



Kenai City Council Work Session

May 20, 2026 – 5:00 PM

Kenai City Council Chambers

210 Fidalgo Avenue, Kenai, Alaska

www.kenai.city

**** Telephonic / Virtual Information on Page 1****

Agenda

- A. **CALL TO ORDER**
- B. **INTRODUCTION** - Terry Eubank, City Manager
- C. **DISCUSSION ITEM**
 - 1. Parks and Recreation Master Plan
 - Presentation Corvus Design, Chris Mertl & Nancey Casey
- D. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**
- E. **PUBLIC COMMENTS** (*Public comments limited to five (5) minutes per speaker*)
- F. **ADJOURNMENT**

The agenda and supporting documents are posted on the City's website at www.kenai.city. Copies of resolutions and ordinances are available at the City Clerk's Office or outside the Council Chamber prior to the meeting. For additional information, please contact the City Clerk's Office at 907-283-8231.

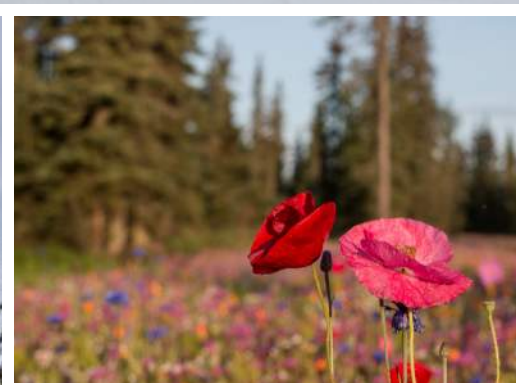
Registration is required to join the meeting remotely through Zoom. Please use the following link to register:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/GYIEt_0fSGqN5HGQIk6z0g



PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

May 7, 2026
Approved: Parks and Recreation Commission



City of Kenai

Parks and Recreation Master Plan

PREPARED FOR

City of Kenai
Parks and Recreation Department



PREPARED BY

Corvus Design



ASSISTED BY

Casey Planning and Design
ECI



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to:

- Terry Eubank, City Manager
- Christine Cunningham, Assistant to City Manager
- Tyler Best, Parks and Recreation Director
- Jenna Brown, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director
- Kevin Buettner, Planning Director
- Kenai Parks and Recreation Commission
- Kenai community members, parks and recreation user groups, and all that helped guide this master plan.

DOCUMENT DATE

May 7, 2026-Approved by Parks and Recreation Commission

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Project Overview



INTRODUCTION

The City of Kenai (City), nestled in the heart of south-central Alaska on the Kenai Peninsula, is developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan to guide the City's investment in infrastructure and recreation in support of its programming over the next twenty years.

BACKGROUND

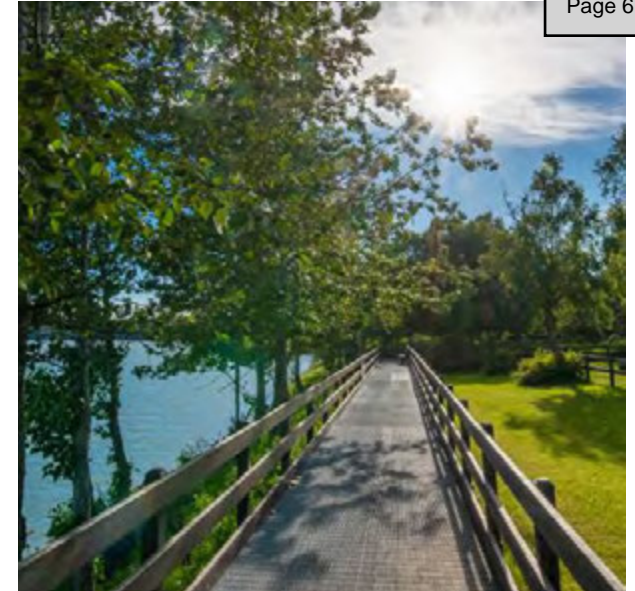
The City of Kenai Parks and Recreation (P&R) Department oversees a diverse array of parks, trails, and recreational facilities to enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors. The City maintains parks, miles of trails, and numerous open spaces and recreation facilities across the city. These range from recreation buildings, playgrounds, and sports fields to special use areas, beaches, grass strips, and wildlife-viewing areas.

The P&R Department coordinates seasonal displays, landscaping efforts, and public events, ensuring the parks remain vibrant and accessible year-round. They actively support recreation, conservation, and cultural heritage through partnerships with local organizations, volunteers, and the community.

From May to October, the P&R Department employs seasonal staff to assist with mowing, landscaping, and prepping sports fields. They transition to snow clearing, light displays, and ski trail grooming in the winter. They also manage flower displays, supported by local volunteers and vendors.

The City maintains, operates, and performs capital improvements for:

- **Two Building Facilities:** Kenai Recreation Center and Multi-Purpose Facility.
- **Fourteen Parks and Public Spaces:** Kenai Municipal Park, Millennium Square, Scenic Bluff Overlook, Beaver Creek Park, Old Town Park, Cunningham Park, 4th Avenue Park, Leif Hansen Memorial Park, Kenai Greenstrip, Kenai Community Garden, Daubenspeck Family Park, Fourth and Forest Pocket Park, Elson Family Rest Stop, and Erik Hansen Scout Park.
- **Four Playgrounds:** Located in four parks listed above, which include Municipal Park, Old Town Kenai Park, Beaver Creek Park, and Kenai Greenstrip.
- **Fourteen Developed Athletic Fields:** Kenai Little League Fields (three baseball fields and one softball field), Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park (four adult softball fields), and Kenai Sports Complex (six regulation-sized soccer fields).
- **Two Beaches and Two Wildlife Viewing areas:** North Kenai Beach, South Kenai Beach, Tarbox Wildlife Viewing Platform, and Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform.
- **Four Special Use Areas:** Kenai Skate Park, Eagle Disc Golf Course, Kenai Bark Park, and the Field of Flowers.
- **Maintained Grass Strips:** Blue Star Memorial, Airport Triangle, and main rights-of-way grass strips within the city.



Cunningham Park boardwalk

- **Eight Trail Corridors:** Daubenspeck Family Park Loop Trail, Bernie Huss Memorial Fitness Trail (Ryan's Creek Trail), Shqui Tsatnu Trail (Richka Creek), East End Trails, Lawton Drive Extension, Kenai Ski Trails, Meeks Trail, and Municipal Park Walking Trails.

There are other properties operated and managed by the City that include the Kenai Municipal Cemetery and Cemetery Expansion and the City Dock. The City also leases 120 acres of Land and Wildlife Conservation Fund encumbered land for a privately operated golf course. The P&R Department does not operate or perform capital improvements for the golf facilities. The City does maintain certain public-use areas on this land, such as ski trails, in the off-season. The City leases 10 acres to the Peninsula Oilers Baseball Club for Oiler Park, for which the City is not responsible for maintenance.

SCOPE OF PROJECT

The City of Kenai is developing a comprehensive 20-Year Parks and Recreation Master Plan. This plan will serve as a guiding document for decision-makers in planning, maintaining, developing, and rehabilitating the City’s parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will be informed by a thorough review of existing infrastructure and operations, extensive community and stakeholder engagement, and an analysis of best practices and financial considerations. The operational aspects of the Personal Use Fishery (Dip Net Fishery) are not included in the scope of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; however, supporting infrastructure will be reviewed, including parking, access points, and restrooms, and how these facilities may intersect with future park development.

The project will prioritize resident desires and needs to ensure the development and maintenance of high-quality, diverse recreational spaces, including parks, multi-use areas, facilities, and trails, within the constraints of the City’s annual budget and Capital Improvement Plan, while also exploring potential funding strategies, including grants or bond funding.

The Draft Final Kenai Trails Plan, dated November 2011, was not formally adopted by the city. Trails may be referenced in this plan, but recommendations are not made. It is anticipated that a substantial update or a new trails plan is needed.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will:

- **Chart a 20-year course** for managing and developing Kenai’s recreation, parks, and facilities through short, medium, and long-term plans.
- **Prioritize and recommend actions** to improve existing and create new park and recreation facilities.
- **Strategically sequence improvements** to maximize the benefits of parks, recreation areas, trails, and natural open spaces.
- **Use National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) metrics** to determine expected facility level of service standards while validating at the local level.
- **Actively involve the community** through surveys, meetings, and focus groups to ensure broad representation and gauge funding support.
- **Determine staffing levels** required to effectively maintain parks in accordance with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s recommendations.
- **Build on existing knowledge** by using the current park inventory and the previous open space plan.
- **Establish clear and measurable goals** to ensure the Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s objectives are achievable and trackable.



Public meeting receiving input on park needs



Kenai River with the City of Kenai and Cook Inlet in the background

CITY RECREATION ASSETS

The City’s recreation assets offer a diverse system of facilities and natural areas to support a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities year-round. The City offers year-round recreation assets that include a comprehensive system of developed facilities, such as indoor centers, sporting infrastructure, trails, and natural open areas, like parks and water-access points, prioritized for diverse public use and environmental stewardship.

Facilities

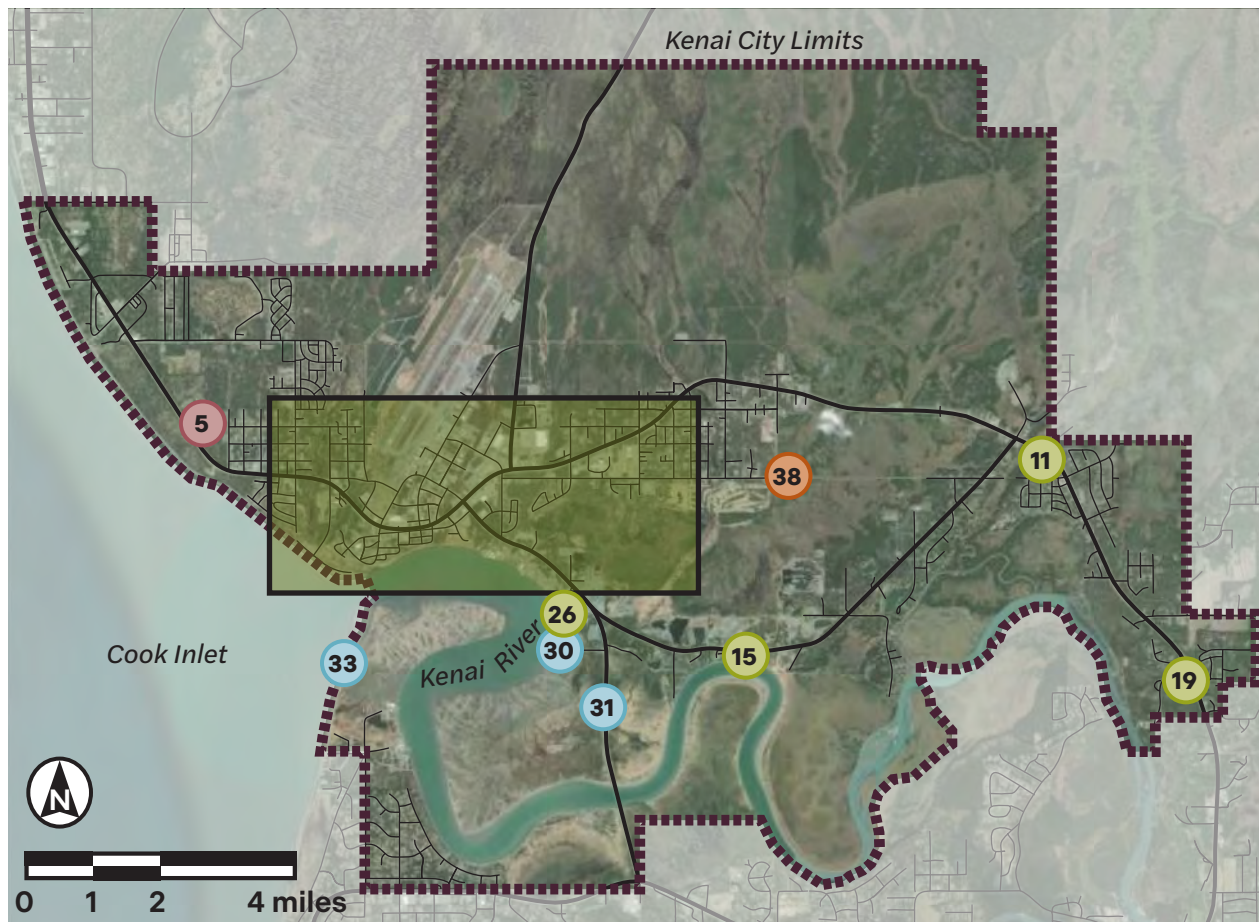
- 1 Kenai Recreation Center
- 2 Multi-Purpose Facility (Ice Rink)

Sportsfields

- 3 Kenai Little League Field
- 4 Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park
- 5 Kenai Sports Complex

Parks and Special Use

- 6 Municipal Park
- 7 Leif Hansen Memorial Park
- 8 Erik Hansen Scout Park
- 9 Kenai Historic Cabin Park
- 10 Old Town Park
- 11 Beaver Creek Park
- 12 Daubenspeck Family Park
- 13 Kenai Bark Park
- 14 4th Avenue Park
- 15 Cunningham Park
- 16 Kenai Greenstrip
- 17 Kenai Community Gardens
- 18 Kenai Skate Park
- 19 Elson Family Rest Stop
- 20 Fourth & Forest Pocket Park
- 21 Field of Flowers
- 22 Eagle Disc Golf Course
- 23 Coral Seymour Memorial Ballpark (Oiler Park)
- 24 Kenai Municipal Golf Course
- 25 Kenai Municipal Cemetery & Cemetery Expansion
- 26 Kenai City Dock



Map of Kenai and its park and recreation facilities



Enlargement of Downtown Kenai

Open Land or Natural Space

- 27 Millennium Square
- 28 Scenic Bluff Overlook
- 29 Blue Star Memorial
- 30 Tarbox Wildlife Viewing Platform
- 31 Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform
- 32 Kenai North Beach
- 33 Kenai South Beach

Trails

- 34 Daubenspeck Family Park Loop Trail
- 35 Bernie Huss Memorial Fitness Trail
- 36 Shqui Tsatnu Trail
- 37 East End Trails
- 38 Lawton Drive Extension
- 39 Kenai Ski Trails
- 40 Meeks Trail
- 41 Municipal Park Walking Trails

In addition to the assets listed, the P&R Department manages or maintains many other areas in Kenai that are not included in the recommendations for this plan beyond understanding maintenance and operations:

- Flower boxes, beds, circle planters, and light pole decorations
- Grounds at the Kenai Visitor and Cultural Center, Challenger Center of Alaska, City Dock, and other City-owned facilities.
- Street and highway rights-of-way (Willow Street, Main Street Loop, Airport Way, Granite Point, Barnacle Way, and Kenai Spur frontage from Walker Lane to Kenai Sports Complex).

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This overview highlights top policies and recommendations shaped by facility assessments, public input, best practices, and leadership insights. These guide future planning and help prioritize improvements to the City’s parks and recreation assets. A complete list of priorities is in the Implementation section of this master plan and for each listed park and recreation asset.

GENERAL POLICIES

Overview: The master plan policies streamlines public land management and operations, reduces maintenance costs, enhances user experience, and builds community partnerships.

- **Accessibility:** Ensure all facilities meet national accessibility standards. Upgrade playground safety surfaces to fully accessible and lower maintenance tiles, and replace high-traffic pedestrian use areas that are turf grass with durable, accessible, low-maintenance paved materials. Ensure all other areas are accessible.
- **Facility Consolidation:** Centralize shared-use sports fields and major gathering spaces to reduce duplicated amenities and lighten staff workload. Consolidation improves user experience and cuts maintenance and operations costs.
- **Operations and Expectations:** Maintain facilities to meet or exceed City and user expectations for safety, cleanliness, and quality. Ensure new parks meet these standards from the start.

- **Design Standards:** Use uniform signage, durable structures, and standardized furnishings to boost safety, reduce maintenance, and create a cohesive look.
- **Inspections:** Regularly inspect all playgrounds and recreation facilities, and standardize documentation for inspections and repairs
- **Shared Infrastructure:** Collaborate with schools, agencies, and local groups to support shared use, funding, and maintenance of recreation facilities used by the community.
- **Funding:** Support adequate parks and recreation funding through local sources and outside opportunities including grants and partnerships to maintaining safe, high-quality public assets and staffing.
- **Adaptive Management:** Prioritize recreation investments through adaptive management by aligning real-time community needs with diverse funding strategies and realistic staffing capacity. This approach ensures project timelines remain flexible and sustainable, allowing the City to respond effectively to shifting public priorities.

