

Cedar Hills Park Improvements – Neighborhood Meeting #1 Meeting Notes

Meeting Date/Time: August 5th, 2014 / 6:00 pm to 7:45 pm

Meeting Location: William Walker Elementary School, Gymnasium

In Attendance:

(THPRD)

Aisha Willits – Director of Planning

Matt Kilmartin – Planning / PM

Melissa Gall - Planning

Steve Gulgren – Superintendent of Planning

Julia Rocha - Sports

(MacKay Sposito, Inc.)

Jim Sandlin – Project Manager

Andrew Holder – Landscape Design

Steve Gulgren started the meeting with a brief introduction on the history of the park improvement project, including the bond measure. Matt Kilmartin continued with more background information on the project such as the project budget, the IGA agreement with Beaverton School District, meeting history, reviewing agencies, and the project timeline.

Jim Sandlin then provided an overview of the existing site conditions, constraints, and opportunities. He identified the existing site access points, and summarized the discussions with Washington County engineering staff regarding proposed vehicular access to the park.

Jim then presented the two conceptual master plan options for the park. At this point, the meeting turned to an open discussion format. Comments (C) and questions (Q) from the audience are listed below, with responses from the presenters. The comments and questions are grouped by topic, and are not necessarily listed in the order they occurred.

General Discussion

- 1) **Q:** If the attendees of this meeting reject both concepts and the whole idea of a park improvement project at Cedar Hills Park, will the project go forward anyway?

Matt: Yes, the project will move forward but not necessarily like the Options presented if they are rejected; we'll continue to work to develop an option that has good public support. This project is part of the 2008 voter-approved bond measure, and there is budget available to make improvements. Some specific improvements were promised to the voters, such as a multi-field/multi-purpose athletic field with lights, a splash pad, and other improvements as determined through public outreach, project need and available budget.

- 2) **C:** This is early in the process, and there is still time to organize larger groups to voice concerns to the appropriate agencies before future public meetings and before the design is finalized and permitted.

- 3) **C:** These presenters are not the deciders... everyone here needs to put pressure on the deciders.
- 4) **C:** The commenter does not want any new user groups, sports, or revenue generating uses for the park. The proposed plans “destroy the character of the park.” “Paving paradise to put up a parking lot.” He wants it to remain as-is for the sake of the neighborhood.

Matt: This is a community park.

- 5) **Q (Matt):** We’ve heard a number of concerns about the project so far, but we’d also like to hear about aspects of the park concepts that you like. That is valuable information for us to make decisions on what to include.

(No response until much later in the meeting, from Joan Hulquist, Principal of Walker ES): Walker ES students and staff are very excited about the new playground, and access to a field that will be usable year-round. Walker ES doesn’t otherwise have any open turf of its own.

Accessibility

- 6) **Q:** Originally the project included the Champions Too field (for disabled children), why is it not included now?

Matt: The Champions Too field is not part of the bond measure, and another site was determined to be a better location for it.

Traffic

- 7) **Q:** Can we get a copy of the traffic report?

Matt: Yes. We’ll also post the final report to the project web page.

- 8) **C:** The park improvements will bring through-traffic that will impact the Lynnfield Lane neighborhood. The signalized intersection at Lynnfield and Walker already functions poorly, and this will make it much worse. It is an unfair burden on the neighborhood. The intersection at Lynnfield and Walker needs to be addressed as part of this project. *(This sentiment was repeated at least 3 times throughout the meeting)*
- 9) **C:** There is concern that the access drive through the site, connecting Cedar Hills Blvd. to Lynnfield Lane (and thus to Walker Rd.) will result in added traffic from commuters cutting through the park to avoid the congested intersection of Cedar Hills Blvd. and Walker Rd. *(This sentiment was repeated 2 times throughout the meeting)*

Matt: The IGA between THPRD and BSD dictates the connections from Cedar Hills Blvd. to the school and from Lynnfield Lane to the park. We can continue to look for better solutions to avoid a potential traffic cut-through.

- 10) **C:** It is disappointing that the design team did studies (“schematics”) of the park entry on Cedar Hills Blvd., but did no studies for the intersection of Lynnfield and Walker.

