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# Douglas Carter Fisher Neighborhood Park Public Comment Form Summary

Comment Period: August 4-31, 2009

**Number of Comment Forms Mailed:** 1,822  
**Total Returned:** 129 (120 paper; 9 electronic)  
**Overall Return Rate:** 7%

Please note that this is a summary of comments received and is not a word-for-word transcript of all written comments. The original comment forms are available for public review upon request at the Clark County Public Service Center in Vancouver. Please call Jilayne Jordan at (360) 397-6118 x. 4949 for more information.

**Question 1: Please tell us how important the following neighborhood park elements are to you.**

	<b>Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>Don't Know/ No Opinion</b>
a) Short walking and biking trail	<b>77 (63%)</b>	28 (23%)	14 (11%)	4 (3%)
b) Small open grassy field	<b>62 (50%)</b>	48 (38%)	12 (10%)	3 (2%)
c) Additional trees, landscaping, etc.	<b>52 (43%)</b>	38 (31%)	24 (20%)	7 (6%)
d) Screening and privacy plantings for adjacent neighbors	37 (30%)	35 (29%)	<b>38 (31%)</b>	11 (10%)
e) Playground equipment	<b>62 (51%)</b>	29 (24%)	25 (21%)	5 (4%)
f) Basketball half court/sport court	30 (25%)	29 (24%)	<b>51 (42%)</b>	11 (9%)
g) Picnic tables	<b>51 (42%)</b>	41 (33%)	26 (21%)	5 (4%)
h) Park benches/seating areas	<b>76 (61%)</b>	37 (30%)	9 (7%)	2 (2%)
i) Environmental education & observation opportunities	19 (16%)	42 (35%)	<b>49 (41%)</b>	10 (8%)

*NOTE: Not everyone who sent in a comment form responded to this question, and not everyone who responded marked a box for each item.*

## Most Important Park Elements

### *“Very Important” selected (50% or more)*

1. Short walking and biking trail	63%
2. Benches	61%
3. Playground equipment	51%
4. Small open grassy field	50%

### *“Very Important” AND “Somewhat Important” combined (50% or more)*

1. Benches	91%
2. Small open grassy field	88%
3. Short walking and biking trail	86%
4. Picnic tables	75%
5. Playground equipment	75%
6. Additional trees and landscaping	74%
7. Screening and privacy plantings	60%
8. Environmental education and observation opportunities	51%

- The least support was for a basketball half court/sport court (42% selecting “Not Important”), and environmental education and observation opportunities (41% selecting “Not Important”).
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## Question 2: Have you ever visited Covington Neighborhood Park before? If you answered “Yes”, what did you do there?

*NOTE: There was an error on the comment form that referred to the park as “Covington Neighborhood Park” in this question. This may have confused some people, so the following responses may not actually represent how many neighbors have visited Douglas Carter Fisher Park.*

**YES:** 26 (21%)

**NO:** 96 (79%)

- Respondents said they engaged in the following activities:
  - Walked around
  - Observed nature (birds, amphibians, insects, etc.)
  - Picnicked
  - Played with children
  - Let children run around
  - Went berry picking
  - Riding bikes
  - Played in the field
  - Walked a dog
  - Played Frisbee
  - Picked up litter
- Those who hadn’t been to the park gave the following reasons:

- Moved here recently
  - Don't know where it's located
  - Didn't know it was a park
  - Nothing to do there currently
- Some respondents did not answer this question.
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**Question 3: Is there something special about this property as it is right now that you would like to keep during the upcoming park development process (i.e. views, access points, etc.)?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
  - 13 respondents said there was nothing about the park they wanted to preserve.
  - Features other respondents said they'd like to preserve included:
    - The open play field
    - The adjacent drainage ditch
    - Trees and plants around the perimeter
    - The wildlife that lives in and around the property
    - The blackberry bushes along the south side
    - Access from 54<sup>th</sup> Street
    - Peace and quiet
    - Wetland and buffer areas
    - The natural and unspoiled character
    - Access trail from stormwater facility on the north side
    - Wildflowers
    - Gate access from adjacent property
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**Question 4: Would you support including natural play experiences in this park instead of traditional playground equipment?**

**YES:** 83 (75%)

**NO:** 28 (25%)

- Comments from people who selected "Yes":
  - Great idea
  - Kids love to climb
  - Prefer it to traditional playground equipment, which is everywhere
  - Make sure it's child friendly
  - Would prefer a mixture of both natural and traditional equipment
  - Make sure it's easy to maintain
  - Like what was done at Jorgenson Woods Neighborhood Park in West Hazel Dell
  - It is important for children to experience nature and use their imaginations when playing
  - Would love a park that is something other than just a playground