LAND MANAGEMENT

Overview: Optimize public spaces by adjusting boundaries, zoning, and land assets strategically.

- **Parks District Zoning:** Establish a “Parks District” and rezone facilities for compliance with Kenai’s updated land use code.
- **Strategic Disposals:** Evaluate disposing of underutilized park properties (e.g., 4th Avenue Park and Millennium Square) and reinvest proceeds appropriately.
- **Parcel Consolidation:** Merge subdivided underlying lots (such as the Kenai Recreation Center) to simplify future site development.
- **New Neighborhoods:** Evaluate the need and demand for parks in newer residential neighborhoods. Secure public parkland where identified as a need.

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Overview: Invest in facility upgrades that boost recreation opportunities, safety, and efficiency while replacing aging features.

- **General:** Replace or upgrade equipment, furnishings, and features that are outdated, nearing end of life cycle, or unsafe.

Priority improvements: These improvements represent those identified as higher priority projects over the next ten years.

- Old Town Park and Municipal Park playground replacements.
- Multi-Purpose Facility interior upgrades, refrigeration system replacement, and roof replacement.
- Recreation Center interior upgrades and remodel.
- Parks and Recreation Shop relocation.
- Phased park improvements at Cunningham Park, Eagle Disc Golf Course, Leif Hansen Park, Scenic Bluff Overlook, Municipal Park, Kenai Wildlife Platform, Tarbox Viewing Platform, and the Bark Park.
- Interpretive sign replacement at various parks.

RECREATION PLANNING

Overview: Use adaptive management and public input to guide short and long-term improvements and consolidation of recreation facilities.

- **Site-Specific Studies:** Conduct public master planning for major consolidated facilities like the expanded Kenai Sports Complex as an all-fields sports and athletics facility, and the Kenai Greenstrip and Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park as an expanded community event space.
- **Multi-Purpose Facility:** Assess the feasibility of enclosing the ice rink and using it for summer activities.
- **Turf Reduction Plan:** Identify high-maintenance turf areas with low use and develop strategies to reduce maintenance, including possible disposal.
- **Trails Master Plan:** Create a comprehensive plan for a connected, city-wide trail network that is aligned with this master plan and community priorities.
- **Five-Year Audits:** Reassess and adjust the master plan priorities every five years to stay aligned with community needs.

NEW FACILITIES

Overview: Recommended new parks and recreation facilities or existing assets with a significant shift in use, including those that might be guided by the recreation planning efforts identified previously:

- **Pickleball Courts:** New outdoor facilities at a location to be determined
- **Kenai Sports Complex:** Expand into the city's primary competitive sports facility by adding relocated and improved baseball and softball fields, and centralized support amenities to the existing rectangular sports fields.
- **Kenai Greenstrip and Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park:** Merge spaces after fields relocation to create an expanded and improved downtown community event and festival venue.
- **Little League Fields and Municipal Park:** Convert vacated ballfields into a seasonal campground and parking, with a linked trail network.
- **New Neighborhood or Pocket Parks:** New parks within newer residential neighborhoods, as deemed a priority by the community and City.

New funding, partnerships, or changing needs may shift these priorities or make some improvements more timely or cost-effective.



Park Metrics



PARKS & RECREATION
MASTER PLAN

BENCHMARKS

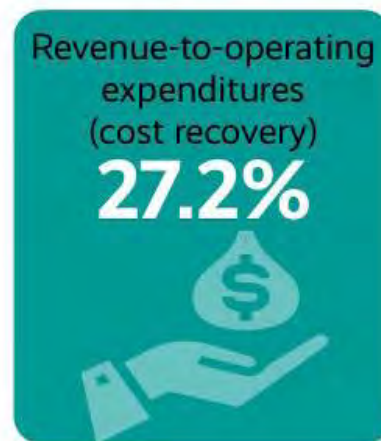
NRPA REPORTING

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is a not-for-profit organization that invests in and champions parks and recreation across the United States. Their mission is “to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people.” Through these efforts, the NRPA has developed a **2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review** from the **NRPA Park Metrics** database to provide those working in the parks and recreation industry a benchmark for facilities and programming within a community.

Level of Service (LOS) is a national standard of park types based on park size and the number of park facilities a community should offer its residents, depending on the population. The **2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review**, summarizes the national average findings for a typical parks and recreation department, and is highlighted in the infographic to the right. Note that smaller communities will yield different findings, and these represent national averages.

LEVEL OF SERVICE ASSESSMENT

The LOS assessment will use the City’s population of 7,614 to determine the LOS for various recreation facilities offered by the City of Kenai. The population is based on data from the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District. An inventory of recreation assets will not be conducted for communities adjacent to Kenai; as a result, the populations of these communities will not be included in this assessment.



2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review Key Findings, (<https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/research/2024-agency-performance-review.pdf>)

KENAI RECREATION ASSETS

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The City manages 15 developed parks, 14 athletic fields, four special-use areas, and two beaches, totalling approximately 364 acres. Additionally, the City manages two wildlife viewing areas, two recreation buildings, and numerous maintained grass strips and undeveloped public sites.

According to median numbers found in the **NRPA Park Metrics** for communities with populations of less than 20,000 and using the City’s population of 7,614, the following metrics are met:

Metric: One park per 1,001 residents or 7.6 parks.

- The City offers 31 parks and special-use areas or facilities, or one park per 246 residents.

Metric: 12.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

- The City offers approximately 47.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

At present, Kenai exceeds the national median for parks and acres of parkland; however, they are also used by surrounding communities. Additionally, Goal 6 in the 2016 City of Kenai Comprehensive Plan calls out, “Ensure that Kenai has excellent parks and recreational facilities and opportunities.” This indicates that providing recreation facilities is a priority, as reflected in the number of facilities.

OUTDOOR PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES			
Facility Type	Recommended Facilities per Population	Number in Kenai	Status
Playground (ages 5-12)	1 per 2,345	5	Met
Tot lots (ages 2-5)	1 per 5,000	2	Met
Playgrounds with inclusive structures	1 per 5,165	2	Met
Basketball Court*	1 per 4,479	4	Met
Diamond Fields	1 per 1,958	8	Met
Rectangular Fields	1 per 2,578	4	Met
Tennis Courts*	1 per 3,500	4~	Met
Dog Park	1 per 10,188	1	Met
Community Garden Plots	1 per 8,800	1	Met
Swimming Pool	1 per 9,745	2~	Met
Skate Park	1 per 10,776	1	Met
Pickleball Courts*	1 per 3,483	0	Deficit
Volleyball Courts*	1 per 7,057	1	Met
Fitness Zones+	1 per 8,274	0	Met
Multiuse Courts^	1 per 3,900	N/A	N/A
Splash Pads+	1 per 13,391	N/A	N/A
Multiuse Racquet Courts^	1 per 4,659	N/A	N/A
Walking/Running Tracks+	1 per 6,129	1~	Met
Disc golf courses	1 per 9,402	2	Met
18-hole golf courses	1 per 11,904	1	Met
Synthetic Fields+	1 per 11,028	1~	Met
Ice Rink	1 per 8,338	1	Met
Water Parks	1 per 17,125	N/A	N/A
Racquetball/Handball/Squash Courts	1 per 14,000	N/A	N/A

*Dedicated to a single sport (not multiuse). +Fitness zones/exercise stations; splash pads/spray grounds/spray showers; walking/running tracks/loops; synthetic rectangular fields. ^Multiuse courts: basketball, volleyball, etc.; Multiuse racquet courts: tennis, pickleball, etc. (excluding racquetball/handball/squash courts). ~ Public facilities managed by agencies other than the City.

CITY PARK FACILITIES

The City provides the traditional role of operating parks and related facilities, and providing recreation programming and services. Typical park and recreation agencies serving populations of less than 20,000 often operate three buildings. The City operates two buildings: the Kenai Recreation Center and the Multi-Purpose Facility.

According to the NRPA, three in five agencies have recreation centers and community centers. Other common indoor facilities include senior centers, performance amphitheatres, and nature centers. Similar facilities operate in or near Kenai and are operated by other agencies.

The table on the previous page summarizes the **2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review** recommended park and recreation facilities for communities with populations of less than 20,000. Keeping in mind that these are national standards, and that some of these facilities would not be expected in an Alaskan community, such as splash pads and water parks. Other facilities typically found outdoors are often found indoors in recreation buildings or schools to allow year-round use, including racquet courts, volleyball courts, multi-use courts, and other sports courts. These are indicated as N/A in the table.

Like many small Alaska communities, the City is not the only agency providing outdoor (and indoor) park and recreation facilities. The Kenai Peninsula Borough School District also provides park and recreation facilities that serve Kenai and the larger region. School District facilities are primarily for student use, but in the off-hours, many can be used by the community and accommodate community use in their scheduling. These major recreation facilities, managed by others, include swimming pools, synthetic fields, tennis courts, and rectangular fields. Facilities managed by agencies other than the City are indicated in the table with (~).

When including school facilities, the table to the left indicates that the City of Kenai is meeting many of the parks and facilities guidelines for a community of its size, with a deficiency of pickleball courts. New courts could be developed in partnership with the School District at existing tennis courts.



Meeks Trail



Daubenspeck Family Park

EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

The P&R Department hosts programs year-round and partners with local organizations and volunteers to provide a broader range of recreational opportunities. The City supports community-led efforts by offering space, equipment, logistical assistance, or event coordination. This collaborative approach provides greater opportunities to use public park and recreation facilities.

EVENTS

Events Operated by the City

The City of Kenai independently hosts seven events each year in Kenai including the Easter Egg Hunt, Family Free Skate, Kite Festival, Fall Pumpkin Festival, Skate with Santa, Kenai Planting Days, and the Community Clean-Up.

Events Supported by the City

The P&R Department supports the following events through logistical support or by providing supplies, staffing, promoting, or site maintenance. These events include the 4th of July Parade & Festival, Dipnet Fest, Kenai Firecracker Softball Tournament, Industry Days, Kenai Airfair, Kenai Animal Fair, Solstice Ski & Relay for Life, Solstice Run, Kenai River Marathon, Silver Salmon Derby, Elk Hoop Shoot, and the Memorial Day with American Legion Post 20.

PROGRAMS

Programs Operated by the City

The P&R Department operates the Kenai City League Basketball program, a self-officiated adult basketball league with 6-8 teams per season. Games are managed by the players themselves, with referees and scorekeepers present only during the championship game.

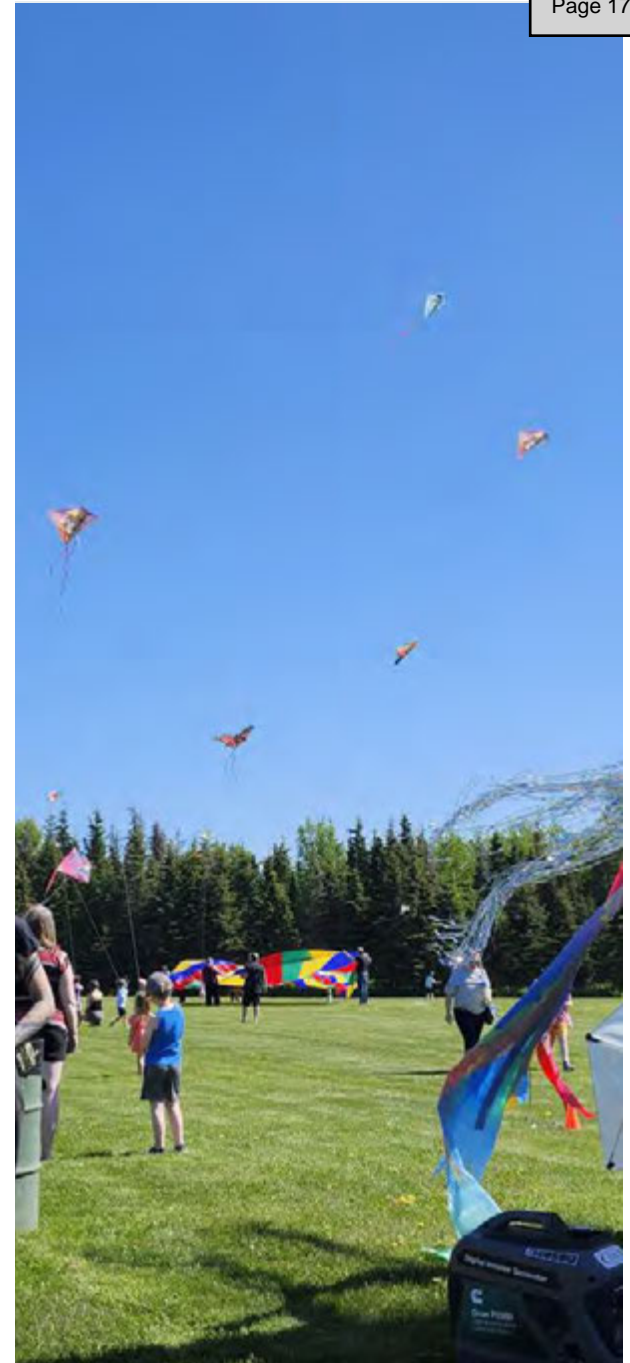
The P&R Department also operates the Community Garden Program, which allows residents to rent garden beds for personal gardening.

Shared Programs Hosted by the City

There are three programs that are hosted by the P&R Department: Indoor Youth Rugby Skills Clinic, Valentine’s Wallyball Tourney, and the Weekly Circuits with Kenai Fitness Collective.

Open Programming at the Kenai Recreation Center

These drop-in programs are unsupervised, with basic equipment and posted rules provided. All skill levels are welcome; participants are expected to rotate fairly and uphold sportsmanship. These programs include Play & Move Toddler Time, Lap Walking, Open Pickleball, Open Volleyball, Open Basketball, Open Rugby, and Open Dodgeball.



Kenai Kite Festival

STAFFING

According to the **2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review**, park and recreation agencies serving jurisdictions of fewer than 20,000 residents have a median of 13.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) on staff, or 6.0 FTEs in lower quartile jurisdictions. When looking at these numbers, it is important to note that the ratio of FTEs to residents for populations of less than 20,000 is approximately 13.7 FTEs per 10,000 residents, or 7.0 FTEs per 10,000 residents in lower quartile jurisdictions. As of 2023, the City's population was 7,614, indicating the P&R Department should have 10.4 FTEs on staff to meet the national median.

Currently, the P&R Department employs 10.79 FTEs. Although this exceeds the national standard based on population, they also manage 47.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which is more than triple the national median acreage for a community of comparable size (see page 12), supporting Kenai's staffing levels above the national standard.

Full-time staff support programming, facilities, and other services to help ensure safe, inclusive places are accessible to all community members. In Kenai, these efforts are augmented by the use of part-time and seasonal staff, which expands capacity during peak demand and supports year-round operations.

The P&R Department has the following staff numbers as of 2025:

- Five FTE on staff:
 - Director (1): Oversees the P&R Department.
 - Assistant Director (1): Directly oversees the Kenai Recreation Center and the personal use fishery.
 - P&R Maintenance Technician (2): Responsible for maintenance and landscaping duties across the department's facilities and parks.
 - Laborer (1): Supports maintenance operations.
- Six part-time staff members for the Kenai Recreation Center:
 - Part-Time Recreation Center Workers (6): Operate the Kenai Recreation Center's front desk, handle transactions, and manage facility cleaning. These staff are supervised by the Assistant Director.
- Ten seasonal staff from May to October:
 - Seasonal Maintenance Workers (10): Hired to manage increased workload during the summer months, including landscaping, mowing, trail maintenance, and other seasonal tasks.



Wallyball at the Recreation Center

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

OPERATING EXPENDITURES

Operating expenditures include personnel services and operating expenses (e.g., program expenses, utilities, maintenance, transportation), capital expenses not in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and other expenses. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 budget for the P&R Department is \$486,032 for operations and \$824,763 for personnel, for a total of \$1,310,795, with an additional \$120,000 for capital improvement projects.

Expenditures over \$35,000 are included in the City’s CIP, which Public Works prepares. A capital improvement project is generally a one-time expenditure exceeding \$35,000, with a useful life of more than one year, or a major project tied to long-range planning or development. The smaller projects under \$35,000 are submitted in February to the budget that is finalized in June.

The *NRPA 2025 Agency Performance Review* benchmarks the median annual operating budget for communities with fewer than 20,000 residents at \$1,452,000. The lower quartile benchmark for this same population range is \$665,000.

