

A large, vibrant photograph of a splash pad at a park. The scene is filled with people of various ages, including many children, who are playing in the water. The splash pad is surrounded by tall, mature pine trees, and a building with a covered walkway is visible in the background. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny, suggesting a warm day.

# 2024 - 29 strategic plan

**BEND PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT**

Bend, Oregon | [bendparksandrec.org](http://bendparksandrec.org)

October 15, 2024

*play for life*



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS: 2024-25

Jodie Barram, Board Chair  
Donna Owens, Vice Chair  
Nathan Hovekamp  
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## EXECUTIVE TEAM

Michelle Healy, Executive Director  
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Kathleen Hinman, Human Resources Director  
Theresa Albert, Human Resources Director (*Outgoing*)  
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Brian Hudspeth, Planning & Development Director  
Matt Mercer, Recreation Services Director

## STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECT TEAM

Rachel Colton, Park Planner,  
Strategic Plan Project Manager  
Kristin Toney, Administrative Services Director  
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## DISTRICT STAFF

More than 200 district staff members participated in and contributed to the development of the Strategic Plan.

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For more on the  
2024-29 Strategic Plan,  
visit [bendparksandrec.org/  
strategicplan](http://bendparksandrec.org/strategicplan)







# strategic plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning for the future of Bend Park and Recreation District is one of the most important things we can do to assure that the resources we are entrusted to manage are of maximum benefit to our community and visitors.

The Bend Park and Recreation District's Strategic Plan guides our organization on how to best bring our mission and values to life for the next five years (Fiscal Year 2024-25 to Fiscal Year 2028-29). As we embark on this next strategic journey, our focus remains on leveraging our strengths, addressing weaknesses, capitalizing on opportunities, and navigating potential threats in sustainable ways to enable us to be the most efficient and effective organization.

The Strategic Plan is an internally focused document that identifies our vision, mission, community pledge, organizational values and the strategies to help us achieve our identified strategic goals. It is used to help inform our long-range plans and budgets, and will be used by staff in their day-to-day operations, decision-making, and long-term planning.

This plan is more than a guide; it is a testament to our dedication to providing recreational services, maintaining and growing our parks and trails, and fostering a sense of community connection and pride. With the next five years of growth and change ahead, we remain confident that we have a talented, dedicated and enthusiastic team in position to provide amazing parks, trails, facilities, recreation programs, and events that will help Bend residents and visitors play for life.



## our vision

To be a leader in building a community connected to nature, active lifestyles and one another.

## our mission

To strengthen community vitality and foster healthy, enriched lifestyles through parks, trails and recreation.

## community pledge

To reflect our community, welcome and serve equitably, and operate with transparency and accountability.



## we value

**COMMUNITY** by interacting in a responsive, considerate and efficient manner to create positive patron experiences and impact in the community.

**INCLUSION** by reducing physical, social and financial barriers to our programs, facilities and services, and making them more equitable for all.

**SAFETY** by promoting a safe and healthy environment for all who work and play in our parks, trails, facilities and programs.

**STAFF** by honoring the diverse contributions of each employee and volunteer, and recognizing them as essential to accomplishing our mission.

**SUSTAINABILITY** by fostering a balanced approach to fiscal, environmental and social assets to support the health and longevity of the district, the environment and our community.



