



TUALATIN HILLS PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

Public Meeting Notes

Project: Lowami Hart Woods Park – Trail Improvements & Natural Area Restoration
Meeting Location: Conestoga Recreation and Aquatic Center, Room 202
Date & Time: November 17, 2010, 6:30-8:00 PM

Staff Present: Matt Kilmartin, Park Planner*
Gery Keck, Park Planner
John Gaddis, Natural Resources & Trails Specialist*
Melissa Marcum, Volunteer Coordinator
Mike Janin, Superintendent of Security Operations*
Steve Regner, Office Tech

* = presenters

Introduction

Twenty neighbors and interested park patrons attended this public meeting for Lowami Hart Woods Park Improvements. Matt Kilmartin opened by giving a brief overview of the project's history and timeline, focusing on the adoption of the Master Plan in 2001, recent refinements of the Master Plan exhibit, and design development progress.

Master Plan Overview

Matt discussed the goals and details of the approved Master Plan, noting refinements made to the rendered master plan exhibit since 2001 based on recent updates to the natural resource inventories. The main project improvement will be an 8'-wide asphalt trail that will lead from Hart Road northward through the park to the property line at Brookhaven. This community trail segment will provide a future connection for the South Johnson Creek Community Trail as identified in the park district's Trails Plan. The trail will include a new bridge crossing over Johnson Creek, and will also lead to a gathering area at the site center designed to provide environmental education programs such as day camps. Additionally, a 3'-wide gravel loop trail will provide patrons with another way to experience the park's environment. The trails are being designed to immerse trail users in the natural environment of Lowami Hart Woods Park without causing undue impacts to the site's significant natural resources. The project will include a paved parking lot to be accessed from Hart Road for auto and bus parking, with an adjacent staging area plaza and trail head, informational kiosk, picnic area, and temporary restroom facilities. As part of the project, public improvements to Hart Road will need to be implemented to improve vehicular access and pedestrian safety into and out of the park. Once

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the project design and permitting are finalized, construction of the trail improvements are expected to take place during summer/fall of 2012.

Natural Resources Overview

John Gaddis gave a brief overview of the natural resources within the park, including the creek corridor, wetlands, significant fir groves, and a variety of endangered plant species. The area also contains non-native plant species that need to be removed. The focus of the natural area restoration will begin with stream corridor restoration, removal of the non-native species, planting of native trees and shrubs, and the closure of numerous non-designated “rogue” trails. The restoration efforts will begin during the fall of 2011, with the plantings occurring in spring of 2013, to coincide with the trail improvements. Funding is included to ensure plant establishment over a subsequent two-year period following the project.

Encroachments

Matt briefly discussed the issues of property encroachments into the park by adjacent residences. The park district conducted a review of encroachments in 2001 during Master Planning, and will be revisiting any existing encroachments with individual property owners in the near future. The park district’s goal is to work cooperatively with neighbors over encroachments and to avoid any need to fence the park boundaries.

Security

In response to numerous security-related questions, Mike Janin, Superintendent of Security Operations for THPRD, provided an overview of park security and patrol, and discussed expectations for park stewardship. Mike discussed his desire to work together with neighbors, especially those directly adjacent to the park, to foster stewardship and minimize unwanted activities at the park. Mike identified that the best security for the park is by the eyes and ears of neighbors. Mike identified multiple ways for neighbors to contact park patrol, including by phone and the park district’s website. Mike also emphasized the benefits of the paved trail, allowing vehicle and bicycle access for park patrol to respond quickly to any issues that arise.

Concerns & Responses (from the meeting):

- What has changed in the Master Plan since 2001, and why has the District waited so long to implement the plan?
 - *Response: Most significantly, the trail alignments have been refined. Thanks to the 2008 bond, the District now has the funds to implement the approved 2001 Master Plan.*

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- Why are you paving the trail?
 - *Response: Both THPRD and City of Beaverton community trail standards require the paving of the community trail. Permeable paving was considered, but environmental conditions and maintenance issues make permeable pavements impractical at this site.*

- Is the trail paved because of ADA requirements?
 - *Response: Accessibility is a goal of the trail standards, and the paved trail will provide a greater level of accessibility for all park patrons; however, due to environmental constraints such as large trees and steep topography, the entire trail will not be 100% ADA compliant.*

- Will the loop trail be paved too?
 - *Response: No, the loop trail will be a gravel surface trail, and will be narrower and have some steeper grades than the community trail.*

- Two years ago, Boy Scouts doing volunteer work left large piles of Holly that later almost caught fire. Greater maintenance follow through is necessary to avoid this from happening in the future. Who will be conducting the park maintenance?
 - *Response: The district will employ Natural Resource Technicians as well as volunteer groups to conduct park maintenance. Maintenance follow through is certainly necessary to prevent similar issues. The project budget allows for two years of funding to ensure plant establishment.*

