



Planning & Development
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Public Meeting Notes

Project: Lowami Hart Woods Park
Location: Beaverton Seventh Day Adventist Church, Fellowship Room
Date & Time: May 11, 2011, 6:30-9:00 PM

Staff Present: Matt Kilmartin, Park Planner
Hal Bergsma, Director of Planning
Steve Gulgren, Superintendent of Planning & Development
Kristin Atman, Interpretive Programs Supervisor
John Gaddis, Natural Resources and Trails Specialist
Mike Janin, Superintendent of Security Operations
Steve Regner, Office Tech

Consultants Present: Paul Agrimis, Vigil-Agrimis, Inc.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Hal Bergsma opened the meeting, welcoming the approximately 76 park neighbors and interested patrons. Hal explained that the meeting was to discuss the two 2008 Bond funded projects at Lowami Hart Woods Park, a trail development project, and a natural resource enhancement and illegal trails closure project.

In 2001, THPRD staff planners worked to develop a Master Plan for Lowami Hart Woods Park. After significant community outreach, the THPRD Board of Directors approved the project, with further design and construction to be funded by future mechanisms. Issues have risen in the past year that question whether or not the 2001 Master Plan truly reflects what the Board of Directors approved. Additionally, while the 2001 Board discussed opportunities for environmental education, no formal decision was made regarding how the site would be programmed for such activities.

Based on these and other issues brought before THPRD staff, a list of key planning issues surrounding the Lowami Hart Woods project was jointly developed in January 2011 by Hal Bergsma, project manager Matt Kilmartin, and Priscilla Christenson and Mark Hereim of the Friends of Beaverton's Johnson Creek. Hal noted that these issues and others will be outlined by Matt Kilmartin, and will guide public discussion throughout the meeting.

2. Trail Improvement Project Overview & Update

Matt Kilmartin identified how the four trail alignments that have been evaluated to date. In order to minimize environmental disturbances including avoiding impacts to wetlands, avoiding the CWS wetland buffer, reducing disturbances from creek crossings, and reducing the number of trees to be removed, a final refined alternative trail alignment is being proposed. Matt described the proposed alignment by the project consultants relative to

previous proposals. Matt proceeded to give an overview of the key planning issues identified by staff and the Friends of Beaverton's Johnson Creek earlier this year:

Site Programming—The 2001 Board of Directors identified the need to include opportunities for environmental education in the Lowami Hart Woods Master Plan, however, they were not specific in what they wanted to see. Kristin Ataman gave an overview of programs offered at several THPRD sites, including Tyke Treks, guided adult tours, and school group tours, with the goal of making nature more accessible. Lowami is a site favored for environmental education because of its proximity to 6 local schools, allowing the opportunity for small school groups to visit the site.

Parking—The 2001 Master Plan called for a parking lot to accommodate 8-18 cars, to be developed in two phases, with a first phase of 8-10 spaces and the remaining spaces to be developed in the future if deemed necessary after additional public process. Staff and Vigil-Agrimis have worked to refine the parking area design with minimal impacts to the natural resource. A total of three parking concepts were presented; two located adjacent to Hart Road and directly across from 149th Ave including one concept with 8 stalls and one concept with 12 stalls; and, the third parking concept located in the southeast corner of the site across from Dunsmuir Avenue showing the feasibility of up to twenty stalls, but with 12 stalls being more likely. Staff anticipates that groups traveling to the site will likely use 15-passenger vans, which fit in a standard parking stall. Groups arriving by school bus could be unloaded/loaded without the need for permanent bus parking on-site. Different paving surfaces will be evaluated with further engineering study to determine the best material for the site.

Main Trail—

Classification—Currently, the trail is classified as a Community Trail, based on the future connections to the north and south as identified in the District's 1998 and 2006 Trail Master Plans. Community Trail standards dictate 8'-10' wide paved trails with 1'-2' gravel shoulders. The currently proposed width is the minimum width allowed under Community Trail standards.

Width & Surface—Proposed 8' trail with 1' shoulders. Current width would impact 28 healthy, non-hazard trees. Reducing trail width to 5'-6' would reduce tree impacts to approximately 20 healthy, non-hazard trees.

Vehicle Rating—2001 Master Plan called for vehicle access for security and maintenance.

Use Limitations—No limitations for shared use of the trail are currently proposed; shared use includes all non-motorized uses, including walkers, bicyclists, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.

Loop Trail—To retain existing dirt trail alignment, but with improvements of gravel or wood chip soft surfacing as appropriate for site conditions.

Additional Issues—

Trail connection from southeast—2001 Master Plan stated the trail should be eliminated; however, staff see benefits of trail being retained.

Dogs—Should dogs be allowed on a leash or prohibited altogether?

Kiosk Location—Location could be at parking lot or site center. Staff believes the parking lot is the most appropriate location.

Restrooms—2001 Master Plan called for a permanent restroom building; however, staff is currently proposing portable toilets inside a screened enclosure.