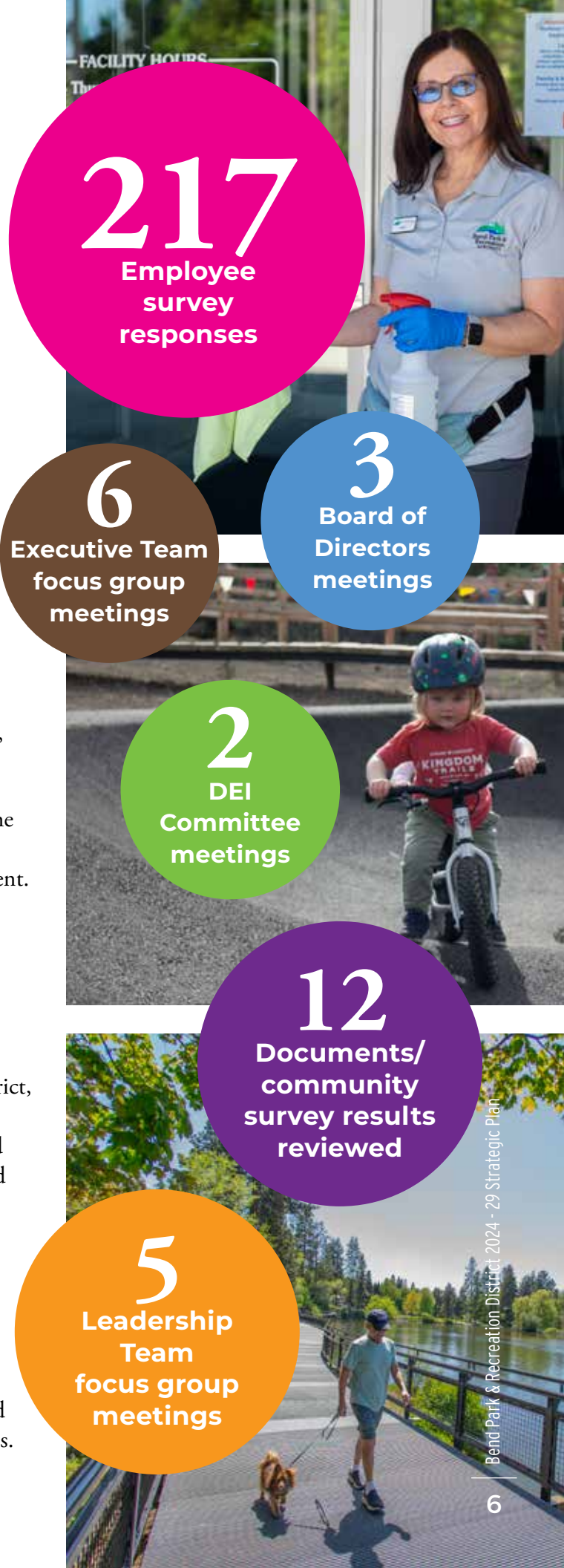
# planning & engagement process

This intentional and flexible plan was developed through a comprehensive process that was driven by data, and staff, board and community feedback. Key elements of plan development include:

**DATA REVIEW:** Having a solid foundation was critical to the development of this plan. In order to ensure the plan was informed by relevant data, the team reviewed a dozen data sources, including, but not limited to the current Strategic Plan, 2018 Comprehensive Plan, 2022 Community Perception Survey, 2022 Employee Survey, 2022/2023 Recreation Annual Report, 2023 Community Needs Assessment Survey, applicable district policies, Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan, and the district's mission, vision and values.

**STAFF & BOARD ENGAGEMENT:** Given the internal facing nature of this document, extensive staff and board engagement was a critical element of plan development. This included the opportunity for all staff members to take a survey to provide feedback on the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), as well as focus groups with the board, executive team and leadership team to discuss this same topic. This engagement included numerous focus groups to reach alignment around the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the district, which ultimately played a critical role in the development of key plan elements. The entirety of staff was kept engaged as the process progressed through regular email updates and feedback opportunities.

**DRAFT PLAN DEVELOPMENT:** The draft plan was developed and reviewed internally before it was posted to the district's website for public and board review. The district's board provided feedback on the plan at a publicly noticed meeting where the community also had the opportunity to provide feedback. The plan was finalized after consideration of all feedback and relevant plan updates.



## strengths

- **ASSETS** – well maintained parks, trails and facilities
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT** – positive reputation
- **FUNDING** – dedicated funding and fiscally responsible
- **PROGRAMMING** – diverse and high-quality offerings
- **STAFF** – talented, dedicated, passionate and knowledgeable

## weaknesses

- **COMMUNICATION** – internal and external
- **FACILITY/PROGRAM CAPACITY** – high demand/use
- **STAFF CAPACITY** – high workloads
- **STAFFING & STAFF TURNOVER**
- **WAGES/BENEFITS** – be competitive and recognize cost of living

# SWOT Analysis

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis is a method that yields data to help organizations develop goals and strategies to meet their objectives, improve efficiency and fulfill their missions. The analysis was a key part of our plan's development. Each SWOT element received more than 300 individual comments which were distilled to the five bullets shown here, exemplifying the key messages heard.

## opportunities

- **CHANGING COMMUNITY/WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS**
- **FUNDING OPTIONS** – more grants and alternative funding
- **MAINTAIN** – take care of assets and protect natural resources
- **PARTNERSHIPS** – expand and enhance partnerships
- **PROGRAM & ASSET FOCUSED EXPANSION** – expand in key areas

## threats

- **AFFORDABILITY** – for the district, its employees and the community
- **CLIMATE** – ice storms, high heat, poor air quality and fires
- **COMPETITION FOR DISTRICT FUNDING & STAFF**
- **CRIME & MISBEHAVIOR**
- **RAPID POPULATION GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT**





# guide to the strategic plan

The key elements of this strategic plan are the foundational priorities, goals and strategies. They exemplify what is important to the district, what we are trying to achieve as we look towards the future, and how we will achieve it.

## priorities

Key focus area in which the district will invest time, energy and resources.

## goals

Outcomes intended to result from the district's dedication of resources, attention, and effort to help achieve a desired future state.

## strategies

Define where the district will focus our efforts to achieve established goals.







# priorities

Throughout the strategic planning process, a theme of priorities became clear. These priorities are the key focus areas that will help us achieve our long-term vision, and where we will invest time, energy and resources.