If reviewing operating expenditures per acre of park and non-park sites, the median operating expenditures for a community of less than 20,000 is \$9,512 per acre. The lower quartile budget is \$3,446 per acre for that same population range. The P&R Department operating expenditures are \$3,601 per acre based on the City’s approximately 364 acres of developed parkland. Although this total is below the national median of \$9,512 per acre, Kenai’s acreage is more than triple the national average of developed parkland (see page 12), and must be considered when applying this standard.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING

Annually, the City develops the five-year CIP in coordination with input from all City departments, the administration, advisory commissions, and the City Council, for long-range capital improvement planning and budgeting. The CIP is reviewed with all City departments, the administration, and advisory commissions, beginning in September and then brought forward to City Council for final approval. The annual budget, which captures smaller projects not included in the CIP, is finalized in June.

The City’s CIP for FY 2026-2030 budget is \$6,370,000 for parks and recreation projects. Of this, City funding will cover \$2,290,000 (35.95%), with the P&R Department needing to secure outside funding to cover the remaining \$4,080,000.

The *NRPA 2025 Agency Performance Review* benchmarks the five-year capital budget spending for communities of less than 20,000 at \$2,212,000 (median) or \$808,000 (lower quartile).



Municipal Park playground

FUNDING

Park and recreation agencies gain funding through a variety of sources. For the average agency, 63% of available funds come from general fund tax support/appropriations, 20% from earned revenue, 8% from special taxes or voter-approved levies, and 9% from other sources. In comparison, the P&R Department receives 83.7% general fund tax support/appropriations and 16.3% from earned revenue, with 0% from special taxes or voter-approved levies.

According to the **2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review**, park and recreation agencies serving populations of less than 20,000 people recover 31.1% (median) or 16.3% (lower quartile) of their annual operating expenditures from non-tax revenue. Based on the FY2024 expenses summary, 16.62% of the P&R Department expenses (\$1,192,131) were covered by revenue (\$198,110) that was generated by fees from the Kenai Recreation Center sales (\$60,014), the Multi-Purpose Facility use (\$137,816), and park rentals (\$280). Based on the NRPA benchmarks, the City meets the lower quartile targets for non-tax revenue generation.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE

All park and recreation agencies expect to have some deferred maintenance projects. This can be due to a lack of funding, time, resources, and/or available staff. For a community of less than 20,000, the median estimated cost for deferred maintenance projects is \$125,000. The P&R Department does not currently have a deferred maintenance list.



Leif Hansen Memorial Park with its flower lined pathway

PARK & RECREATION FACILITY CLASSIFICATIONS

CLASSIFICATIONS

The NRPA park classifications and radius of service (ROS) provide a flexible framework and valuable resources for communities to develop tailored park categories and service levels. Recognizing that each community is unique, these NRPA guidelines are typically adapted based on geographical, cultural, and socioeconomic factors to create a park system that best serves its residents.

Therefore, for a community like Kenai, developing effective park classifications and service levels requires a thorough assessment of its demographics, environmental conditions, existing park inventory, and the specific needs and desires of its residents. Considering Kenai’s vast natural landscapes, smaller population centers, and strong focus on outdoor recreation is critical to planning,

managing, and advocating for a park system that truly meets the diverse needs and reflects the unique identity of the Kenai community.

For each park classification, the following pages include a general description of the classification, a typical size range, ROS, and list of parks and facilities that fall within that classification. Park sizes are guidelines for park planning purposes. Many Kenai parks include large tracts of undeveloped parkland that exceed the size guidelines. The list of amenities is not meant to be prescriptive or exhaustive. The appropriate amenities for any individual park or recreation facility should be determined through a regular master planning process that involves the community it is meant to serve. All parks and facilities should be designed to serve multiple age segments and a diversity of users.

-  **REGIONAL PARK**
-  **COMMUNITY PARK**
-  **NEIGHBORHOOD PARK**
-  **POCKET PARK**
-  **SPECIAL USE PARK OR FACILITY**
-  **OPEN LAND OR NATURAL SPACE**



Municipal Park playground

REGIONAL PARK

Regional parks serve a broader region and provide diverse recreational experiences. They may include significant natural resource areas, large-scale facilities, and amenities such as hiking trails, boat launches, fishing access points, campgrounds, wildlife viewing areas, nature centers, and interpretive signage. A regional park may have sports field complexes and indoor recreation facilities (aquatic centers or gymnasiums), and have supporting facilities including covered picnic areas, playgrounds, multi-family day-use facilities, and can include educational experiences.

Currently, the City does not have a true regional park, as most existing parks serve more localized or neighborhood needs. However, with strategic investments in amenities, expanded facilities, and thoughtful development, several of Kenai’s parks have the potential to evolve into regional destinations. Enhancements such as larger recreational fields, trail connections, picnic and gathering areas, and unique attractions could broaden their appeal and serve a wider portion of the community, positioning them as significant recreational hubs for the region.



Kenai Little League Field

COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks serve several adjoining neighborhoods, attracting residents from a relatively large area. They are larger and more diverse than a neighborhood park and meet community-based recreation, athletic, and open space needs.

A community park can often include amenities found in neighborhood parks, as well as facilities for more organized activities like athletic fields, swimming pools, ice rinks, and community centers. Amenities within a community park can include park shelters or pavilions that could be rented for events, larger playgrounds, walking paths or access to trails, and picnic areas. Accessible parking should be provided, as well as indoor accessible bathrooms and site lighting.

In Kenai, community parks are larger parks that serve the whole city. They include sports fields, courts, large playgrounds, and open spaces for events and gatherings. While they may not have all the land or amenities of a regional park, they still offer plenty of space, multiple uses, and serve a large portion of the community.

Radius of Service

Up to 6.0 miles.

Kenai Community Parks

- Kenai Sports Complex (18.94 acres)
- Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park (14.48 acres)
- Kenai Little League Field (12.78 acres)
- Kenai Greenstrip (5.56 acres)
- Municipal Park (34.56 acres)
- Daubenspeck Family Park (7.09 acres)



Kenai Sports Complex



Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park



Municipal Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Neighborhood parks serve the needs of residents within walking distance of their homes and are intended to serve as a neighborhood’s recreational and social focus. They should strike a balance between passive and active recreational opportunities. Larger-sized parks tend to have a mix of developed parcels with areas for natural open space.

A neighborhood park can be developed for field or court games with open play fields, basketball courts, or other sports courts. They can also have smaller playgrounds, picnic areas, and small park shelters. They often have limited facilities and either minimal parking or on-street parking.

In Kenai, neighborhood parks serve a broader area than mini-parks and a smaller area than community parks, providing multiple uses such as playgrounds, courts, small sports fields, and multiple recreation components. They are designed to be accessible to most residents in the neighborhood, often within a short drive or walking distance, and support daily recreation for families and community members.

Radius of Service

Up to 1.0 mile.

Kenai Neighborhood Parks

- Old Town Park (1.11 acres)
- Beaver Creek Park (5.23 acres)
- 4th Avenue Park (3.75 acres)

POCKET PARK

Pocket parks provide spaces for residents to enjoy a few minutes outside and are great ways to enhance access to walkable recreational amenities, particularly on sites not suitable for other uses, such as small, irregular plots of land.

Pocket parks cater to concentrated populations and are often a part of urban regeneration efforts. They can include seating elements, public art or monuments, playgrounds, picnic areas, community gardens, or court games such as bocce or ping pong. They are often located in areas that do not require parking and are accessed by foot or bicycle.

In Kenai, several parks function as pocket parks, providing small-scale recreational spaces that serve nearby neighborhoods. These parks are typically under 5 acres and offer amenities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and open green spaces, making them ideal for short visits and informal recreation.

Radius of Service

Up to 0.5 miles

Kenai Pocket Parks

- Erik Hansen Scout Park (0.64 acres)
- Elson Family Rest Stop (0.72 acres)
- Fourth & Forest Pocket Park (0.21 acres)



Beaver Creek Park



Erik Hansen Scout Park

SPECIAL USE PARK OR FACILITY

Special use parks or facilities are unique outdoor or indoor spaces developed to serve a primary purpose that typically serve the entire community. While they provide general recreation, they don't always fit neatly into other park classifications. These facilities often focus on specific activities or interests, such as sports, dog parks, or unique outdoor experiences, while still remaining open to the broader public.

Radius of Service

Varies depending on specific use

Kenai Special Use Park or Facility

- Eagle Disc Golf Course (10.93 acres)
- Kenai Bark Park (1.57 acres)
- Leif Hansen Memorial Park (3.5 acres)
- Kenai Skate Park (0.86 acres)
- Kenai Historic Cabin Park (1.01 acres)
- Coral Seymour Memorial Ballpark (Oiler Park) (10.0 acres)
- Kenai Municipal Golf Course / Kenai Ski Trails (119.7 acres)
- Kenai Recreation Center (1.56 acres)
- Multi-Purpose Facility (7.26 acres)
- Field of Flowers (3.03 acres)
- Kenai Municipal Cemetery & Cemetery Expansion (7.13 acres)
- Kenai City Dock (12.54 acres)
- Cunningham Park (2.16 acres)
- Kenai Community Garden (1.25 acres)

OPEN LAND OR NATURAL SPACE

Open lands or natural spaces are dedicated to protecting natural resources, historic landscapes, visual beauty, and biodiversity. Alternatively, these can also be maintained as undeveloped green strips. Recreation use in these areas is often secondary and limited to passive activities such as enjoying nature, studying wildlife habitat, fishing, or hiking on trails. These are properties with few or no built amenities and are dominated by open spaces and natural features.

In Kenai, open lands and natural spaces encompass a variety of undeveloped or minimally developed areas that prioritize conservation, wildlife habitat, and passive recreation. These spaces offer residents and visitors opportunities for activities such as hiking, birdwatching, fishing, and enjoying the natural beauty of the region.

Radius of Service

Varies depending on specific use.

Kenai Open Land or Natural Space

- Millennium Square (7.08 acres)
- Tarbox Wildlife Viewing Platform
- Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform
- Scenic Bluff Overlook (4.03 acres)
- Blue Star Memorial (1.0 acres)
- North Beach (32.81 acres)
- South Beach (32.62 acres)



Kenai South Beach



Kenai North Beach



Kenai Historic Cabin Park

RADIUS OF SERVICE



North Beach access across the sand dunes

RADIUS OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

The NRPA provides a flexible system of metrics, offering a baseline that communities can adjust based on their unique characteristics. The NRPA metrics are not a one-size-fits-all approach, and applying them to Kenai highlights some limitations due to the city’s geography and connectivity via roads and bike paths.

For example, Municipal Park sits next to the ocean, meaning half of its ROS extends into the water. The NRPA standard is a 3-mile radius for community parks, and this park serves a greater range than the standard due to the fact that it is connected to multiple large neighborhoods by paved roads, sidewalks, and bike paths. Similarly, Beaver Creek Park, located on the edge of Kenai, serves a broader population through the Unity Trails network and the Kenai Spur Highway. A simple circular radius does not accurately reflect its service area.

To better represent the real ROS provided by Kenai’s parks, the city will use the NRPA framework but double the standard ROS after careful review.

For the most part, the community is well served by community parks. However, several residential neighborhoods are not well served by local neighborhood parks that include playgrounds. Focus should be placed on neighborhoods with higher residential density with children, expanding and new neighborhoods, and those that are not currently served by school playgrounds that provide recreation opportunities after school hours.

For the following neighborhoods, the City should conduct local outreach to determine the need for a new park, and if needed, the appropriate facilities for each. Prioritize those neighborhoods with the greatest need.

Residential neighborhoods that may benefit from the development of a neighborhood or pocket park with play equipment include:

- Channel Way Neighborhood (expanding neighborhood)
- Kaknu Way Neighborhood
- Rogers Road Neighborhood
- VIP Drive Neighborhood
- Woodland Subdivision
- Inlet Woods
- 1st and 2nd Street
- Valhalla Heights
- Shoreline Heights
- Central Heights
- Three W’s Subdivision



Fishing in Cook Inlet



Inventory & Recommendations



OVERVIEW

PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES

The City's current recreational offerings largely meet the needs of its community, supported by thoughtfully located parks that serve many existing neighborhoods; however, based on public input and guidance from the NRPA, there is a clear need for dedicated pickleball courts to meet growing demand. In addition, the City should initiate a public process to formally prioritize locations for future neighborhood parks to ensure equitable access as Kenai continues to grow, and to prioritize capital investment in the Kenai Recreation Center and Kenai Multi-Purpose Facility to maintain service levels and address aging infrastructure.



Erik Hansen Scout Park, looking over the Kenai River

Strategic Focus for Community Parks

A key priority is to designate specific uses for Kenai's parks, creating focused and exceptional spaces. There is an opportunity to focus on specific uses in select areas, resulting in less maintenance and operations and improving the user experience.

The Kenai Greenstrip offers a large open space for public events, but its limited dedicated facilities require significant setup and operational effort. Similarly, Millennium Square also hosts community events with no permanent supporting infrastructure. Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park, Kenai Little League Fields, and the Kenai Sports Complex are focused sports fields, each requiring support facilities, maintenance, and operations at multiple locations.

By strategically consolidating recreation uses and avoiding duplication across several parks, Kenai can create more efficient and impactful recreation spaces. Imagine the benefits if all competitive sports fields are relocated to the Kenai Sports Complex. This streamlines maintenance and operations, consolidates supporting facilities, and enhances the overall athletic experience.

With the ballfields relocated, the Kenai Little League Fields become a vibrant hub for recreation activities and the Kenai Greenstrip is enhanced into a facility for major community events, with flexible, expansive open space. The City achieves operational savings and maintenance efficiencies by consolidating staff, equipment, and supporting infrastructure to a single, high-use location.

An Exciting Future for Kenai's Parks

Through the implementation of this master plan, Kenai has the exciting opportunity to provide the necessary recreation facilities, prioritize and improve the user experience, and rebrand its parks and recreation facilities. By taking a strategic approach to development and consolidating specific uses, the City can create vibrant public spaces that serve Kenai more effectively and become sources of civic pride.

There are opportunities to consolidate resources through strengthening community partnerships. For example, the school district maintains sports fields and a pool, which may be at risk of closure. Rather than duplicating facilities, the City could work with the district and other partners to share existing spaces, coordinate use, and support the public. While the City would not take on the direct operation of schools or other community facilities, collaboration allows all parties to maximize what already exists and provide better access and value to Kenai residents.

It is essential to create and adopt a new trails master plan for Kenai that also considers recommendations in this master plan and establishes the desired community-wide trail network. The trails plan, when developed alongside the parks and recreation plan, will result in both plans serving as vital tools for the City, helping to identify priorities and enhance its exceptional parks and recreation opportunities.

MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

One of the key findings is the significant maintenance needs of the existing parks and recreation facilities, especially for parks and sports fields. The City's commitment to maintaining large areas of turf grass is a significant undertaking for many of its parks, where the grassed areas primarily provide aesthetic benefits and are not used extensively for recreation. It is recommended that the P&R Department implement a turf reduction strategy in non-essential areas and replace high-traffic, failing turf with durable, hardened surfacing (e.g., pavers, concrete, or compacted gravel) to increase accessibility and significantly reduce ongoing maintenance effort and cost.

Additionally, consolidating sports fields in one location will reduce maintenance and create a single place well served by supporting amenities, including restrooms, concessions, maintenance sheds and equipment, storage, and other needs to support the sports fields' use and maintenance.

Playgrounds throughout the City have loose, shredded safety surfacing and require regular inspections and maintenance to ensure the surfacing is at the proper depth. While this is an acceptable, cost-effective material, it requires significant maintenance (in some cases, daily). Updating playground surfacing to more expensive safety tiles (or poured-in-place surfacing) would significantly reduce maintenance and likely yield long-term cost savings. However, replacing surfacing is a large investment and reinvesting in new surfacing should be considered when playgrounds are replaced or improved.

PARK STANDARDS

Standardized park signage, along with the development of uniform design and product standards for parks and playgrounds, offers significant benefits for both users and City staff. Signage standards creates a cohesive and intuitive system across different park and recreation facilities, ensuring visitors can quickly and easily find amenities, understand park regulations, and navigate trails and larger parks through wayfinding, thereby creating a positive user experience.

Establishing standards for park products, including play equipment, site furnishings, and safety surfaces, is crucial for safety compliance, ensuring durability against heavy use and weather, and ultimately reducing long-term maintenance costs. Standardized products (e.g., benches and trash cans) allow the City to keep replacement products on hand for timely repair or replacement. This consistency not only protects the public and lowers liability but also helps maintain a positive identity for Kenai's park system.

Many park structures including covered picnic areas, restrooms, pavilions, and buildings that support sports fields are nearing the end of their life cycle or require renovations. Developing a durable and vandal resistant design standard for these structures will help reduce maintenance and enhance the user experience. Specific recommendations for park structures are outlined in each park description.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION LANDS

The City maintains some properties that are subject to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) restrictions when the property was deeded to the City. These restrictions generally deal with airspace and non-obstruction of approach and navigation routes. It is recommended that major recreational facilities should be limited on these properties; instead, focusing on lower-cost facilities or those that could be relocated.

