

Two: Community Context

Cave Junction, and the greater Illinois Valley region within Josephine County, exhibit populations and economies in transition. The population of Cave Junction (including the Urban Growth Boundary) was 2,199 in 2010, and rose to 2,395 by 2015¹. According to the Portland State University's population forecasts, Cave Junction is expected to grow at a rate of around 1.4% between 2015 and 2035. This means that by 2035, Cave Junction's population could swell to around 4,300.²

At the same time, Cave Junction and the surrounding area have been identified by the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Forecasting, Research, and Analysis as a poverty hotspot.³ Josephine County South had a poverty rate of 31%, compared to the county at 20%, and the state of Oregon at 16%.⁴ Between 2010 and 2015, the total number of South Josephine County residents receiving Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits (SNAP – also known as food stamps) increased from 20% to 33%.⁵

These characteristics are an important backdrop for the future development of the Cave Junction park system. An understanding of potential community needs embedded in the economic context will allow the City to develop a park system that is more responsive to all residents. This chapter of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan presents information about Cave Junction's socioeconomic context as a way to illuminate specific community characteristics that should guide the park system's development.

Regional Context and Planning Area

The City of Cave Junction, Oregon, is located within the foothills of the Illinois Valley in Josephine County. Before the City incorporated in 1948, the Illinois Valley was inhabited for thousands of years by the Takelma tribe. During the 1870s and 1880s, as the Oregon gold rush brought increased settlement, the local economy transformed to accommodate for growth by expanding agriculture, ranching, logging, fishing, tourism, and small-scale retail trades and crafts.⁶ Most of these industries are still active today.

Cave Junction has year-round mild weather and the surrounding areas offer exceptional access to outdoor recreation.⁷ The average temperature for Cave Junction is 55.8°F with an annual high temperature of 71.4°F, and an annual low temperature of 40.3°F.⁸ The City experiences an average rainfall precipitation of 63 inches per year, as well as an average annual snowfall of 12 inches.⁹

1 Portland State University Population Research Center. "Coordinated Population Forecast 2015-2065: Josephine County." June 2015. P. 7.

2 *Ibid.*

3 South Josephine County is defined as Census Tract 3616 from the United States Census Bureau designations. The Oregon Department of Human Services used census data to determine high poverty census tracts.

4 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey (2011-2015 ACS 5-year Estimates), Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics.

5 *Ibid.*



6 The Sierra Institute. "Northwest Economic Adjustment Initiative Assessment – Cave Junction, Illinois Valley, Oregon." P.4.



7 Josephine County. "It's the Climate." <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=1726>

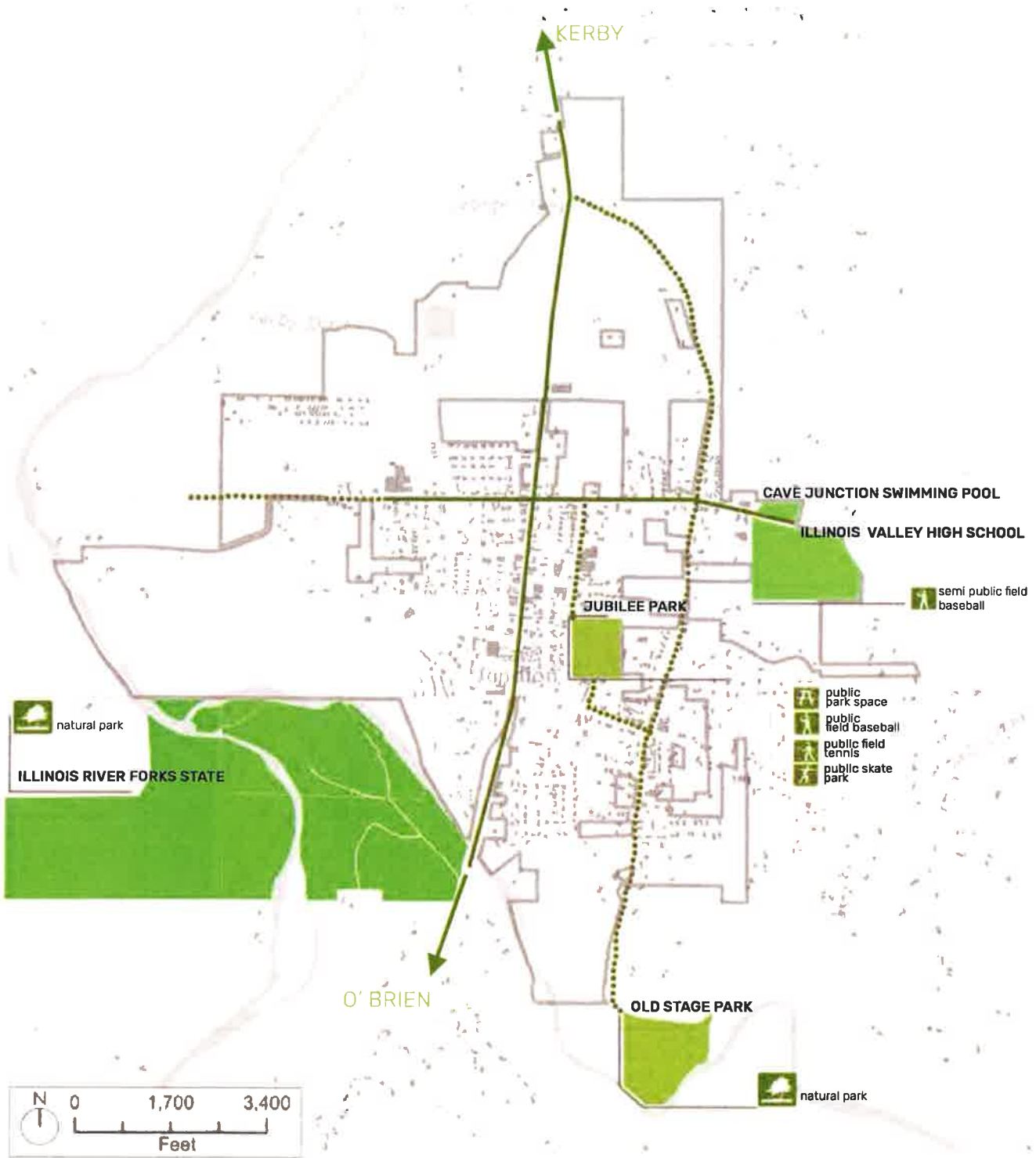
8 U.S. Climate Data. <http://www.usclimatedata.com/climate/cave-junction/oregon/united-states/user0059>