- It would be different and exciting
  - Make sure it's safe
  - Log and rock climbing features would be great
  - Would prefer no logs
  - A sand play area would be great
  - Metal equipment gets hot in the summer and wood rots and splinters
  - Environmental education opportunities are not needed
- Comments from people who selected "No":
    - Don't like the idea of a sand play area – cats will use it as a litter box
    - Would prefer a mix of both
    - Concerned that it would be dangerous and that there wouldn't be enough adult supervision
    - A regular playground is fine
    - Prefer traditional equipment
    - Don't want rock climbing features
    - Don't think a fabricated natural play area is very natural
    - Don't think children who live in this area would use it
- Some respondents did not answer this question.
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**Question 5: Do you have any concerns about this upcoming park development project?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
- 18 respondents said they had no concerns.
- Some respondents' concerns involved safety and security-related issues, including:
  - That the park will become a hangout for teenagers to do drugs and drink.
  - That the park will attract gangs, drug dealers or homeless people.
  - Need security to protect against vandalism.
  - Install a stop sign on 58<sup>th</sup> at 47<sup>th</sup> Street facing southbound traffic to ensure pedestrians can safely access the park.
  - Litter spreading to neighbors' lawns.
  - How isolated and hidden away this park is. Keep it open and visible from adjacent houses and the road.
  - The drainage ditch will create a safety problem. Children could fall in.
  - It's important that children and adults feel safe in this park.
  - Concerned about the Sheriff's Office's ability to patrol the park and respond to calls.
- Other concerns included:
  - The existing grassy area is being lost to the wetlands.
  - Construction vehicles could damage the pavement on 54<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - Put picnic tables on concrete slabs.
  - That the trail will be too short to use – use creative design techniques to make the trail as long as possible.
  - Do not like how long it has taken to develop this park.

- Visitors could park on the neighborhood streets and block driveways. The design needs to include a parking area for a few cars.
- Don't want additional noise.
- Concerned that there won't be any funding available to build it.
- Minimize the amount of paved surface as much as possible.
- Visitors will let their dogs run off the leash.
- Don't want dogs such as Pit Bulls allowed in the park.
- People might abuse or misuse the park.
- Restrooms must be well maintained and locked at night.
- Neighbors may be inconvenienced or disturbed during construction.
- Use this money for something else, like fixing up playgrounds at the nearby schools, additional law enforcement patrols in the neighborhood, or preventing more layoffs of county employees.
- Other parks in this area are underused. Would prefer this property be left as a refuge for wildlife.
- There aren't enough access points to this park. It will be hard for a lot of people to get to it without driving.
- Provide features that appeal to adults also, not just kids.
- Keep costs down as much as possible.
- The county shouldn't develop this park now, when the economy is so bad. Cut spending and reduce taxes.
- Hope the plan includes a restroom.
- Provide handicapped parking spaces at least.
- People won't pick up dog waste.
- Provide some shade using a covered pavilion or something like that if big trees aren't possible.
- Don't want any kind of sports area or court because it will attract teenagers and young adults who bring lots of noise and trash with them.
- Coyotes and raccoons could get into the garbage if it isn't picked up very often.
- Don't ruin it with ugly playground equipment.
- A sports court will create too much noise for neighbors who work evening and night shifts.
- Keep it mowed.

**Question 6: Do you have any other comments to share about this project?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question, or said they didn't have any other comments.
- Summary of general comments:
  - Make it environmental, natural and eco-friendly.
  - Make it unattractive to criminals.
  - Eager to see it completed.
  - Please add an access point at 55<sup>th</sup> Street and put bridges over the drainage ditch for pedestrians.
  - Please include an access point from the east side of the park.
  - Build it before 2011.
  - Make sure it's handicapped accessible.
  - Consider including a memorial for the late Bob Steele (former East Minnehaha Neighborhood Association parks chairman) in the park.
  - Keep it low maintenance and safe.
  - Plant as many big evergreen trees as possible.
  - Keep it as natural as possible.

- We don't need another park.
- Really need walking trails in this neighborhood – there are no sidewalks.
- Provide something other than just another new playground.
- Looking forward to it. There are a lot of kids in this neighborhood.
- Should be a stimulating and happy place for families and friends.
- Pleased it will be a park and not more houses.
- Let people who live in this neighborhood work construction on the project – there are a lot of people out of work now.
- Some months of the year, this whole property is under water, ankle deep.
- Don't use the same type of playground equipment that's in Orchards Park.
- Most people have yards for younger children to play in. Would prefer this be a place for older children and teenagers to skateboard and play basketball or field games.
- Enhance the wetlands and add to the beauty of the park.
- Purchase the large property east of the park and combine it into one large park.
- Make it naturally attractive and colorful. Use drought resistant trees, flowering bushes such as lilacs and Rhododendrons, and a weeping willow for shade.
- Provide access to the wetlands for exploration and education.
- Specific features respondents asked be included in the park:
  - A hitting-throwing-rebound wall in the park designed specifically for solitary play
  - Restroom
  - Parking area
  - Off-leash dog park
  - Dog waste bag dispenser – have neighbors refill it with used grocery bags
  - Walking path with tall grasses on either side
  - Path made of recycled, shredded tires/rubber
  - Something that the blind can use
  - Water feature or fountain people can play in
  - Changeable skateboarding area with elements that can be removed and replaced on a regular basis
  - Swings (multiple requests for the tall swings you find in older parks and swings adults can also use)
  - Seating areas
  - Privacy fences for adjacent neighbors
  - Slides/large slides
  - Merry-go-round
  - Things to climb on
  - Basketball half court – may help replace some hoops set up in the street
  - Portable fence on wheels to allow kids to play pickle ball, baseball or home-run derby in the field
  - Good lighting to discourage criminal activity after dark
  - Picnic tables and benches
  - Wetland/wildlife education and observation area for children and adults
  - Bike trails like at Orchards Park
  - Additional trees, screening and privacy plantings for neighbors

END