

Recreation Services Director Jase Newton and Cathi Ellis presented the opening and operating plan for the Art Station. Construction was approved in 2023, began in 2025 and was anticipated to be completed in August 2026, with programs expected to begin in September. The approximately \$4.3 million facility is planned to operate seven days per week for about 350 days annually, with holiday and maintenance closures, and is expected to add approximately 1,500 annual programming hours. A public grand opening is scheduled for October 11 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Staff explained that programming decisions were informed by participant surveys, three years of enrollment and cancellation data, and program waitlists. Survey responses showed continued interest in ceramics and pottery, as well as painting, drawing, and mixed media, one-time workshops and supervised open studio use. Existing programs will be distributed among the Art Station, Harmon Clay Studio and Bend-La Pine Schools based on equipment needs, target audiences, parking impacts and program schedules. The new facility will support larger class capacities, expanded program offerings, rentals, therapeutic recreation and future arts disciplines.

Board members discussed communications about Larkspur parking, participant evaluation, scholarship accessibility, the pace of facility growth, custodial coverage and future rentals. Staff said evaluations are sent after registered programs and may be expanded to ask specifically about the Art Station experience. Staff also noted that scholarship use was below the budgeted allocation, providing flexibility to absorb additional demand. The operating model will include Arts and Enrichment staff during daytime business hours, instructor access during evening programs and custodial service five evenings each week. Programming will be monitored and adjusted using participation, waitlist and community feedback data. The Board expressed appreciation for the data-driven and flexible approach.

2. Bend La-Pine School District Partnership

Recreation Services Director Jase Newton, Cathi Ellis and David Kieffer reviewed the district's intergovernmental agreement and long-standing partnership with Bend-La Pine Schools. The five-year agreement was last updated in 2023 and is scheduled for renewal in 2028. The partnership provides reciprocal access to facilities, supports efficient use of public resources and expands recreation opportunities for students, families and the broader community. During the reporting period, the district used school facilities for approximately 22,715 program hours and served 8,094 participants across elementary and middle schools, gyms, fields, courts and the transition co-op building. Programs included therapeutic recreation, Kids Inc., early-release enrichment offerings and youth and adult sports. Bend-La Pine Schools used district facilities for more than 8,000 hours, including aquatics, athletic tournaments, practices, games, park and rental hall activities, and use of Vince Genna Stadium. Staff emphasized that reciprocal access reduces duplicate public investment and substantially expands both agencies' capacity. Board members expressed appreciation for the scale and quality of the partnership and asked how coordination occurs and whether additional opportunities remain. Staff described ongoing coordination among facility schedulers, school administrators, athletic directors and program teams, supported by periodic longer-range planning conversations. Staff reported no significant unmet facility needs at this time and encouraged continued advocacy for the partnership. The

Executive Director noted that the report had also been provided to the school district in recognition of the collaboration and staff effort required to maintain it.

Business Session

1. Larkspur Parking Direction

Bronwen Mastro presented updated parking improvement options for Larkspur Community Park. The park currently has 240 stalls and experiences peak demand on weekday mornings. Staff evaluated three locations within already developed portions of the park that could add up to 56 parking stalls. Updated cost estimates totaled approximately \$850,000 for all three areas, with available funding sufficient to complete the project.

Staff recommended proceeding with improvements to the 15th Street and Bocce/east island areas which would add approximately 39 stalls for just under \$700,000 and not pursuing the north parking area due to higher costs, utility easement constraints, design challenges, and community concerns. Board discussion focused on retaining the north gravel area for staff parking, potential tree impacts, construction timing, and efforts to minimize disruption during construction. Staff noted that opportunities to relocate affected trees would be explored. Permitting and bidding were expected to continue, with construction anticipated in spring 2027. Bid documents will address phasing and traffic management, and the construction contract will return to the Board for approval.

MOTION: Director Schiffman moved to direct staff to proceed with completion of the design, permitting and construction bidding for the 15th Street and the Bocce and East Island Parking Areas at Larkspur Park. Director Owens seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0, (Owens, Schneider, Schoen, Schiffman; Hovekamp absent).

