

Hockinson Community Park Master Plan Fact Sheet

July 2005

Update

With interest in further reducing the impact of this park project on area residents, the Director of Vancouver-Clark Parks & Recreation has removed the five adult softball fields from the park design. The effects of this change will be to: reduce traffic and parking requirements, conserve energy through the elimination of three lighted fields, and produce a design more sensitive to the existing wetlands..

The park site is a 240-acre property located at the southwest 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). The spacing between the wetlands provides very few areas that are large enough to accommodate youth league sport fields which are typical in a community park. The largest contiguous developable area that is dry and developable for active, intensive uses is about 30 acres in size and is located in the southernmost portion of the park. Right now, 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 character of the area is currently rural, but rapidly changing to urban.

Overall Park Program

With the exception of the removal of the adult softball fields, the Hockinson Park design program remains constant and includes the following elements, which were represented on the last plan presented to the community:

- 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

Design Considerations Guiding the Project

The park planning continues to focus on minimizing development within the wetlands and placing improvements within more suitable upland areas. A complete wetland delineation was prepared to compare and further validate earlier wetland mapping. The results of the wetland delineation were very consistent with the early wetland mapping of the site. Current Corp of Engineers and County permit requirements dictate that the master plan minimize impacts to wetlands and their buffers by developing upland areas before proposing impacts to wetlands. Impacts to wetlands require mitigation through creation of new or enhancement of existing wetlands. Mitigation is a costly process (both in terms of development cost and loss of usable land area) and will be avoided when possible.

The regulatory criteria that will be applied to this project are based on the following sequence:

1. **Avoid** impacts to wetlands (utilize dry uplands before disturbing wetlands)
2. **Minimize** impacts to wetlands (limit impacts based on quantity and quality criteria)
3. **Mitigate** for impacts (restore existing or create new wetlands on site for any impact)

Taking into consideration the additional wetland areas, the permitting criteria, the removal of the adult softball complex, and our responsibility to create an economically feasible development, the following plan for the park emerged: Sports fields will be located in the largest areas of contiguous uplands, which is the corridor of upland area spanning from the southern meadow into the westerly 40 acre portion of the park site. In consideration of the neighbors concerns, we have left the lowest impact

league (Highlands) in the southern meadow. Evergreen Little League will remain in the westerly 40 acres and Prairie Soccer will have shared used fields on the outfield areas of the little league fields. To further minimize impacts to the wetlands and maximize connectivity of habitat from east to west through the site, the two dedicated soccer fields will be moved to the north 40 acres and placed in such a way as to avoid wetlands and minimize impact to the treed areas.

This proposed master plan meets the following goals:

- Meets the regulatory criteria (i.e. most likely to get permitted by the Corps of Engineers and other regulatory agencies).
- Reduces development cost by avoiding wetland areas.
- Reduces and mitigates impacts to adjacent properties. Being a good neighbor.
- Balances the number of users with what the land and infrastructure can support.
- Provides operating and maintenance efficiencies.
- Allows shared use of common facilities (restrooms, parking areas) (which reduces cost).

In order to retain the “reduced impact” benefit from the elimination of the five softball fields, we are not incorporating any new programs/uses into the final master plan. The small amount of upland area in the northwest portion of the park (taking into consideration the increased amount of wetland in that area) will accommodate the two dedicated soccer fields and possibly one or more of the community park amenities. The placement of these programs will be to share parking areas and restrooms to keep costs down. There was not enough developable area gained through the elimination of the softball fields to justify reconsideration of an equestrian component in this park.

These design modifications are consistent with and are a response to the project’s guiding principles, which were discussed at the beginning of the master planning process.

Hockinson Park -- Guiding Principles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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

Design Alterations Resulting from Community Discussions

The following table summarizes specific concerns raised through the public process and how those concerns have been addressed.

Comments / Concerns Expressed	Design Response / Mitigation
Neighborhood concern about lighting all of the sports fields.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifted fields as far from the residences as possible; • Agreed to light only 3 baseball and 1 dedicated soccer field until 2015, and then evaluate the need for lights beyond that time frame through another public process and Good Neighbor Agreement.
Neighborhood concern about privacy and safety of adjacent property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed to provide buffer planting in the first phase of construction to maximize maturity as little league matures; • Provide perimeter fencing; • Prepare Good Neighbor Agreement to address other concerns of adjacent neighbors.
Concern that there were too many sport fields proposed for the park that would result in a negative impact on traffic, regardless of what the traffic studies indicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removed the 5 adult softball fields from the park master plan.