approach to improving city parks and services prior to formally creating a City Parks Department. This scalable approach starts with the creation of a "Parks Team" consisting of existing employees that will be dedicated to parks planning and maintenance that will work together, in the same space to improve communication. This *Service Level 1* could be implemented upon Council acceptance of the report.



As the City's park system and services expand and as resources permit, a scalable approach to implementing a Parks Department has been developed which includes major milestones to guide the City in its decision-making process. The intention of the scalable approach detailed below is to provide the City with a roadmap for creating a dedicated parks and recreation department while addressing community priorities in the short term.

Scalable Approach: Service Level 1 - 3

City of Stanwood				Separate Parks District
Current	Parks Team	Parks & Rec. Supervisor	Parks & Rec. Department	Parks District
Level of Service <i>Current Service Level</i> Current LOS	Level of Service <i>Service Level 1</i> - Improved park and ballfield maintenance - Improved communication with public	Level of Service <i>Service Level 2</i> - Coordinating recreation programming - More cohesive approach to park development, programming, budgeting, and strategic planning	Level of Service <i>Service Level 3</i> - Operating recreation programming and facilities - Expanded park and ballfield maintenance	Level of Service <i>Service Levels 1-3</i> Parks districts can operate at a variety of service levels
Description - Decentralized - Services split between City departments	Milestones - Dedicated staff for park services - Centralized (e.g., Public Works)	Milestones - Staff supervision needs - Recreational programming coordination - Budget & strategic planning needs	Milestones - Operating recreational programming and facilities - Other programming and activities needs (e.g., special events, partnerships) - Park system expansion	Milestones - City is unable to dedicate sufficient funds - Service demands from outside the City outpace City-resident demand
Est. Biennial Cost (2021 \$) \$1.2M*	Est. Biennial Cost (2021 \$) \$1.2M-\$1.4M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021 \$) \$1.7M-\$2.1M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021 \$) \$2.3M-\$2.7M	

Staff has been reviewing how the phase approach could work within our existing organizational structure. While the following charts are slightly different than shown in the Berk report, it reflects an implementable approach that works with existing staffing levels and reasonable budget impacts.

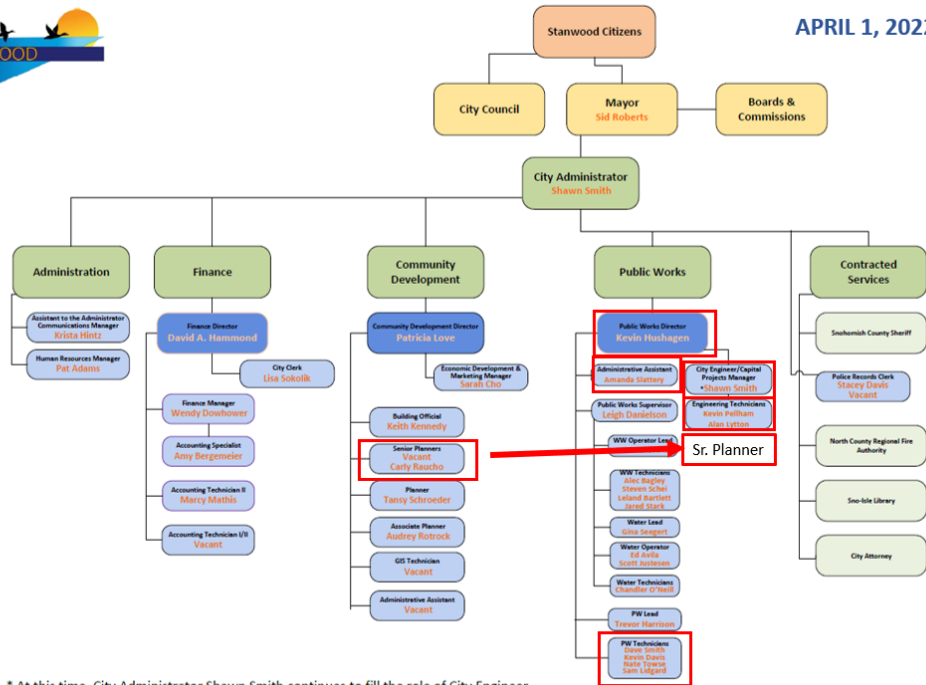
Service Level 1: Parks Team

Move the current half time Senior Planner to Public Works for better communication with the Parks Team. A Parks email and phone number will be set up creating a direct link between the public and parks. This is the first step in creating a parks division within Public Works.

Service Level 1

Parks Team Model:

- Move Senior Planner to PW Under City Engineer
- CDD Planning Role Shifts to City Engineer (Currently Vacant) / Provides Support During Transition
- PW Staff Stay Under Current Supervisors, But Move Into Same Building Space for Improved Communication



Cost: Existing Staff

* At this time, City Administrator Shawn Smith continues to fill the role of City Engineer.

Service Level 2: Parks Division with Public Works

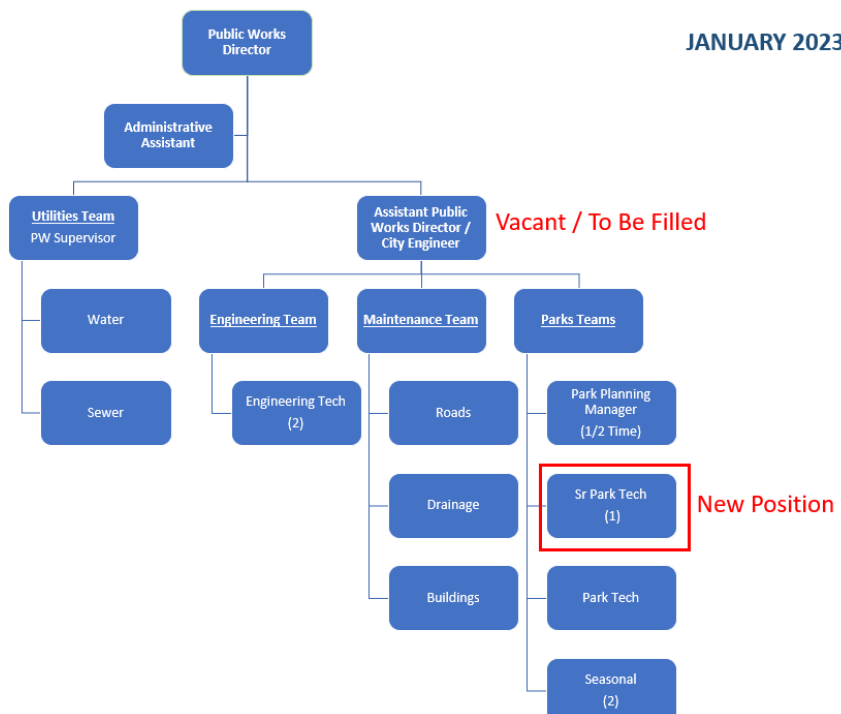
The reviewing Boards and Commissions have recommended moving to Parks Service Level 2 as quickly as possible. Below is a proposed organization chart showing how a parks division could be implemented within the Public Works department using existing staff, rehiring the vacant Assistant Public Works Director / City Engineer position, and hiring one new Senior Parks Technician.

Service Level 2

Parks Division Model:

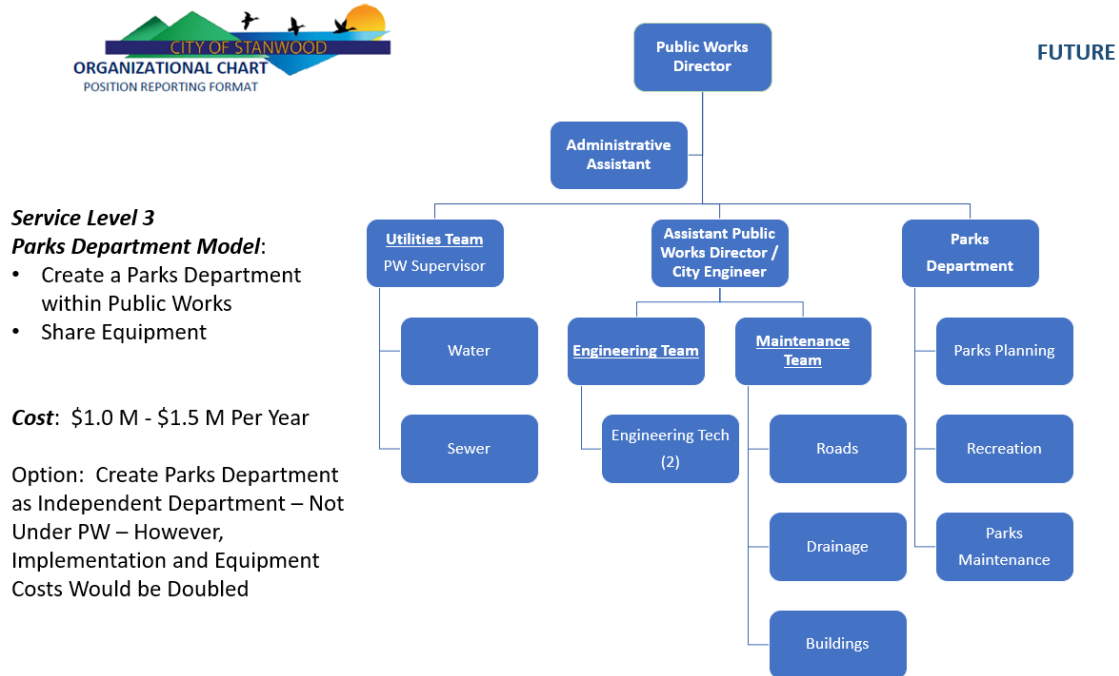
- Rehired Assistant Public Works Director / City Engineer with Some Parks Planning Background
- Create / Clarify Engineering, Maintenance, and Parks Teams
- Hire New Sr Parks Tech Position

Cost: \$150,000 - \$200,000 Per Year
One New Position and Minor Reclassification of Sr Planner to Parks Planning Manager

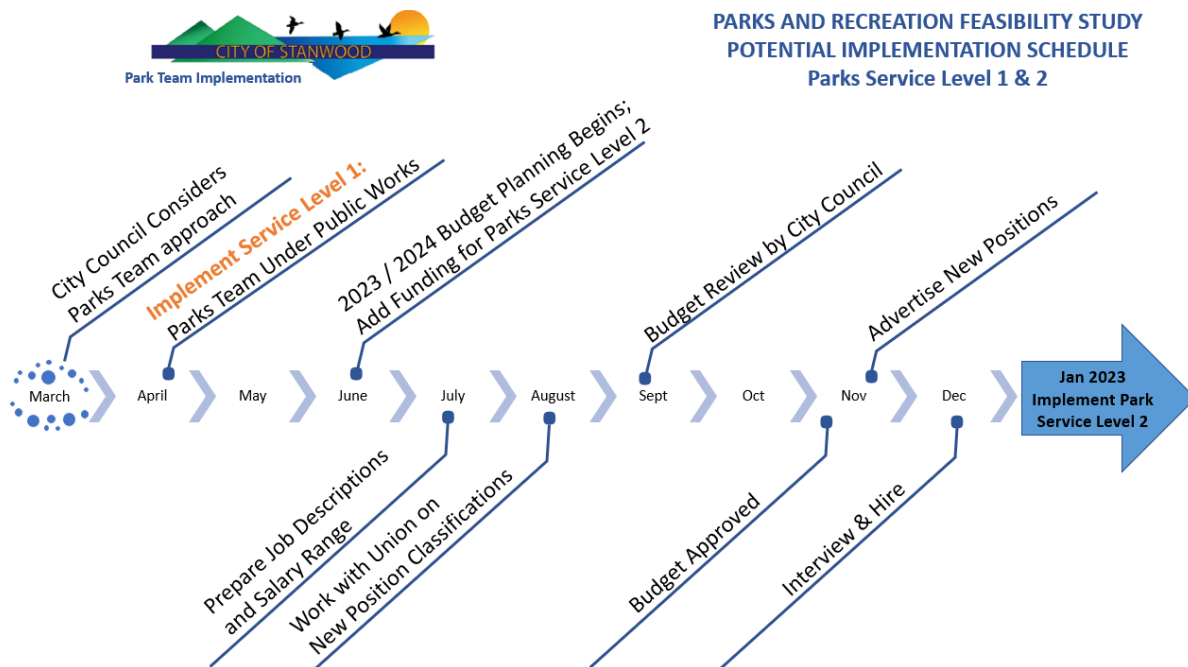


Service Level 3: Parks Department

The following organization chart shows a full parks department within Public Works once recreational programming is provided. Recreational programming includes providing recreation classes, hosting / managing tournaments, and / or building a community center or other buildings that support parks and recreation.



The following timeline as been prepared showing that Parks Service Level 1: Parks Team can be implemented immediately if Council approves the approach. Parks Service Level 2: Parks Division could be implemented by the beginning of January 2023 if the needed positions are funded.



Fiscal Impact

Staff has analyzed the anticipated costs to implement Parks Service Level 1 and 2.

Parks Service Level 1: Parks Team

The Parks Team can be implemented quickly upon approval by Council without impacts to the City budget. This Team would work under the direction of the Public Works Direction with planning support from the Community Development Director as needed. This is intended to be an interim step towards building the Parks Division.