Properties maintained by the City that are subject to FAA restrictions include:

- Millennium Square (a portion is subject to FAA restrictions, but no use regulations).
- Field of Flowers
- Kenai Community Gardens
- Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park
- Kenai Greenstrip
- Kenai Recreation Center
- Daubenspeck Family Park
- Kenai Bark Park
- Kenai Cemetery and Cemetery Expansion
- Leif Hansen Memorial Park (a portion of).

CITY ZONING

The City of Kenai has 18 zoning classifications including Recreational. Only the Municipal Golf Course and the Kenai Sports Complex are located within this classification. All other parks and facilities are located in a variety of zones including Conservation, Airport Light Industrial, Rural Residential, and others. Establishing a new Parks District classification and rezoning parks to this classification, and rezoning recreation facilities to Recreational resolves existing land use challenges.



Sand dunes at Kenai North Beach

FACILITIES

KENAI RECREATION CENTER

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

1.56 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Recreation Center offers a diverse range of year-round recreation space for all ages. The facilities include a weight room and cardio room, two racquetball/wallyball courts, gymnasium, saunas, showers, and locker rooms. On the top floor is a Teen Center, operated by the Boys and Girls Club, that provides the community's teen's with a fun, safe environment to spend their time. The Teen Center has a dance floor, snack bar, pool tables, foosball, ping-pong, video games, TV, air hockey, and computers.

Construction of the Kenai Recreation Center (phase I) was completed in 1981. The gymnasium (Phase II) was completed in 1983. The Boys & Girls Club of the Kenai Peninsula managed and operated the facility from 2003 under a Partnership Agreement until 2021, when the City took over the operation of the downstairs of the facility.

In 2023, the roof and air handlers were replaced and in 2024, the gymnasium, lobby, and locker room flooring were all redone.

Maintenance and Operations

Operated by six part-time regular staff members, supported by the Assistant Parks and Recreation Director. They operate the front desk, which handles all transactions and perform all of the facility cleaning. In the summer months, the P&R Department maintains all the green space around this facility.

Facilities and Amenities

- Teen Center
- One weight and cardio room
- Two racquetball/wallyball courts
- One gymnasium
- Four locker rooms with showers; two of the locker rooms have saunas
- Off-street parking

Public Input

The Kenai Recreation Center is a valued and versatile facility, widely used for diverse indoor recreational activities. The center is a popular hub for court games and the weight/cardio room. Toddler Time and private rentals for events are also highly valued. Users appreciate the wide range of year-round options for all ages and feel that the gymnasium, fitness center, and multi-purpose rooms are central attractions. Amenities like the sauna, restrooms, and locker rooms with showers contribute to a positive experience. Respondents generally view the center as well-maintained, with ongoing improvements enhancing user satisfaction.

Respondents felt that improvements could include separated space for Tot Time with more programming. They also have a desire for more upgraded equipment and machines in the fitness room and more open play times for pickleball. The facility is often described as small, cramped, and limited with persistent complaints about poor ventilation, stuffy air, and lack of natural light. There is also a general perception of the facility being old and tired, indicating a need for a full remodel. Respondents desire expanded hours, including earlier summer openings, later closings, and weekend availability with a demand for more classes and open gym times.

Opportunities

The Kenai Recreation Center provides an amenity to the community which is frequently used by residents. During major recreational events, parking becomes a problem, requiring street parking and creating traffic safety concerns. Redesigning the parking lot to accommodate high-traffic events would relieve some of these concerns. As noted below, the entry to the lower level is not ADA accessible, and redesigning the entry from the parking level would alleviate the non-compliant access and provide a more inviting entry. Using the storefront and storage area for a lobby could provide the needed building accessibility and benefit staff and visitors but requires space planning for verification.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

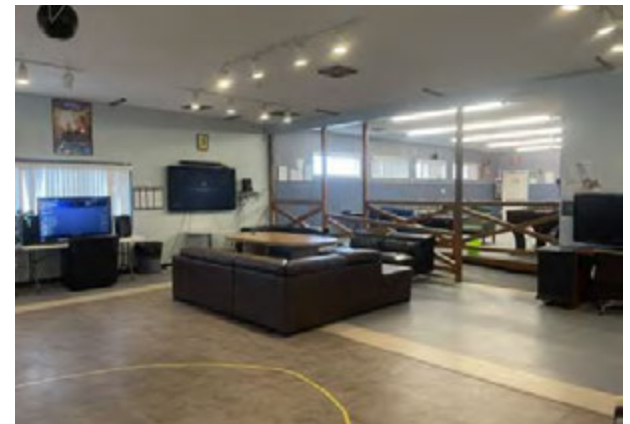
- Provide ADA access into the building.
- Redesign parking for more efficient use.
- Gym area renovation and modernization.
- Locker rooms renovation and ADA accessibility improvements.
- Programming and conceptual design for upper level, if vacated.
- Standardize signage for building consistent with other Parks and Recreation signage.
- Develop an internal maintenance plan to schedule routine maintenance tasks.
- Subdivide four parcels the land is on into one parcel, to help with further improvements.
- Rezone parcel from Central Mixed Use (CMU) to Recreational (R).



Exterior of Recreation Center



Gymnasium



Teen Center

MULTI-PURPOSE FACILITY

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

7.26 acres

Existing Conditions

The Multi-Purpose Facility was constructed in 1999, and refrigeration equipment was added in 2001. From October through March, the facility operates as an ice rink and is free for public use whenever it is not reserved. The Multi-Purpose Facility serves as a rental facility in the summer for roller hockey and other activities, with restrictions for availability. The P&R Commission has expressed interest in someday obtaining an indoor turf facility and marked this as a possible location.

The City historically offered summer ice at the Multi-Purpose Facility, but this service ended in 2022 after an engineering assessment and an Ice System Evaluation Study identified concerns with the facility’s condition. Based on these findings, the City determined that continuing to operate the ice system through the summer was no longer advised or feasible.

The facility also faces several appearance and infrastructure updates. Exterior signage still features an outdated City logo along with a ConocoPhillips logo, even though the company no longer operates the Kenai LNG plant, and the City updated its branding in 2020. In addition, the draft engineering report outlines key capital needs, including replacement of the rink boards and refrigeration compressors, which are nearing the end of their service life.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department contracts for the ice maintenance, maintaining the ice mechanical systems, ice resurfacing equipment, and cleaning the facility. City staff provide ice scheduling and building and site maintenance. Parks maintains all the green space around the facility in the summer months.

During the summer months, the facility is largely unused but remains available for limited public rentals. Due to staffing constraints, access is restricted, though it has been rented on a special-use basis for activities such as roller derby.

Facilities and Amenities

- Refrigerated partially enclosed ice rink (October - March)
- Running water restrooms (no showers)
- Storage room
- Vendor space for skate rentals operated by the contractor
- Five heated locker rooms
- Trash receptacles
- Bleachers
- Off-street parking

Public Input

The Multi-Purpose Facility is a community favorite during the winter between October and March and is enjoyed for ice skating and hockey. Areas identified by the community for improvement include:

- Many respondents would like to see the facility enclosed with ice year-round.
- Alternative uses in the summer would benefit the community.
- Updated or better maintained locker rooms.
- Improved heating system for the spectator stands and player’s benches.



Multi-purpose facility building



Interior of facility

Opportunities

A challenge for the Multi-Purpose Facility is its limited and aging facilities and being a partially open structure. While meeting basic needs, there is opportunity to reduce maintenance and improve ice conditions through installing a new refrigeration system.

The facility has two interior changing rooms which are insufficient. There is a desire to construct permanent, dedicated locker rooms for home and visitor teams.

The open structure provides natural ventilation, which is a critical mechanical feature for the facility, often creating uncomfortable conditions for users and restricting when ice can be installed. Public feedback has consistently identified a desire to fully enclose the rink. Doing so would require a feasibility study to understand additional features and infrastructure to meet proper ice rink operations and building code requirements. Other recommendations suggested by the public include improving the current heating system above the bleachers and adding heat over the player's benches.

The building requires a few repairs, modernization, and maintenance updates to improve durability and appearance of interior spaces.

Recommendations

- New ice refrigeration system.
- Permanent locker rooms.
- Interior area renovation and modernization including improved heat over bleachers.
- Standardize signage for building consistent with other Parks and Recreation signage.
- Partially or fully enclose the facility and related infrastructure improvements.
- Develop an internal maintenance plan to schedule routine maintenance tasks.
- Rezone parcel from Education (ED) to Recreational (R) to allow current use.



SPORTSFIELDS

KENAI LITTLE LEAGUE FIELDS

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

12.78 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Little League Fields share a space with Municipal Park and the Waste Water Treatment Plant, with access to Kenai North Beach. There are three baseball fields and one softball field with a natural buffer running along the bluff to the west of the fields. A gravel perimeter trail meanders through the natural buffer. There is a trailhead north of the northernmost field and south of the southernmost field. The high school uses the main field for its games.

The Little League Fields were constructed before 1979. The girls softball field was constructed in 1987. The facilities are aging including the dugouts, fields, fencing, and snack shack. There is a large, unmarked gravel parking area on the east side of the site that does not provide adequate parking during larger events. Several conex containers are located adjacent to the parking lot for storage.

During the month of July, the Kenai Little League Fields parking lot serves as secondary parking for the Personal Use Fishery, causing temporary scheduling disruption and added wear on the facilities.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department preps the fields for the start of the season and performs weekly maintenance on them throughout the season. Maintenance includes mowing, dragging the fields, fertilizing, weed whacking, and laying lines.

The Kenai Central High School performs pre-season preparation on the fields and the different Leagues chalk the fields and perform light maintenance during tournaments and off-hours. The Leagues also provide portable toilets in the summer. Volunteer efforts allow P&R staff to focus on the weekly maintenance requirements.

Facilities and Amenities

- Two major little league fields, one senior little league field, and one softball field
- One concession (snack shack) structure
- Three storage units (conex)
- Four drinking fountains
- Two score boards
- Eight dugouts
- Nine bleachers
- Batting cages
- Picnic tables and trash receptacles
- Portable toilet (seasonal)
- Off-street parking

Public Input

The main use for the Kenai Little League Fields is baseball for Little League games and T-Ball and general public feeling is it serves well for this use. There is some conflicting use identified with the seasonal dip netters using the park and parking area. Areas identified by the community for improvement include:

- Upgrade restrooms to be year-round.
- Install batting cages and upgrade dugouts.
- Improved maintenance of the fields including turf and baselines.
- Upgrade the main field (field #3) to synthetic
- Overhaul fields or relocate them to the Kenai Sports Complex.



Ball field at the Kenai Little League Fields

Opportunities

The current ballfields complex is congested and notably deficient in support facilities such as restrooms and adequate parking, hindering its success. There is an opportunity to relocate the baseball fields to an expanded Kenai Sports Complex, providing a superior user experience and generating city-wide maintenance efficiencies. By integrating the Kenai Little League Fields with Municipal Park, the two parks can form a connected park focused on social interaction and diverse active and passive recreation.

There is an excellent opportunity to create a robust natural trail network connecting with Municipal Park and expanding onto City-owned land to the north and east to include winter skiing. Space will be available to expand parking and provide a formal seasonal campground to accommodate summer dip net fishery visitors, with improved trail connections to North Beach and the fishery.

Recommendations

- Remove (3) Little League Fields and (1) T-ball field (to be relocated to Sports Complex) and related support structures.
- Upon relocation of fields, validate recreation uses and needs through a public process and park master planning effort.
- Rezone from Conservation (C) to future Parks Zoning District.



Bleachers and dugout



Park trail around ball fields



STEVE SHEARER MEMORIAL BALL PARK

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

14.48 acres

Existing Conditions

Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park is named in honor of Steve Shearer, who died in July 1998. Following his death, a committee was formed to commemorate his life and the important role he played in bringing men’s softball to the city and the beginning of league play in the late 1970s. In 2003, the City Council approved naming the complex and placement of the sign (donated by the committee).

There are four adult softball fields and permanent restrooms with seasonal water. The space is shared with the Kenai Greenstrip, Kenai Community Garden, and Kenai Skate Park. Three fields were constructed in 1980, and a fourth field bordering 1st Avenue was completed in 1989.

The park is City property adjacent to the airport and was deeded to the City by the FAA with restrictions.

The fields, fencing, and bleachers are in fair condition, with the snack shack and restrooms in poor condition. New dugouts were installed in 2025.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department prepares the fields for the start of the season and performs weekly maintenance throughout the summer. Maintenance includes mowing, dragging the fields, fertilizing, weed whacking, and laying lines.

The different Leagues chalk the fields and perform light maintenance during tournaments and off-hours. The high school performs some preseason field preparation.

Facilities and Amenities

- Four adult softball fields
- Bleachers
- Eight dugouts
- One concession
- One official’s shack
- Trash receptacles
- One permanent restroom structure (operated seasonally) and storage building
- Off-street parking

Public Input

The community enjoys the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park for softball games and the open green space for community events. There are some concerns regarding undesired activities. Some respondents complained about the wind and dust, which can make playing softball difficult. Areas identified by the community for improvement include:

- Many respondents felt that revitalizing the area would be beneficial, using Soldotna Creek Park as an example.
- Install a concession and create a wind barrier.
- Better maintenance or more regulations for dogs.

Opportunities

The proposal is to transform the area currently occupied by the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park into an expanded, large community event space. This transformation is contingent upon relocating the ballfields to the larger Kenai Sports Complex, which will consolidate sports facilities, streamline maintenance, and improve the player experience with better support services.

By expanding the adjacent Kenai Greenstrip into the vacated ball park area, and potentially relocating or upgrading the Kenai Skate Park and playground, the City will create a more vibrant and enticing space ideal for large community events like Industry Days and the Pumpkin Festival, as well as seasonal farmers’ markets. This expansion will provide better facilities and the necessary space while maintaining the Kenai Greenstrip’s ‘open space’ designation.

Furthermore, relocating the ballfields will free up essential community parking for these special events, alleviating overflow on surrounding roads. Consideration should also be given to relocating the underused community garden to consolidate facilities.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Relocate softball fields to the Kenai Sports Complex.
- Develop a full master plan for this park for expanding and improving facilities for hosting community events (see Kenai Greenstrip). Include planning for an improved skate park, connected trails (paved and natural) and other facilities to support the expansion of the Kenai Greenstrip into the park.



New dugouts



Softball field



KENAI SPORTS COMPLEX

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

18.94 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Sports Complex includes six soccer fields and off-street parking. There are picnic tables and seasonal portable toilets provided. The Kenai Sports Complex is open year-round and is free of charge. All facilities are in good condition. This park was an Land and Water Conservation Fund project and the fields were constructed in 2006. The local soccer clubs use the fields heavily during the summer.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department preps the fields for the start of the season and performs weekly maintenance on them. Maintenance includes mowing, fertilizing, and weed whacking.

The Kenai Peninsula Soccer Club currently assists the City with lawn care, facility upkeep, and soccer field layout, line striping, and field preparation.

Facilities and Amenities

- Six soccer fields
- One storage facility
- Picnic tables
- Portable toilet (seasonal)
- Off-street parking

Public Input

The community identified expanding trails into the wooded area, building a gazebo (shelter), and permanent restrooms as benefits to the development of the Kenai Sports Complex. Additionally, relocating other sports fields to this location and expanding it out to be a multi-field sports complex with all facilities.

Opportunities

The Kenai Sports Complex has untapped potential to become a home for Kenai's competitive outdoor sports fields including baseball, softball, rugby, and soccer. A sports complex can act as a community hub, where people come together, support local teams, and accommodate kids and adults of all ages for multi-generational play. It would bring all supporting uses into one area to consolidate needed services, such as concessions, restrooms, changing rooms, and storage and maintenance facilities, minimizing the amount of maintenance, operation, and management burden on the P&R Department and decreasing their travel time between facilities.

The current soccer fields are approximately 18.94 acres; however, there is an additional estimated 28 acres that could be used for park land as part of this parcel and an adjacent 24.93 acre parcel located northwest of the soccer fields that can be allocated to the Kenai Sports Complex development if needed.

A large parking lot will be needed to support all activities and understanding the expended demand at one time while guide the capacity of support facilities including parking, restrooms, and other amenities to support operation of the Kenai Sports Complex.

Recommendations

- Develop a master plan for a combined sports complex that includes regulation sized soccer fields, Little League baseball fields (including one with artificial turf and electronic scoreboard), softball fields, and rugby pitch with needed dugouts, fencing, bleachers, and scoreboards. Include support facilities that include concessions, restrooms, storage and maintenance buildings, day-use (picnic) shelters, parking, and other desired facilities. The master plan will verify community need and capacity for the creation of a consolidated sports field complex within a public process.