2. Columbia Park Access & Restoration Project

Jason Powell presented the Columbia Park Access and Restoration Project, which will reconstruct and stabilize the park's Deschutes River frontage, restore riparian areas, create a hardened river access point similar to Miller's Landing, improve accessible pathways and furnishings, replace the Gilchrist Bridge and restore areas affected by construction. The replacement bridge will be longer than the existing structure, provide greater clearance and reduce constriction of the river channel.

Further engineering identified poor subsurface conditions requiring significant foundation changes, including deep micropiles, while leaving the visible layout, footprint and design substantially unchanged. The City of Bend approved the increased bridge-related costs. District funding includes grants, available project funds and city contributions, leaving an estimated district shortfall of approximately \$33,000 when a standard 10 percent contingency is applied. Staff reported that contingency savings from other projects were available to address the difference.

Three bids were received. Deschutes Construction Corporation submitted the lowest responsive combined base and alternate bid of \$2,492,454 and had previously completed district river and park projects. Board members confirmed that the cost increase resulted from subsurface conditions rather than major design changes and expressed support for moving the project forward. Director Schiffman noted for the record that absent Director Hovekamp had

previously expressed concerns about the bridge aesthetics, without speculating on how he would have voted.

MOTION: Director Schoen moved to authorize the Executive Director to award a construction contract to Deschutes Construction Corporation for the Columbia Park Access and Restoration Project in the amount of \$2,492,454 and approve a 10% contingency of \$249,245, for a total construction budget not to exceed \$2,741,699. Director Schiffman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 4-0, (Owens, Schneider, Schoen, Schiffman; Hovekamp absent).

Executive Director's report

- Miller's Landing Park received a national award from the States Organization for Boating Access after nomination by the Oregon State Marine Board. Ian will travel to Boise to present the project and accept the award on behalf of the district.
- Healy reported that the Art in the High Desert event would proceed as planned this year and that staff continue working with event organizers regarding park capacity and environmental challenges and that a broader presentation regarding event operations and emerging challenges was planned for the fall.
- Upcoming district events include: September 2 employee picnic at Alpenglow Community Park, a September 2 South Bridge stakeholder meeting, Pavilionpalooza on September 13 and the Art Station celebration on October 11. The September 1 board meeting is cancelled, and the next regular meeting is September 15.
- Healy reported that approximately \$3.7 million in system development charges had been deferred until occupancy, while current collections remained strong. Available SDC waivers were committed through the end of the calendar year, and anticipated waivers for the following year had also been prioritized. Staff were working with Habitat for Humanity on SDC credits for trail improvements near Discovery Park. Healy also noted that the Oregon Recreation and Park Association was monitoring potential legislative proposals to limit park SDCs, particularly for recreation facilities.
- The district will name the pickleball facility at Pine Nursery the Zehnder Pickleball Complex in recognition of Zehnder's contributions to the development of pickleball in the community. A dedication celebration is scheduled for September 17 from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Good of the Order

- Director Owens asked about future Board discussion regarding the Boys & Girls Club, including the breach letter and potential interest in the former school gym property. Healy reported that she would meet with Bend-La Pine Schools and the Boys & Girls Club and had requested a written response clarifying the club's request and progress addressing the breach. Owens stated that any change to the existing record should return to the Board for discussion. She also thanked staff for the quarterly financial and project reports.

- The Board discussed follow-up to Miller's Shevlin Park comments. Staff reported that the former parking area had been identified for closure because of safety concerns and was retained for emergency and staff access. Trail restoration and closure of user-created trails were underway, and the pedestrian bridge remained in the district work plan but required additional planning and time. The Board supported a coordinated response providing available cost information and clarifying the administrative decision and future access plan.
- Director Schiffman expressed appreciation for fuels mitigation work at Shevlin Park and informed the Board of an upcoming absence.
- Director Schoen proposed sending a note of appreciation to Olive and May for recognizing the women associated with the development and preservation of Drake Park.
- Director Schneider thanked staff for removing a trail obstruction, provided an update that the City of Bend coordination framework was expected to return at the next business session following additional discussion with the City, and asked about the Riverfront Street project, which had advanced to 90 percent design but continued to have funding issues to resolve. Schneider also thanked Schiffman for her work while away.

The meeting adjourned following Good of the Order. The next board meeting is September 15, 2026. ###