Parks Service Level 2: Parks Division

The cost to implement Parks Service Level 2: Parks Division is anticipated to increase the general fund budget by \$150,000 - \$200,000 per year. It includes rehiring the Assistant Public Works Director / City Engineer position, hiring a new Sr. Parks Tech and upgrading the Senior Planner to a Parks Planning Manager

- The Assistant Public Works Director / City Engineer would take on the high level / long range planning and budgeting duties currently being done by the Community Development Director.
- The Parks Planning Manager would be the community contact for parks, coordinate park projects with the park's maintenance and scheduling staff. This position would continue to serve as staff to the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee.
- The new Senior Parks Technician will manage park, field, equipment, buildings, and other park related maintenance schedules and conduct these maintenance activities.
- The Parks Technician is dedicated to park maintenance.

Parks Service Level 3: Parks Department

Initial long-term projects anticipate a Parks Department could cost between \$1M - \$1.5M per year. This does not include building or equipment costs. Further analysis is needed when / if the City decides to provide recreational programming.

Fund(s):	To Be Determined		
Amount:	\$	Project Estimate:	\$ -
Budget Authorized	☐ Yes ☐ No	Amendment Required	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Monitor

RECOMMENDATIONS**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff supports the conclusions of the Park and Recreation Feasibility Study prepared by Berk Consulting and recommends moving forward with forming the Parks Team.

Committee/Board Recommendation:

<u>Council Community Development Committee (February 3, 2022):</u> The Council Community Development Committee reviewed the study results on February 3, 2022 and was supportive of the proposed phased implementation approach. They had the following comments:	<u>Committee Members:</u> Steve Shepro Marcus Metz Dani Gaumont
▪ They felt the report accurately captured the conversation regarding park needs and desires. ▪ Support the phased approach to develop a parks department.	

- Would like to see a proposed timeline for when the city would/could increase service levels.
- Suggest the Council consider moving to Service Level 2 quickly – possibly 2022.

Economic Development Board (February 18, 2022):

The Economic Development Board reviewed the study results on February 18, 2022 and were also supportive of the proposed phased implementation approach. They had the following comments:

- Begin implementation of the team approach – Service Level 1.
- Need leadership support and a clear understanding of how the transition is to occur with shared resources so that parks, streets, and drainage groups have dedicated or shared resources they need to do their jobs without overtaking one another.
- Prepare written maintenance standards and schedules with clear expectations.
- Concerned about implementation of a Parks District. If the District covers the school district boundaries, then funds would flow out of Stanwood whereas if the District covers only city boundaries, then city residents are paying for county (Snohomish and Island) use of city parks. Consider user fees as an alternative to a District.
- As the city moves along the phased schedule to Service Level 2 or 3, create opportunities to partner with other recreational user groups: YMCA, Baseball Leagues, Lacrosse Groups to provide coordinated recreational programming.
- Create venues and opportunities for park users to contribute to the economic welfare of local businesses by creating tournaments and events that market Stanwood as a destination.
- Parks should be used for more than tournaments; they should generate revenue by bringing people into Stanwood to stay for the day. Promote outdoor, weekday and evening use of parks.

Members Present:

Kristine Birkenkopf
John Russell
David Pelletier
Blake Arnold
Les Anderson

Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (February 22, 2022):

The Parks and Trail Advisory Committee reviewed the draft Parks and Recreation Study results on February 22, 2022. They unanimously support the proposed phased implementation plan and motioned for Council to move forward with Service Level 1 immediately and move to Service Level 2 in 2023. Other comments included:

- Need an assessment of needed park equipment with cost estimates.
- Support the team approach with dedicated park staff, email and phone number.
- Support the team approach as it provided better communication and cohesiveness with park planning and maintenance.
- While the proposed approach looks “good on paper”, be careful of how the position is filled as it will be difficult to get one person that

Members Present:

Cathy Wooten
Lisa Bruce
Matt Withers
Dave Hall
Rick Hawkins
Katelyn Durfee

Judy Williams
(Member of Park
Steering Committee
- Attended PTAC as
she was not able to
attend the steering

is an expert in parks planning, maintenance and recreation. Evaluate the team to understand everyone's strengths then fill the Service Level 2 position accordingly. ▪ Provide budget recommendations with Service Level 2 in 2023 to Council. ▪ Once at Service Level 2 begin putting together partnerships for recreation programming.	committee meeting on 2/23) Steven Shero also attended, but not a member of PTAC
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<u>Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study Steering Committee (February 23, 2022):</u> The Steering Committee reviewed the draft report with staff and Berk Consulting on February 23, 2022. They concurred with the recommendations of the Community Development Committee, Economic Development Board and Parks and Trails Advisory Committee that the scalable approach to forming a parks department makes sense for Stanwood. Their consensus was to move forward with assembling the Parks Team (Service Level 1), then conduct an assessment of the team's skills to determine the needs for hiring the vacant supervisor/city engineer position. They also recommended funding Service Level 2 as soon as possible, but with the 2023/2024 budget as a minimum. Other comments included: ▪ Support the idea of forming the parks team first before moving ahead with a full department. The Teams approach will improve communication and coordination between staff and with the public in general. It creates a "one-stop place" for information which is a more positive experience for residents. ▪ It's a smart and reasonable approach that provides flexibility and the time to set up a parks marketing plan and priorities. ▪ It's the first step by the City to focus resources and staff on developing and maintaining parks. However, continue to fund capital park projects to complete the "dream" of robust, regional park facilities that attract tournament and day users. ▪ Would like a timeline to better understand the transition to a full parks department. ▪ Important to support special events in Stanwood. The Economic Development and Marketing Manager will continue to manage special events with coordination with the Parks Team. ▪ Concern about how to fund both the Parks Team, needed maintenance equipment, and continued park development.	<u>Members Present:</u> Robin Hanks Kristine Birkenkopf Rose Olson Dave Hall Steve Shepro Chuck Pratt
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CITY COUNCIL OPTIONS

Based on Council discussion at the worksession, staff will prepare formal options and motions for Council consideration at their March 24th regular meeting.

City of Stanwood

Parks and Recreation Feasibility Study



Photo Credit: City of Stanwood

March 1, 2022

BERK



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Project Team

Brian Murphy Principal in Charge

Jason Hennessy Project Director

Jay Shih Project Manager

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Introduction

The City of Stanwood is the northernmost city in Snohomish County and has a population of around 7,125 residents as of 2020. The City serves as a commercial and cultural hub for the greater Stanwood and Camano Island community, which is estimated to be around 37,800 in population based on 2020 population estimates for the Stanwood-Camano School District. It's park and recreation amenities also serve the broader region and help play an important role in the local economy by attracting out-of-town visitors to Stanwood.

In 2019, the City commissioned a community survey as part of the City's strategic planning efforts to collect feedback from the greater Stanwood and Camano Island community on various services provided by the City. High priorities for park and recreation services and facilities identified by survey respondents included developing new trails and improving existing trails as well as developing new waterfront parks and improving existing waterfront parks. Additionally, respondents identified improving existing parks and amenities as one of the community's top five priorities over the next two to five years.

With the growth of Stanwood's population in recent years and the community's desire for robust parks and recreation services and facilities, the City engaged BERK Consulting in March of 2021 to evaluate what a future park and recreation service model for the City could look like as well as what types of services could or should be provided in Stanwood.

This report includes findings around our evaluation of the City's current park and recreation service model, findings around the community's priorities for parks and recreation in Stanwood from stakeholder engagement, and a recommended phased approach towards providing park and recreation services in the City.

Evaluation of Current State

To provide context around the City's existing parks and recreation operations, this section details BERK's findings around the following:

- **A baseline assessment** of the City's current parks and recreation operations and service model
- **A peer benchmarking analysis** of parks and recreation service models employed by comparison jurisdictions as a point of comparison for Stanwood's current service model

Baseline Assessment

Current Service Model

The City's current parks and recreation service model is decentralized with multiple City departments responsible for discrete parts of the City's current parks and recreation operations. Throughout this analysis, the current service provision is referred as the decentralized model. Exhibit 1 outlines the City's three main park and recreation operational categories along with the respective responsible City departments.

Exhibit 1. City of Stanwood Park and Recreation Operational Categories and Responsible City Departments

Park & Recreation Operational Category	Responsible City Department
Parks Maintenance	Public Works
Parks Planning & Development	Community Development with support from Public Works
Special Events	City Administration/Economic Development

Sources: *City of Stanwood, 2021; BERK, 2021.*

The following are brief descriptions of the three park and recreation operational categories:

- **Parks maintenance** includes the expected regular and periodic maintenance of the City’s park system, including open spaces and trails. Public Works is also responsible for scheduling park facilities for private and public use. The City has eight parks with around 86 acres of parkland; three of those parks are developed and account for about 70% of the total parkland (around 60 acres). The vast majority of current park maintenance activities are in the three developed parks. The City has around 2.5 miles in trail miles, of which 2 miles are outside park boundaries and 0.5 miles are located in Heritage Park.
- **Parks planning and development** refers to activities such as park master planning, facilities design, permitting, community engagement, grant preparation, capital project planning construction management, long-range planning, etc. These activities are performed by a mix of the City’s community development staff as well as engineering technicians in the City’s Public Works department. Other activities undertaken by community development staff around park planning include managing and coordinating the City’s Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (PTAC), a volunteer board of area residents who advise the City Council.
- **Special events** refers to the coordination and permitting of special events around the City as well as managing the City’s tourism and marketing initiative known as Discover Stanwood Camano. Activities include working with event organizers on event applications and submittals as well as coordinating across City functions for necessary services (e.g., barricades, seating, supplies, etc.). Current special events include the Snow Goose Festival, Glass Quest, Light up Your Holidays, Touch a Truck, National Night Out, Movies in the Park, 4th of July Parade, as well as various concerts and festivals among others.

Recreation programming

refers to services such as athletic leagues, arts & culture classes, environmental education programs, fitness classes, after-school programs, childcare, summer camps, etc.

Coordinating and operating recreation programming is a common component of park and recreation service models.

The City does not conduct any recreational programming activities.

Current state descriptions reflect that the City is providing parks services, such as park maintenance and development, as well as scheduling for park facilities, but not recreation programming.

Currently, the City only offers parks services, referring to maintaining and developing its park system and facilities, and supporting special events as part of its park and recreation operations. Recreation programming is another common component of park and recreation service models; as of 2021, the City does not conduct any recreational programming activities.

Current Staffing

Identifying staffing of the City's current parks and recreation service model is challenging since most relevant City staff are not purely dedicated to parks and recreation operations. For all but one staff member, parks and recreation operations represent one of several different responsibilities. For example, the City currently provides park maintenance services through a pool of five full-time maintenance technicians supplemented with seasonal staff; staff also maintain streets, drainage, and buildings alongside parks. These staff shift duties among these responsibilities as needed to meet daily maintenance requirements.

Using assumptions based on interviews with City staff in the spring of 2021 and review of City budget documents, we estimated the portion of staff time for relevant staff that was dedicated to parks and recreation operations for the City's current service model. Exhibit 2 outlines the City's estimated staffing for parks and recreation operations as of 2021.

Exhibit 2. City of Stanwood Parks Staffing by Function and City Department, 2021 Budgeted

Parks Maintenance <i>Public Works (PW)</i>		Parks Planning & Development <i>Community Development (CD)</i>		Special Events <i>City Administration</i>	
Position Title	FTE	Position Title	FTE	Position Title	FTE
PW Director	0.15	CD Director	0.25	City Administrator	0.10
Asst. PW Director/City Engineer	0.15	Senior Planner	0.56	Admin. Assistant	0.20
Admin. Assistant	0.15	Engineering Technician	0.18		
PW Lead	0.33				
PW Tech II	0.66				
PW Tech I	0.66				
Seasonal Temp	0.31				
TOTAL (3.71 FTEs)	2.41		0.99		0.30

Note: The City has made a commitment to fund a new full-time PW Tech 1 position dedicated entirely to parks maintenance; however, the City has not filled the position at the time of this report and this position is not included in the table above. The estimated FTE for the City's engineering technician position is based on the portion of the City's 2021-2026 devoted to parks capital projects. Position titles are current as of the summer of 2021.

Source: City of Stanwood, 2021; BERK, 2021.

As of 2021, the City allocates an estimated 3.7 FTEs to various parks and recreation operations annually. As mentioned above, among all positions listed above, only the part-time Senior Planner for parks planning services is primarily dedicated to parks and recreation operations. Through interviews with City staff, staff indicated that a lack of dedicated staffing resources for park and recreation operations is the primary challenge in expanding activities or services in all three park operational categories.

As a note, after our discussions with staff in the spring of 2021, the City committed to hiring a full-time dedicated parks maintenance technician; however, this position has not yet been hired as of the writing of this report.

Spending

We estimated annual expenditures for parks and recreation operations for the City of Stanwood based on interviews with City staff in the spring of 2021 and review of City budget documents. See Exhibit 3 below for more detail.

Exhibit 3. City of Stanwood Parks Operations Estimated Annual Spending, 2021 Budgeted

Function/Cost Category	Cost (2021\$)
Parks Maintenance	\$307,000
Labor	\$253,000
Supplies & Operating Costs	\$47,000
Professional Services	\$7,000
Parks Planning & Development	\$157,000
Labor	\$119,000
Supplies & Operating Costs	\$6,000
Professional Services	\$32,000
Special Events	\$103,000
Labor	\$40,000
Supplies & Operating Costs	\$23,000
Professional Services	\$40,000
TOTAL	\$567,000

Note: The City has made a commitment to fund a full-time PW Tech 1 position dedicated entirely to parks maintenance, however, the City has not yet filled the position at the time of this report and this position is not included in the table above.

Source: City of Stanwood, 2021; BERK, 2021.

