

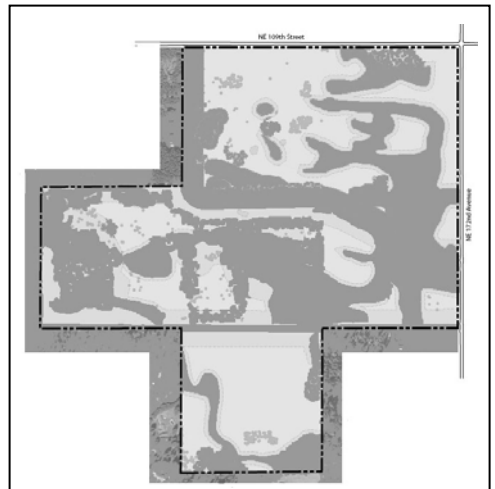
Hockinson Community Park Master Plan Fact Sheet

March 2005

General Information

In 2001, the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department acquired the Hockinson Community Park property as a community park from the WA Dept of Natural Resources, with the intent of primarily serving the people living in approximately a 3-mile radius from the park. At the present, 38,000 people live within the service area for Hockinson Park; that number will increase to approximately 55,000 as the area builds out.

The park site is a 240-acre property located at the SW corner of NE 119th Street and 172nd Avenue. While this site is large, nearly half of the site is wetlands or wetland buffer areas (105 acres), as the darker areas show in the graphic to the right. The spacing between the wetlands leaves very few areas that are large enough to accommodate sport fields which are a typical community park amenity. The two largest contiguous developable areas that are dry and developable for active, intensive uses are each about 30 acres in size.



Overall Park Program

The Clark County Comprehensive Plan outlines the typical developed features of a community park, which includes some of all of the following amenities: multi-purpose playfields and open lawn areas, universally accessible walking trails, play areas, picnic shelters, basketball courts, community gardens, restrooms, and parking. The Hockinson Park design program includes the following elements:

- Picnic shelters
- Play equipment
- Extreme sports area (skate/bmx)
- Multi-use trails
- Interpretive areas and vistas
- Caretaker facility
- Associated support facilities (parking, stormwater retention/treatment, entrance roads)
- Wetland restoration/creation (as required by the county and Army Corps)
- 16 little league fields
- 8 soccer fields
- 5 softball fields
- Off leash area
- Restrooms

Much of the sports program is geared toward youth sports leagues and approximately 60% of the fields listed above will be constructed in the first phase of development and will be located in such a way as to minimize impacts to adjacent neighbors. The youth leagues involved include Evergreen Little League, Highlands Little League, Prairie Soccer and a newly formed AAU league that will share fields with Highlands Little League.

The park planning will attempt to minimize development within the wetlands and locate improvements within more suitable upland areas. Wetlands were identified on site and confirmed by Washington Department of Ecology and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. Current regulations dictate the master plan minimize development within the wetlands boundaries and that development utilize upland areas before impacting wetlands. Impacts to wetlands will require mitigation through development of new or enhancement of existing wetlands. Mitigation is a costly process and will be avoided when possible.

Where we are in the process

The public process was initiated in early December 2004 with the first of a series of public meetings in which we shared general concepts for the overall scope of the project; including amenities that are typical in a community park (both active and passive uses) and the geographic area typically served by community parks (including the typical user population). A series of guiding principles were discussed, which each subsequent design option will be weighed against.

Hockinson Park -- Guiding Principles

- Accommodate community based activities to meet the diverse needs of entire community, now and long-term
- Provide a balance of passive and active park uses.
- Address access, security, and adjacent uses.
- Preserve and enhance natural resources; Incorporate sustainability principles
- Develop a plan which is financially responsible and viable for the long-term

A second meeting was held in mid February 2005 at which time three distinct master plan options were presented that reflected the needed park elements identified above. At this second meeting, attendees were encouraged to discuss the pros/cons of the various options, vote on elements they liked from each concept, and suggest other alternatives; written and verbal comments were received and documented. Additionally, staff have met with the various sport leagues to refine the overall sport needs for the site.

Next Steps

The third public meeting is scheduled for March 31st at 7pm at York Elementary School (9301 NE 152nd Avenue). The public is invited to discuss a refined concept plan, trails, play equipment areas, and park naming.

In response to comments received at the second public meeting in February, Parks staff is reviewing the following:

- Affects to adjacent neighbors – one major goal of the master planning process is to design the park in a manner sensitive to its surroundings. Balancing the development constraints of the site, staff attempts to site the different park elements to minimize impacts to neighbors. As part of the first phase of development, the park property will be fenced along the property boundary and additional trees and landscaping will be planted to further reduce any perceived impacts.
- Field lighting – staff are reviewing design options that eliminate lit fields from the southern forty acres for a period of ten years in an effort to further reduce impacts to adjacent residences to the south and west.
- Equestrian use – staff have concluded that this property is not the best location to accommodate equestrian use. Staff's concerns relate to the restricted use of the sensitive land areas (105 acres) and the safety issues related to incorporating equestrian uses in such close proximity to active sports fields. Staff will continue to work with the equestrian groups to locate and develop equestrian trails and facilities on other sites that are better suited for equestrian use.
- Off leash areas – staff is continuing to research the compatibility issues relating to the sensitive lands to determine what size off leash area can be incorporated into the design.
- Phasing of development – the entire master planned park program will not be built in the first phase. The location of facilities for the first phase will be sited so as to limit impacts to adjacent neighbors.