- Several patrons were concerned about other trails being closed.
 - *Response: During the 2001 Master Planning process, the district received positive feedback regarding the closure of other existing rogue trails. A majority of the trails lead to the rear of neighbors' properties and contributed to vandalism and littering, while many others lead through sensitive natural resources such as wetlands or contribute to resource degradation. The district will plant native species along trail routes to be closed, but recognizes the benefit of exploring the natural environment, and will continue to allow patrons to explore, even off-trail.*

- Will the park be opened dawn to dusk?
 - *Response: Yes. There will be no Park lighting; however, there will be no gates. Park rules signs will be posted to identify the dawn to dusk park hours.*

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- Will there be picnic and barbeque areas?
 - *Response: There will be a picnic area adjacent to the parking lot. Permanent barbeques will not be provided due to maintenance, fire hazard and security issues.*
- The district should install signs prohibiting paintball.
 - *Response: The park will have standard signs identifying restricted activities. The paved trail will provide park patrol greater access to enforce these policies.*
- Kids might enjoy campfire opportunities at the site center.
 - *Response: Campfires were considered during the Master Plan process, but were excluded from the final plan due to maintenance, fire hazard and security issues.*
- Will the trail connect to other parks?
 - *Response: Yes, the paved community trail segment will provide a connection for future South Johnson Creek Community Trail.*
- Will the park remain a neighborhood park, or be reclassified as a community park?
 - *Response: It will remain classified as a neighborhood park.*
- Can neighbors do anything to prevent the community trail from being paved?
 - *Response: The Master Plan was approved in 2001 to include a segment of the South Johnson Creek Community Trail. Both THPRD and the City of Beaverton trail standards require a trail of this classification and programming to be paved. It is highly unlikely at this time that the plan to pave the trail will be altered.*
- Will Park Patrol use the paved trail for access?
 - *Response: Yes. The paved 8'-wide trail will allow park patrol to drive into the park, as far as the site center. The bridges will be vehicle rated. Sharp turns on the paved trail north of the site center will make motor vehicle access challenging, but park patrol will employ bicycles if necessary. Removable bollards at the trailhead will prevent unauthorized vehicle access.*
- One resident commented that they empathized with people who wanted to keep Lowami Hart Woods Park as their special neighborhood place, but emphasized the need to provide connectivity and access to the

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community. They praised the Park Patrol for its diligent efforts to respond quickly to issues and maintain park safety.

- What is the extent of the area of service envisioned by the District?
 - *Response: Primarily the adjacent neighborhood, but the goal of a neighborhood park is to serve approximately ½ mile radius.*
- What is the purpose of providing bus parking?
 - *Response: As identified in the Master Plan, the district will program the park for environmental education such as day camps and guided ranger-walks for school-aged children. Bus parking is needed to accommodate these activities.*
- The parking lot seems big.
 - *Response: The district included 18 parking spaces based on the anticipated programming at the park. An innovative design approach to overlay bus parking onto three standard parking spaces helped to reduce the overall footprint of the parking lot in order to minimize impacts to the surrounding natural resources.*
- I understood the Master Plan included a restroom building and drinking fountain; why are these needed here?
 - *Response: Yes, the Master Plan does include a permanent restroom building with a drinking fountain, but these amenities will not be included in this project phase. Instead, temporary restroom facilities will be provided, primarily to meet the needs of children participating in environmental education programs at the park. The two temporary restrooms will be a standard and ADA portable toilet located within a screened enclosure.*
- What will the dog policy be?
 - *Response: Like most THPRD parks, dogs will be allowed on-leash.*
- How are park users after dark (like campers) dealt with?
 - *Response: Camping is not allowed at the park. Lowami Hart Woods Park will be included in Park Patrols' daily routes, but park security will depend on neighbors alerting park patrol of issues such as campers for best effectiveness.*
- Has the park considered using cameras for security?
 - *Response: Cameras do not work well in low light situations, so they will not be implemented at Lowami Hart Woods Park.*

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- Will the portable restrooms be locked at night?
 - *Response: Not typically, but the ability to lock them will be available. The park district has little trouble with portables at night, but they'll be closely monitored during park patrols.*
- Will chemicals be used to remove invasive species? If so, will it be signed?
 - *Response: Chemical treatments will be used in certain portions of the park for invasive species removal. Areas where chemicals are used will be clearly signed to warn patrons of the chemicals. Chemicals will be used in accordance with THPRD's Best Management Practices and by licensed chemical applicators*
- How will vehicular access be affected by the public improvements on Hart Road?
 - *Response: Right and left turns will be permitted out of both driveway aprons onto Hart Road. Eastbound traffic on Hart Road will only be permitted to turn left into the park at the western driveway.*
- Will crosswalks be striped at the intersection of Hart and 149th?
 - *Response: The City of Beaverton does not typically stripe crosswalks similar to Hart and 149th where a mid-block pedestrian refuge is located within the median, so it is unlikely that it will be striped.*

Concerns & Responses (written):

- None received.