3. Natural Area Preservation Project Overview

John Gaddis noted that Lowami Hart Woods is a quality natural area, but has invasive species throughout the park. The project will focus on natural area restoration of the creek corridor and wetland, and then the upland areas. The project will run subsequently to the trail improvement project.

4. Discussion: Questions(Q)/Comments(C)//Answers(A)

Trail Alignment

Q- What is the purpose of the park? If it is a nature park, shouldn't the trail go along creek?

A- That trail alignment would trigger significant CWS restoration/mitigation requirements and may not be approved.

C - The trail should show off the features of the park.

Q- What is the flooding potential of the newest alignment?

A- The new alignment avoids the majority of the floodplain.

Q- What regulatory agencies are affecting this project, and do they allow for public input?

A- This project is affected by Clean Water Services and City of Beaverton. The City will allow for public input when it goes before the planning commission.

Q- What will the grade of the trail be for the proposed alignment?

A- The steepest grade near the parking lot will be approximately 8% in order to minimize impacts to natural resources. Other portions of the trail may be between 5% to 7%, but the goal in all THPRD facilities is 5% or less. City of Beaverton will allow up to 10%.

Q- What are the tree impacts of the various trail alignments?

A- Original 2001 Alignment – 48 trees, with a total diameter of 773"

Refined Alignment – 40 trees, with a total diameter of 562"

Further Refined Alignment – 57 trees, with a total diameter of 865"

Current Proposed Trail Alignment – 28 trees, with a total diameter of 409"

Q- Have you evaluated constructing a boardwalk through the wetlands?

A- The wetland impacts would be too significant.

Q- If you stay out of the wetlands, will you be able to avoid Army Corp of Engineers?

A- That is the assumption we are working with. DSL permitting will be triggered by 50 cubic yards of displaced wetland.

C- Clean Water Services has done work in the creek before.

C- You haven't asked the neighbors what they would like to see at Lowami Hart Woods Park.^[a1]

Q- Will this trail alignment meet up with Brookhaven Park?

A- Yes, it will also connect to Barcelona. The existing access trail comes close to residential property. This public access will be fixed as part of a separate maintenance project, and its connection to Lowami Hart Woods will be retained.

Q- Will any work be done in Brookhaven Park?

A- No, only the connection to Barcelona will be improved.

Site Programming (Environmental Education)

C- There are residences surrounding the park, programming the park like THPRD is suggesting would eliminate the serenity.

C- There used to be significant wildlife in the park, but it has diminished since THPRD started doing work at the park.

A- Invasive removal will certainly have short term impacts. It's likely that if there is diminished wildlife, it's due to the overall urbanization of the surrounding area. Additional creek enhancement work has been done by CWS.

C- The least amount of impact is the best way to keep it natural.

C- Agrees that there has been diminished wildlife, and believes increased activity is to blame. Notes that the area used to be a campfire girls site hosting hundreds of kids. Believes that kids should be able to access the site, and that 20 kids will not be nearly as significant as what used to occur there.

A- Kristin Atman noted that the site does have a history of environmental education. She emphasized the District's use of pre-registration and scheduling to minimize impacts. Groups of 20-28 are usually split into three smaller groups, resulting in groups of 8-10 kids.

C- Very upset with what the District is proposing. Purchased house backing up to Lowami Hart Woods because of the nature. She does not want people coming into her backyard. She likes the park as is. There is no place for buses at this park. What if parking overflows? This project exposes our neighborhood.

C- This is a smaller park. Not opposed to education opportunities, but impacts of even small groups will eliminate the habitat that is valued.

Q- Is the site center back in the plan?

A- Yes, the site center has been in every iteration of the plan.

C- Would like to see the park stay the same. The programming should allow the site to stay as close to the current conditions as possible.

Q- Has THPRD looked at impacts of park developments in the past? Have the concerns brought forth, i.e. parking, crime, diminished wildlife, etc., come to exist as neighbors fear?

A- No studies have been conducted. Anecdotally, the developments have allowed for better maintenance, reduced demand trails, and protection of bigger blocks of habitat.

C- Education isn't a one-size-fits-all situation; an extended presence in the site is not necessary.

Q- Why isn't a self-guided tour being considered instead of large, organized guided tours?

A- Self-guided tours are a possible option.

Q- What is so special about this site that it should accommodate these groups?

A- The park's proximity to 6 local schools and direct access by the surrounding neighborhood makes it a good location for environmental education.

Q- What is the expected frequency of these programs?

A- Greenway Park does a 5-day camp twice a year. Two of those days are off-site.

Guided hikes happened about twice a year, and last about one hour. School groups are an unknown; maybe two to three in the spring.

Q- Have teachers requested use of Lowami Hart Woods Park?

A- Not that we know of, but we anticipate interest once the opportunity is provided.

C- Parents are the best educators; we should leave it to them.

C- Would love to see self-guided tours.

C- You are presenting conflicting ideas; you want to minimize impact, but maximize exposure by bringing in six schools.

