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# Fisher-Mill Plain (Vandervort) Neighborhood Park Public Comment Form Summary

Comment Period: March and April 2007

**Number of Comment Forms Mailed Out:** 1,064

**Total Returned:** 185

**Return Rate:** 17%

Please note that this is a summary of the comments received and is not intended to present 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 typical neighborhood park elements are to you.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Don't Know/No Opinion
a) Walking and biking trails	<b>134 (75%)</b>	36 (20%)	6 (4%)	2 (1%)
b) Open grassy fields for playing catch, touch football, Frisbee, etc.	<b>99 (57%)</b>	57 (33%)	13 (7%)	5 (3%)
c) Additional trees, landscaping and other habitat enhancement	72 (41%)	64 (37%)	33 (19%)	6 (3%)
d) Screening and privacy plantings for adjacent neighbors	67 (39%)	58 (33%)	38 (22%)	10 (6%)
e) Playground equipment	<b>99 (55%)</b>	51 (29%)	25 (14%)	4 (2%)
f) Small basketball court or sport court (less than half-court size)	61 (35%)	58 (33%)	47 (27%)	8 (5%)
g) Small skateboarding spot (1,500 square feet or smaller)	34 (20%)	42 (24%)	<b>86 (50%)</b>	10 (6%)
h) Picnic tables	<b>98 (53%)</b>	58 (32%)	26 (14%)	1 (1%)
i) Park benches/seating areas	<b>142 (77%)</b>	31 (17%)	9 (5%)	1 (1%)

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

## Most Important Park Elements

### *“Very Important” selected (over 50%)*

1. Park benches/seating areas	77%
2. Walking and biking trails	75%
3. Open grassy fields	57%
4. Playground equipment	55%
5. Picnic tables	53%

### *“Very Important” AND “Somewhat Important” selected (over 50%)*

1. Walking and biking trails	95%
2. Park benches/seating areas	94%
3. Open grassy fields	90%
4. Picnic tables	85%
5. Playground equipment	84%
6. Additional trees, landscaping, etc.	78%
7. Screening & privacy plantings	72%
8. Small basketball court or sports court	68%

- Neighbors said the least important feature would be the small skateboarding spot (50% selecting “Not Important”).
- Several proposed features did not get 50% or higher in any particular ranking:
  - Additional trees, landscaping and habitat improvements
  - Screening and privacy plantings for adjacent neighbors
  - Small basketball or sports court

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**Question 2: There is some interest within the community for including a small, fenced off-leash dog park in the park (please visit [www.clarkdogpaw.org](http://www.clarkdogpaw.org) for more information about off leash dog parks). What comments and suggestions do you have about this idea?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
- Some respondents thought we were referring to the off leash area at Pacific Community Park, which is located farther north of this park.
- 76 said they were in favor of including a small, fenced off leash area for dogs in this park.
- 63 respondents said they were opposed to it.
- Some of those who said they supported the proposal did so with some conditions:
  - Must be located far away from children’s play areas
  - Must be entirely fenced and gated/very secure
  - Dog waste removal laws must be strictly enforced
  - Require muzzles
  - Users must follow clearly posted rules
  - Must be kept clean – any foul odors from dog waste will not be tolerated by neighbors
  - Provide a dog waste bag dispenser

- Only if the entire park becomes an off-leash area
- It should not take up the majority of the park
- Other general comments from those in favor of the proposal included:
  - This park is being used as an unofficial off-leash area already
  - Would supplement the off-leash area at Pacific Community Park – Perhaps make this one for small dogs only
  - It's good to keep dogs and children separate
  - Would create a safe and fun place for dogs and people to play
  - More off-leash areas are very much needed in the community
  - It will draw more people to the park
  - There are a lot of dog owners in the area who would use it
  - Off-leash areas are important in the socialization and health of dogs
  - Will help keep dogs and their waste out of the main part of the park
  - Need separate off-leash areas for big and small dogs
- Reasons cited by those who said they were opposed to the proposal:
  - It's not needed – there is an 8-acre off-leash area going in at Pacific Community Park right up the street
  - It's not a good idea to have children and dogs in close proximity to each other
  - Don't like dogs/afraid of dogs
  - This park is too small to accommodate it
  - Don't support including off-leash areas in public parks
  - Dog waste won't be cleaned up
  - Too many adjacent neighbors – dogs barking and smells will not be tolerated
  - Providing features for children and families is more important
  - Will bring additional crowds, cars and litter to park and neighborhood
  - Dog owners are not likely to manage the situation
  - Not important
  - Not enough parking available

**Question 3: How often do you currently visit this park? What do you do when you're there?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
- A few respondents thought we were asking how often they would visit **if** the park were already developed and what they would prefer to do there.
- Some respondents thought we were asking about Pacific Community Park, which is located a few blocks north of this park at 18<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Approximately 80 respondents stated that they had never visited the park, because:
  - Too overgrown
  - Nothing to do/not developed yet
  - Didn't know it existed
  - Didn't know it was open to the public
  - People let their dogs off the leash and don't clean up after them
  - Too dangerous to get to – no sidewalks on 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

- The remaining respondents said that they had visited the park. The activities they said they engaged in at the park were:
    - Walking dogs/letting dogs run off leash
    - Walking
    - Enjoying nature (trees, wildlife, flowers, etc.)
    - Attending the annual Laurelwood Church festival
    - Jogging
    - BBQing with friends/picnicking
    - Playing touch football, soccer, catch and Frisbee
    - Flying kites
    - Riding bikes
    - Cross-country skiing in winter
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**Question 4: Is there something special about this park that you would like to preserve during the upcoming park development process?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
  - The items respondents wished to preserve were:
    - Trees (overwhelmingly requested by a majority of respondents)
    - Access from Third Street, Second Street and 170<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 175<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and church parking lot
    - Dog park usage
    - Green space
    - Animal habitats
    - Flowers and shrubs
    - Nesting areas for hawks and osprey in trees
    - Flowering trees
    - Rustic, natural feel
    - Open areas
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**Question 5: Do you know the history of this property? Does this property have any special or historical significance to the area?**

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
- The vast majority of respondents (more than 150) did not know the history of the property.
- Some respondents expressed an interest in learning about the history.
- The comments we did receive about the history of the property included:
  - It was a horse ranch
  - There were goats and sheep there
  - Pasture
  - Vandervort family raised and boarded horses. Mr. Vandervort was a vet for the Portland race track.

