

4 Public Outreach & Community Engagement



Public Involvement

Engagement Process Overview

The Liberty Lake Parks and Recreation Master Plan was shaped by a layered engagement process conducted throughout 2025 and 2026. The city sought to reach residents through multiple methods, including online surveys, stakeholder conversations, interactive community events, and targeted capital improvement prioritization activities. This ensured broad participation from a wide variety of the community. Below is a summary of all engagement efforts and results. See Appendix B: Community Engagement Summary (*Page 208*) for all results.

Stakeholder Interviews: City staff from a variety of city departments, including Parks & Recreation, Community Development, Public Works, Police, Communications, and Parks & Arts Commission, identified early themes such as equitable access, maintenance needs, programming gaps, and opportunities for partnerships

Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey: 376 responses provided significant insight into how residents use parks, which amenities they value, and where they see opportunities for improvement.

Community Satisfaction Survey: 226 households responded, park maintenance ranked among the highest-rated city services, while recreation programs and trails were identified as priorities for additional focus. *A City-led survey assessed to support parks planning process.*

Kick-Off Workshop: On May 22, 2025, about 17 participants engaged in interactive stations to share their vision for future parks, prioritize features, and identify preferred public art.

Pop-Up Events: To reach a wider audience and interact directly with park users, several pop-ups were held at Pavillion Park, Orchard Park's Touch a Truck event, the Liberty Lake Farmers Market, the 4th of July celebration, and Barefoot in the Park. These events successfully gathered spontaneous feedback from families, youth, and seniors.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Engagement: Phase 2 engagement started with prioritizing park system investments through interactive "priority path" activities conducted at community and school-based events and through an online survey. This effort gathered detailed input on preferred capital projects and funding priorities. The CIP projects were then identified and brought back to the community through an online prioritization/funding tool to understand the community's priorities.

Engagement Activity and Response Summary

The city engaged the community through 10+ in-person events, stakeholder interviews, and multiple online surveys.

- 376 Needs Assessment survey responses;
- 268 online CIP prioritization responses;
- 402 online CIP Funding tool responses;
- Nearly 500 in-person CIP prioritization participants; and
- Approximately 1,950 interactive votes collected during Phase 1 pop-up activities.

In total, the process captured input from well over 1,000 unique participants, in addition to thousands of individual activity votes

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"Over 80% of residents said parks are very important to their quality of life."

Engagement Kick-Off Workshop

An open-house-style engagement kick-off was held in May 2025 to introduce the Parks and Recreation Master plan and gather early input from the community. Approximately 20 community members attended the workshop. The event provided residents with an opportunity to learn about the purpose and scope of the plan, ask questions, and share their thoughts about Liberty Lake's parks and recreation system.

Interactive stations were used to encourage participation and discussion. These stations focused on long-term vision, park experiences, public art, park features, and preferred types of play. Participants were invited to describe what success for the plan would look like and feel like in the future, as well as the sights, sounds, and experiences they associate with an ideal park system. Feedback emphasized parks as places that bring people together, support all ages and abilities and provide safe, welcoming environments for both active and passive recreation.

Key Priorities from the Engagement Kick-Off Workshop:

- Park features preferences:
  - Nature (35), shaded gathering spaces (26), and sports (24) received the highest interest through interactive polling
- Public art preferences:
  - Nature-inspired art (10) received the most votes among art options.
- Play preferences:
  - Natural-style play equipment (4) ranked highest, followed by traditional (2) and modern play elements (2).

Input gathered during the kick-off workshop helped shape the focus of subsequent engagement efforts.

Stakeholder Interviews

In addition to community-wide engagement, the city and project team conducted a small number of stakeholder interviews with city staff, department leadership, and advisory representatives early in the planning process. These interviews provided focused insight into park operations, facility conditions, service gaps, and long-term planning considerations.

Across interviews, stakeholders identified consistent themes related to equitable access to parks, aging facilities, deferred maintenance, and limited indoor recreation space, which constrains programming capacity. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship, trail connectivity, and proactive planning to address future growth as Liberty Lake approaches full build-out.

Stakeholder input reinforced many of the priorities identified through public engagement and helped inform recommendations related to capital investments, operations, partnerships, and implementation strategies.

Key Priorities from Stakeholder Interviews:

- Improve equity, access, and system capacity.
- Invest in existing assets and operations.
- Strengthen stewardship, connectivity, and partnerships.



Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey

Following the kick-off workshop, an online needs assessment survey was launched on May 23 and closed on July 22 to gather broader community input. The survey received 376 total responses, including 235 complete and 141 partial responses, providing a strong dataset for understanding systemwide trends and priorities.

