



Planning & Development  
503/629-6305  
Fax 503/629-6307

### **Public Meeting Notes**

**Project:** The Bluffs Park-Phase II  
**Location:** Cedar Mill Library, Lewis & Clark Meeting Room  
**Date & Time:** May 17, 2012, 6:00-8:00 PM

**Staff Present:** David Lewis, Park Planner  
Steve Gulgren, Superintendent of Planning & Development  
Hal Bergsma, Director of Planning  
Rene Brucker, Park Planner  
Mike Janin, Superintendent of Security Operations  
Greg Creager, Park Ranger  
Nicole Paulsen, Planning & Development Coordinator

#### **1. Project History & Current Project Overview**

Steve Gulgren opened the meeting, welcoming the approximately 22 park neighbors and interested patrons. Steve gave a detailed background of the property, explaining previous public outreach process while David Lewis reviewed the current project and reasoning behind the design. The property was acquired by THPRD in 1975. An adjacent property was acquired in 2009 to help facilitate connectivity between Bonny Slope Elementary school and adjoining neighborhoods.

When funding became available in 2002, THPRD staff began the master plan process, including an extensive public outreach process. Staff held three neighborhood meetings, passed and mailed out surveys as well as requested any additional public comment. After tabulating surveys and other comments submitted by the public, trails, benches and play areas were the most desired facilities for the park. Staff designed a plan to accommodate the desired elements as well as sensitively approach concerns. Staff realized the site limitations and steep topography of the Haskell Court entrance point thereby recommending to the Board of Directors the access be constructed of gravel rather than asphalt. This recommendation was granted with the notion that the South Drive entrance would be asphalt and act as the main access point to the park. The master plan was approved in 2002 with a phased approach. The first phase included the play equipment and Haskell Court entrance while phase two continued the path to South Drive.

In 2008 voters passed the parks bond measure, which included funding for phase two of The Bluffs Park. The original schedule showed the project beginning in 2010 with construction happening in 2012. Surrounding neighbors were eager to have the trail constructed prior to 2012. District staff held a neighborhood meeting in 2009 and with input designed and constructed a temporary, wood chip trail for neighborhood use until the permanent trail could be constructed. The Bluffs Park Trail-Phase II project began in February 2011. Two neighborhood meetings were held in May and July 2011 where staff gave an overview of the projects as well as listened to concerns and answered questions.

Staff worked very hard with local jurisdictions to increase slope in order to save cost, surrounding vegetation and privacy for neighbors. The project manager also worked closely with surrounding neighbors to design a landscape scheme that would help provide privacy.

In April 2012 THPRD was approached by surrounding property owners with concerns about the project. Based on these concerns THPRD conducted this neighborhood meeting to address any questions/concerns.

2. Purpose of Current Project & Existing Temporary Trail Conditions

**Purpose of Current Project**

Steve Gulgren explained the need for the project and how it will impact future pedestrian traffic. He noted the District's goals for connectivity with in neighborhoods as well as off-street routes. The acquisition of property in 2009, just north of Bonny Slope Elementary was purchased to allow for the construction of a safe, direct, off-street route to the elementary school, when funding is available. Steve further noted the park and trail deficiency the District faces in the northeast quadrant of the district. This project allows for the opportunity to provide recreation, leisurely walking and connectivity.

**Existing Temporary Trail Conditions**

Steve Gulgren described the conditions of the existing temporary trail that staff designed and built in 2009. He noted some areas have become soggy/muddy and slippery making it hard to function properly. For this reason, as well as the uneven wood chip surface, it makes it difficult for parents with strollers, elderly patrons and/or patrons with disabilities to navigate. Steve also explained that the steep slopes of the existing trail are not in line with the goals of the district or the codes for permanent trails with-in Washington County land use codes. For these reasons, combined with connectivity and the 2008 bond measure, the asphalt trail is recommended.

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

Steve Gulgren opened the discussion period by acknowledging the concerns brought up previously including drainage, privacy and cost.

**Q:** What is considered accessible?

**A:** Americans with Disabilities Act requires facilities to comply with design elements in order to accommodate persons with disabilities. In a recreation atmosphere the requirements become difficult due to items such as environment, slope, vegetation etc. and sometimes unfeasible. Based on situations where slope and environmental damage become concerning, the THPRD Board of Directors has approved the slope of hard surface trails to be designed up to 10%. Steve Gulgren noted that the existing temporary trail has portions above 20% which do not meet the guidelines set by THPRD Board of Directors.

**Q:** What type of species will you be planting?

**A:** David Lewis, project manager, informed the group that mostly native plants would be planted. He was unsure of the exact species but can provide the information in a more detailed format if requested.

**Q:** Will there be a stairway in the trail?

**A:** The stairway will be removed and the slope will be less.

**Q:** What is the requirement to have the trail six feet wide?

**A:** Steve Gulgren referenced the THPRD 2006 Comprehensive Plan as well as the Trails Master Plan indicating neighborhood trail widths having a standard of 5-8 feet wide. He further explained that a trail less than six feet wide makes it very difficult for two groups of patrons walking towards each other to pass.