Storage shed



Sports Complex with access road and gate



Fields at the Sports Complex



Seasonal portable toilet



Facility sign

PARKS & SPECIAL USE

MUNICIPAL PARK

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

34.56 acres

Existing Conditions

Municipal Park shares space with the Kenai Little League Fields and the Waste Water Treatment Plant, with access to Kenai North Beach. A large campground was located in the park that operated through the 1970s and '80s and was discontinued in the late '80s. The campground area now serves as a walking path and day-use picnic sites. New playground structures were added in 2015 and an inclusive see-saw was added to the park in 2023.

Overall, the park and its amenities are in very good condition, with the exception of the sand volleyball court, basketball court, and picnic areas (old campground) in the woods, which are in fair to poor condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass, playground, walking trails, basketball court, pavilions, bathrooms, and landscaping. Kenai parks holds its annual Easter Day egg hunt at this park and plows the walking trails to provide a safe space to walk in the winter.

Facilities and Amenities

- One basketball and one volleyball court
- Playground (tot lot and 5-12 year old)
- Three rentable shelters with another shelter being reconstructed
- Open turf area and trails
- Picnic areas with picnic tables and BBQ grills
- Trash receptacles and a dumpster
- Benches and drinking fountains
- One bathroom with running water (seasonal)
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Overall, the community enjoys the variety of amenities that is offered at Municipal Park, including the playground and open space, sports courts, park shelters, trails, and day-use areas. Respondents value the winter trail maintenance to promote year-round walking. Several comments identify concerns regarding undesired activities happening throughout the day-use area. Areas identified by the community for improvement include:

- More playground equipment for older children and more frequent maintenance.
- Outdoor fitness equipment along upper trails.
- Repair and maintenance of the restroom and installing another at the day-use area.
- Upgrade the basketball court to a full-sized court and re-surface the volleyball court.
- Better delineation of walking trails through the decommissioned campground area.

Opportunities

Municipal Park is a well programmed and popular community park. Public input requested that the existing volleyball court be resurfaced. Improving the basketball court at the park and volleyball court would complement the other social activities being recommended there. Outdoor fitness equipment was also brought up by the community and could become part of the trail system within the park. It is recommended that the City replace the loose shredded safety surfacing in the playground with safety tiles when a new playground is installed.

The City has the opportunity to develop new recreation opportunities for the large campground area that closed in the late 1980s. Currently, the community uses the decommissioned campground for passive day use recreation and providing new day-use shelters and a restroom would improve user experience. Providing a network of trail connections to the current Kenai Little League Fields, North Beach, the natural corridor north of the park, and Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park should be considered.

Recommendations

- Upgrade existing restroom for year-round use.
- Upgrade playground safety surfacing with tiles when replacement of playground occurs.
- Provide expanded day-use recreation facilities and expanded parking in decommissioned campground.
- Identify trail and connector opportunities in the park as part of an updated Kenai Trails Master Plan.
- Rezone from Conservation (C) to future Parks Zoning District.



Kenai Municipal Park playground



Day use shelters



Trail connecting to North Beach



Seasonal bathroom structure and portable toilet



LEIF HANSEN MEMORIAL PARK

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

3.5 acres

Existing Conditions

Leif Hansen Memorial Park is named in honor of Leif Hansen, who tragically passed away in a drowning accident in 1986. Following his loss, his family envisioned the site as a memorial park where community members could remember and honor their loved ones, including veterans. A Memorial Park Planning Committee was formed in 1987 to design the park, and since then memorial sidewalks, plaques, and a fountain (donated by the Hansen family) have been added, reinforcing the park's role as a place of remembrance and reflection.

The park features the Town Clock, constructed through a community-wide effort with donated funds, volunteer labor, and contributions from local industry, residents, and the Kenaitze Indian Tribe. The project was partially funded through the memorial fund of Officer John Watson, who had long envisioned a town clock for Kenai. Today, the clock stands as a centerpiece of the park and a symbol of community spirit and collaboration.

The park amenities includes a gazebo, water fountain, Veteran's and Marine Memorials, and a meandering walking path with memorial plaques throughout the park. The City allows reservations for Leif Hansen Memorial Park Gazebo. The park is in good condition with the exception of the fountain and older deteriorating paving in poor condition.

A concern is that many of the memorial plantings are encroaching on park elements and sidewalks, creating maintenance challenges. Planned maintenance will be conducted on the water fountain in 2025. During the winter, the park is decorated with Christmas lights and a Memorial Day event happens here. No permanent structures may be placed on the state right-of-way.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department installs memorial plaques, maintains all the green space and landscaping, as well as hanging seasonal decor throughout the park in the winter months.

Facilities and Amenities

- One gazebo
- Dedicated memorial structures
- One town clock
- One memorial water fountain
- Benches and one drinking fountain
- Meandering concrete pathway with memorial plaques
- On-street parking

Public Input

Overall, there is a lot of community connection with Leif Hansen Memorial Park. People enjoy the amenities and memorials and the general park setting. The park is used for a variety of different activities, such as weddings or family photos. Although the park is generally enjoyed by the community, there is also a lot of undesirable activities that take place here. Respondents felt that the park would be improved by better monitoring and discouraging undesirable activities.

Opportunities

Leif Hansen Memorial Park is a unique park in Kenai that hosts a variety of memorials including those dedicated to individuals. The park is nearing capacity for hosting additional memorial plaques. The park also lacks landscape standards to guide maintenance and the continued addition of memorials. Memorial plantings are overgrowing walkways and the development of design standards will act as a master plan and guidelines as future memorials are developed and implemented. They will help to ensure the Leif Hansen Memorial Park is developed in a way that is powerful, cohesive, and an enduring tribute that serves its purpose to the community.

A portion of this property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Develop design standards and guidelines for the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of future and existing memorials and related plantings.
- Rejuvenate the fountain and renovate landscaping.
- Rezone from Conservation (C) to future Parks Zoning District.



Park gazebo



Memorial water fountain



Veterans memorial



Memorial plaques along the pathway



Town clock

ERIK HANSEN SCOUT PARK

Park Classification

Pocket Park

Size

0.64 acres

Existing Conditions

Erik Hansen Scout Park was established in 1997 as an Eagle Scout project. The property was donated by Dr. Peter and Karolee Hansen in memory of their son Erik, an Eagle Scout and lifelong scouter who passed away at age 32. The park, which features a statue of a Boy Scout leader, serves as a tribute to Erik’s life and dedication to scouting.

Erik Hansen Scout Park is a small pocket park, located in Old Town Kenai, that has scenic views of the Cook Inlet and Kenai River, providing an ideal location for watching the dip netters below. Interpretive displays highlight many of the physical features of the surrounding landscape. The park includes memorial benches, plantings, gravel trails, a grassed area, a spotting scope, and on-site parking. It is a popular park in the summer.

The park is in very good condition and has recently been revitalized through volunteer efforts in coordination with the P&R Department. They replaced the pathway, garden bed, and improved fencing.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains all the green space and landscaping, as well as hanging seasonal decor throughout the park in the winter months.

Facilities and Amenities

- Boy Scout Statue
- Memorial benches
- Interpretive displays
- Scenic view
- Spotting scope
- Trash receptacle
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Erik Hansen Memorial Park is appreciated for its view of the Kenai River and Cook Inlet and for the ability to site above the banks and watch the dip netters below on the shores. Overall, there isn’t many improvements desired by the community. Better general maintenance and more seating are the only comments provided.



Spotting scope and interpretive panel along the bluff



Park bench

Opportunities

Erik Hansen Memorial Park serves the community as a pocket park overlooking the river. Public input identified the need for better general maintenance and improving seating to view the scenery and watch dip netters below. The park includes several memorial benches and aging interpretive panels.

Recommendations

- Upgrade memorial benches when replacement is needed while maintaining memorial designation.
- Improve hardened surfaces and walking areas and maintain.
- Replace and update interpretive panels.
- Rezone from Central Commercial (CC) to future Parks Zoning District.



4TH AVENUE PARK

Park Classification

Neighborhood Park

Size

3.75 acres

Existing Conditions

4th Avenue Park has been maintained by the City since the 1970s. The park previously had playground equipment, which was removed around 2018. Replacement of the equipment was considered, but no funds were allocated and the project was not carried forward. At present, the park serves as a large open turf area that is suitable for throwing a Frisbee, playing soccer, and other activities that require space. There is a full-size basketball court and a picnic shelter and barbecue grill. There is an aging backstop and unmaintained grass field that is no longer used by Little League.

The field is in fair condition as is the shelter and picnic facilities. The basketball court is in good condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass, and basketball court.



Basketball court

Facilities and Amenities

- Basketball court
- Baseball backstop
- Open turf area
- One small shelter
- Picnic table, barbecue grill, and trash receptacle
- Portable toilet available for events or rentals
- Off-street parking

Public Input

4th Avenue Park is not well known or used by the community. Some respondents felt it would be best to close the park and sell the property, using the funds on other better used parks in Kenai.

Proceeds of the sale of City-owned land must be deposited in the Land Sale Permanent Fund and are not available for use by the City for any purpose other than for investments.



Small park shelter

Opportunities

4th Avenue Park is a good candidate for disposal due to larger adjacent parks already serving this neighborhood, with support for its disposal expressed by members of the public. Should the greater public desire this park be kept within the system, a master plan should be developed.

Recommendations

- Consider closure and disposal of the park through a public process; and,
- If park is not approved for closure, develop park master plan.
- Rezone from Suburban Residential (RS) to future Parks Zoning District.



KENAI HISTORIC CABIN PARK

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

1.01 acres

Existing Conditions

Completed around 2010, the cabins in this park were brought together to showcase different historical chapters of Kenai's past. Many historic cabins and related equipment have been consolidated in this location. Although the structures are old, they remain in good condition. The site is fenced and is only open to the public when a docent is present.

Maintenance and Operations

The park is operated and maintained under an Memorandum of Understanding with the Kenai Historical Society. The Society is responsible for maintaining the grounds, managing operating hours, and keeping a thorough inventory of the site.

Facilities and Amenities

- Arness Cabin (1925)
- Dolchok/Juliusen Cabin (1922)
- Miller Cabin (c. 1910)
- Three Scandinavians Cabin (date unknown)

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- Continue working with the Kenai Historical Society to preserve and showcase the historic cabins.



Kenai Historic Cabin Park sign



Kenai historic cabin interior

OLD TOWN PARK

Park Classification

Neighborhood Park

Size

1.11 acres

Existing Conditions

Old Town Park is a smaller neighborhood park located in Old Town Kenai, adjacent to the Kenai Historic Cabin Park. The park has been in existence prior to 1979 and was originally intended to provide facilities for all ages (toddlers, pre-school, school age). The Kenai Lions Club has assisted with various projects in this park through the years.

It is fully fenced and has a playground, open turf areas, picnic structure, and a half-court basketball court. These items were installed between 1979 and 1985. The present swing was installed in 1994 and the modular play system in 1996. The smaller playground was replaced in 2010. The playground is in poor condition and is slated for replacement in 2026, if funding allows.

Currently, there is a schematic design to completely redo the park and can be found in the City’s CIP.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass, playground structures, court, and landscaping.

Facilities and Amenities

- Playground with two small units, one swing, and one slide
- One basketball court (half-court)
- One shelter
- Open turf area
- Picnic table, BBQ grill, and trash receptacle
- One portable toilet
- On-street parking

Public Input

Limited responses were received for Old Town Park during the Inventory Survey and Public Open House. Overall, the community felt the park is not in a good location and feels run-down with needed equipment replacement. Respondents would like access to the beach, restrooms, and an overhaul of the park.



Shelter with playground in background



Swings and turf area

Opportunities

A schematic level master plan was developed in 2023 as a full park ‘do over’ that included new playground equipment. Implementation of this master plan, with a priority on the playground, is recommended for Old Town Park.

Recommendations

- Evaluate portions of the playground improvements as designed in the 2023 park plan based on funding availability.
- Rezone from Central Commercial (CC) to future Parks Zoning District.



BEAVER CREEK PARK

Park Classification

Neighborhood Park

Size

5.23 acres

Existing Conditions

Beaver Creek Park is an inviting park just off the Kenai Spur Highway side of the Unity Bike Trail. In 1972, the City obtained Land and Water Conservation Fund funding to construct the park as it is today, purchasing the parkland in 1980. Prior to this, this space was maintained by the local Boy Scouts.

The park includes a picnic shelter, playground, full outdoor basketball court, and vault toilet that is currently out of order. A portable toilet is rented in the summer. There are plans to replace the picnic shelter.

The vault toilet and shelter are in poor condition. The playground equipment is in good condition, however safety surfacing needs improvements. All other facilities are in good condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass, playground structures, court, and landscaping.



Small picnic shelter

Facilities and Amenities

- Playground with one small unit, one slide, and one swing
- One basketball court
- Open turf area
- One small shelter
- Picnic table, bench, barbecue grill, trash receptacle, and drinking fountain
- Bike repair station
- One vault toilet (out of order). A seasonal portable toilet is provided.
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Beaver Creek is an enjoyable park that people will ride their bike to and enjoy the playground and access to the creek. Respondents identified undesirable activities at the park which creates an unsafe environment. The restroom facility and shelter is in need of repair and maintenance and some perimeter trails would be valued.



Existing vault toilet and seasonal portable toilet

Opportunities

There are current plans in place to replace the existing shelter and the City places a seasonal portable toilet on site. Upgrading the vault toilet would benefit park users. Loose shredded safety surfacing at the playground places a maintenance burden on the City, deteriorates easily, creating unsafe play conditions, and reduces accessibility. It is recommended that the City replace the loose shredded safety surfacing with safety tiles.

A hardened surface should be installed in all high-use areas (to replace failing grass), including the picnic shelter, to reduce maintenance and improve accessibility. Reduce the overall grass area used for active play and allow the rest of the grass spaces to naturalize, reducing overall maintenance burden on the City.



Open turf area

Recommendations

- Replace existing shelter, picnic table and BBQ (planned).
- Harden the surfacing under the day-use picnic shelter and high use areas. Hardened surface shall incorporate the picnic table, barbecue grill, and access points from the parking area.
- Upgrade playground safety surfacing with tiles when the playground is replaced.
- Replace the non-functioning vault toilet;
- Consider relocating the free library due to repeated vandalism.
- Reduce the overall amount of grass while maintaining adequate open green space.
- Rezone from Rural Residential (RR) to future Parks Zoning District.



Playground at the park



Basketball court



DAUBENSPECK FAMILY PARK

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

7.09 acres

Existing Conditions

A main feature of Daubenspeck Family Park is a central pond used for swimming in the summer and illuminated ice skating in winter months. In 2010, the City named the park Daubenspeck Family Park in honor of the family, whose donation of lands and mineral rights had contributed more than two million dollars to support City athletic programs as of that date.

The park includes a quarter-mile gravel loop trail connecting two beach areas, picnic area, toilet, and a day-use recreation area with two rental shelters. The trail is being re-routed away from the beach area.

Park facilities are in fair to good condition but are showing signs of heavy use. Erosion is occurring around the pond at access points. The boat launch is in disrepair and not usable.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains facilities and the landscaping. Minimal ice maintenance is provided during the winter months.

Facilities and Amenities

- Beach/swimming area
- Two rentable pavilions
- One vault toilet
- Loop trail
- Picnic tables
- Fire pit
- Trash receptacles
- Winter ice skating (with lighting)
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Daubenspeck Park is a cherished community park used for walking, swimming, water sports, ice skating, and to enjoy a barbecue. Some respondents felt that it would benefit from better maintenance and monitoring. They also felt there is potential for growth with City land available around the park.



Main parking, pond access and restrooms

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to formalize the main gathering space near the parking lot and restroom at Daubenspeck Family Park with a hardened surface to replace the failed grass and improve accessibility. This includes around the fire pit area and restoring the degraded edges of the pond at this main access point. Restoration can be completed by creating a formal pond access point with a hardened edge and stairs, allowing restoration to the surrounding natural bank. This will improve this main access point and provide safe, convenient, and accessible recreational access to the pond. Additionally, there is an opportunity to install a small dock to be used for swimming in the summer and ice skating during the winter.

There is a nice picnic area on the south side of the pond that currently has no access or sightlines to the pond. It is recommended that the City remove some vegetation to create better sightlines to the pond. Additionally, access points could be developed so that groups picnicking can swim or skate on the pond from this spot. Access points should be developed to mitigate degradation of the natural pond edge.