These are the areas in which the district will invest time, energy, and resources.

**team**  
**service**  
**community**







priorities, goals and strategies

# team

**GOAL 1:** Attract and retain qualified employees at staffing levels that support desired service levels

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Align recruitment, on-boarding and retention practices with the desired needs, work experiences and work practices of employees
- b. Build staffing plans to maintain the desired level of service
- c. Be competitive with other employers' wages and benefits

**GOAL 2:** Foster a workforce that is heard, informed, involved and valued

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Continue to develop a collaborative and welcoming work culture across departments and between all levels of the organization
- b. Offer diverse recognition and appreciation programs





priorities, goals and strategies

# team

**GOAL 3: Invest in the growth and development of all district employees**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Support a culture of learning and growing by providing support for staff to access training
- b. Provide opportunities for employees to contribute in areas beyond their daily activities, and advance in the organization

**GOAL 4: Support the well-being and safety of all district employees**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Keep up with changing workforce needs and adapt how the district works to enhance employee experiences
- b. Identify opportunities to enhance a welcoming, safe and inclusive work environment



priorities, goals and strategies

# service

**GOAL 1: Maintain quality, clean and safe parks, trails and facilities**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Take care of what we have by prioritizing investment in existing assets
- b. Develop and use data and best practices to increase work efficiency, and use benchmarks to track progress over time

**GOAL 2: Support the recreational needs of an evolving community through programming, parks, trails and facilities**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Maintain adopted levels of service targets for parks, trails and facilities
- b. Monitor and adapt programming to meet community needs

**GOAL 3: Steward fiscal resources, and further environmental and social sustainability**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Use financial modeling and other planning tools to holistically evaluate, plan and forecast necessary expenditures for system expansion, operations and maintenance
- b. Continue efforts to be responsible stewards of the natural environment and evaluate and identify opportunities to respond to changing environmental conditions
- c. Provide opportunities for building community connections and foster belonging





priorities, goals and strategies

# community

**GOAL 1: Deliver positive patron and community experiences by offering services that are accessible, responsive to patron feedback, and welcoming to all**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Develop and redevelop parks, trails and facilities to ensure they are welcoming and inclusive
- b. Plan and create welcoming, inclusive, safe and accessible opportunities and programs that address barriers to participation

**GOAL 2: Expand and leverage collaborations to increase impact**

**STRATEGIES:**

- a. Dedicate resources to seek grant and alternative funding opportunities to support priorities
- b. Strategically align with partners that enhance the district's efforts



## plan implementation

This plan is intentionally broad and adaptable, in order to support creativity and allow for changing conditions. It does not include actions or performance measures, which are intended to be developed as part of plan implementation. These actions should align not only with the goal and strategies within the plan, but also the district's budget and staff workloads. Identified actions are intended to not just be a box to check off. They should be something that truly moves the needle in helping the district meet its identified goals.

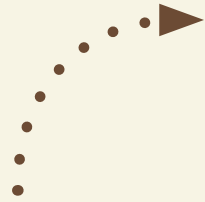
The district's leadership team will be responsible for development and completion of actions, in partnership with the strategic planning team. The recommended process for plan implementation is illustrated on the following page. The first year of this process will be unique given that no actions have been developed to date.

In addition to the quarterly leadership team meetings identified on the next page, action specific meetings may occur as necessary to help facilitate completion of action items. The intent of the Annual Strategic Plan Cycle graphic is to illustrate the broad scope of what the leadership team will address at each of the quarterly meetings.

To help the district track progress towards achieving goals identified within the plan, performance measures will be refined, developed and tracked. The district currently has a total of 14 performance measures that were developed as part of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, which will be re-evaluated as part of the implementation of this Strategic Plan. As part of the quarterly leadership team meetings, the Strategic Plan team will present opportunities for adding, removing and changing existing performance measures to better align with this Strategic Plan. Performance measure updates will be provided to the board annually at the board workshop.



ANNUAL  
**STRATEGIC  
PLAN**  
CYCLE



**FALL**

Develop actions and identify champions to lead work for each strategy. After year one, the team will report on action item status, and re-evaluate and add/remove actions as necessary.



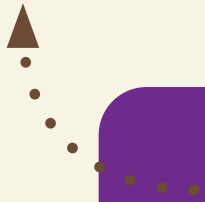
**WINTER**

Report on action item progress and amend actions as necessary. Evaluate existing performance measures and consider new ones. Prepare for Strategic Plan update at annual board workshop.



**SPRING**

Report on action item progress and finalize any action item changes.



**SUMMER**

Discuss action item progress and amend actions as necessary. Prepare for Strategic Plan action item update during board work session.





**The future is not  
some place we are going to,  
but one we are creating.**

**~ John Schaar,  
American Political Theorist**

*play for life*