Survey results demonstrated that parks and recreation are highly important to the overall quality of life in Liberty Lake. 82.9% of respondents rated parks and recreation as very important to their quality of life. In addition, 59.2% of respondents reported visiting the park closest to their home weekly or more often, indicating frequent use of neighborhood parks and trails. Natural features and open space were consistently rated as system strengths, with over 80% of respondents rating natural features and open space as excellent or pretty good.

Physical Activity

Walking and biking paths, playgrounds, picnic shelters, and open space were among the most commonly used amenities. More than 50% of respondents reported using walking and biking paths, children's play structures, and picnic shelters within the past year, reinforcing the importance of these core park amenities.

Park Improvements

When asked about desired improvements, respondents expressed a strong interest in expanded recreation programming. Camps and classes were selected by nearly half of the respondents, making them the most desired program type. Water-based recreation and outdoor nature programs were each selected by 44.7% of respondents, reflecting strong interest in both aquatic amenities and nature-based experiences. Aquatic amenities, including swimming opportunities, emerged as a recurring theme throughout survey responses, with many respondents noting they currently travel outside of Liberty Lake for swimming lessons, aquatic exercise, and family water recreation.

Barriers to Use

The survey also identified several barriers that limit park use. 41.6% of respondents indicated they are unsure about what parks and recreation programs are available, making this the most commonly cited barrier. 27.9% reported that facilities are overcrowded or frequently booked, while 16.2% cited being too busy or parks not being a priority. Lack of shade, limited restroom access, and accessibility concerns also appeared in both structured responses and write-in comments, highlighting the importance of comfort amenities and equitable access across the park system.



Public Art

Public art was addressed through multiple survey questions. Respondents showed the strongest preference for interactive and nature-inspired public art and identified parks as locations where art can enhance a sense of place, support community identity, and create engaging destinations.

Key Priorities from the Needs Assessment Survey:

- Top desired recreation programs:
  - Camps and classes (~50% of respondents)
  - Water-based recreation (44.7%)
  - Outdoor nature programs (44.7%)
- Most frequently requested system improvement: Aquatic amenities, including swimming opportunities
- Top valued amenities: Trails, open space, playgrounds, and picnic areas (each used by over 50% of respondents)
- Most commonly cited barriers:
  - Uncertainty about available programs (41.6%)
  - Overcrowded or booked facilities (27.9%)
  - Lack of shade and restroom access (Common write-in response)

Overall, survey results reinforced the importance of parks as everyday spaces for recreation and connection, while identifying specific needs related to programming, amenities, comfort, and system capacity that informed subsequent engagement and plan recommendations.

Pop-Up Engagement Events

To complement the survey and reach residents in more informal settings, a series of pop-up engagement events were held throughout summer 2025 at parks and community gatherings, including Pavillion Park, Orchard Park, and Town Square Park. These events engaged hundreds of participants, including families, children, and individuals who may not typically attend formal public meetings.

Pop-up activities relied on visual and interactive tools such as sticker-dot boards, pom-pom polls, and image-based preference exercises. Topics included preferred types of play, desired recreation amenities and programs, and public art. The pop-up format proved especially effective for engaging families and youth, allowing participants of all ages to provide input in accessible and engaging ways.

Across pop-up events, participants consistently expressed interest in water features, play opportunities, nature-based amenities, and shaded gathering spaces. Recreation programming preferences closely aligned with survey results, and public art activities revealed interest in interactive, nature-inspired, and community-created art.

Key Priorities from Phase 1 Pop-Up Engagement:

- Pom-Pom Poll (1,950 total votes):
  - Water: 409 votes
  - Play: 395 votes
  - Nature: 372 votes
- Recreation programs and activities (555 total votes):
  - Water & recreation: 102 votes
  - Camps & classes: 95 votes
  - Youth sports leagues: 85 votes
- Public art preferences (235 total votes):
  - Interactive art: 80 votes
  - Nature-inspired art: 57 votes
  - Sculptures: 30 votes

Feedback from pop-up events helped validate survey findings while providing additional insight into how residents experience specific parks and amenities.



Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Engagement

Phase 2 of the public involvement process focused on gathering more detailed input to inform updates to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Capital Improvement Program. The Capital Improvement Program will inform park improvements over the next 1-6 years. During fall 2025, targeted pop-up engagement events were held at well-attended community and school-based events, including the Liberty Lake Municipal Library Halloween Event (nearly 325 participants), Liberty Lake Elementary STEM Night (approximately 100 participants), and a Girl Scouts meeting (approximately 15 participants).

A priority path activity was used to guide participants through decisions related to park system investments and funding priorities. This interactive, decision-tree format encouraged participants to consider tradeoffs and identify the improvements they believe should be prioritized. A youth-friendly activity was also provided to ensure younger participants understood planning before completing the activity, so they could meaningfully engage.