As of 2021, the City is estimated to spend around \$567,000 on annual parks and recreation operations. This represents around 9.5% of the City's budgeted General Fund spending for 2021, which was projected at around \$5.9 million.

Current Park Maintenance Service Standards

The City does not have written standards or schedules for park maintenance. Based on interviews with staff, primary park maintenance activities include mowing, herbicide, irrigation, ballfield maintenance, restroom maintenance, and playground maintenance. Mowing is the City's most frequent and labor-intensive park maintenance activity with the City's three developed parks mowed twice a week during the peak season (March through October) and once a week during off-peak season (November through February).

Peer Benchmarking

To provide context to the City's current parks and recreation operations, the City's parks and recreation service model was compared against peer jurisdictions around the Puget Sound region. Two subsets of peer jurisdictions were selected:

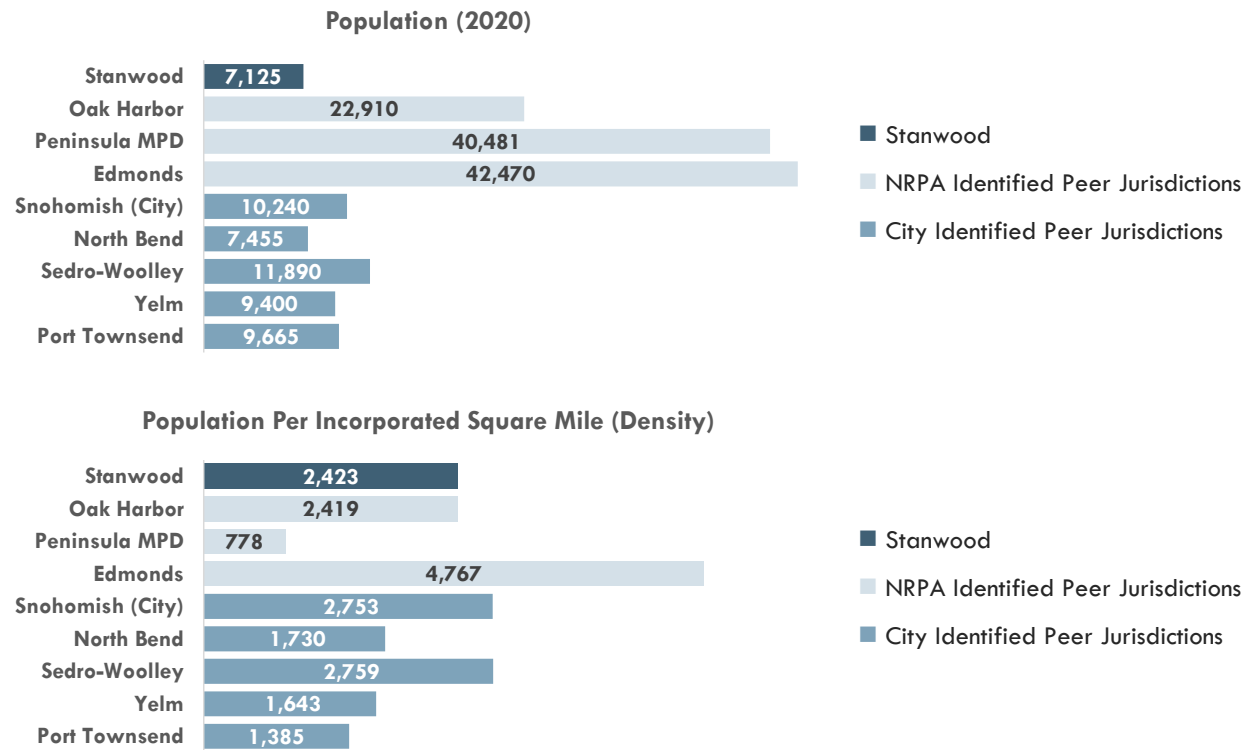
- Jurisdictions identified through the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics database based on size of park system and population: cities of Oak Harbor, Edmonds, and Port Townsend along with the Peninsula Metropolitan Parks District
- Jurisdictions identified in collaboration with City staff due to similar population size and proximity: cities of Snohomish, North Bend, Sedro-Woolley, Port Townsend, and Yelm

Burlington often gets mentioned as a comparison to Stanwood due to proximity and relatively similar population size. However, Burlington was not included as a peer comparison due to significant differences in sales tax base relative to Stanwood. Based on 2019 information, Burlington's taxable retail sales and use collections were over three times the size of Stanwood's taxable retail sales and use collections, on a per capita basis. Burlington's park department has an annual operating budget over twice the size of Stanwood's estimated annual parks and recreation spending, on a per capita basis. Likely due to greater available revenues, Burlington has a dedicated parks and recreation department, unlike Stanwood and most peer jurisdictions.

Background Information

This section compares peer jurisdictions with Stanwood in terms of population size and population density as shown in Exhibit 4.

Exhibit 4. Peer Benchmarking Background Information



Sources: NRPA, 2021; City of Stanwood, 2021; City of Snohomish, 2021; City of North Bend, 2021; City of Sedro-Woolley, 2021; City of Yelm, 2021; City of Port Townsend, 2021; BERK, 2021.

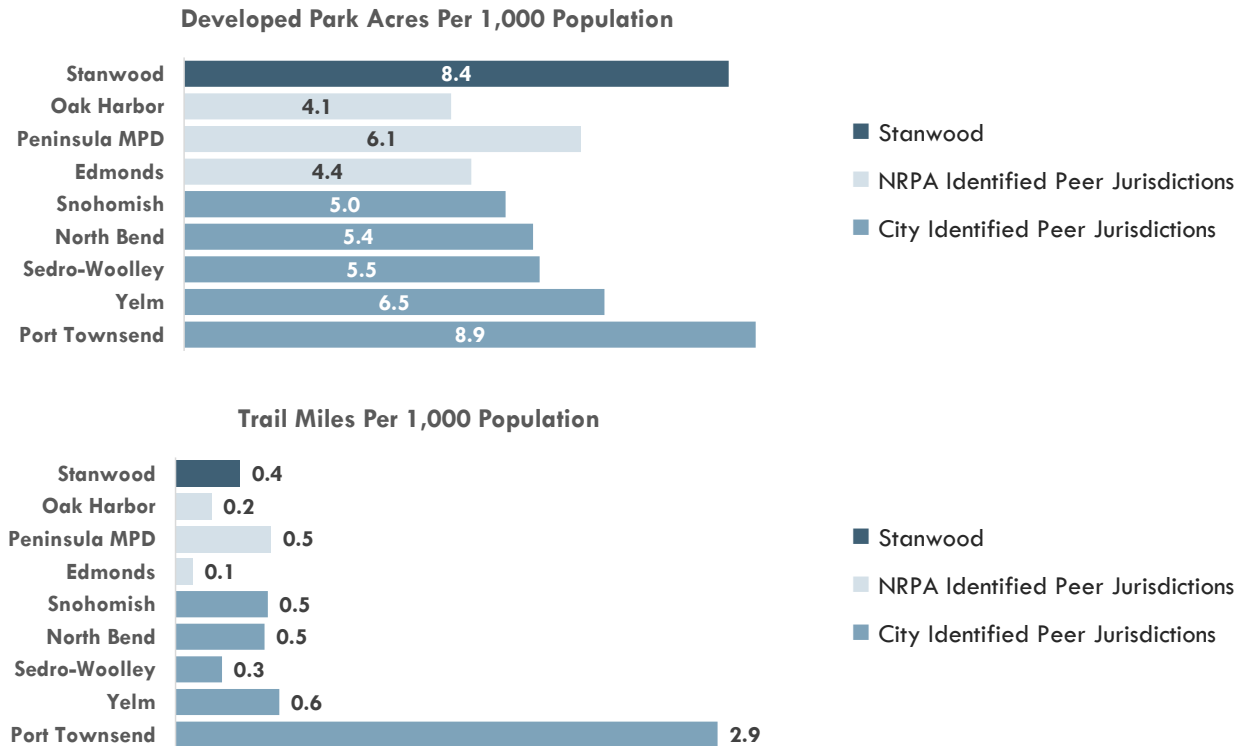
While Stanwood has a citywide population of around 7,125, its park system services the greater Stanwood-Camano community, which is estimated to be up to around 37,800. As a result, beyond jurisdictions with similar population size, some larger jurisdictions such as Edmonds and the Peninsula MPD were also chosen for comparison.

In terms of population density, Stanwood is near the middle of the pack with the 4th highest population density out of the nine jurisdictions shown above.

Park and Trails Inventory

This section compares peer jurisdictions and Stanwood in terms of the size of each jurisdiction's park and trail system as shown in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5. Peer Benchmarking Inventory Information



Sources: NRPA, 2021; City of Stanwood, 2021; City of Snohomish, 2021; City of North Bend, 2021; City of Sedro-Woolley, 2021; City of Yelm, 2021; City of Port Townsend, 2021; BERK, 2021.

Stanwood has a high number of developed acres per capita relative to peers, being 2nd highest among comparison jurisdictions after Port Townsend. Stanwood also has an average-sized trail system based on trail miles per capita relative to peers.

Recreational Programming

This section compares peer jurisdictions and Stanwood in terms of recreation programming offered as shown in Exhibit 6.

Exhibit 6. Peer Benchmarking Recreation Programming Offerings

Name	Population	Recreation Programming	Health/Wellness Education	Fitness Enhancement Classes	Team Sports	Social Recreation Events	Cultural Crafts	Performing/Visual Arts	Themed Special Events*	Notes
Stanwood	7,125	No								
Oak Harbor	22,910	No**								
Peninsula MPD	40,481	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Formerly leased a indoor soccer center; developing a new community center
Edmonds	42,470	Yes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Operates a recreation center and a pool
Snohomish (City)	10,240	No								
North Bend	7,455	No**								
Sedro-Woolley	11,890	No								
Yelm	9,400	No								
Port Townsend	9,665	Yes		✓	✓	✓			✓	Operates an indoor aquatic center

Note: *Themed special events are not well-defined by NRPA; likely are not the same as the City's large-scale special events but special events specific to parks. **These jurisdictions are within parks districts that offer recreation programming; residents within these cities have access to recreation programming that are not offered by each city itself but a separate representational government.

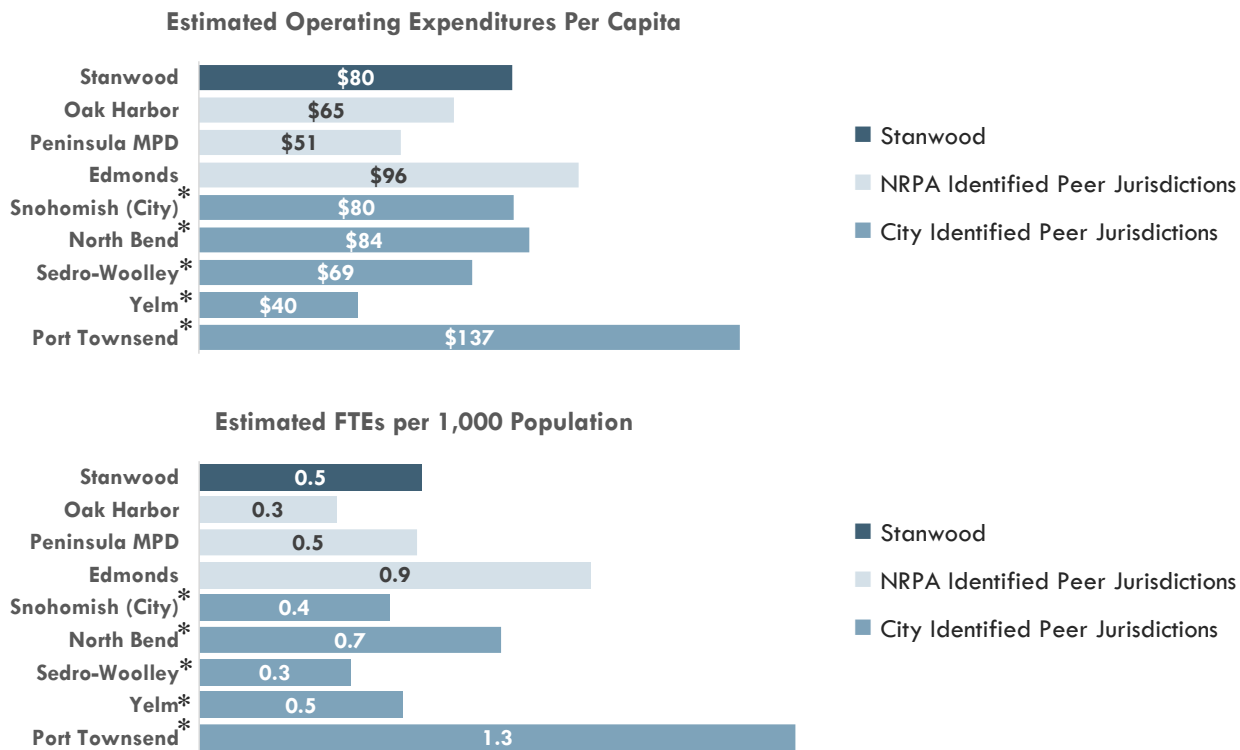
Sources: NRPA, 2021; City of Stanwood, 2021; City of Snohomish, 2021; City of North Bend, 2021; City of Sedro-Woolley, 2021; City of Yelm, 2021; City of Port Townsend, 2021; BERK, 2021.

As noted earlier, Stanwood does not have any existing recreational programming offerings. Of the nine peer jurisdictions, only three offer recreation programming with all of them operated out of facilities owned or leased by the respective jurisdiction. Team sports, fitness classes, and social recreation/themed special events are the most offered recreation programming offering type.