On the east side of the pond is an existing boat launch that is not usable. It is recommended that the boat launch be decommissioned and the pond edge be restored.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Harden surfacing from parking lot around the fire pit and develop a controlled access point to the pond. Restore impacted areas along pond edge.
- Install a small dock.
- Decommission existing boat launch.
- Install a park map.
- Clear vegetation at the picnic shelters to promote sightlines to the pond and install access points to the pond edge.
- Rezone from Light Industrial (IL) to future Parks Zoning District.



Vault toilet



Picnic area with shelters



Daubenspeck Family Park Loop Trail



Vault toilet and parking area



KENAI BARK PARK

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

1.57 acres

Existing Conditions

Kenai Bark Park is Kenai’s first official dog park and is the result of a community project involving volunteers, community fundraising, and a partnership with the City. The park was officially opened in 2023 and includes a separate area for small dogs and one for larger dogs. The entry pavilion and double gate entry for staging dogs is in excellent condition. A gravel trail loops around the perimeter of the large dog area. Although the dog park is newly constructed, winter freezing associated with the high water table results in footings being elevated and creating gaps in the fencing. The high water table also creates drainage challenges and the establishment of surfacing that is friendly to dogs. The existing trees, especially in the small dog area, are being heavily impacted, creating use challenges.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains facilities and the landscaping. A dog park committee has raised funds to help build the park and will also purchase equipment for the park.

Facilities and Amenities

- One pavilion with double-gated entry
- Separate fenced area for small/large dogs
- Benches
- Trash receptacles
- Dog agility features
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Respondents appreciate this addition to Daubenspeck Park and enjoy bringing their dog to a fenced dog park that offers a mix of spaces. Some improvements desired include better fencing and park surfacing, water management, and water supply for the dogs. A few respondents mentioned the addition of a shelter within the two dog areas.

Opportunities

The Kenai Bark Park has challenges with surface drainage and frost heaving. Solutions should be determined to install fencing that isn’t impacted by ground heaving and results in dogs escaping from the park. Better surface drainage is needed and an upgraded, dog-friendly aggregate surfacing should be installed.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Install gutters on shelter.
- Remove dead, dying or hazard trees from small dog park area, and add fill to improve drainage. Regrade and upgrade surfacing in park to a dog-friendly aggregate surfacing (crusher fines or E-1 top coat over D-1 base).
- Continue to investigate and resolve seasonal jacking of fence posts. Reset if heaving continues.
- Upgrade site furnishings for both people (benches) and dogs (agility).
- Rezone from Light Industrial (IL) to future Parks Zoning District.



Bark Park shelter and park



Kenai Bark Park



KENAI COMMUNITY GARDENS

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

1.25 acres

Existing Conditions

Located in the northwest corner of the Kenai Greenstrip, the Kenai Community Garden has raised and low beds available for rent and a garden shed. It includes the Fruiting Forest (apple trees and berry bushes). All facilities are in poor condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department manages reservations of the beds and will prep them for the renters. They also maintain the grass inside the park.

Facilities and Amenities

- Community garden with fifteen plots
- Garden shed (building)
- Fenced fruiting forest

Public Input

The community felt the community garden space is in need of upgrades. They also identified it as seeing limited use with less demand over recent years.

Opportunities

The Kenai Community Garden offers locals the ability to rent garden plots and grow their own produce and flowers. Use of the community garden has declined over the years, indicating there may be less demand and a public process should determine if this facility should continue.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- If there is community need, determine new location with improved visibility, vehicle access, and supporting amenities.



Garden shed



Garden boxes



KENAI GREENSTRIP

Park Classification

Community Park

Size

5.56 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Greenstrip is a large open space in downtown Kenai, perfect for community-wide celebrations and hosts several annual events. The Kenai Greenstrip shares space with the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park to the west and the Kenai Community Garden. There are two pavilions with available electricity that can be rented and a restroom building. The original shelter was constructed in 1991 and expanded in 2009. The Kenai Greenstrip includes a restroom that was constructed in 1993 and is open seasonally and does not meet demands during community events. The playground for 5-12 year old children was installed in 2023 but is not accessible due to the elevated surfacing. The Kenai Greenstrip includes the community garden and fruiting forest in the north-west corner. On the opposite side of the ballfields, is the Kenai Skate Park.

The Kenai Greenstrip and related structures are in good condition, as is the playground. The community garden and skate park are in fair to poor condition and are in need of maintenance or replacement.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the shelters, restrooms, playground, grass, and landscaping in the summer.

Facilities and Amenities

- Two rental shelters with electricity
- One restroom building (seasonal)
- One playground
- Picnic tables
- One drinking fountain
- Off-street parking (at ballfields)

Public Input

Community input identified this space as a well-used space for community events and a nice central location. Many people felt it would be better used if the ball fields at the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park were relocated to the Kenai Sports Complex and this space was developed into a larger event space for music, vendors, food trucks, etc. Some improvements to the playground were mentioned and providing ADA compliant play equipment and surfacing. Parking was identified as needed.



Kenai Greenstrip playground

Opportunities

Combine the Kenai Greenstrip with the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park to create a large community open and event space. See the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park for additional details and how relocation of the ball fields to the Kenai Sports Complex allows the expansion of the Kenai Greenstrip. The intent is to maintain the area as ‘open space’ and add more formal amenities that would better serve the community for larger events, including a performance space (stage), dedicated hardscape for vendor stalls and booths, and expanded parking on site. Creating a more formal developed community gathering and event space through the reduction of turf will reduce maintenance of the area and improve the special event experience. The newer existing restroom serves basic everyday use; however, it is undersized for larger community events. There is no dedicated parking for the Kenai Greenstrip on site and parking often occurs on the streets creating congestion and safety concerns.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Create an open space master plan. Elements in the plan could include (but needs to be verify by public) formal booth and vendors space, performance (stage) area, general gathering areas, pavilions and day-use area, parking, and formal walkways and paths. Integrate with adjacent improvements for skate park and playground. Ensure planning responds to any FAA restrictions and reflects its 'open space' designation.



Rental shelters



Shelter interior



KENAI SKATE PARK

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

0.86 acres

Existing Conditions

Located to the west of the Kenai Greenstrip, the Kenai Skate Park is a fenced area within a larger parking lot with asphalt surfacing. The fenced skate area takes up a portion of the overall park and is used for parking or is unprogrammed. Skate elements include portable features that includes tabletops, grind rails, stairs, half pipe and quarter pipes. Gravel and sand are found throughout the park and the deteriorating asphalt surfacing makes skating challenging.

The surfacing and skate features are in fair to poor condition and the location with wind blown sand and gravel makes this a challenging location to operate a skate park.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the facilities and secures the park when winter conditions make it unusable. During the summer, maintenance includes sweeping the park, painting over graffiti, and performing intermittent inspections.

Facilities and Amenities

- Portable skate features (mounted)
- Chain link fence

Public Input

Little was stated about the skate park other than is it seldom used and that is likely due to its existing condition.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to explore a new skate park in conjunction with the expansion of the Kenai Greenstrip (see Kenai Greenstrip). The new skate park should focus on all-wheeled activities, including scooters, bikes, and roller blades, and be designed for all ages and abilities. The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities. In the interim, a concrete pad could be located in a new location with the existing skate elements to create a better short term skate experience.

Recommendations

- Install concrete pad under existing skate features as a short-term solution.
- Should there be the community need for a long-term solution, develop a master plan for an all-wheeled park within the larger Kenai Greenstrip expansion planning effort.



Kenai Skate Park



EAGLE DISC GOLF COURSE

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

10.93 acres

Existing Conditions

This Land and Water Conservation Fund project developed a network of hiking and ski trails that began in 1972. The disc golf course was likely developed in the early 2000's. This area includes an 18-course disc golf course within a wooded environment and one mile of walking trails. Dogs are allowed on the trails, but must be on leash.

The disc golf course is in fair condition due to heavy use and needed maintenance. Erosion and trampled landscaping are found in high use areas due to lack of hardened trails and use areas related to the disc golf course.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the trails throughout the summer. They also maintain the course, including mowing grass around tees and signage, removing dead or hazardous trees, and performing general trail maintenance. They also conduct intermittent inspections during the summer to check paths, infrastructure, and overall site conditions.

The local disc golf club actively supports upkeep of the course. Before tournaments, club members clear trees, clean and prepare trails, and assist staff with additional trail maintenance throughout the season.

Facilities and Amenities

- Shared 18-course disc golf course
- 1 mile walking trail
- Benches and trash receptacles
- Off-street parking (two lots)

Public Input

Community input identifies the Eagle Disc Golf Course as a fun and convenient place to walk and play disc golf in the summer and to ski during the winter. There is a desire to upgrade disc golf amenities (tees, baskets, benches, signs and trails).



Entrance with park sign and portable toilet



Disc golf basket

Opportunities

Overall, the site serves its function. Wayfinding and a map of the disc golf layout would be beneficial, as well as having both novice and advanced tees and adding flags on top of the baskets for better identification.

Recommendations

- Wayfinding and directional signage. Map of the tee, fairway, and basket at each hole location.
- Novice and advanced tee start.
- Establish hardened paths between each hole and along fairways to the baskets.



CORAL SEYMOUR MEMORIAL BALLPARK (OILER PARK)

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

10.0 acres

Existing Conditions

Coral Seymour Memorial Ball Park, or Oiler Park, is leased from the City. The complex was developed in 1976 and is used by the Peninsula Oilers Baseball Club, Inc. There is one adult sized baseball field.

Maintenance and Operations

Under a lease agreement, the Kenai Oilers Baseball Club is responsible for all maintenance of Coral Seymour Memorial Ball Park, including field grooming, infield and outfield care, mowing and trimming the surrounding green spaces, and ensuring that facilities and equipment remain safe and in good condition for players and spectators.

Facilities and Amenities

- Snack shack
- Bleachers
- Running water toilets (summer use)
- Dugouts

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- Continue coordination with the leaseholder and provide City support as appropriate.
- Consider Conditional Use Permits to allow for concerts or fairs.



A game at Oiler Park



KENAI MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

119.7 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Municipal Golf Course is owned by the City and is leased for summer operation and maintenance to KNC Golf, Inc. as the community golf course. Development of the golf course began in 1986 and today it is an 18-hole course with a 72 par rating. The golf course includes a club house and all facilities are open to the public in the spring through autumn for a fee.

In the winter months, the public uses the golf course for Nordic ski use on trails groomed by the P&R Department. There are four looped Nordic routes, totalling just over 3 miles with a short snowshoe loop trail in the woods. Grooming started in 1996 in order to enhance community recreation throughout the winter months. The terrain is predominantly flat and suitable for beginners, yet challenging enough for experienced skiers. Kenai Central High School and the Kenai Middle School use the facility for training.

Maintenance and Operations

In the winter, the P&R Department grooms the Nordic ski trails weekly.

Facilities and Amenities

- Four loop Nordic ski trails
- One loop snowshoe trail

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- Coordinate with the leaseholder to address improvements to bridges, water access, and protection of salmon habitat.
- Trail lighting for improved night-time skiing, which could in turn support the supply of power to other areas of the golf course.



Municipal Golf Course



Winter ski trails at the golf course



FOURTH AND FOREST POCKET PARK

Park Classification

Pocket Park

Size

0.21 acres

Existing Conditions

The small park is maintained as a green space in the summer with mostly turf and some newly planted trees. There are two benches, a little free library, large boulder, and a wood chip path that cuts through the park. The park is in good condition, however the wood chip path is deteriorating.



Benches, little free library, and wood chip path



Pocket Park

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass and landscaping in the summer.

Facilities and Amenities

- Benches
- Little free library

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- Rezone from Suburban Residential (RS) to future Parks Zoning District.



ELSON FAMILY REST STOP

Park Classification

Pocket Park

Size

0.72 acres

Existing Conditions

The small pocket park is located adjacent to the Unity Trail and was acquired through a donation by James A. Elson and Jo Ann Elson in June 2005 to be used as a park or rest stop. The park has a path connection from the Unity Trail and a picnic table.

Maintenance and Operations

This site is a natural, low-maintenance area with no grass or permanent landscaping. The P&R Department performs intermittent inspections during the summer, checking the path, infrastructure, and overall condition of the site.



Picnic area at Elson Family Rest Stop

Facilities and Amenities

- Picnic Table

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- Manage the land in accordance with the donation requirements.
- Rezone from Rural Residential (RR) to future Parks Zoning District.



CUNNINGHAM PARK

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

2.16 acres

Existing Conditions

The park land was donated to the City by Martha Cunningham in 1971 with a deed requirement that the property be used for a public park and a reversion clause in the event the property was not used as a park. The park was constructed under a Land and Water Conservation Fund grant in 1973. It serves as a park on the Kenai River and is one of the few areas in the Lower Kenai River that provides public access for bank fishing. It is a popular fishing destination for locals and tourists, particularly in the fall during the silver salmon season.

A boardwalk was built along the uplands of the Kenai River to protect the banks from erosion, providing a great example of a bank restoration project similar to those occurring in other sections of the river. There are two access points on either end of the boardwalk to the banks of the Kenai River. All facilities are in good condition.

Maintenance and Operations

During the summer, the P&R Department maintains the green space, landscaping, and vault toilet.

Facilities and Amenities

- Boardwalk and Kenai River access
- Bank fishing
- Interpretive display
- Bicycle repair station
- Trash receptacle (not bear proof) and benches
- One vault toilet
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Community input identifies Cunningham Park as enjoyable to the community for its connection to the Kenai River and as a scenic viewpoint. Many respondents use the park for fishing or to passively watch people fishing and enjoy the boardwalk. It is also used as a turn around or stop off point for people biking on the bike trail. Desired improvements include a fish cleaning table, more benches or sitting areas to view the river, improved restroom facilities, restoration efforts for the weeds, and more overall maintenance of the trash and restroom facilities.

Opportunities

Cunningham Park is an enjoyable river side area for passive recreation and the public feels it serves the needs of the community. There is a sizeable area of maintained grass that is underutilized and could be reduced through naturalization efforts. The boardwalk provides a nice viewing opportunity and protects the bank from erosion caused by foot traffic; however, there is only one bench accessible on the boardwalk and overall, the boardwalk is narrow and doesn't offer a comfortable place to sit and enjoy the scenery. Expanding on the boardwalk to create a seating node with interpretive panels would be a nice addition to the park.

Recommendations

- Improve seating and add interpretive panels on the boardwalk.
- Invasive plant species management, restoration of natural areas.
- Reduce maintained grass area and promote more naturalization around the edges. Maintain the central area as mowed, but let the other spaces naturalize.
- Improve pedestrian access to the river on east side of park by hardening a trail to high tide line.
- The restroom will need to be upgraded or replaced in the mid-term.
- Rezone from Rural Residential (RR) to future Parks Zoning District.



Stair access from the boardwalk to the riverbank



River access with bench and foot brush



Fishing along the Kenai River at Cunningham Park



Park and boardwalk view



Restroom and parking



FIELD OF FLOWERS

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

3.03 acres

Existing Conditions

The Field of Flowers provides a popular amenity for locals and visitors with its transformative flower display. The field is seeded each spring, providing visitors with a beautiful backdrop of flowers. A bark mulch trail meanders around the field with a central spur. There is also a small gazebo located on the northeast portion of the field. Botanical information is displayed on small signs throughout the site.

The property has approximately 2,600 feet of frontage on the Kenai Spur Highway and was deeded to the City by the FAA with Airport Restrictions. There is no dedicated parking and the site and its facilities are not accessible.

All facilities are in poor condition with the gazebo in a fair condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The field is hydroseeded with wildflowers annually by a contractor and maintained and irrigated by the P&R Department.

Facilities and Amenities

- Wildflower field
- One gazebo
- Interpretive displays
- Mulch trail with benches
- On-street parking (limited)

Public Input

Overall, the community describes the Field of Flowers as a beloved destination. It is mainly used as a place to take pictures, to walk through and enjoy the flowers, or to enjoy as you drive by. Respondents identified a lack of parking or not knowing where to park as deterrents to visiting the Field of Flowers. Better maintenance for the structures, signage, and flower field was identified as needed. Some concerns were raised regarding the species of flower that is being used and creating a space that uses native Alaska wildflowers.

Opportunities

The Field of Flowers is a major draw for people in the community and those visiting or driving through. A developed master plan would be beneficial to layout designated wildflower beds, walking trails, updated interpretive signage, provide dedicated parking, and connections to the adjacent park activities. It is also recommended that the City work with a naturalist to ensure that they are planting native species and to develop a detailed implementation and maintenance plan.

There is also an opportunity to maintain the intent of the Field of Flowers, but relocate it to an existing park or event space, that can accommodate parking, is ADA accessible, and reduces maintenance load on the City. It is recommended that the City relocate the Field of Flowers to the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park site (as part of park redesign) on the north side with connections to the natural space west of the park.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Develop a park master plan.
- Rezone from Conservation (C) to future Parks Zoning District.