9 *Ibid.*

cave junction PARKS

- public park space 
- public field baseball 
- public field tennis 
- public skate park 
- natural park 

-  existing bike lanes
-  future proposed connections



Demographic Analysis

In 2015, Cave Junction had a population of 2,395 within its Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).¹⁰ According to the 2010 Census (the latest year with reliable data available for Cave Junction), the City's largest age groups are youth up to 19 years of age (19%), and seniors above 65 years of age (21%).¹¹ Age projections for Josephine County predict that the share of seniors above 65 years of age will increase to 33% of the population by 2035, making seniors the fastest growing age group in the county.¹² In terms of race, 92% of Cave Junction residents identify as white, and less than 1% as African American, American Indian, or Asian.¹³ Additionally, 8% identify as Hispanic and/or Latino/a.¹⁴

Economic Analysis

In 2015, the median household income for Cave Junction was \$27,347.¹⁵ This is about \$10,000 less than the median income for Josephine County. Additionally, while 16.5% of Oregon households are living below the poverty level, Cave Junction's poverty rate is twice the state average at 33.5%.¹⁶ These findings directly relate to parks as parks play an important role in providing low-cost and accessible recreation options for those who can't afford more costly entertainment and recreation.

Industries within Josephine County also play a vital role in the City's economic well-being. The largest employers in the county include Rouge Community College, Three Rivers Hospital, and Grants Pass School District.¹⁷ Three Rivers School District is the largest employer in Cave Junction, followed by Rough & Ready Lumber.¹⁸ While most land within Josephine County is owned by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, the remaining lands in the rich Illinois Valley are cultivated for food crops, wine, and, most recently, marijuana. Popular tourism attractions within Josephine County include Rogue River rafting trips, Hellgate Excursions jet boat rides, Lake Selmac, Indian Mary Park, and Oregon Caves National Monument.¹⁹

Recreation

Currently, the City of Cave Junction possesses three designated park areas which are all at different stages of development.²⁰ These include Jubilee Park, the City's only developed city park; Old Stage Park, a 40-acre, undeveloped plot of land along the Illinois River; and the community swimming pool, which has been out of service since 2008. The public schools of Cave Junction (Evergreen Elementary School, Lorna Byrne Middle School, and Illinois Valley High School) also include recreation options that residents may apply to use through the Three Rivers School District. Other recreational assets

10 Portland State University Population Research Center. "Coordinated Population Forecast 2015-2065: Josephine County." June 2015, P. 7.

11 U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census Summary File 1, Table QT-P1: Age Groups and Sex.

12 Portland State University Population Research Center. "Coordinated Population Forecast 2015-2065: Josephine County." June 2015, P. 22.

13 U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 Census Summary File 1, Table P9: Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race.

14 *Ibid.*

15 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey (2011-2015 ACS 5-year Estimates), Table DP03: Selected Economic Characteristics.

16 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey (2011-2015 ACS 5-year Estimates), Table: S17101.

17 "Major Employers in Josephine County," <http://kalmiopsiswild.org/wp-content/uploads/Josephine-County-Major-Employers.pdf>

18 *Ibid.*

19 Josephine County. "It's the Climate." <http://www.co.josephine.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=1726>

20 Note that a complete inventory of existing parks and recreation programs can be found in Chapter 3 of this Master Plan.



View into the tennis courts at Jubilee Park.

surrounding Cave Junction that are not owned by the City include the Rogue-Siskiyou National Forest, the Klamath National Forest, Illinois River Forks State Park, and Oregon Caves National Monument & Preserve. All of these amenities attract tourists each year.

Despite its small size, Cave Junction has several organized recreational opportunities for its residents, including Little League, City/Adult baseball league, student sports through the schools (such as basketball, volleyball, football, track & field, wrestling, and equestrian), and the Boys & Girls Club, which takes youths ages 6-18 to Jubilee Park and beyond during the summer months. To complement these activities, several nonprofits focused on health and youth development serve Josephine County, including Cave Junction. These organizations often provide outdoor-focused programming. Some examples include Healthy U's health and fitness classes, Rusk Ranch Nature Center's summer school, Siskiyou Field Institute outdoor programs, and Hearts and Hooves, a program that provides therapeutic horse riding for persons with disabilities.

Summary

Cave Junction will not remain static over the 10 years covered by this plan. The city's senior population will likely increase over the next 10 years and beyond, and poverty will likely continue to be a challenge. These two groups (seniors and low-income residents) have specific needs that the park system can strive to meet, while at the same time catering to the desires of other residents. Cave Junction already has many physical and programmatic assets for both residents and tourists. The City can build on these assets as it works to improve and expand the park system. At the same time, the City should focus some attention of building assets for its fastest-growing demographic (seniors) and its most under-resourced demographic (low-income families).