

# GREENER PARKS FOR HEALTH



WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP

NRPA envisions a future where everyone has equitable access to safe and inclusive green spaces and where greener parks are recognized as essential community infrastructure.

Greener parks provide invaluable benefits including reduced flooding, cleaner air, and cooler temperatures. They improve the overall health and well-being of the surrounding communities and help communities adapt to a changing climate.

**What do we mean by “Greener Parks?”**  
Parks that incorporate green infrastructure features into their design to achieve maximum improvements for the community.

NRPA invests in greener parks for communities to drive system-level change at the intersection of three key areas.



## HEALTH BENEFITS OF GREENER PARKS:



- Increasing tree canopy can decrease rates of obesity and obesity-related illnesses. Studies show that close proximity to urban green spaces and trees significantly decreases rates of obesity and lowered body mass index in children and adults.
- Spending more time outdoors helps people recover from mental fatigue more quickly. Studies have shown that when office workers and students are exposed to high levels of greenery, they have improved attention and focus.
- Greenery, especially tree canopy coverage, lowers ground temperature, which leads to reductions in heat-related mortality and hospitalizations.

## SOCIAL BENEFITS OF GREENER PARKS:



- Planting new trees can decrease crime levels in the area over time. A study in Chicago found that increasing the tree canopy in a park by 10% decreased the battery rate in the park by 10%.
- Green spaces offer opportunities for communities to socialize together, leading to increased trust among neighbors.
- Maintaining greener parks well increases trust and satisfaction with the local government.

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF GREENER PARKS:



- Rain gardens and other features decrease localized flooding, protecting park amenities.
- Green infrastructure features filter harmful pollutants from the air and water.
- Green roofs have been shown to decrease the intensity of flooding and filter out pollutants, including carbon dioxide and ozone, from the air.

## ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF GREENER PARKS:



- Three out of every four green infrastructure jobs go to local residents, creating a direct economic investment in the community.
- Green infrastructure provides an economic benefit through flood damage prevention. From 2007-2017 the National Flood Insurance Program paid out an average of \$2.9 billion/year in flood claims.
- Green infrastructure is often cheaper to build and maintain than traditional gray infrastructure.

Visit [nrpa.org/GreenerParksforHealth](https://www.nrpa.org/GreenerParksforHealth) for more information.