C- Individual homeowners and neighbors do not own the park. Everyone owns the park and should be able to access the park. Worried, however, about self-exploration continuing to do more environmental damage.

On-site Parking

C- It is difficult to access park, and doesn't want people parking in front of homes. However, the southeast location doesn't provide hard surface trail to site center.

A- If the southeast location is selected, the trail to the site center will be hard surface.

C- The southeast corner was old parking area.

C- Concerned about views into the parking lot from home and deck adjacent to the park. There should be plantings to screen views into parking lot.

C- Median should be removed to allow for on-street, parallel parking.

- A- City of Beaverton would likely not approve that design.
- C- Diagonal parking should be added to Hart Road to eliminate need for on-site parking.
- A- City of Beaverton would likely not approve that design.
- Q- Will there be a left turn lane traveling east?
- A- City of Beaverton would likely not approve that design.
- Q- There is a city-owned piece of property south of Hart Road. Has that been considered?
- A- Yes. Half of that property is used for storm water detention, and the entire site may have conservation easement.
- Q- If the southeast corner is selected for parking, would there be bus access?
- A- Yes, potentially.
- Q- Has a traffic study been conducted?
- A- Traffic engineer was used; the study found no significant impacts.
- Q- Will it be near a bus stop?
- A- Yes.
- C- There are probably 2-3 parking spots at Lowami Hart Woods right now; almost never full. It is, however, dangerous to back out onto Hart Road.
- Q- Would parking increase late-night use?
- A- District sites are generally only for dawn to dusk use, including this one. Park Patrol should be called in those situations where people are in the park at night. Mike Janin will be available after the meeting to discuss security.
- Q- Will there be a garbage can at the parking lot?
- A- Yes.
- C- Cannot use the park as is; the trail is too muddy most of the year. The improvements proposed would be nice.
- C- It should be left as informal parking.
- C- During the summer, Lowami Hart Woods becomes a party area. Police only disperse the kids, who come back after the police leave.

Main Trail

The trail has been classified as a Community Trail for 13-years. The Board of Directors stated that this trail should be paved to make it as accessible as possible.

- C- Federal guidelines state that for a trail to be accessible, it needs to be between 48-60" to allow passage of a wheelchair. This trail should be changed from a Community Trail; 8' is not necessary.
- Q- What is the Nature Park's trail widths?
- A- Nature Park trails are classified as Neighborhood Trails, and are approximately 7.5'.
- Q- ADA requires grades to be less than 8.3%. Is that accomplished here?
- A- Due to the terrain, it is nearly impossible to maintain that grade throughout the park. It is a balancing act between accessibility and minimizing impacts.
- Q- If someone is injured on a steep path, who is going to pay for that?
- A- That is something the District will let Attorneys handle.
- C- Dogs should continue to be allowed in the park.
- C- Supports a 6' paved path with 1' buffer. Anything narrower will prevent security vehicles from accessing the site.
- C- The path should be no more that 4'-5' with no shoulders; the park isn't big enough for wider paths.
- C- Supports first responder access, no matter what the width requirements.
- Q- Are current bridges vehicle rated?
- A- The newest bridge near the site center is vehicle rated but the two existing foot bridges crossing the tributary are not vehicle rated.

C- There is an issue of 'community' involved. The trail connects to other trails. This a great trail, and access to it will help more people appreciate it.

C- Washington Park trails are 36" wide, those seem wide enough.

Loop Trail

C- Gravel Trails promote bike use.

C- Gravel would be a good surface.

Q- What are the cost comparisons between wood chips and gravel?

A- Similar costs, but gravel requires less maintenance.

Q- Mud still comes through wood chips; could you use weed fabric beneath the wood chips?

A- That doesn't solve the wet conditions that a gravel base beneath the wood chip surfacing would. Regardless, filter fabric should always be utilized to keep surfacing materials from sinking into the subgrade.

C- I'm in favor of whatever is driest.

Q- Are steps considered on the loop trail?

A- Steps could be considered.

Q- What about flagstone?

A- Ornamental stone has not been considered and would be more expensive.

Next Steps

Hal Bergsma described the upcoming process. Following this neighborhood meeting, staff will present the modified Master Plan to the Board of Directors, which is scheduled for June 6th, 2011. It is a public meeting, and the public will have an opportunity to speak, limited to three minutes per person.

To have your comments considered by staff in preparation of their report to the Board of Directors for their June 6th meeting, comments need to be received by May 18th. After the 18th, your comments will still be provided to the Board, but will not be included as part of the staff recommendation packet. After the Board of Directors provides direction, staff will return to the Board in August to confirm the Master Plan properly reflects the Board's direction.

Then, the next opportunity for public comment will come during the Land Use process with the City of Beaverton, which is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2011. A Conditional Use Hearing will follow, likely in spring 2012. Construction is anticipated to begin in spring 2013, and be completed by the end of that calendar year.

Comments provided tonight will be included into meeting minutes and will be posted online. Comments will be incorporated into staff's recommendation packet that goes before the Board of Directors.