To broaden participation, the same priority path activity was offered through an online survey, which received 268 responses. Participants were first asked whether they were Liberty Lake residents, allowing results from both the in-person and online engagement to be summarized by resident and non-resident participation. Results from both engagement formats were then combined to identify consistent priorities across all responses.

Key Priorities from CIP Engagement:

Overall Park System Priorities (487 votes):

- Community Pool: 224 votes
  - Resident: 201
  - Non-Resident: 23
- New Playground Equipment: 66 votes
  - Resident: 54
  - Non-Resident: 12
- New Trails: 63 votes
  - Resident: 55
  - Non-Resident: 8

Overall Funding Priorities (511 votes):

- Natural-Style Play Equipment: 148 votes
  - Resident: 125
  - Non-Resident: 23
- Free Community Events: 85 votes
  - Resident: 72
  - Non-Resident: 13
- Traditional-Style Play Equipment: 55 votes
  - Resident: 46
  - Non-Resident: 9

Fund it Tool

After the results from the priority path activity were analyzed and compared with earlier engagement findings, a list of potential capital projects was developed and presented back to the community through an online “fund-it tool.” This activity allowed participants to allocate 500 points across a range of proposed projects, with point values assigned based on the relative scale and estimated cost of each improvement. The exercise encouraged participants to consider tradeoffs while identifying which investments they believed should be prioritized.

The results of this activity helped further refine the Capital Improvement Program by highlighting the projects that received the highest level of community support. Using a required zip code question, 79.6% of respondents were identified as Liberty Lake residents. The top five projects identified through this tool are shown below and represent the projects funded by the highest percentage of respondents.

Key Priorities from Fund It Tool:

- Feasibility & Site Planning Study: Community Pool (81.2%)
- Pavillion Park Playground Renovation 67.7%
- Orchard Park Playground Shade 61.8%
- The Pavillion Park Splash Pad (59.4%)
- Orchard Park Tree Canopy Project (57.7%)

This Capital Improvement Program (CIP) engagement directly influenced the final CIP for the City of Liberty Lake's Parks and Recreation Plan.

Key Takeaways from Engagement

Community members expressed pride in Liberty Lake's parks system while highlighting opportunities to expand programming, add new facilities, improve trails, and ensure equitable access.

Recreation Programming

Residents want more programs that are inclusive, diverse, and accessible:

- **Camps & classes:** nature exploration, STEAM, arts & creativity
- **Water recreation:** learn-to-swim programs, splash events, kayaking & paddleboarding
- **Youth leagues:** soccer, volleyball, baseball
- **Inclusive options for seniors, families, and people with disabilities**

Facilities & Amenities

High-priority facilities and amenities include:

- **Aquatic center/public pool** (the top request across all engagement)
- **Indoor community/recreation center** for year-round use
- Expanded **sidewalks & trails** linking neighborhoods to parks
- **More amenities overall:** benches, shelters, restrooms, shade structures, and dog areas

Playgrounds

Families called for shaded, inclusive, and engaging play areas:

- **Traditional equipment:** swings, slides, merry-go-rounds
- **Natural features:** hillside slides, climbing areas, nature play zones
- **Core activities:** swinging, climbing, and sliding

Trails & Connectivity

Trails are among the most beloved assets, with the Centennial Trail standing out. Residents want:

- Expanded **neighborhood trail connections**
- A **5–15-minute walk standard** for park access
- **Better lighting, signage, and safety**
- **ADA accessibility** for all ages and abilities
- **Conservation values** integrated into trail planning

Public Art

Residents view public art as an opportunity to reflect Liberty Lake's identity:

- **Interactive and nature-inspired installations**
- **Murals & mosaics** on benches, planters, and walls
- **Historical & cultural themes** celebrating heritage and inclusivity
- **Key locations:** gathering spaces, park entryways, trails, and playgrounds

Community Values & Experiences

Residents consistently described parks as central to Liberty Lake's identity. They want:

- **Safe, well-lit spaces** with good visibility
- **Natural areas & shade** for comfort and conservation
- **Accessible parks** for all ages, abilities, and income levels
- Stronger **outreach and communication** so residents know about available programs
- **Continued support for signature events** such as Barefoot in the Park, Home for the Holidays, Pavillion Park concerts, and the Farmers Market

Overall Insight

Liberty Lake residents are proud of their parks and eager to see them evolve. The strongest priorities are creating a pool/aquatic center, building an indoor community center, expanding trails, upgrading playgrounds, and maintaining existing facilities. At the same time, residents emphasized safety, accessibility, natural spaces, and public art as ways to strengthen community connection.