Park gazebo



Perimeter trail around field of flowers



Park entrance sign



KENAI MUNICIPAL CEMETERY AND CEMETERY EXPANSION

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

7.13 acres

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Municipal Cemetery and Cemetery Expansion consists of the original cemetery grounds and the expansion, both enclosed with decorative fencing. The original section became fully reserved in 2025, though it is not yet fully occupied. The site includes a columbarium, a memorial gazebo, and landscaped grounds that support year-round visitation and memorial activities. The expansion is not fully developed, and a full site plan is underway to include water access, a veterans' area, a columbarium, and additional plots.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department provides regular grounds maintenance, including mowing, trimming, grave-site care, and seasonal cleanup. Snow removal is conducted in the winter to maintain access. The City Clerk's office manages plot reservations for the cemetery.

Each year, the American Legion performs an Avenue of Flags ceremony on Memorial Day. They also help maintain the flagpole.

Facilities and Amenities

- Landscaped cemetery grounds
- Columbarium
- Memorial gazebo
- Avenue of Flags
- Decorative fencing surrounding both sections of off-road parking

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Opportunities

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Complete long-term site plan to include additional parking, its parking development, and the veteran's area.



Cemetery Entrance



Columbarium

KENAI CITY DOCK

Park Classification

Special Use Park or Facility

Size

12.54 acres

Existing Conditions

City Dock is the community’s primary boating access for the Kenai River. It is extremely popular for locals and the thousands of visitors who come to the community in summer for angling. The facility includes a large gravel parking lot, four-lane boat launch, and large commercial dock on the Kenai River. The dock is not available to the public and is for commercial use only. The facility includes seasonal toilets and trash cans. The facility is fee based during the personal use fishery for parking and use of the boat launch. A large portion of the southern portion of the park is in a natural tidelands setting.

All facilities are in good to excellent condition; however, congestion is a significant concern during the personal use fishery.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the facilities and turf areas.

Facilities and Amenities

- Four lane launch ramps
- Parking lot (238 vehicles with trailers, 12 accessible spaces for vehicles with trailers, 45 vehicles, 8 accessible spaces for vehicles)
- Running water toilets (summer use)
- Trash cans
- 170-foot commercial dock with three cranes (5,500 lbs capacity), not available to the public.

Public Input

No public input was received on this area; however, City Dock was the subject of 2022 master planning as part of the Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment.

Recommendations

- Implement the recommendations outlined in the Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment.



Parking during fishing season



Boat launch

OPEN LAND & NATURAL SPACE

MILLENNIUM SQUARE

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

7.08 acres

Existing Conditions

Millennium Square consists of parcels 04705602, 04705805, and 04705870, with parcel 04705602 developed with the Scenic Bluff Overlook, grassy public area, and parking. Portions of the property have been identified for potential lease or sale to support future development of a town square. It is home to rugby games and weekly practices, soccer practices, general use, and Kenai's Fall Pumpkin Festival, Kite Festival and other events. There is no dedicated off-street parking.

The fields and shelter are in good condition but the fields have some drainage issues. The fields provide space for snow storage in the winter. There is no power, lighting or restrooms on site.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department preps the fields at the start of the season and performs weekly maintenance, including mowing and fertilizing. The local rugby club also considers this field their home and hosts annual cleanup and maintenance days each spring, providing volunteer support that helps keep the grounds in good condition.

Facilities and Amenities

- Open fields
- One small shelter with picnic table
- Off-street parking (limited at Scenic Bluff)

Public Input

Primary community use is for rugby practice and games and community events. General consensus feels that this is an underutilized area and respondents described improving the fields to be more vibrant or inviting and having better connections with the Scenic Overlook Bluff. Ideas included a destination amphitheater with seating that celebrates Kenai's unique history and culture and creates a natural place to gather. There was the desire to provide additional facilities (power, restrooms, shelters, parking) to better support festivals and community events. Creating a dedicated rugby field was also desired.

Opportunities

If the Kenai Sports Complex, Kenai Greenstrip and the Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park are developed as recommended in this study, the uses for Millennium Square could be relocated to these areas without the need to expand existing infrastructure and management. The desired Millennium Square facilities could be consolidated where new facilities are being proposed. To optimize other places in Kenai and focus resources on these other areas, there is an opportunity to reduce the burden and dispose of Millennium Square or hold for other community use rather than maintaining this underused area as open space. Maintain public access from Scenic Bluff Overlook to Leif Hansen Memorial Park.

The property has restrictions established by the FAA that should be considered when planning recreational facilities.

Recommendations

- Remove any sports use in the open space (relocated to Kenai Sports Complex).
- Remove any event use in the open space (relocate to Steve Shearer Memorial Ball Park, Kenai Greenstrip, or the Kenai Sports Complex).
- Dispose of land while maintaining public access from Scenic Bluff Overlook to Leif Hansen Memorial Park.



Small shelter at the edge of the field



Turf general use field looking north



Turf general use field looking south



SCENIC BLUFF OVERLOOK

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

4.03 acres

Existing Conditions

The Scenic Bluff Overlook is a large open grass space overlooking the Kenai River with a pergola that was donated in 2009. The ‘Bird Cage’ gazebo was built and donated to the City by Scott Hamann of Metal Magic and installed in 2009. It is available to rent and used as a location for weddings.

Erosion along the bluffs has made the river edge portion unstable. It is anticipated that approximately one third of the open space area could erode as part of the bank stabilization project.

Park facilities are limited but are in good condition. Erosion will be an ongoing concern that includes public safety.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the grass and landscaping in the summer.



Artistic gazebo

Facilities and Amenities

- One rentable pergola
- Interpretive displays
- Two trash receptacles
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Community input identifies the Scenic Bluff Overlook as an enjoyable location to eat lunch, take pictures, and enjoy the view. There is mention of undesirable activities that diminish the value of the park.

Opportunities

Scenic Bluff Overlook is a much-loved space in Kenai with exceptional views and connections to natural areas. Public input identified the desire to further celebrate Kenai’s unique history and culture, creating a natural place to gather, share, and learn.

The open space at Scenic Bluff Overlook is currently eroding due to the Kenai River; however, efforts are underway to stabilize the bank. At this time, it is recommended that the City maintain the open space at the Scenic Bluff Overlook as it is until the bank is stabilized and erosion has ceased. At that time, further planning elements could be developed for the open space areas.

Recommendations

- Provide a kiosk (or similar) and interpretive plaza to showcase and celebrate Kenai’s history and culture.
- Develop interpretive signs and wildlife viewing facilities along river edge and park.



Open space along the bluff

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL

Park Classification

Open Land and Natural Areas

Size

1.0 acres

Existing Conditions

Blue Star Memorial is a large, well-maintained green space during the summer months. The area features the Blue Star Memorial marker, several benches, and open landscaped grounds. The memorial is part of a national program that began during World War II to honor the service and sacrifice of America’s Armed Forces. The “Blue Star” comes from the tradition of families displaying service flags with blue stars to represent loved ones serving in wartime. Today, thousands of Blue Star Memorials are found across the country, each uniquely designed and often used as a gathering space for ceremonies on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other patriotic occasions.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department mows the grass, maintains the monument, and plants flowers in the planters surrounding the memorial.

Facilities and Amenities

- Blue Star Memorial
- Benches
- Planters
- Trash receptacle

Public Input

No public input received on this area.

Recommendations

- No recommendations.



Memorial sign and green space



TARBOX WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

Not applicable

Existing Conditions

The Tarbox Wildlife Viewing Platform was completed in 2009 through the combined efforts of ConocoPhillips Alaska, Kenai Watershed Forum, Keen Eye Birders, City of Kenai, State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The large elevated observation platform is accessible and allows viewing of the wetlands. The facility includes interpretive panels, a benches and trash can, and on-street parking. The facility is in excellent condition.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department performs annual cleaning and regular trash removal.

Facilities and Amenities

- Elevated viewing platform
- Interpretive displays
- Spotting scope, trash receptacle, and bench
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Community input describes this facility as a great location to look at the scenery, sunsets, wildlife, and watch dip netters in July. As part of the Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment, there was a desire to create an elevated boardwalk partially into the tidelands to improve hunter and wildlife viewing access. Adding spotting scopes and interpretive panels were also requested.

Opportunities

It is recommended the City move forward with implementing the recommendations outlined in the Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment which identifies improvements to this area including extending an elevated boardwalk.

Recommendations

- Implement the recommendations outlined in the 2022 Kenai Waterfront Revitalization Assessment.



Viewing platform with sign and fence



Bench and waste receptacle on platform



KENAI WILDLIFE VIEWING PLATFORM

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

Not applicable

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform is a Land and Water Conservation Fund project and was developed in 1990. Located along Bridge Access Road, this highway wayside has an elevated timber boardwalk structure, a spotting scope for viewing wildlife, and interpretive panels. The wayside includes a large paved parking lot.

This area has been traditionally used by waterfowl hunters and provides unique access opportunities for hunting in the fall months.

The facility is in fair condition and is in need of maintenance. Settling of the parking lot at the platform edge has created a barrier that prevents the viewing platform from being accessible.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department performs annual cleaning and regular trash removal.



Interpretive panels and spotting scope

Facilities and Amenities

- Timber viewing platform with benches
- Interpretive displays
- Spotting scope and trash receptacle
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Community input describes this facility as a great location to look at the scenery, sunsets, and wildlife. There is a desire to do a complete upgrade this facility.

Opportunities

The Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform is a well-used facility by locals and visitors. The facilities provided meet user expectations; however, are deteriorating and dated. Updating these facilities would continue to provide a positive experience for the community.

Recommendations

- Review site ADA accessibility plan
- Update and replace interpretive signage



View across Cook Inlet



KENAI NORTH BEACH

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

32.81 acres

Existing Conditions

This community beach-front area provides access to the north beach of the Kenai River and Cook Inlet. It is the most popular destination in Alaska in July due to the personal use fishery. There is a small paved area for parking, with a larger parking area that is unpaved. There are also vault toilets and camping is permissible during the dip net fishery season. Fees do apply during this time. North Beach is also used for halibut fishing and whale watching. Other times of the year this beach is a local favorite to walk, have bonfires, ride a fat bike, fish from shore, or fly a kite. The facilities are in good condition but can be undersized during the month of July.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department performs daily maintenance of the toilets and trash pick up during the summer months and less frequently during the rest of the year. They monitor beach access and use during the dip net fishery season.



North Beach during dip netting season

Facilities and Amenities

- Beach access
- Dip netting and fishing
- Camping (July 10-31)
- Trails
- Trash receptacle
- Vault toilets
- Off-street parking

Opportunities

North Beach is well-served. Public feedback identified the desire to have dedicated recreation areas with fire pits located near the beach and better striped parking in the parking lot. Ensuring the public stays on approved pathways to reduce impact on sand dunes has been a focus of the City. Opportunities include better regulatory signage.

Recommendations

- Dedicated recreation areas with fire pits
- Clear regulatory signage



Public Input

Community input describes Kenai North Beach as a great year round destination for locals and congested and chaotic during the dip net fishery season. There is the desire to better control vehicles on the beach and keep the area clean.

KENAI SOUTH BEACH

Park Classification

Open Land or Natural Space

Size

32.62 acres

Existing Conditions

Kenai South Beach sits at the south mouth of the Kenai River. Accessed at the end of Cannery Road, this site provides outstanding views of Kenai’s “Ring of Fire” to see up to 5 Cook Inlet volcanoes on a clear day.

From July 10-31 during the dip net fishery season the area is very popular with portions of the beach fenced off to control access and manage parking. During the rest of the year, it is a local favorite, similar to North Beach.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department performs daily maintenance of the toilets and trash pick up during the summer months and less frequently during the rest of the year. They monitor beach access and use during the dip net fishery season.

Facilities and Amenities

- Beach access
- Dip netting
- Camping (July 10-31)
- Trash receptacle
- Vault toilet
- Off-street parking

Public Input

Community input describes the area as a great year round destination for locals and congested and chaotic during the July fishery. There is the desire to better control vehicles on the beach and keep the area clean.

Opportunities

Kenai South Beach is well managed by the City. Opportunities include better regulatory signage or information distributed during the busy dip net fishery season. The City should install detailed regulatory signage on public awareness of parking, preserving habitat, and keeping Kenai’s beaches clean. Ensuring the public stays on public lands and not adjacent private lands is a concern as is impacts to the adjacent sand dunes.

Recommendations

- Clear regulatory signage



South Beach



Dip net fishery

TRAILS

The following inventories City trails; however, specific trail recommendations are not made as part of this master plan. A community wide trails master plan needs to be developed within a public process that will make trail specific recommendations and identify new trails and related facilities.

DAUBENSPECK FAMILY PARK LOOP TRAIL

Trail Use
Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length
0.25 miles

Existing Conditions
The route is a gravel path that loops around the pond, with multiple seating areas and a Story Walk maintained by the library. It also passes by our two rentable pavilions, the beach area, and the adjacent Kenai Bark Park.

Maintenance and Operations
The P&R Department maintains the trail during the summer months. In winter, the trail is not groomed but members of the public will still walk it.

- Facilities and Amenities**
- Trash cans
 - Path of 10,000 Steps signage
 - Benches
 - Vault Toilet

BERNIE HUSS MEMORIAL FITNESS TRAIL (RYAN’S CREEK TRAIL)

Trail Use
Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length
1.1 miles

Existing Conditions
This gravel trail follows Ryan’s Creek and forms part of the Bernie Huss Memorial Fitness Trail and is part of the Path of 10,000 Steps. It is frequently used by walkers, runners, and families. The corridor includes shaded areas, creek viewpoints, and informal wildlife viewing opportunities.

In 1984 the City formally changed the name from Ryan’s Creek Trail to the Bernie Huss Memorial Fitness Trail.

Maintenance and Operations
The P&R Department maintains the trail during the summer months.

- Facilities and Amenities**
- Trash cans
 - 9-hole disc golf course
 - Boardwalk segments
 - Path of 10,000 Steps signage

SHQUI TSATNU TRAIL (RICHKA CREEK)

Trail Use
Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length
650 feet

Existing Conditions
A dirt trail connecting 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue. Cuts across the creek and creates a walking connection between these two neighborhoods.

Maintenance and Operations
The P&R Department maintains the trail during the summer months.

- Facilities and Amenities**
- Trash cans
 - Benches
 - Bridge

EAST END TRAILS

Trail Use

Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length

1 mile

Existing Conditions

The trail system runs parallel to the disc golf course and provides a well-used walking route.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains this trail during the summer months and grooms a section of it in the winter to provide access to the ski trails. This winter route connects the high school and middle school, allowing the ski teams to reach the trail system.

Facilities and Amenities

- Trash cans
- Benches
- Seasonal portable toilet (summer)

LAWTON DRIVE EXTENSION

Trail Use

Multi-use: walking, biking, skiing, all-terrain vehicles, and snow machines.

Length

1.5 miles

Existing Conditions

This route runs adjacent to the Kenai Golf Course / Kenai Ski Trails winter network, but is not officially part of it. The corridor also serves as a utility access road. The route provides an informal connection between the neighborhoods surrounding Lawton Drive and Beaver Loop.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department does not maintain the trail during the summer months. In winter, the trail is groomed for Nordic ski use when conditions allow.

Facilities and Amenities

None.

KENAI SKI TRAILS

Trail Use

Multi-use: Nordic skiing and snow-shoeing.

Length

3.75 miles

Existing Conditions

The Kenai Ski Trails are located on the Kenai Municipal Golf Course and form an interconnected network of Nordic ski routes during the winter months. The system features a mix of open fairway skiing, gentle rolling terrain, and wooded sections.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department grooms the trails throughout the winter for both classic and skate-style skiing.

Facilities and Amenities

- Trash cans
- Seasonal portable toilet (summer)
- Bridges

MEEKS TRAIL

Trail Use

Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length

750 feet

Existing Conditions

Gravel trail connecting Old Town and providing a walkway to Kenai North Beach via a pedestrian bridge.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the trail during the summer months.

Facilities and Amenities

- Trash can
- Benches
- Path of 10,000 Steps signage
- Bridge

MUNICIPAL PARK WALKING TRAILS

Trail Use

Multi-use: walking, biking, non-motorized.