Matt: No improvements are proposed for the intersection of Lynnfield and Walker.

Pedestrian Access

11) **C:** The proposed plans do not include safe crosswalks to access the park from the south and west. The park and school are not ‘walkable’. People can’t walk from the adjacent neighborhoods to the park and school, they have to drive. “This park is an island.” (*Three separate but similar comments combined*)

12) **Q:** Why did the traffic study not identify pedestrian connection problems, especially at the intersection of Lynnfield and Walker?

Matt: That was not the intent of the traffic study.

13) **Q:** What is the project budget for street improvements? Not just for vehicular access, but for improvements to make this a walkable, livable park.

Matt: The project does not have the budget for extensive street improvements. This is a park improvement project, we only making typical public street improvements as required by permitting jurisdictions.

14) **Q:** Why is no crosswalk/signal proposed at 123rd and Walker? Commenter says Washington County will be building sidewalks on 123rd for safe access to the school, but there will be no way to cross Walker.

Matt: Washington County is planning improvements to Walker Road between Cedar Hills Blvd. and Hwy. 217, but we don’t know their time frame or design elements yet.

15) **C:** The houses on 121st which are adjacent to the park have gates into the park, and don’t want that access blocked. The stormwater LIDA facility on the plans appear to block access there.

Jim: The LIDA facility shown on the plan is not designed yet, and may not be in the location or the size shown. It will not impede private access into the park.

Matt: We will accommodate access through that area during design development.

Synthetic Turf Sports Field

16) **Q:** How was the decision made to include a double-size field, instead of a single field? The bond measure language on the website says one field would be provided. (*This and similar questions were raised at least 4 times throughout the meeting*)

Matt: The decision was based on community need. The actual bond language indicates a “multi-purpose, multi-field.” THPRD management feels a double field will provide this use.

Julia: This is the first site big enough for a synthetic turf baseball field, which there is much demand for. Baseball fields are wider than soccer fields, so a single soccer field would not accommodate a baseball overlay.

17) **C:** The large synthetic turf field doesn’t leave any natural turf areas for non-sports activities or gatherings like concerts.

Julia: When the synthetic turf field is not reserved for sports activities, it could be used for gatherings or concerts.

- 18) **C:** The field is too large. More un-programmed open space is needed than is shown on the plans. Try a scheme with just one field – it would have more open space, add less traffic to deal with, and remove fewer trees.
- 19) **C:** There is no space for spectators around the field. There is only 6' between sidelines and the fence, so any spectators would need to watch through the fence. There isn't much room outside the fence either. This feels like putting revenue generation and the sports leagues as a priority over the needs of the community.
- 20) **C:** The synthetic turf field is needed. Single or double field is not important to the commenter – kids need year-round opportunities to engage in sports as an important part of their development.

Existing Trees

- 1) **C:** The large tree grove is what has made Cedar Hills Park so special; it is a unique feature in an urban setting. It is a big part of why the commenter bought a house nearby. The proposed plans remove too many trees, and especially too many large trees.
- 2) **C:** Removing fir trees out of the grove will harm the ones that remain, and more are likely to fall. They depend on each other for shade and protection from wind, and their root systems are interconnected.

Misc. Park Amenities

- 3) **C:** Based on experience, automatic gates are easily damaged in a public setting. Consider automatic retracting hydraulic bollards.
- 4) **C:** Sand [volleyball] is a bad idea close to the splash pad.
- 5) **C:** In Option 2, the picnic area is cut off from the 2-5 playground and splash pad.
- 6) **C:** The community garden could be used as a buffer along the fence on the SE corner of the site, as a buffer for the residents on 121st Ave.

Stormwater

- 7) **C:** The southernmost house on 121st, at the southeast corner of the park, experiences flooding, and has to use a pump in the basement.

Lighting

- 8) **C:** There is a concern that lighting for the 7 parking stalls near the Walker ES cul-de-sac will be disruptive, especially for children of the neighbors.

Jim: Those are existing parking stalls, with no improvements proposed there. It is unknown at this point if the City will require lighting improvements there.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:45 pm