Exploring open-space possibilities

Portland boasts an enviable system of parks and trails, treasured by residents and tourists alike. To continue to meet our needs, this system must grow as the city grows, and the community must come together to decide where additional open space should be protected. To further this goal, The Trust for Public Land is joining forces with Portland Trails and the City to spearhead creation of a system-wide plan for future open-space protection and improvement, the Portland Open Space Vision and Implementation Plan.

American cities large and small are creating similar visions. Some are planning for more equitable distribution of parks and playgrounds to low-income neighborhoods, while others are strategically siting green spaces to absorb stormwater and manage flooding.

Portland residents need to evaluate our priorities. Do we primarily value open space for recreation, to grow our food, or as green and climate-smart infrastructure? Or should our primary goal be the protection of natural beauty? Answers to such questions will help shape our shared vision, which in turn will help us determine where our community should grow and invest—which lands to develop and which to protect.

Perhaps the community will identify city-owned parcels for new open space. Or it may decide that future open space protection should be guided by the same values represented in our current park-and-trail system. Whatever we may ultimately decide, our goal is to develop a decision-making tool that allows us to make future open-space choices based on community priorities.
Portland's open-space visioning kicked off with a series of inclusive public meetings led by Portland Trails. The Trust for Public Land is employing award-winning GIS tools to map existing conditions and identify possible new open space opportunities. Following comment from community groups representing health, education, architecture, business, open space and other interests, we'll prioritize opportunities that meet community goals and develop practical ways to implement them.

**Phase 1: AUGUST 2014 – JANUARY 2015**
- Inventory existing reports, digital data, and maps related to open space
- Map and evaluate existing open spaces and improvements
- Facilitate a robust civic dialogue on the future of our parks and open spaces
- Conduct an online survey of residents on park needs and priorities

**Phase 2: FEBRUARY 2015 – AUGUST 2015**
- Analyze potential open space improvements by type and community needs
- Map priority parcels for protection or improvement based on values expressed in Phase 1
- Assess costs of priority maintenance along with resources available to meet them
- Assess public and private funding that might be available to meet open space needs
- Help to develop an accountable system for distributing resources
- Produce a report on all findings to help the city implement recommendations

**Partnering for Portland’s Future**
For more than 20 years, The Trust for Public Land, Portland Trails, and the City of Portland have been working together to protect and construct some of Portland's most cherished open space assets, including:

**The Eastern Prom Trail: 1993–1995**
A 2.1-mile waterfront trail along the Eastern Promenade and East End Beach, connecting Commercial St. with the Back Cove.

**Bayside Trail: 2006–2011**
A 1.2-mile urban greenway and recreational trail in the heart of the Bayside neighborhood—an important step in ultimately connecting the Back Cove and Eastern Prom trails with Deering Oaks Park.

**Canco Woods: 2012**
A 13-acre wooded urban oasis and wetland ecosystem threaded by a network of recreation trails in the Back Cove neighborhood.

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**The Trust for Public Land creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.**

For more information:

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