Staffing and Spending

This section compares peer jurisdictions and Stanwood in terms of the amount of staffing and spending as shown in Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7. Peer Benchmarking Staffing and Expenditure Information



Notes: * Costs and FTE counts for these jurisdictions are based on park maintenance and recreation services and do not include parks planning services costs and FTE counts which are difficult to isolate using budget information

Sources: NRPA, 2021; City of Stanwood, 2021; City of Snohomish, 2021; City of North Bend, 2021; City of Sedro-Woolley, 2021; City of Yelm, 2021; City of Port Townsend, 2021; BERK, 2021.

Stanwood is in the middle of the pack among peer jurisdictions in both annual spending per capita as well as staffing per capita. However, it should be noted that for the peer jurisdictions it is difficult to confirm that staffing and spending numbers include costs and services such as parks planning and special events. In particular, costs and FTE counts for city-identified peer jurisdictions are based solely on park maintenance and recreation services given the difficulty in isolating those costs using budget information. As a result, we would expect higher actual staffing and spending numbers for those jurisdictions than shown above.

Service Models

This section categorizes each of the peer jurisdictions along with Stanwood into various parks and recreation service models as shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8. Peer Benchmarking Service Provision Models

Decentralized	Department	Regional (District)
Stanwood City of Snohomish Sedro-Woolley Yelm North Bend* Oak Harbor*	 Port Townsend** Edmonds	Peninsula MPD North Bend* Oak Harbor*

Note: * Both North Bend and Oak Harbor are within parks districts that offer recreation programming; residents within these cities have access to recreation programming that are not offered by each city itself but a separate representational government. The city governments of North Bend and Oak Harbor use a decentralized parks and recreation service provision. ** Port Townsend is moving to a decentralized model after budget cuts during COVID and staff changes.

Source: NRPA, 2021; City of Stanwood, 2021; City of Snohomish, 2021; City of North Bend, 2021; City of Sedro-Woolley, 2021; City of Yelm, 2021; City of Port Townsend, 2021; BERK, 2021.

A decentralized service model refers to a jurisdiction without a dedicated parks and recreation department with multiple city departments responsible for discrete pieces of parks and recreation service provision. A department service model refers to jurisdictions with a dedicated parks and recreation department. A regional or district service model refers to jurisdictions that have formed a metropolitan park district (MPD) or park and recreation district for the provision of parks and recreation services.

Not all jurisdictions fit neatly into the three categories outlined above. The cities of North Bend and Oak Harbor are within park districts, the Si View MPD and the North Whidbey Park and Recreation District, respectively, which residents benefit from, however, the cities themselves operate using decentralized parks and recreation service models. Additionally, Port Townsend has historically had a parks and recreation department; however, due to recent budget cuts and staffing changes has now shifted to a decentralized service model.

In general, most peer jurisdictions operate using a decentralized model, particularly those with a similar total population size to Stanwood (i.e., the city identified peer jurisdictions such as Sedro-Woolley, North Bend, Snohomish, Port Townsend, and Yelm).

Interview Findings

To provide more context to the benchmarking findings, BERK spoke with staff from the cities of Snohomish, North Bend, and Sedro-Woolley. BERK reached out to staff at the cities of Port Townsend and Yelm and were unable to schedule an interview.

Based on interviews with staff from jurisdictions similar in population size to Stanwood, the following major themes emerged. These cities:

- **Do not have dedicated parks departments;** parks maintenance is done by public works staff while parks planning is typically done by planning staff in coordination with public works staff
- **Do not offer recreation programming**
- **Have a majority of special events run by outside organizations** with permitting services from the City
- **Described themselves as struggling with a lack of resources relative to needs;** most jurisdictions had either 1-3 dedicated parks maintenance staff supplemented by seasonal labor or had a pooled approach to parks maintenance similar to Stanwood where maintenance staff and seasonal labor are partially dedicated to parks among other responsibilities

BERK also asked peer jurisdictions about their future plans for parks and recreation operations. The following themes emerged:

- Multiple jurisdictions indicated that forming a parks department has been planned for in the past but had to be postponed due to budget constraints or that studies are intended in the future to explore
- Two jurisdictions indicated considering hiring a recreation coordinator focused on scheduling and sports leagues as a partial step towards a parks department

Community Priorities

Background

Prior to the work conducted as part of this study, the City had conducted considerable work engaging the community around its general vision for parks and recreation in the City. In 2019, a community survey found that the respondents placed a high priority on future parks and recreation planning, specifically around developing new trails, improving existing trails, developing new waterfront parks, and improving existing waterfront parks.

In 2016, the City Council formed a volunteer board, the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (PTAC), to guide the strategic direction of the City's park system and operations. The PTAC has been a strong advocate for the hiring of parks director and the formation of a dedicated park and recreation department.

Stakeholder Engagement Findings

Building off the previous work done around understanding the community's vision for the City park and recreation services, BERK conducted meetings with members of the PTAC, Economic Development Board (EDB), and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Group. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Group was convened for this study to provide recommendations and guidance to City Council. Membership consists of stakeholders across the greater Stanwood Camano area including elected officials, members from the PTAC and EDB, representatives from community groups such as the Historical Society and Arts Advisory Group, and business owners.

These meetings were conducted to surface the community's specific desires and priorities around the role of parks and recreation programming, facilities, and amenities in Stanwood. Across all groups, the following common desires were stated :

- **Tournament-ready ballfields**
- **Increased signage and wayfinding around the City**
- **Improved trails and walkability**
- **Increased parking capacity and improved parking maintenance**
- **Increased park development and planning**

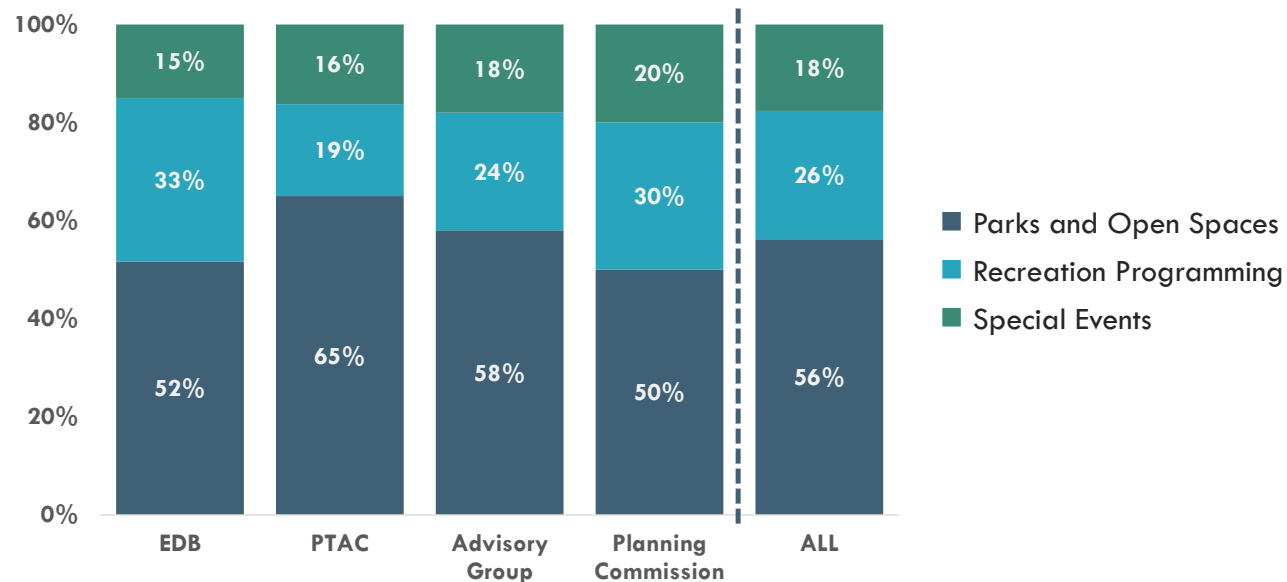
There was a general desire across the engaged groups of wanting to make the City park system more of a destination for residents and visitors alike. While recreational programming and special events were specifically included as discussion topics during meetings, neither was identified as a priority. The priorities above focus on improving the City's park system.

Based on stakeholder feedback, **recreational programming is a secondary priority** that should be developed after existing parks are improved and maintenance standards are increased. Similarly, feedback around the City's role in special events was that **the City should focus on supporting special events held by community groups** rather than on organizing additional City-sponsored events.

Resource Allocation

As part of engagement for this project, members of the PTAC, EDB, Planning Commission, and Advisory Group were asked to complete a short exercise in how they would choose to allocate \$100 among parks and open spaces, recreation programming, and special events. Results from this exercise are shown in Exhibit 9, averaged into percentages.

Exhibit 9. Stakeholder Allocation Exercise Results



Sources: BERK, 2021.

Most respondents indicated a desire to concentrate resources in parks and open spaces, with respondents across all groups indicating they would allocate an average of 56% of resources towards parks and open spaces. Respondents who added comments to their submissions indicated that they viewed parks and open spaces as the prerequisite for growth in recreation programming and special events. **These findings align with discussion feedback that the City’s park system should be the main focus with recreational programming and special events being secondary concerns.**

Recommended Path Forward

BERK collaborated with City staff to develop a recommended path forward toward meeting the identified priorities and expanding the City's parks and recreation service model, building on all of the inputs and findings described above.

There has been consistent feedback from some stakeholders, such as the City's PTAC, for the City to form a dedicated parks and recreation department and to hire a parks department director. Based on findings from stakeholder engagement, this desire may stem from the community's priorities of improving park maintenance, enhancing park development and planning, and improving communication with residents and local partners.

Given resource constraints facing Stanwood and jurisdictions of similar size, we suggest a phased approach towards expanding and improving the City's parks and recreation service model that can be scaled up over time to meet the needs of the community as it grows. The intention of the approach detailed below is to provide the City with a roadmap for creating a dedicated parks and recreation department while addressing community priorities in the short term.

As an immediate step, we recommend that the City increase coordination among existing staff who provide park-related services including parks maintenance, planning, capital project management, and scheduling by forming a parks team.

As the City's park system and services expand and as resources permit, we have also identified major milestones that should guide the City as it moves towards a dedicated parks department over time. Exhibit 10 details this phased approach and provides potential milestones the City should consider when determining when to scale up its park and recreation services and operations. It should be noted that these milestones are not intended to be clear trigger points for City decisionmakers to follow but are meant to serve as considerations for City decisionmakers as they balance competing desires and demands across all City services and operations.

Exhibit 10. City of Stanwood Recommended Phasing Plan for Parks and Recreation Services, 2021\$

City of Stanwood				Separate Parks District
Current	Parks Team	Parks & Rec. Supervisor	Parks & Rec. Department	Parks District
Level of Service Current Service Level Current LOS	Level of Service Service Level 1 Improved park and ballfield maintenance Improved communication with public	Level of Service Service Level 2 Coordinating recreation programming More cohesive approach to park development, programming, budgeting, and strategic planning	Level of Service Service Level 3 Operating recreation programming and facilities Expanded park and ballfield maintenance	Level of Service Service Levels 1 -3 Parks districts can operate at a variety of service levels
Description Decentralized Services split between City departments	Milestones Dedicated staff for park services Centralized (e.g., Public Works)	Milestones Staff supervision needs Recreational programming coordination Budget & strategic planning needs	Milestones Operating recreational programming and facilities Other programming and activities needs (e.g., special events, partnerships) Park system expansion	Milestones City is unable to dedicate sufficient funds Service demands from outside the City outpace City-resident demand
Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.2M*	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.2M-\$1.4M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.7M-\$2.1M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$2.3M-\$2.7M	

Note: *Estimated costs for the current level of service assumes that the City has filled the full-time PW parks technician position that it has budgeted for 2022.
 Sources: City of Stanwood, 2022; BERK, 2022.



Short-Term Phase: Parks Team

In the short-term, we recommend that the City increase coordination among existing staff involved in parks and recreation services. The City identified forming a Parks Team as an initial approach to facilitate coordination.

Existing staff include public works maintenance and engineering technicians who provide park maintenance and park capital facilities design and construction management respectively; a senior planner who provides park planning services; and an administrative assistant who provides park scheduling services.

Exhibit 11 outlines the general approach of staff included in the formation of a Parks Team at the City and associated parks related responsibilities. The Parks Team will consist of both staff entirely dedicated to parks services as well as staff that are only partially dedicated to providing parks services.