**C:** At this time multiple attendees requested the trail be lessened to a narrower width. One attendee felt six feet was unreasonable as this trail will not be a high traffic area therefore; scooting over to accommodate passerby's would be welcomed.

**Q:** Are they going to get rid of blackberries?

**A:** Greg Creager, park ranger, stated that in the project area, many of the blackberries will be removed as part of construction. Park-wide, we are actively removing invasive species, including Himalayan blackberry, to improve wildlife habitat. As of now, we have held off on performing restoration in the proposed trail project area due to the lower natural value of this part of the park and the knowledge that the trail project will remove some of these plant species.

**Q:** What percent of the project area is non-native?

**A:** Greg Creager listed some of the non-native species within the project area, including English ivy and Himalayan blackberry. He estimated approximately 70% of the vegetation in the project area was non-native. He noted that the Haskell Court entrance and the section adjacent to Bonny Slope Elementary are more valuable and intact natural areas compared to the area of the trail project.

**Q:** Maintenance has been very poor near the South Drive entrance with maintenance just mowing for the first time two days ago. Does maintenance have money in the project budget to make sure the park has more upkeep than what is currently happening?

**A:** The money for maintenance is not budgeted in the project since it is an ongoing operation. There is a money budgeted every year for our maintenance department to maintain parks. Since this area is currently undeveloped it does not receive as much attention as developed parks. Once construction is completed, the maintenance department will provide more upkeep services than seen currently.

**Q:** How do you get mowers into the play equipment area?

**A:** THPRD has an agreement with the Hideaway Condominiums to use their access point for maintenance operations.

**Q:** The current trail is nice and maintains a private, secluded area so why are you building a pavement trail with split rails and removing the foliage? Why can't you keep the trail natural as is?

**A:** THPRD has needs for connectivity with in the area and although the existing trail works now, wood chips will get very soggy and packed down into the mud. In order to design a chip trail the construction would still entail excavation and disturbance of the same area since a gravel base would need to be included. Additionally, in order to design and construct a chip trail with gravel base it would need to be permitted through Washington County which does not allow slopes beyond 10% therefore, the chip trail would not be permissible. Many sections of the existing trail are above 10% and some portions exceed 20%.

**C:** The trail feels forced, should have built the park on the Bonny Slope Elementary property.

**C:** The trail is so close to the backs of people's yards, I will not feel comfortable. I will feel like I am intruding in their yard.

**Q:** How big is the swale going to be since it is next to my yard? The trees provide a privacy screen for me, are you removing the cedar trees? When will construction start and for how long?

**A:** The swale will be twelve inches deep and four feet wide. The cedar trees will not be removed. David Lewis noted he would further discuss further specific needs after the meeting. The construction is anticipated to begin in the summer of 2012 and last a couple of months.

**C:** People will walk next to my deck which is awkward for other people (users). My mailbox is next to the trail head where you have designed a plaza and a bench. The plaza and bench are not needed as it will not be a high traffic area.

**C:** Connectivity is all over the neighborhood with sidewalks.

**C:** Requests wood chips with better drainage

**C:** Requests two foot wide gravel path if anything has to be done. Believe this project is a waste of money that the people don't want.

**C:** People are asking for the path, the people attending tonight are the exception since it is located next their property. In addition Not looking at the big picture of the community.

**Q:** What is the maintenance cost between asphalt and gravel?

**A:** The THPRD Maintenance Department has calculated the maintenance cost. An asphalt path would be \$700 per year while a gravel path would require \$3,300 per year in maintenance cost.

**C:** Walks children to school every day on the existing path and has not seen any drainage issues even when last year was the wettest on record. No need for asphalt.

**C:** People love what is existing and seem concerned about changes in tranquility. Experience in the past seems that communities are scared of change but once the construction is completed, it becomes better than what was originally there and becomes a good thing. Connectivity is very important and seeing people in parks and on trails is a good thing.

**C:** The park isn't great to begin with. Would rather drive to the school to use their play equipment.

**C:** Does not believe connectivity is the issue, it is the use of asphalt and width of the trail that is ridiculous.

**C:** Understands the idea and uses of the paved trail but also understands the privacy and greenery issues. Requests the District compromise and construct a three to four foot wide paved path.

**C:** Works for Beaverton School District and has heard an overwhelming amount of concern from parents about not having a safe, non-slippery, direct path to walk children to and from school. Additionally, it is not standard practice for busses to pick up kids within a half mile radius of the school but due to lack of connectivity to the school, busses are still picking kids up in the neighborhood. This path along with the final connection to Bonny Slope will allow for bus routes to stop in the area and not spend more money.

**C:** Concerned about what the trail will do to the natural look of the area. Don't see a reason for the bench and believe the design is overkill for the area.

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#### 4. Next Steps

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general manager and management team who will make a decision. The project is currently out to bid and is tentatively scheduled for July 2012 construction. The bid will be presented to the Board of Directors at their June meeting, which is scheduled for June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Steve explained it is a public meeting, and the public will have an opportunity to speak if desired.



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