Length

0.5 miles

Existing Conditions

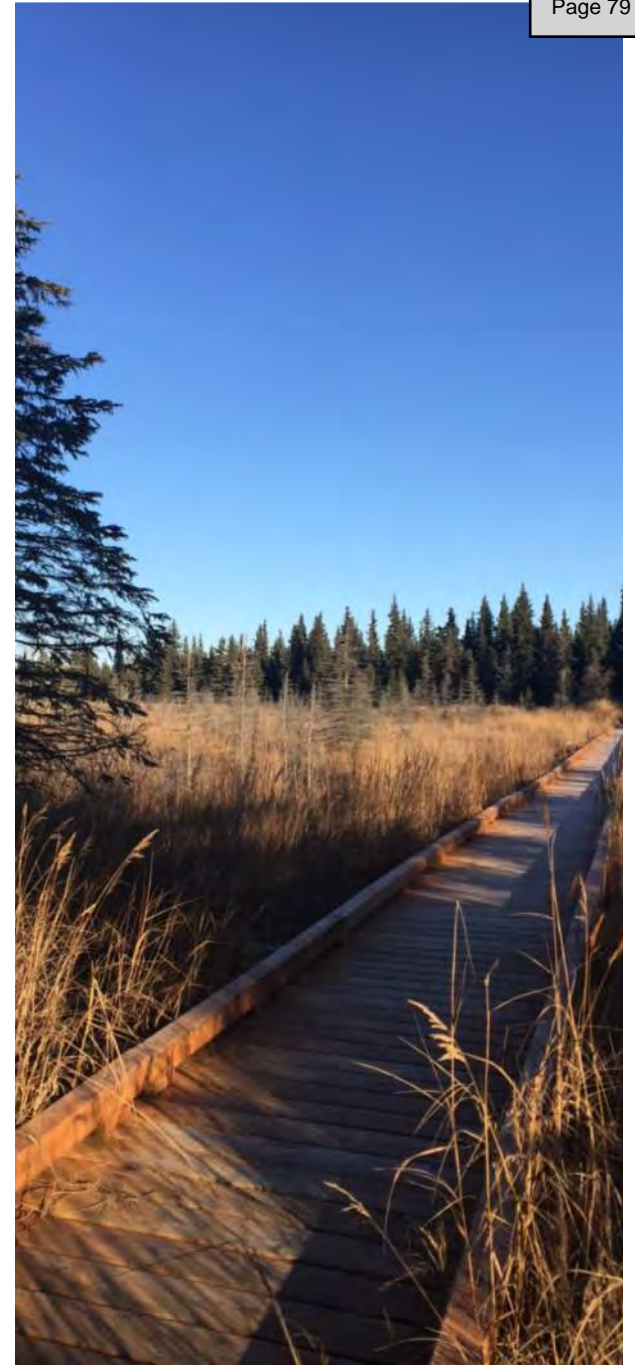
Municipal Park trails include a variety of trails and access to the Kenai Lions Club ADA-accessible viewing area overlooking the Cook Inlet. The park is located on a former campground, and its old access roads now serve as wide, well-packed dirt trails that provide year-round walking opportunities. It also serves as an access point to North Beach from the park.

Maintenance and Operations

The P&R Department maintains the trail during the summer months. During the winter, the P&R department plows the trail to provide a safe, off-road walking area.

Facilities and Amenities

- Trash cans
- Seasonal restrooms
- Informal creek viewpoints
- Path of 10,000 Steps signage
- Benches



Ryan's Creek Trail



Meeks Trail



Implementation



PARKS & RECREATION
MASTER PLAN

PRIORITIES

LOOKING AHEAD: INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

This portion of the 20-year Parks and Recreation Master Plan outlines the implementation and how the City of Kenai will maintain, improve, and strategically expand facilities and infrastructure over the next two decades. The master plan and the priorities serve as a roadmap to ensure public assets remain safe, functional, and aligned with community needs.

Built From Community Input

The priorities identified reflect:

- Public engagement and feedback
- Facility condition assessments
- Operational analysis
- Anticipated demographic and service trends



Field of Flowers

THE FIRST 5 YEARS

Through the City’s regular planning process for the 5-year capital plan, there is a current list of capital improvement projects. The first 5-years of priority projects will include already established City capital projects and some smaller recommendations from this plan.

List of top priorities for the next 5 years of departments

- Old Town Park-Playground replacement design
- Old Town Park-Playground replacement
- Multi-Purpose Facility-Replace locker rooms 1 and 2 and refurbishment of interior locker room 3, 4 and 5
- Multi-Purpose Facility-Roof replacement design
- Multi-Purpose Facility-Roof replacement
- Parks and Recreation Shop-Relocation design
- Parks and Recreation Shop-Relocation
- Multi-Purpose Facility-Enclosure feasibility study
- Multi-Purpose Facility-Refrigeration system replacement
- Improve and add Interpretive signage to Scenic Bluff Overlook, Municipal Park, Erik Hansen Park, Kenai Wildlife Platform, and Tarbox Viewing Platform
- Cunningham Park-Add a fish cleaning table
- Eagle Disc Golf Course-Additional signage
- Construct outdoor pickleball courts
- Develop and implement a turf reduction plan

- Review all parks and recreation zoning and change as needed
- Create design standards for all park signage, benches, and other equipment

THE NEXT 5 TO 10 YEARS

The second 5-year period focuses on some of the biggest projects recommended in this master plan and contains general projects that the Parks and Recreation Department anticipates in the next 10 years.

List of priorities for the next 5-10 years

- Kenai Sports Complex-Consolidation design
- Kenai Sports Complex-Phase 1 construction
- Kenai Sports Complex-Phase 2 construction
- Kenai Little League-Conversion into a campground
- Kenai Greenstrip-Design of community complex plan after relocating fields
- Leif Hansen Park-Gazebo replacement
- Recreation Center-Recreation room conversion
- Municipal Park-Playground replacement
- Cunningham Park-Vault toilet replacement
- Recreation Center-Lighting to full led conversion
- Recreation Center-Weight room refurbishment
- Recreation Center-Wallyball courts remodel
- Recreation Center-Entry/backroom remodel

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: YEARS 11–20

This section of the plan includes community input and anticipated longer range projects from the Parks and Recreation Department.

List of priorities years 11-20

- Beaver Creek Park-Playground replacement
- New Neighborhood Park (Location to be determined)-New neighborhood park and playground
- Eagle Disc Golf Course -Paving disc golf trail
- Kenai Skate Park-Park relocation
- Kenai Greenstrip-Playground replacement
- Kenai Greenstrip-New pavilion
- Daubenspeck Park-Vault toilet replacement
- Recreation Center-Roof replacement
- Kenai Municipal Golf Course-Warming shack at ski trails
- Kenai Wildlife Viewing Platform-Platform replacement
- Kenai Municipal Golf Course-Irrigation and power design
- Leif Hansen Park-Electrical replacement
- Kenai Greenstrip-Electrical replacement
- Recreation Center-Entry and parking lot improvements

A FLEXIBLE PLAN

The project priorities identified in this master plan represent a desired vision that exceeds current General Fund allocations. This is intentional, as it reflects the community and City desires while ensuring the stewardship of park and recreation assets. To implement this vision, the City will utilize a diversified funding strategy—including bonds, state and federal grants, private-public partnerships, and other funding sources to supplement traditional City funding.

Adaptive Management

The master plan’s twenty-year roadmap requires a living document approach. To remain responsive, the City will evaluate and recalibrate priorities based on the following:

- **Community Growth:** Monitoring demographic shifts and community expansion to ensure service levels keep pace with resident needs.
- **Facility Lifecycle:** Prioritizing reinvestment based on real-time assessments of assets and safety.
- **Financial Capacity:** Matching project timelines with the availability of specialized grants or favorable economic conditions.
- **Evolving Trends:** Adapting to changing recreational trends and needs to ensure facilities remain relevant for future generations.

The City reserves the right to accelerate specific priorities when new opportunities arise—such as grants and philanthropic gifts, land acquisitions, or new partnerships. Any proposed changes will be conducted with transparency, involving the public to ensure the community remains part of the master planning effort and any updates.

Five-Year Performance Audit

To maintain the integrity and momentum of this master plan, the Parks and Recreation Department will conduct a formal evaluation of this master plan every five years. This audit will serve three functions:

- **Accountability:** Reporting on completed projects and milestones achieved
- **Validation:** Re-evaluating asset conditions and deferred maintenance needs
- **Recalibration:** Updating the priority list to reflect the current fiscal conditions, opportunities, and community needs.

Through this audit process, the City ensures that the master plan remains not just a visionary document, but an actionable and resilient blueprint for the future of parks and recreation in Kenai.

FUNDING

OVERVIEW

This section provides general funding information for the City of Kenai, as well as a generic list of potentially available external funding opportunities. This information will become outdated as funding sources and opportunities change rapidly, and should be validated prior to pursuing any source.

CITY FUNDING

Capital Improvement Programs

A capital improvement program (CIP), or capital investment plan, is a plan for capital expenditures of a government to be incurred each year over a fixed period of future years. While policy guidelines vary, capital projects are generally expenditures for infrastructure, buildings and facilities, equipment, and land that are generally expensive (over a certain dollar amount), non-recurring, and have a useful life expectancy of more than one year. Large projects like park acquisition, park construction, and other recreation projects that require borrowing of funds can often be included in the City's CIP. Local government capital funds may be used as a match to apply for federal or state grants.

General Fund

The General Fund finances basic maintenance and operations and is not a consideration for funding major park projects. It is a consideration for funding staffing increases that may be needed if some new parks are built or expanded as outlined in the master plan.

Bonds

Local governments can finance large capital recreation projects by seeking approval from citizens to approve debt financing through a bond referendum or vote. Bonds are most useful for long-term debt for large capital projects.

GRANT FUNDING OPTIONS

Community Development Block Grant

Administration: Department of Urban Housing and Development (HUD). Alaska Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Division of Community and Regional Affairs.

Funding type and range: Single-purpose project grants up to \$850,000

Eligibility: For public facilities and planning activities. Non-profits may apply as co-applicants.

Timing: In a typical year, applications are distributed in late fall, and awards are made the following spring.

The CDBG is “a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs.” The amount for CDBG funding for a particular area is determined by HUD using a number of factors, including population growth and poverty level. Federal regulations require at least 51 percent of the population that benefits from funded projects or activities be low and moderate income.

Within Alaska, the CDBG provides funding annually to all Alaska communities, aside from Anchorage, for community development, which includes public facilities, and planning to address “issues detrimental to the health and safety of local residents and to reduce the costs of essential community services.” Additionally, the funding may be used to fund Special Economic Development activities that result in job creation for low and moderate income people.

Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program: Alaska

Administration: USDA, Rural Development Program

Funding type and range: The program offers three funding sources; low interest direct loans, grants, or a combination of the two. Federal share for grants is up to a maximum of 55 percent for communities with a population of less than 12,000. Program is open year round.

Eligibility: Federal, state, and local land management agencies, Tribes, and non-profits with legal agreements.

This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service and does not include private, commercial or business undertakings. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay project expenses that could include parks and playgrounds.

Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Program

Administration: Department of Interior, National Park Service (NPS).

Funding type and range: Grants that require a 50% match. Grant amounts may vary by grant cycle. In 2022 the minimum grant award was \$25,000 (project at least \$50,000), and the maximum was \$250,000 (project at least \$500,000).

Eligibility: State, regional, or local governments with the legal authority to provide park and recreation services on public lands.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a 50/50 matching and reimbursable program. Eligible project types are identified and prioritized in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Over 300 LCWF grants have been awarded in Alaska, including projects for developing or improving local parks and playgrounds. August 2020 the Great American Outdoors Act fully and permanently funded this program.

A community can generate the match through a number of ways, including cash or documented in-kind labor, goods and services, volunteer time, or donations.

Rasmuson Foundation Grants

Administration: Rasmuson Foundation

Funding type and range: Various options

Eligibility: Alaska based 501(c)(3) non-profits or local or tribal government.

The Rasmuson Foundation promotes civic responsibility and individual philanthropy amongst Alaskans; economic possibilities for Alaskans; educational opportunity for Alaskans; healthy Alaska families; quality health care for Alaskans; strong leaders; vibrant arts and culture in Alaska. The Foundation has been a strong supporter of parks, trails, and playgrounds projects in the past.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Administration: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Funding type and range: This is a low interest loan program intended to finance public infrastructure improvements.

It is required that 10% of the CWSRF be used for green infrastructure projects, many of which are or can be done in parks. Application deadlines vary depending on the specific state and type of project. The program provides loans for planning, design and construction.

Recreational Trails Program

Administration: Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Funding type and range: Federal share is up to 80 percent with Federal agencies able to provide additional Federal funds up to 95 percent. The maximum grant is \$300,000 for motorized and \$200,000 for non-motorized and non-motorized diversified trail projects.

Eligibility: Federal, state, and local land management agencies and non-profits with legal agreements.

Timing: Annual grant period, typically open in late summer and early autumn.

Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. Projects can include repair of existing trails, new trails, and acquisition of easements or property for trails. This grant can be used for maintaining public recreational trails and related facilities, and for safety and educational projects. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 reauthorized the RTP through fiscal years 2022-2026.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

Administration: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Funding type and range: Grants require a minimum 20% match. This percentage can be higher (sliding scale), depending on the amount of publicly owned Federal land in the state. Grant amounts vary by grant cycle. In FY 2020 the program had a budget of \$270 million.

Eligibility: State, regional, or local governments with the legal authority to manage transportation facilities including trails and other corridors.

Timing: The next request for proposals for the Alaska FLAP will likely be in 2026.

The Federal Lands Access Program was established to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The FLAP supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators. Approximately \$69.5 million in FLAP funds have been obligated in Alaska.

The Skatepark Project Grants

Administration: The Skatepark Project

Funding type and range: Grants of \$1,000 to \$25,000.

Eligibility: Provided to non-profit organizations and state or local agencies, including public schools.

Timing: Letters of Inquiry year-round and has quarterly award cycles.

The Skatepark Project is dedicated to promoting the construction of new, quality skateparks located in under-served communities throughout the United States. The Skatepark Project primarily supports projects that can demonstrate a strong grassroots commitment, particularly in the form of planning and/or fundraising by local skateboarders and other community groups. Priority is given to projects that are designed to increase equity, are built from concrete by experienced skatepark contractors and include local skaters in the process.

Federal Lands to Parks Program

Administration: Department of Interior, National Park Service (NPS)

The Federal Lands to Parks Program helps communities to acquire, reuse and protect surplus federal properties for local parks and recreation. States, counties, and communities may acquire federal land and buildings no longer needed by the federal government at no cost on condition they are protected for public parks and recreation. Since its inception in 1949, this program has transferred about 184,000 acres of land to state and local governments for parks and recreation use.

Community Built Playspace Grants

Administration: KABOOM!

Funding type and range: Funding for design, planning, equipment and community-build. Amount varies depending on project. Applicant is required to provide a portion of funding for purchase of play equipment.

Eligibility: Provided to non-profit organizations and state or local agencies, including public schools.

Timing: On-line application with extended open periods and award cycles.

Since 1996, KABOOM! has collaborated with partners to build, open or improve more than 16,700 playgrounds across the country. Projects are community-driven and include playgrounds, adventure courses, and multi-sport courts with a minimum of 2,000 square feet of improvements. The land manager is required to complete site preparation and demonstrate a community need for the playground. Community-Built Playspace grants are limited only to certain cities or areas for each funding cycle. At this time, Alaska is not one of the listed states for grant funding.

Playground Manufacturer Grants and Promotions

Various playground equipment manufacturers will occasionally hold promotional events where grants or discounted equipment is available to applicants. These tend to be revolving opportunities with specific application periods and are often not regularly scheduled. Many manufacturers have e-mail lists to receive product updates and promotional offers.

Corporate Grants

A variety of corporations provide money for community projects including parks and playgrounds. Amounts typically range from \$500 to 5,000 but some offer larger amounts. Corporations include Walmart, Kroger, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, REI, LL Bean, Subaru of America, and others and typically need to have a local presence for consideration.

OTHER FUNDING OPTIONS

Local Businesses and Organizations

Local businesses and community service organizations have supported parks and recreation. Local service clubs have successfully funded and provided labor for the repair and installation of new playgrounds and park improvements throughout Alaska. Volunteer groups that include local groups (Boy Scouts, labor unions, the Rotary Club, and others) as well as the many larger businesses such as the Home Depot and others often provide volunteer hours by their staff (and sometimes funding) for the communities they serve.

Park Foundation

The creation of a local Kenai Park Foundation non-profit as a 501(c)(3) would allow residents to advocate for and raise funds for parks and playground improvements in the community. Non-profits have additional access to funding and grants that a typical City government may not. Park Foundations have been established in Juneau, Sitka and Anchorage and are in the establishment stages for several other Alaska communities.

RESOURCES

The National Recreation and Park Association periodically posts information about grant and fundraising opportunities that are available for park and recreation agencies, affiliated friends group, and 501(c)(3) non-profits. These opportunities can be found at: <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Grant-Fundraising-Resources>



Public meeting