Exhibit 11. Parks Team Approach and Responsibilities



Parks Team

Park Manager

Team lead & point of contact
Parks planning
Permitting
Budgeting

PW Engineering Technicians*

Engineering design
Bidding and contracting
Construction management

PW Maintenance Technicians*

Park and ballfield maintenance and inspections

PW Administrative Assistant*

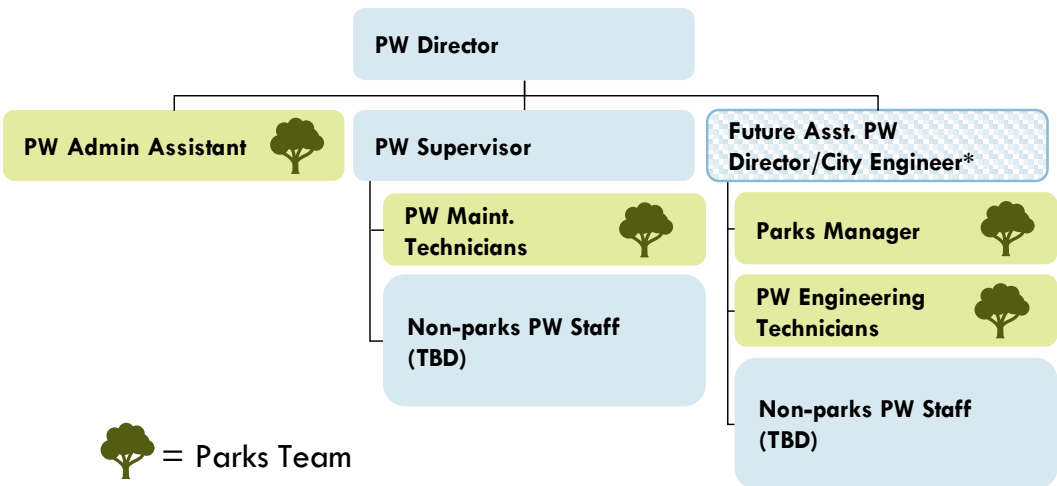
Ballfield and shelter scheduling

*Note: * These positions include staff that are only partially dedicated to providing parks services. The City has budgeted for a dedicated park maintenance technician position which will it is looking to fill in the next biennium.*

Sources: City of Stanwood, 2021-2022; BERK, 2021-2022.

The City has suggested that the Parks Team be housed in the City's Public Works Department and be incorporated into the department's existing organizational structure – see Exhibit 12 for more detail. Of the identified community priorities detailed on page 15, increasing park maintenance levels and enhancing park development via increased coordination can be addressed immediately. Given that Public Works oversees maintenance and collaborates with planning staff on park planning and development, we agree with the City's suggestion of Public Works housing the Parks Team.

Exhibit 12. Parks Team Approach within PW Organizational Structure



*Note: The Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer position title has not been determined at the time of this report.
Sources: City of Stanwood, 2022; BERK, 2022.*

The Parks Manager position under this approach is not intended to serve in a supervisory role for the other positions in the Parks Team – the team will be supervised by a proposed Assistant PW Director/City Engineer position. As a note, the title of the proposed Assistant PW Director/City Engineer position has not been determined at the time of this report. Positions such as maintenance technicians, engineering technicians, and the administrative assistant that are partially dedicated to parks services should continue to be supervised and managed as is currently done within the PW Department for their non-parks related responsibilities. These positions will only be supervised by the proposed Assistant PW Director/City Engineer position for their parks related responsibilities.

In summary, our recommendation to form a Parks Team includes the following actions:

Organizational Structure and Staffing Actions

- **Move all Parks Team staff into the Public Works department** under the direction of the Public Works Director and **co-locate all Parks Team staff in the Public Works facilities building**. This will help improve coordination and collaboration among City staff and allow for a more cohesive approach to parks services, from planning and development to operations and maintenance. This can also allow for easier monitoring of parks service needs for City staff as well as decisionmakers.
- **Reclassify the part-time Senior Planner into a Parks Manager position**. As part of the reclassification process, the City will need to identify the position's roles and responsibilities, consider the time needed to complete those duties, and make any changes to FTE, which is currently 0.56 FTE. Duties already identified for the Parks Manager include leading the Parks Team in weekly meetings to discuss parks-related issues, tasks, and projects. The position will also serve as the City's liaison with the PTAC and collaborate with the Community Development department on parks-related planning and permitting services and with Finance department on parks-related budgeting and capital project planning.
- **Establish an email and phone number for the Parks Team** to provide the community with a direct communication line to parks services at the City. The City has identified the Parks Manager position as the lead for monitoring and responding to communications received by the Parks Team email and phone number.

Training and Capacity Building Actions

To better communicate expectations and increase maintenance standards, we recommend that the City also engage in the following actions to train existing staff and build the City's capacity in park maintenance:

- **Develop an operations and maintenance manual** that includes a weekly, monthly and yearly maintenance schedule based on level of service standard derived from industry best practices.
- **Conduct a seasonal needs assessment** to determine total seasonal hours needed.
- **Train the Public Works Parks Team** on turf and park maintenance best management practices. This could include hiring a consultant or identifying appropriate trainings.
- **Inventory needed equipment and purchase/rent equipment** based on maintaining fields at tournament-ready condition.

Investing in the training and capacity building actions above will help the City begin to better understand the tasks necessary to maintain its parks at a higher level of service and identify staffing and equipment needs to allocate resources efficiently and effectively.

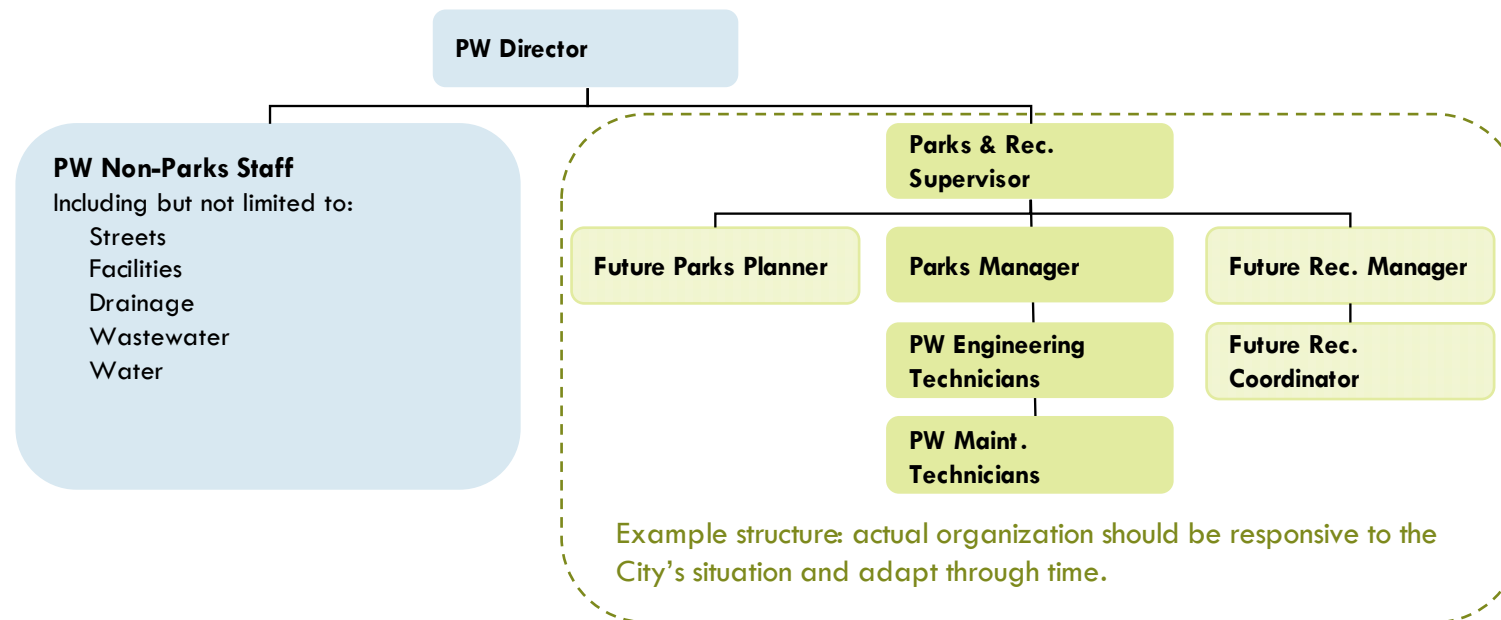


Medium-Term Phase: Parks and Recreation Supervisor

The Parks Team approach will provide the City with a foundation for scaling up park services as the community grows. It is anticipated that the Parks Team phase will focus on addressing the primary community priorities of increasing park maintenance levels and enhancing park development. As those priorities are addressed, the next significant increase in park service levels is likely to include focusing on secondary priorities such as providing recreational programming and holding park-specific special events.

The City would likely be well served by hiring a dedicated parks and recreation supervisor to provide these additional services. The Parks and Recreation Supervisor would focus on managing and expanding existing park services as well as developing new recreation programming to meet community needs. As an intermediate step, this position can be located within the Public Works Department per Exhibit 13.

Exhibit 13. Parks and Rec. Supervisor Approach within PW Organizational Structure



Sources: City of Stanwood, 2022; BERK, 2022.

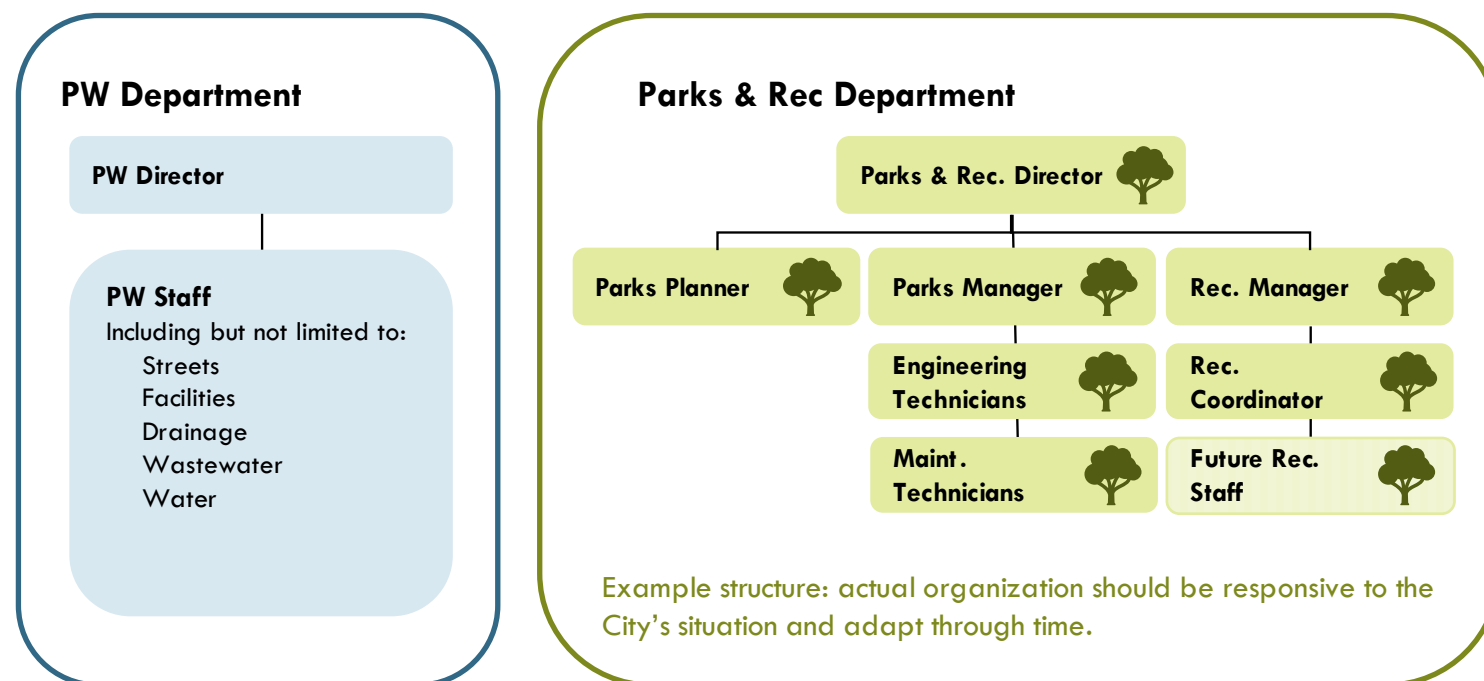
This approach includes the possibility of hiring additional staff beyond the Parks and Recreation Supervisor such as a dedicated Principal Parks Planner and building out the City's recreational programming staff by hiring a recreation manager and/or a recreation coordinator. This approach may also allow the City to free up capacity of existing staff; for example, park scheduling duties could get shifted to recreation programming staff while supervision of the Parks Team would likely shift from the proposed Asst. PW Director/City Engineer to the Supervisor.



Long-Term Phase: Parks and Recreation Department

As the City's park system and recreation programming grows, the Parks and Recreation Supervisor approach can be transformed into a Parks and Recreation Department at the City, headed by a Parks and Recreation Director position as shown in Exhibit 14. Potential milestones that indicate scaling up to a Parks Department may be warranted include ownership and operation of recreation facilities such as a community center and or growth of the City's park system to the point where a dedicated crew of full-time park technicians is required.

Exhibit 14. Parks and Recreation Department Approach Organizational Structure



Sources: City of Stanwood, 2022; BERK, 2022.

Estimated Costs for Recommended Phasing

For each of the three phases of our recommended approach, we estimated costs to the City on a biennial basis as shown in Exhibit 15. Costs are presented as a range for each of the three phases given that staffing and resource needs will likely evolve over time within each phase. As positions are added to the City's park and recreation operations under each phase and the City's capacity increases it is assumed that these positions can free up capacity for certain existing staff positions to focus on non-parks related services. For example, positions providing supervision under the City's current model may no longer be needed as the City hires a Parks and Recreation Supervisor.