## Question 6: Do you have any concerns about this upcoming park development project?

- Some respondents did not answer this question.
- Approximately 45 of the respondents said they had no concerns.

General summary of issues and concerns identified:

### Traffic, Road Improvements and Parking:

- Traffic speeds on NE 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and the safety of children crossing the street to get to the park. Speed limit should be reduced and crosswalks and warning signs installed
- Additional traffic and parking on neighborhood streets
- Need to provide off-street parking to keep cars off neighborhood streets
- Do not allow on- or off-street parking – make it a “walk to” park for neighbors
- Need to have sidewalk down 172<sup>nd</sup> between 18<sup>th</sup> Street and 1<sup>st</sup> Street
- No on-street parking should be permitted on Third Street – it’s too narrow
- Street lighting needed around park
- 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue should be widened and sidewalks added
- Traffic bottlenecks could be created by dropping off or picking up children
- Construction traffic on 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue

### Crime and Safety:

- Clear out some of the trees to make it more open and visible – no hiding places.
- No skateboarding park. It will scare away families and smaller children and attract bad behavior.
- Don’t allow after hours use of the park; Clearly post hours of operation and enforce them
- Need regular police patrols
- Possible criminal behavior (gangs, drugs, littering, vandalism, etc.)
- Locate playground away from 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue for safety
- Lighting at night needed to help prevent criminal activities
- People coming from outside the neighborhood to use the park
- Providing easy access for criminals to adjacent neighbors’ backyards

### Other Issues:

- The off leash area won’t be big enough to play fetch
- Ensuring regular maintenance of park after it’s built
- Don’t cut down all the trees
- Dog owners not picking up pet waste
- Increased noise to adjacent neighbors
- Do not duplicate what’s at Pacific Community Park – keep it quiet and peaceful
- Provide easy access for pedestrians
- Keep it simple and low maintenance
- Don’t put ballfields here
- Increased noise levels for adjacent neighbors
- Not enough open space. Buy the undeveloped property on the corner of 172<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Don’t allow dogs/no dogs off leash
- Don’t make the skateboarding area too small
- Need to include an area for older children to play (basketball or skateboarding)

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## Question 7: 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.

- A number of respondents expressed excitement that the park was being developed.
- Summary of general comments:
  - It's not safe to walk to the nearby schools – having a basketball court and playground closer to home is necessary.
  - Don't forget to provide features for senior citizens (walking trails, benches, etc.).
  - Install a push light crosswalk on 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.
  - Change the park's name to something simpler.
  - Very important to provide play areas for all ages and interests.
  - Don't include noisy features in the park like skateboarding and basketball .
  - Design for the present and the future.
  - Provide a basketball court – it will help keep kids from playing in the street.
  - Don't understand why we're building this park when there's another going in just up the street. Waste of money.
  - Install a more secure perimeter fence.
  - Remove trees that are directly adjacent to neighbors' properties – limbs keep falling into yard during wind storms.
  - Reduce the speed limit on 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and put in speed bumps.
  - Primary usage of the park to date has been as an off-leash area for dogs – please include a place for them in the design.
  - Include a path that cuts straight through the park from the church to Third Street.
  - Include mile markers on pathways in ¼ mile increments.
  - Pacific Park will have a big skate park and other sports courts. No need to have them here also.
  - Spend money on improving existing parks instead of developing new parks.
  - Leave it alone. Development will eliminate habitat for the animals, and impact ability of property to absorb rainwater.
  - Additional off-leash areas for dogs are very important.
  - Make sure park is handicapped accessible.
  - Include a skateboarding area.
  - Remove the large fir tree on the far east side of the park – it blocks the sun to my yard and garden in the morning.
  - Would like to see additional wildlife habitat plantings.
  - Entrance from 170<sup>th</sup> and Third should be for neighborhood access only – not a public entrance.
  - Keep trees away from adjacent homes.
  - Design paths to wind between trees.
  - Last summer, the neighborhood children set several grass fires in the park that neighbors had to drag hoses around to put out.
- Additional park features respondents asked be included in the park:
  - Include bird and squirrel feeders in the park – their habitat is shrinking due to development in the area.
  - Plant fruit-bearing trees and plants for children to eat.
  - Put privacy inserts into chain link fence for adjacent neighbors.
  - Include a small parking lot.
  - Include restrooms.
  - Include an obstacle course for children.
  - Include a water feature for children to play in.
  - Buy the piece of property on the corner of 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and turn it into a parking area for the park.

- Include a huge rock from one of the nearby quarries in the park as a natural play area for climbing, sitting and exploring or a couple of smaller rocks.
- Include a drinking fountain.
- Include a duck or fish pond.
- Include a covered picnic area.
- Include a full basketball court and tennis court with fencing to keep balls inside.
- Include plenty of trash cans.
- Include an informational sign or bulletin board with information about the history of the property/area.
- Provide a dog waste bag dispenser.

END