

Your Yakima Parks

DESIGNED FOR BETTER LIVING

A PROGRESS REPORT OF THE METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

JANUARY, 1951



Yakima Herald Photo by Carl Fry

This is intended to be a very brief report to you as a citizen of Yakima relating what the Metropolitan Park District of Yakima is, and what it has accomplished to date.

The Metropolitan Park District of Yakima was called into being in the fall of 1943 following an election in which the citizens of Yakima directed that the District be formed. It operated in the year 1944 with the funds provided in the City budget for that year and as an agent of the City Commission. Its first direct levy of two and one-half mills became available for 1945 and since that year, it has operated as an independent District.

Original Holdings

In 1945, the following parks were being used:

- Miller Park with swimming pool
- Lions Park with swimming pool
- Washington Park
- Milroy Park

These four had a total acreage of about 12 acres. There were four small areas known as: Portia Park, Summitview Park, Owyhee, and South Second Street Park, having a total area of about 2.0 acres.

There were also the parking strips along Naches Avenue and South Sixth Avenue having an area of about 7.0

acres, which the City of Yakima considered as parks.

The City had received the tract known as Larson Park in 1937 but had done practically nothing as a City to comply with the requirements of the gift. A border of trees had been planted by the Lions Club in 1940, and a battery of six tennis courts had been built by the City aided by the Yakima Tennis Club, the Lions Club, and the John Lampert Estate.

One of the first tasks of the new District was to rehabilitate and repair the swimming pools. Modern chlor-

inating equipment was installed to operate with the repaired filters, and full compliance with the requirements of the State Board of Health for sanitary operation of the pools effected.

Supervised Recreation Begun

In 1944, on a small scale, supervised recreation was begun in the four larger parks. Each year since that date the program has been expanded in those four parks and extended to Larson Park and the Nob Hill School. In co-operation with the public schools, this program has served a larger number of children each year and has extended into the winter. The program has provided worthwhile leisure time activities for children in safe places. Each year additional playground equipment has been added and picnic facilities provided in larger measure.

Larson Park Heavily Used

In the fall of 1945 the District started development of Larson Park which has now been completed to a point where it is all in sod and planted and is being used for softball, baseball, tennis, supervised recreation, and other activities. The park contains about sixteen acres and was donated in memory of A. E. Larson and Rose B. Larson. The Park District has spent some sixty thousand dollars in development so far. The immediate and heavy use of this park by teen-agers and young men and women is an indication of the rapid growth of Yakima's population, and the need for the park.

Franklin Area Acquired

In 1945, park commissioner Wellington P. Hews obtained the help and financial assistance of the residents in the area around the Franklin Junior High School and enabled the District to make the first payments upon a tract of about 17½ acres lying west of the Franklin Junior High School. The total cost of this area was \$28,000, about half of which was supplied by the residents in the area. Development of this area has begun and will be continued as funds permit.

Lions Club Buys Land

The need for recreation and park facilities in the southeast section of Yakima had impressed many citizens and in 1950 the Lions Club of Yakima, H. L. Cahalan, and E. A. Bannister donated to the Metropolitan Park District of Yakima five acres of land adjoining the new Ruth E. Childs School. Because of the apparent need for a park in the area, the park board commissioners intend to push development as rapidly as possible.

There is also a strong probability of a tract of ten acres being donated for park purpose in the western part of the city.

Funds Come From Levy

In the year 1950, with a levy of three mills, the estimated income of the District was as follows:

From taxes	71,588.51
From swimming pools.....	9,000.00
From concessions	250.00
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	80,838.51

This has been expended or budgeted as follows:

Salaries and Wages	43,074.00
(excluding recreation)	
Other operation and	
maintenance costs	13,255.00
Supervised recreation	3,577.50
Capital acquisition and	
development	20,932.01
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	80,838.51

Comparative Per Capita Costs

According to our 1950 population of 38,336 for Yakima, the comparative annual per capita cost of parks and some other municipal functions is as follows:

Fire Department	6.66
Police Department	6.50
Street Department	6.34
Sanitation Department	2.56
Parks & Recreation	2.10
Misc. General Government.....	1.98
Engineering Department	1.42
Library	1.33

Parks an Economic and Social Necessity

Parks supply an economic and social need. As America becomes more and more a country of city dwellers with crowded districts, space for playground and recreation commands ever

higher premiums. Children need space for active play and physical activity in order to develop healthy bodies and sound minds. They cannot do this if there is no place for play except city streets. Older people, particularly those who have retired, also need recreation and every one benefits by open spaces of green grass and landscaped areas. The only feasible method of providing for these needs for all of the people of Yakima is by public action for the benefit of all thru the Metropolitan Park District. As time passes, we shall undoubtedly learn that parks which are a pleasant convenience when times are good, will in hard times prove themselves to be an economic and social necessity. While parks and playgrounds cannot directly help people make a living, they can, along with schools and library facilities, make living worthwhile, and living conditions in this city attractive and desirable for its citizens. What we spend for parks brings us something we keep with us here at home. That parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities have a direct financial value for a city is evidenced by the fact that modern industrial concerns, when seeking a new location, investigate carefully the adequacy of schools, parks, playgrounds, and recreation, and the conveniences for worthwhile living.

How Extensively Are the Supervised Playgrounds and Pools Used in Yakima?

Since 1945, a yearly average of some 70,000 children and adults have used our playgrounds during the regular ten-week summer program for active and passive recreation. In addition a limited winter program has been conducted in the schools under Park Board sponsorship. This has included athletic and game programs for boys and girls, outdoor ice skating, recreation leadership training courses and square dancing for adults.

Swimming has always been extremely popular and is becoming increasingly so as these attendance figures (excluding school use of some 5000 per year) for the last six years show:

1945—62,274	1948—72,266
1946—67,353	1949—82,311
1947—67,980	1950—88,073

Many Agencies Have Helped

During the years since its organization, the Park District has received many gifts from individuals and organizations. The Yakima School District, the Yakima City Commissioners, and the Yakima Police Department have helped and co-operated wonderfully. The recreation and supervised play program can justly be called a joint enterprise of the Park District and the School District with aid from the State Department of Education and helped by the members of the Police Department over and above the requirements of duty. For all of this, the Park Board is thankful and definitely committed to its policy of co-operating as fully as possible with all agencies which want to make Yakima a city in which its citizens are glad to live.

Growth of City Emphasizes Needs

With the funds at its command, the District will necessarily be limited in the progress which it can make in acquisition and development of parks. The needs are great and are increased by the rapidity of growth of the city. While our tax is based on a population of about 39,000, we are really faced with the task of providing for, and supplying, a city of 60,000.

The need for the services of the Metropolitan Park Board of Yakima are great. The commissioners of the District are anxious to provide as amply as possible for the necessary and desirable parks, playgrounds, and facilities, in compliance with the considered good judgment of Yakima citizens and appreciate thankfully all aid which can be obtained.

Metropolitan Park District Commissioners

John F. Chesterley, *President*
Earl M. Fisher, *Vice President*
John S. Applegate, *Clerk*
Mrs. Wilbur Linn
George W. Wilkins

O. R. Schumann, *Legal Adviser*
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