Exhibit 15. Costs for Recommended Phasing Plan for Park and Recreation Services, 2021\$

	Current	Parks Team		Parks and Rec. Supervisor		Parks and Rec. Department	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Staffing							
Park Administration FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Rec. Programming FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	2.0	3.0
Park Maintenance FTEs	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	4.0	5.0
Park Planning & Dev. FTEs	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	2.2	2.2	2.2
Special Events FTEs	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total FTEs	4.7	4.7	5.2	6.1	8.0	9.5	11.5
Biennial Costs							
Est. Labor Costs	\$914,000	\$914,000	\$1,026,000	\$1,326,000	\$1,634,000	\$1,756,000	\$2,106,000
Est. Supplies & Operating Costs	\$170,000	\$170,000	\$176,000	\$196,000	\$216,000	\$224,000	\$272,000
Est. Professional Services Costs	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$188,000	\$222,000	\$270,000	\$280,000	\$314,000
Est. Total Costs (2021\$)	\$1,244,000	\$1,244,000	\$1,390,000	\$1,744,000	\$2,120,000	\$2,260,000	\$2,692,000
Est. Costs Above Current (2021\$)	+\$0	+\$0	+\$146,000	+\$500,000	+\$876,000	+\$1,016,000	+\$1,448,000

Note: *Estimated costs for the current level of service assumes that the City has filled the full-time PW parks technician position that it has budgeted for 2022.

Sources: City of Stanwood, 2022; BERK, 2022

On a total cost biennial basis, we estimate that the Parks Team phase will cost between \$1.2 and \$1.4 million, the Parks and Recreation Supervisor phase will cost between \$1.7 and \$2.1 million, and the Parks Department phase will cost between \$2.3 and \$2.7 million. On a biennial basis, implementing the Parks Team phase would either not increase current spending, or increase it as much as \$150K above current levels. The Parks and Recreation Supervisor phase would cost from between \$500K to \$900K above current levels, and the Parks and Recreation Department phase would cost from between \$1.0 million to \$1.5 million more than current levels.

Park and Recreation District Options

The City may consider forming a park and recreation district if the City is unable to generate or dedicate sufficient revenues to fund the expansion of the City's park and recreation operations or if service demands from residents outside the City are outpacing City resident demands. Washington State law authorizes four types of park and recreation districts:

- Park and recreation districts
- Joint park and recreation districts
- Park and recreation service areas
- Metropolitan park districts

Generally, the four district types have similar purposes and powers. For example, all four:

- Generate base revenues from property tax levies;
- Can issue general obligation debt to fund capital projects;
- Are empowered to charge fees for services; and,
- Can levy additional taxes.

Relative to the other park and recreation districts, Metropolitan Park Districts (MPDs) have a higher base levy rate, up to \$0.75 per \$1,000 AV compared with \$0.60 per \$1,000 AV, and the levy is permanent, which might explain why MPDs have become more common. Both park and recreation district types and park and recreation service areas have 6-year property tax levies. Based on 2021 assessed values for the City of Stanwood, a MPD formed around the City's boundaries would generate a maximum of around **\$850,000** in annual revenue while a park and recreation district option formed around the City's boundaries would generate a maximum of around **\$680,000** in annual revenue. MPDs and parks and recreation service areas have higher debt ceilings relative to the two park and recreation district types (2.5% of assessed value versus 1.25% of assessed value).

Additional considerations for the City in evaluating park and recreation district options are the geographic boundaries of the districts and the implications for revenue generation as well as implementation. For example, a district could be formed with boundaries greater than the City limits, such as the boundaries of the Stanwood-Camano School District, which could generate higher revenues and a larger tax base than a district based on the City's boundaries. However, this option would also see a greater complexity in governance and administration for implementation and would require the City to share control over park and recreation operations and services. Forming a district based on City's boundaries would offer the City easier implementation but less potential for revenue generation. As an example, based on 2021 assessed values, an MPD formed around the Stanwood-Camano School District could generate a maximum of around **\$6,200,000** in annual revenue while a MPD formed around the City's boundaries would generate a maximum of around **\$850,000** in annual revenue

Parks and Recreation Service Model Study

**Briefing on Findings and
Recommended Approach**

Study Overview

- Evaluation of current state
- Community priorities through stakeholder engagement
- Recommended path forward

Evaluation of Current State

Stanwood

- Currently provides parks services through a decentralized model (i.e., various parks services are provided by different City departments)

Park & Recreation Operational Category	Responsible City Department
Parks Maintenance	Public Works
Parks Planning & Development	Community Development with support from Public Works
Special Events	City Administration/Community Development/Economic Development

- Does not currently have full-time staff dedicated to parks
- Does not have written park maintenance standards and schedules
- Does not currently provide any recreational programming (i.e., athletic leagues, classes, camps, etc.)

Evaluation of Current State

Similar peer jurisdictions (Snohomish, Sedro-Woolley, North Bend)

- **Also operate through decentralized models** (i.e., park maintenance with Public Works and park planning with Planning department)
- **Do not offer recreation programming with special events run by outside organizations** (supported by the City through permitting, coordination, etc.)
- **Described themselves as struggling with a lack of resources relative to needs**, most jurisdictions had either 1-3 dedicated parks maintenance staff supplemented by seasonal labor or had a pooled approach to parks maintenance similar to Stanwood where maintenance staff and seasonal labor are partially dedicated to parks among other responsibilities
- Multiple jurisdictions indicated that forming a parks department has been planned for in the past but had to be postponed due to budget constraints or that studies are intended in the future to explore

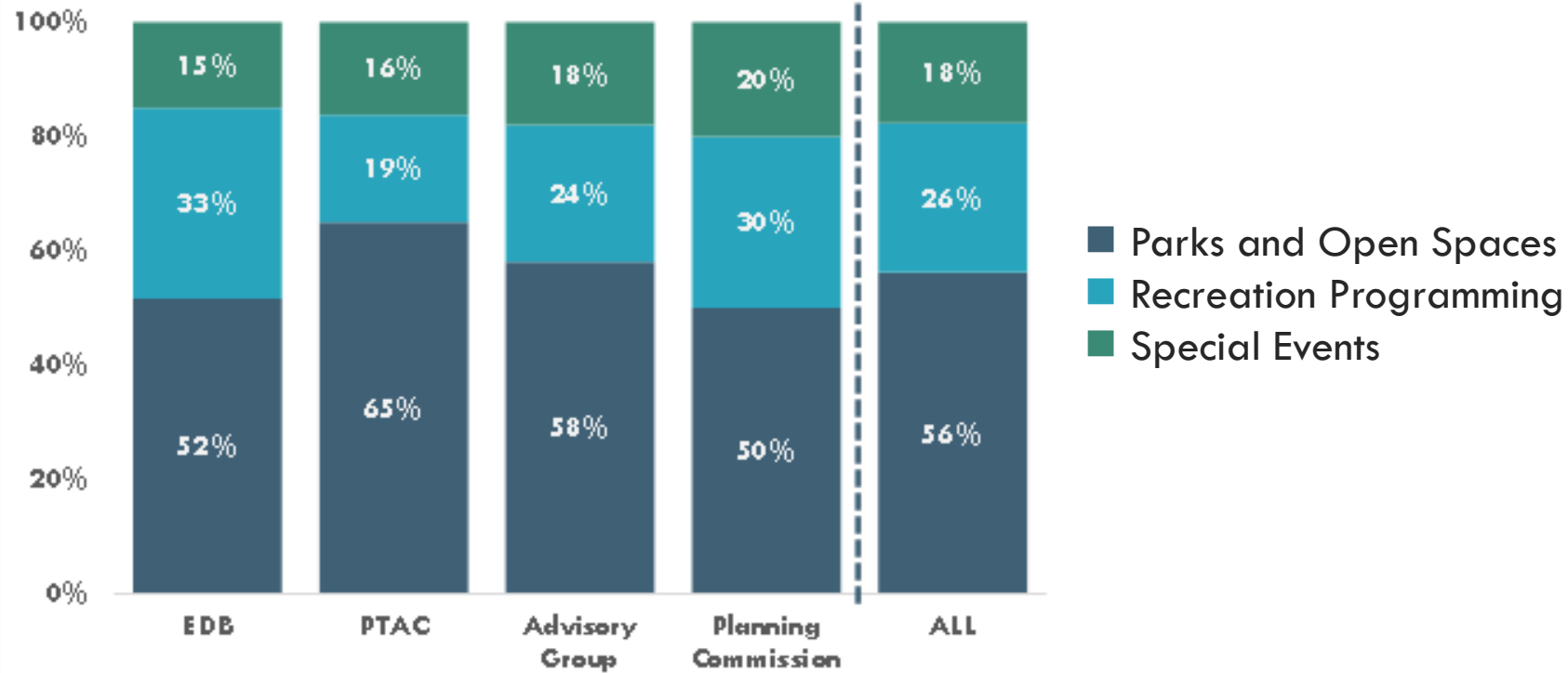
Community Priorities

Across stakeholder groups, the following common desires were stated:

- Tournament-ready ballfields
- Increased signage and wayfinding around the City
- Improved trails and walkability
- Increased parking capacity and improved parking maintenance
- Increased park development and planning

There was a general desire across the engaged groups of wanting to make the City park system more of a destination for residents and visitors alike. **Recreation programming and special events were identified as secondary priorities that should be focused on after existing parks are improved and maintenance standards increased.**

Community Priorities



- Respondents who added comments indicated that they viewed parks and open spaces as the prerequisite for growth in recreation programming and special events.
- **These findings align with discussion feedback that the City's park system should be the main focus with recreational programming and special events being secondary concerns.**

Recommended Path Forward

- Phased approach over short-, medium, and long-term given resource constraints
- Roadmap toward creating a Parks and Recreation Department while immediately addressing community priorities of:
 - **Improving park maintenance,**
 - **Enhancing park development and planning**
 - **Improving communication with community and local partners**

City of Stanwood

Separate Parks District

Current	Parks Team	Parks & Rec. Supervisor	Parks & Rec. Department
Level of Service <i>Current Service Level</i> Current LOS	Level of Service <i>Service Level 1</i> - Improved park and ballfield maintenance - Improved communication with public	Level of Service <i>Service Level 2</i> - Coordinating recreation programming - More cohesive approach to park development, programming, budgeting, and strategic planning	Level of Service <i>Service Level 3</i> - Operating recreation programming and facilities - Expanded park and ballfield maintenance
Description - Decentralized - Services split between City departments	Milestones - Dedicated staff for park services - Centralized (e.g., Public Works)	Milestones - Staff supervision needs - Recreational programming coordination - Budget & strategic planning needs	Milestones - Operating recreational programming and facilities - Other programming and activities needs (e.g., special events, partnerships) - Park system expansion
Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.2M*	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.2M-\$1.4M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$1.7M-\$2.1M	Est. Biennial Cost (2021\$) \$2.3M-\$2.7M

Parks District

Level of Service

Service Levels 1-3

- Parks districts can operate at a variety of service levels

Short-Term: Parks Team



Parks Team

Park Manager

- *Team lead & point of contact*
- *Parks planning*
- *Permitting*
- *Budgeting*

PW Engineering Technicians*

- *Engineering design*
- *Bidding and contracting*
- *Construction management*

PW Maintenance Technicians*

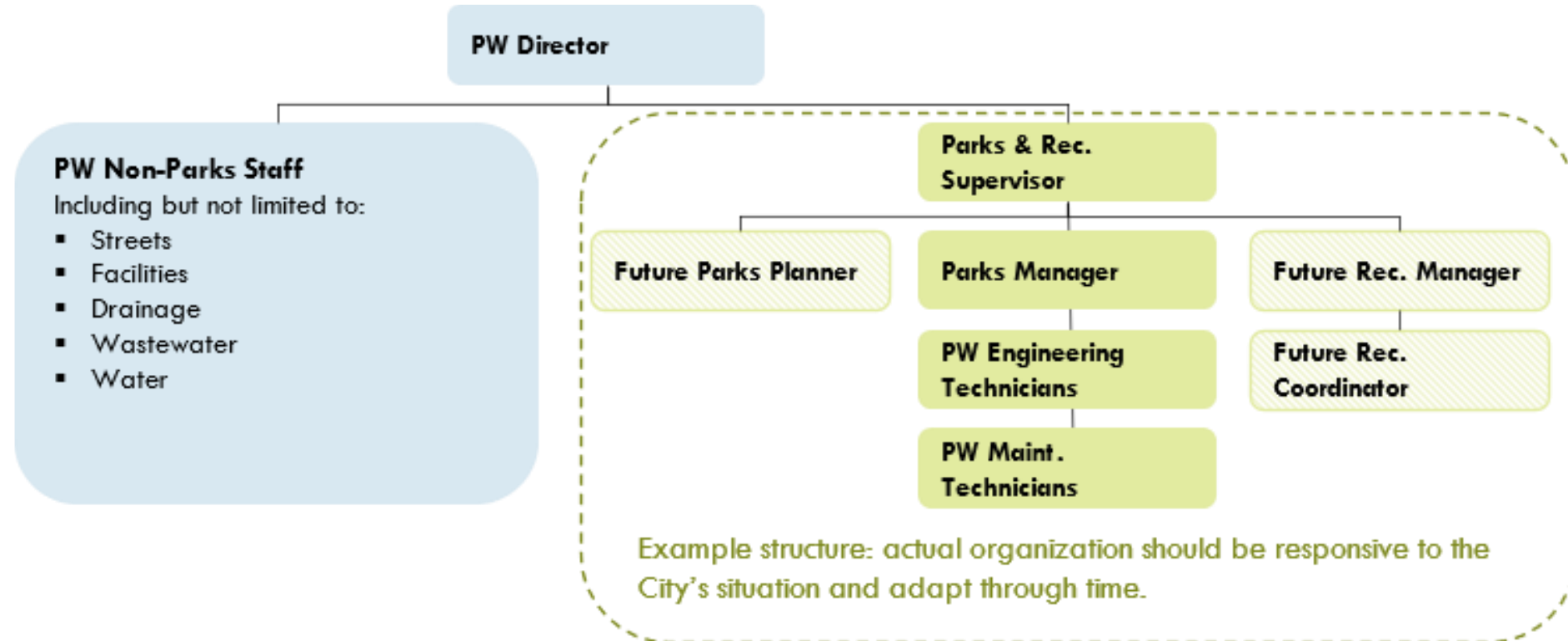
- *Park and ballfield maintenance and inspections*

PW Administrative Assistant*

- *Ballfield and shelter scheduling*

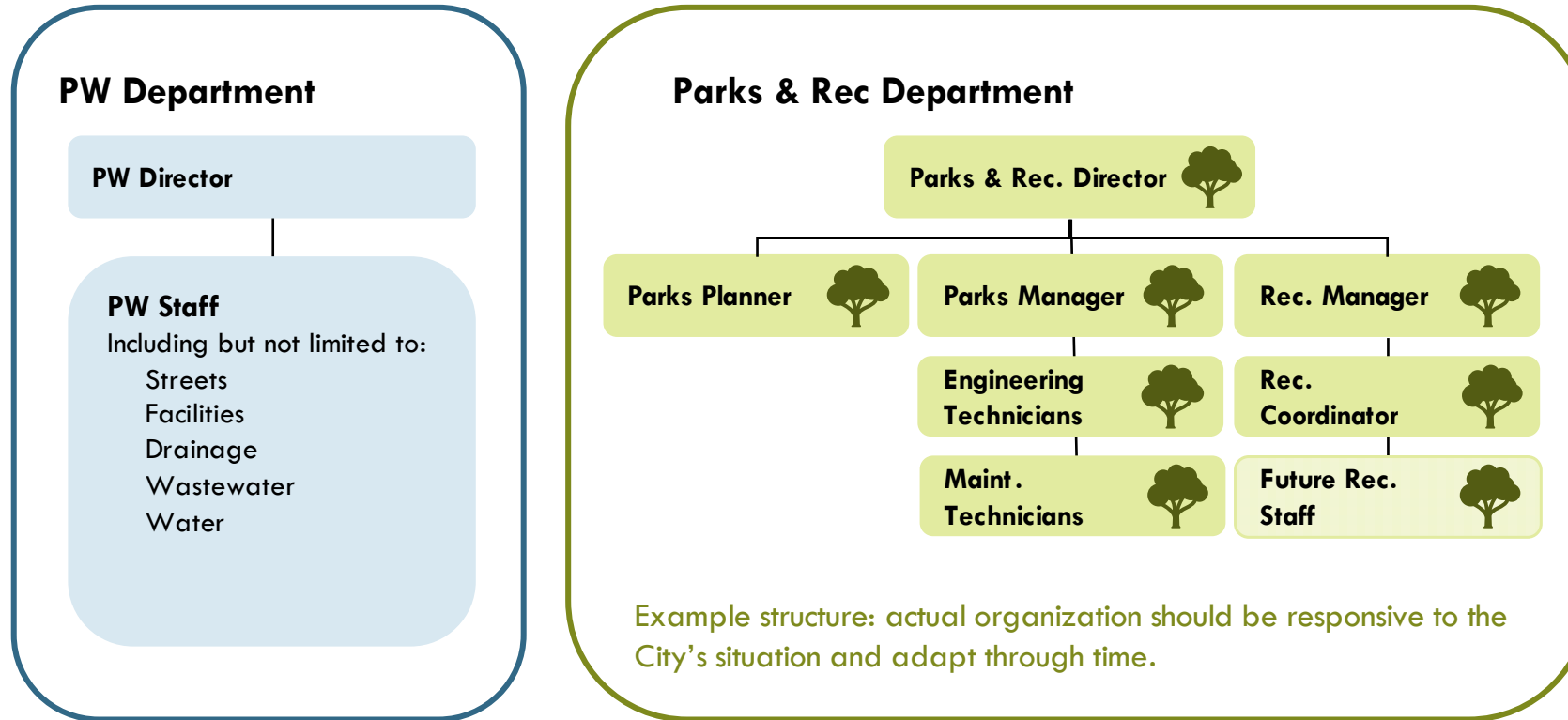
- Centralize Parks Team staff in Public Works
- Establish email and phone number for Parks Team
- Reclassify Senior Planner to Park Manager and hire full-time dedicated park maintenance technician
- Develop park maintenance manual and train park maintenance staff on ballfield and park maintenance best practices

Medium-Term: Parks and Recreation Supervisor



- Begin focusing on secondary priorities such as providing recreational programming and holding park-specific special events
- Build foundation for a dedicated parks and recreation department

Long-Term: Parks and Recreation Department



- Need for dedicated parks department once City begins employing multiple teams fully dedicated to parks services, such as recreation programming and park maintenance
- Provides framework and organization to allow the City's parks system and services to scale along with needs of community

Estimated Operational Costs for Recommended Phasing

	Current	Parks Team		Parks and Rec. Supervisor		Parks and Rec. Department	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Staffing							
Park Administration FTEs	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
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Est. Costs Above Current (2021\$)	+\$0	+\$0	+\$146,000	+\$500,000	+\$876,000	+\$1,016,000	+\$1,448,000

- Estimated costs above current levels on a biennial basis are:
 - Parks Team: \$0 - \$146K
 - Parks and Recreation Supervisor: \$500K - \$876K
 - Parks and Recreation Department: \$1.0M - \$1.5M

Park and Recreation District Options

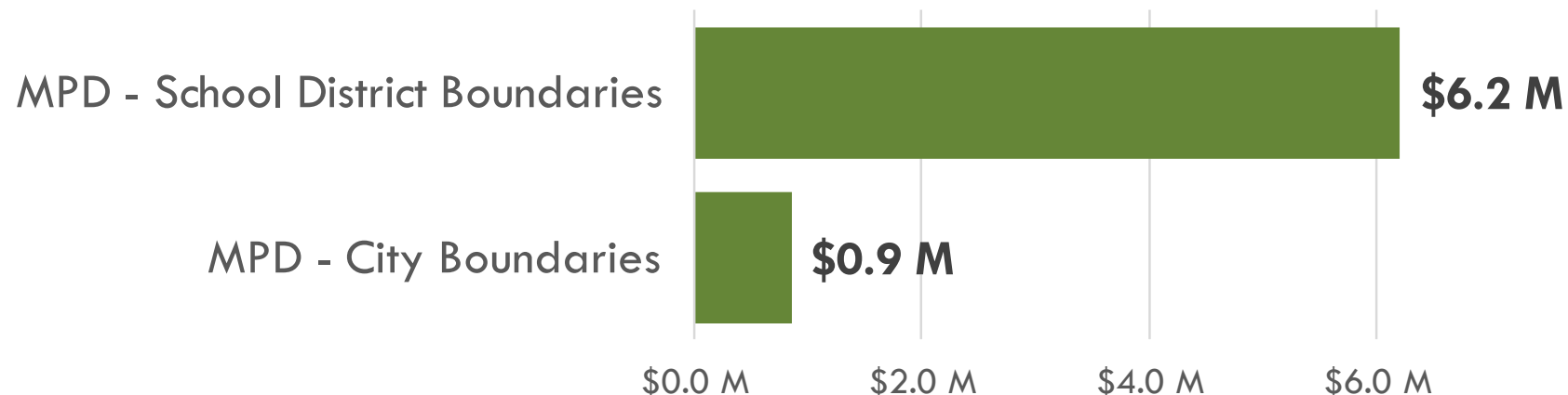
Types

- **Park and recreation districts** – max levy of \$0.60/\$1,000AV with duration of six years
- **Joint park and recreation districts** – max levy of \$0.60/\$1,000AV with duration of six years
- **Park and recreation service areas** - max levy of \$0.60/\$1,000AV with duration of six years
- **Metropolitan park districts** – max levy of \$0.75/\$1,000AV and is permanent

Geographic boundary implication

- City boundaries – more control, less revenues
- Stanwood-Camano Island School District boundaries – less control, higher revenue generation

MPD annual estimated maximum revenue, based on 2021 AV



Comments from Community Development Committee, EDB, and PTAC

Community Development Committee Themes

- Support phased approach and suggest Council consider moving to Service Level 2 quickly – possibly in 2022
- Would like to see a timeline for when the City would/could increase service levels

EDB Themes

- Support immediate implementation of Service Level 1
- Support developing written maintenance standards and schedules with clear expectations
- Emphasized importance of leadership support and clear transition plan for scaling up operations
- Concern about regional park district and funds flowing out of the City with consideration of user fees as alternative

PTAC Themes

- Support immediate implementation of Service Level 1 and quickly moving to Service Level 2 by 2023
- Emphasized importance of hiring right skillset for supervisor position to fit in with existing team and City's needs
- Emphasized importance of written maintenance standards and understanding equipment needs with cost estimates
- Provide budget recommendations with Service Level 2 in 2023 to Council

Advisory Committee Themes

- Support immediate implementation of Service Level 1 and assessing supervisor/city engineer position needs
- Support moving to Service Level 2 as soon as possible, with a target of the 2023/2024 budget
- Emphasized importance of continuing to fund capital projects and supporting special events
- Would like to see a timeline for how the City would scale to parks department
- Concern around how scaling to Service Level 1 and beyond, including equipment needs, will be funded by the City



CITY OF STANWOOD COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT

ITEM NUMBER: 2

DATE: March 10, 2022

SUBJECT: American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)

CONTACT PERSON: David Hammond, Finance Director

ATTACHMENTS: A – Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker
B – Government Finance Officers Assn. ARPA Guiding Principles
C – Potential List of Uses
D – NCFE Request for ARPA Funds

Reference: [Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Overview of the Final Rule \(treasury.gov\)](#)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this special meeting workshop item is for Council discussion regarding the use of the ARPA funds.

BACKGROUND

The ARPA provided cities and towns \$65.1 billion in direct and flexible federal funds. The first half of the allocated funding was received by the City of Stanwood at the end of June 2021 in the amount of \$1,018,070. These funds are part of ARPA program titled, "Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds." The US Department of Treasury issued its Final Rule on the use of these funds in January, which has an effective date of April 1, 2022. Under the Final Rule, cities may use a standard allowance in lieu of the formula prescribed by the Interim Final Rule. By this rule, all of Stanwood's ARPA funding is considered revenue replacement, thus can be used for any governmental purpose.

Attachment A provides a useful overview of how other local governments have allocated these resources. When considering which projects to assign this ARPA windfall, staff also recommends the City Council consider the ARPA guiding principles prepared by the Government Finance Officers Association (a summary of these principles is included as Attachment B).

Staff has developed a list of potential projects for council consideration that adhere to these principles (See Attachment C). Note that some of these projects are already included in the current budget or partially funded in the budget.

In November 2021, the city council authorized design and construction of a removable flood wall in an amount not to exceed \$564,000 and designated as an ARPA project. This project is underway and is currently in the design phase. Thus, the remaining ARPA funds from the first installment of is \$523,600. The City also received a request for financial support from North County Regional Fire Authority from the City's ARPA funds (See Attachment C).

Staff considered whether to use these funds to provide premium pay for essential workers, both city staff and others in the community, as this would be an authorized use. However, this did not rise to the top in consideration for the following reasons. First, the impact of the pandemic currently appears to be abating. Second, it would be difficult to define who in our community should be included. The city has many essential workers who were unable to work remotely, including many city employees. In the end, staff considers the attached list of potential investments more valuable to the community than providing premium pay to individuals.

Local Government ARPA Investment Tracker

A Partnership of



Note: Within this interactive tracker, users can select search filters below—including by location and type of expenditure—or search through the map, to find detailed information on large city and county plans for deploying American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)'s State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund dollars.

This tracker was last updated on February 23rd, 2022 and contains project data from Recovery Plans submitted by local governments to the Department of the Treasury on August 31st, 2021. This tracker will be updated as more information becomes available

of Local Governments

152

of Projects

2334

Total \$ Tracked

\$18.4bn

% of Funding Budgeted

48.6%

National Sample Average ⓘ

GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS

37.9%

INFRASTRUCTURE

12.1%

HOUSING

12.7%

ECONOMIC &
WORKFORCE DEV

10.5%

COMMUNITY AID

12.3%

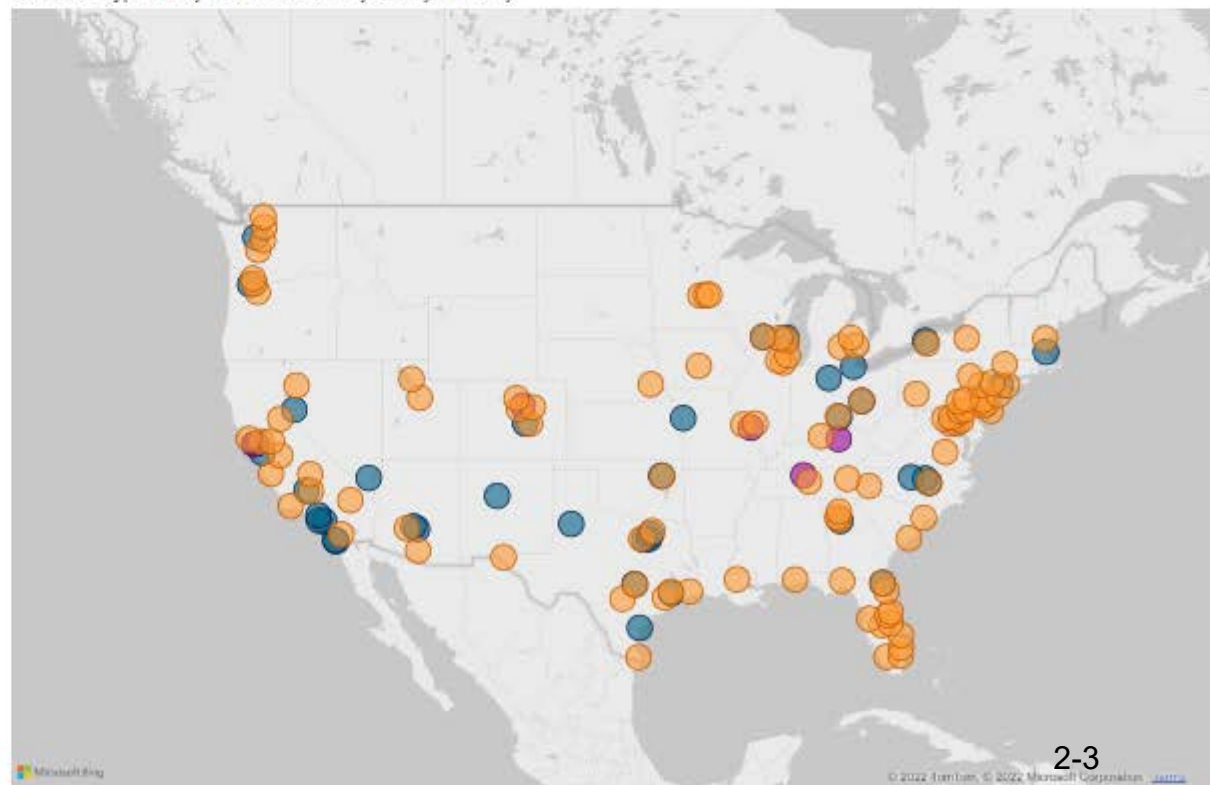
PUBLIC SAFETY

2.3%

PUBLIC HEALTH

12.2%

Local Gov Type ● City ● Consolidated City-County ● County



Summary of Government Finance Officer's Association-ARPA Funds Guiding Principles

Temporary Nature of ARPA Funds. ARPA funds are non-recurring so their use should be applied primarily to non-recurring expenditures.

- Care should be taken to avoid creating new programs or add-ons to existing programs that require an ongoing financial commitment.
- Use of ARPA funds to cover operating deficits caused by COVID-19 should be considered temporary and additional budget restraint may be necessary to achieve/maintain structural balance in future budgets.
- Investment in critical infrastructure is particularly well-suited use of ARPA funds because it is a non-recurring expenditure that can be targeted to strategically important long- term assets that provide benefits over many years. However, care should be taken to assess any on-going operating costs that may be associated with the project.

ARPA Scanning and Partnering Efforts. State and local jurisdictions should be aware of plans for ARPA funding throughout their communities.

- Local jurisdictions should be cognizant of state-level ARPA efforts, especially regarding infrastructure, potential enhancements of state funding resources, and existing or new state law requirements.
- Consider regional initiatives, including partnering with other ARPA recipients. It is possible there are many beneficiaries of ARPA funding within your community, such as schools, transportation agencies and local economic development authorities. Be sure to understand what they are planning and augment their efforts; alternatively, creating cooperative spending plans to enhance the structural financial condition of your community.

Take Time and Careful Consideration. ARPA funds will be issued in two tranches to local governments. Throughout the years of outlays, and until the end of calendar year 2024, consider how the funds may be used to address rescue efforts and lead to recovery.

- Use other dedicated grants and programs first whenever possible and save ARPA funds for priorities not eligible for other federal and state assistance programs.
- Whenever possible, expenditures related to the ARPA funding should be spread over the qualifying period (through December 31, 2024) to enhance budgetary and financial stability.
- Adequate time should be taken to carefully consider all alternatives for the prudent use of ARPA funding prior to committing the resources to ensure the best use of the temporary funding.

Proposed ARPA funded Projects					
Department	Project Title	Project Description	Community Priority	Budget Estimate	Fund
Finance/IT	Budget Software	One-time implementation costs for Cleargov budgeting software. This purchase mitigates employee exposure to events like COVID-19 by establishing a telework infrastructure, improved stakeholder access, and a tool for better communication and public access to the budget and periodic status reports. It allows staff to develop budgets and financial plans remotely to minimize physical contact.	Enhance Public Engagement	\$ 5,600	Allocated
Finance/IT	Public Records Request Software	One-time implementation costs for Public Records Request Processing Software. This purchase will improve employee efficiency when processing citizen records requests by automating workflows. These requests are often made to learn about city government and also to gather information about property development. The Police Dept. processes approx. 400 requests per year, while the Clerk's Office processes about 115. Failure to comply with the Public Records Act carries significant financial penalty and this purchase will help ensure compliance with the Public Records Act.	Enhance Public Engagement	\$ 10,000	Allocated
IT/Public Works	SCADA Network Vulnerability Assessment	The Mid-Biennial Budget Amendment authorized network vulnerability assessment of the water and the wastewater Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Networks. This work is in process and early indication is that there will be the need to expend resources to remediate issues identified in the assessment. SCADA systems play important roles in very critical processes, an unchecked weakness could cause grave consequences. Upgrading and improving water and sewer infrastructure is a key area of emphasis for State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.	Protecting the Environment	\$ 50,000	Water/Sewer
City-wide	Regional Fire Authority Revenue Loss	The Regional Fire Authority (RFA) has requested assistance with the purchase of an ambulance. The RFA experienced a decline in transportation fees during the pandemic with limited ability to reduce costs of staffing the service. At the same time, the RFA had budgeted purchase of an ambulance, and was able to complete the purchase. The RFA has also requested revenue loss mitigation from Snohomish County, however the county did not provide in the first phase of ARPA funding.	Promoting Public Safety	\$ 150,000	General fund

Proposed ARPA funded Projects					
Department	Project Title	Project Description	Community Priority	Budget Estimate	Fund
City-wide	Lincoln Hill Retirement Community/Senior Center	This request comes from the Lincoln Hill Retirement Community/Senior Center, to partially replace revenue lost during the pandemic. The biggest impact has been Economic, as we have basically been “closed” and cannot hold fundraisers, rent rooms, programs fees, etc. that normally would give us income. Just our car show alone, we lost \$8000 in income. Our income has been reduced by at least \$25,000 due to covid and not being able to operate fundraisers, room rentals, had to close the Thrift Store (\$90,000 a year income).	Promoting Public Safety	\$ 25,000	General fund
Community Development	Brick Road Gateway	Expand the City Beautification budget to design and construct a gateway feature in the triangle entrance to the brick road at 270th and Camano Street (or near there). The City would work with our local landscape architect to establish project parameters for the gateway project and then use our partnership with the Stanwood Camano Arts Advocacy Commission to design and construct the feature. This would result in two gateways drawing residents and tourist off of SR 532 and into the downtown shopping district: 88th Avenue Arch currently under design and the Triangle Gateway area. The Gateway Feature will be designed so that it can be moved as needed to accommodate any future changes in the brick road.	Expand Tourism and Promoting Economic Growth	\$ 50,000	General fund
Community Development	Special Event Support	Many of the yearly special events held in Stanwood were canceled the last two years due to Covid-19. In 2021 downtown businesses gathered together to hold the Halloween and Light Up Your Holiday events and while these were very successful events, staff and Councilmembers heard that some businesses could not participate due to the financial impact Covid 19 had on their businesses. This request is to establish a small fund to help support the 2022 special events as a city contribution. City contributions would be dispersed in \$1,000 to \$2,500 amounts depending on requests showing what amenities could be added to elevate the event and participation. Funds can be used for on-site furnishings such as heaters, benches, tents, lights, or other types of equipment to enhance the public enjoyment of the event. Suggested events could include the Summer Concert Series, Light Up Your Holidays, Halloween Ghouls Night, Community Parade, and Farmers Market.	Expand Tourism and Promoting Economic Growth	\$ 10,000	General fund

Proposed ARPA funded Projects					
Department	Project Title	Project Description	Community Priority	Budget Estimate	Fund
Community Development	Event Stage and Tent	Purchase a portable stage, trailer and tent for special events such as the summer concert series, hometown holidays, touch a truck, national night out. The stage would be used by the city as well as event organizers. The existing “gypsy wagon” is reaching the end of its life span and not very useful as it is too small to accommodate some of the bands the City / Chamber would like to attract to Stanwood. The tent will cover the stage if it rains or provide shade. To help pay for the costs the city could charge a “rental fee” for special events or it could be marketed as a city contribution towards special events.	Expand Tourism and Promoting Economic Growth	\$ 30,000	General fund
Community Development	Municipal Code Update	The City has initiated the Stanwood Municipal Code Update project, which will update all 17 Titles of the Municipal Code by eliminating outdated and redundant provisions, modernizing the text in a reader friendly format and updating the code to be current with state and federal law. A request for proposals has been advertised and two firms submitted proposals; interviews to select the consulting firm took place on March 3, 2022. The Council appropriated \$200,000 for this project in the 2022 budget. Much of this work was going to be overseen by the Senior Planner. However, the City has not been able to fill this position, so additional consulting time / costs will be needed.	Enhance Public Engagement	\$ 50,000	General fund
Community Development	City Beautification Project – Power Installation	Expand the City Beautification budget to install power to city owned light and banner poles in the downtown area. The City’s holiday decorations can only be installed on city owned poles. Many of these poles do not have power capabilities for holiday decorations. Businesses and Councilmembers have requested that we upgrade the power grid in the downtown area so that we can install a lighted holiday tree and decorations along the Twin City Mile and other streets in the downtown area. This ARPA fund request along with \$50,000 in the 2022 budget for holiday decorations would be used to install the power needed.	Expand Tourism and Promoting Economic Growth	\$ 50,000	General fund
Public Works	Flashing crosswalk signs	Purchase and install pedestrian activated flashing crosswalk signs at 72nd Ave and 272nd St to allow safe crossing for citizens to access schools, shopping center and the YMCA. Currently there is only sidewalk on the east side of 72nd Avenue at this intersection. Students walking to school, citizens going to the Haggen shopping center or using the YMCA facilities cross to connect with the sidewalk on the west side. This is a high traffic area that, especially during the fall and winter months with shorter daylight hours, has been identified as a candidate for a lighted crossing.	Promoting Public Safety	\$ 15,000	Street fund

Proposed ARPA funded Projects					
Department	Project Title	Project Description	Community Priority	Budget Estimate	Fund
Public Works	Flashing crosswalk signs	With the continued and increased use of the Food Bank more citizens are crossing 102nd Avenue to the parking lot on the east side of the road. Staff would purchase and install pedestrian activated flashing crosswalk signs at 102nd Ave and 271st St to allow safe crossing for citizens using the food bank and other services. 102nd Avenue is a high traffic road and the City has received requests to provide a safer way for citizens to cross.	Promoting Public Safety	\$ 15,000	Street fund
Clerk	Digitization of Building Permits	This request is to support the digitization of building permit files. The city currently maintains eighty-two boxes of building permit files. These records are required to be maintained for the life of the building plus six years. Planning for future records storage is impacted significantly by this requirement. Further, this is our most frequent record requested by the public, thus staff time involved in locating and providing these records is significant, whereas if they were digitized they would be easily located.	Enhance Public Engagement	\$ 50,000	General fund
Public Works	Physical Security Improvements	This project would fund upgrades to the physical security of the Public Works Shop, including gate access.	Protecting the Environment	\$ 25,000	Allocated
City-wide	Indirect Costs	Federal award rules allow application of ten percent administrative overhead costs to account for the costs of administering the ARPA award, including adherence to federal procurement rules and required reporting.		\$ 100,000	Allocated
			Total	\$ 635,600	
			Available	\$ 454,000	
			Excess/ (Deficit)	\$ (181,600)	



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8117 267th St NW

Stanwood, WA 98292

www.northcountyfireems.com

May 7, 2021

From: Chief, North County Regional Fire Authority

To: Mayor, City of Stanwood

Subj: AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDING APPORTIONMENT

Dear Mayor Callaghan:

The North County Regional Fire Authority requests your support in apportioning a percentage of funding that has been made available to the City of Stanwood through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), to help offset the loss of operational funding due to the negative impacts that the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on your fire department.

Fire Authority funding comes from just two primary sources of revenue: property taxes and EMS Billing. The full arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in public fear of going to the hospital for medical issues that normally would have caused them to call 911. The impact of this hesitancy by the public to use the 911 system caused the number of EMS calls to drop in 2020 by almost 15% compared to the number of EMS calls in 2019. This has had a significant negative impact on the Fire Authority's revenues received through EMS Billing, which provides roughly 20% of its revenues. With call volumes historically increasing year after year, it makes sense that the planned revenues from EMS Billing would be some dollar value more than what was received from that funding source in 2019. Instead, North County Fire's EMS Billing revenue in 2020 was over \$393,000 less than those revenues received in 2019. As a result, many planned capital improvements were unable to be realized in accordance with our strategic plan. With the pandemic likely to continue through the majority of 2021, North County Fire is facing another year of significantly reduced EMS Billing revenue; a reality that is simply out of our control.

The funding guidelines of ARPA, as you are aware, include funding to combat the negative economic impacts resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic. Direct, flexible funding has gone directly to every county and municipality in the United States, but has not trickled down further to public safety agencies. Realizing that each City department will be advocating for their own portion of the \$1.59M that the City of Stanwood has been allotted, I respectfully request that your fire department be factored in to the apportionment of those funds in a fair and equitable manner.

Your consideration of this request is much appreciated and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John C. Cermak".

John C. Cermak
Fire Chief