

# NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARK AT CROWELL WOODS



## Neighborhood Meeting and Online Open House Summary

The Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (THPRD) invited the public to a neighborhood meeting on May 16, 2017, to present the draft master plan for the new neighborhood park at Crowell Woods and answer questions about the design. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting in the cafeteria of Beaver Acres Elementary School in Aloha. Staff from THPRD, WHPacific, and JLA Public Involvement were available to engage with attendees.

### Presentation

Steve Gulgren, THPRD, opened the presentation with a discussion of the design approach, public involvement, and project funding. Compared to THPRD's usual design process this project was conducted with a higher level of public involvement ahead of the master plan site design. With the goal of creating a park that best serves the needs of the neighborhood, THPRD has sought input from the community to help shape the priority uses and layout of the new park. Steve explained that funding for the project is made up of system development charge funds (for the construction phase) along with money from the 2008 bond measure. The westernmost area of the new park site was purchased with 2008 bond funds dedicated to natural resources meaning that, any development on this portion of the project would be very limited.

John Todoroff, JLA Public Involvement, gave a brief summary of public involvement efforts to date. Neighbors and park users had the opportunity to give their input through multiple methods prior to the master plan being developed. At a series of three community conversations, people discussed the needs of the neighborhood and how a park can address them. An online survey gathered input about design features that are desired in the park. At three design workshops, participants worked together to locate amenities and other park elements on the base map. The input gathered from these public involvement efforts directly shaped the draft master plan.

Landscape architect Mark Hadley, WHPacific, presented information about the site conditions and the draft master plan. WHPacific's survey of the property delineated the wetland areas adjacent to Steed Creek and inventoried trees, existing informal trails, and topographical features. Mark then presented the draft master plan and described the park's design elements including trails, bridge/viewpoint, creek access, gathering circle, community garden, picnic areas, hybrid traditional/nature play area, and shelter.

## Q&A

Following the staff presentation, attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns about the draft master plan. The major topics of discussion included:

- The tables under the shelter will be the primary picnic area, but there could be other places to locate additional tables in the park. The shelter will not be rented out.
- Some of the large ponderosa pines were identified by an arborist as being potentially hazardous due to their old age, and will be removed during park construction. Wood from these trees could be used in the park.
- THPRD is in discussions with Washington County regarding half-street improvements. Discussions are still ongoing for the street frontages along Pheasant Lane, Marty Lane and 174<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Marty Lane and 174<sup>th</sup> Avenue seem to be the strongest candidates for improvements.
- Like most of THPRD's neighborhood parks, there will be no night lighting installed and the park will be open from dawn to dusk.
- On-site public parking will not be included in the park design, although there will be an area for maintenance vehicle parking
- THPRD is currently in the process of exploring the acquisition of an adjacent parcel of land that currently contains a path from Beaver Court to a bridge that crosses the creek. This parcel is jointly owned by 44 neighbors.
- The park is not in a flood zone and the park is not expected to contribute to increased runoff. Additional plantings will help shade the creek.
- THPRD's park patrol staff will patrol the new park for nuisance activities including after hour late-night park use. Trail improvements/connectivity and increased use of the site by the public will discourage unwanted use in the park. Neighborhood park watch volunteer groups are encouraged to coordinate with patrol staff.
- The community garden is not expected to draw a significant amount of new traffic to the park. Previous studies have shown that THPRD's other gardens attract about three cars per day.
- While dogs will be allowed on-leash in the park, there will not be a designated dog park area.
- The wetland area adjacent to the northeast edge of the site is a water quality management area owned and maintained by an HOA and will not be maintained by THPRD.
- "New Park at Crowell Woods" is a working name only. THPRD's naming process will include public input.
- A meeting participant suggested that the park somehow honor the memory of Mr. Crowell, the former owner of the land, perhaps with a plaque.
- The draft master plan will be submitted for approval by the THPRD board in June 2017. Construction of the park is expected to be complete by fall 2019.

## Informal discussions

After the conclusion of the question-and-answer session, staff engaged in informal conversations with meeting participants and reported that there was a high level of enthusiasm for the project. Some of the questions and concerns from these conversations included:

- Two park neighbors expressed concern that hazard trees located near the property line could be a liability for their private property, with the possibility of limbs falling.

- A neighbor expressed concern that the community garden will attract visitors who will park on nearby streets.
- The property owner next to the future community garden is a paraplegic, so extra consideration should be taken to minimize any construction impacts affecting him.
- The trail loops will be a good place for walking dogs.
- At the end of the meeting THPRD staff asked the question as to whether this draft master plan represented what the community wanted to see in their park and was it ready to be presented to the THPRD board for approval? The overwhelming consensus of the group was that the draft master plan should be presented to the board for approval.

### **Comment cards**

10 attendees submitted comment cards, which asked for feedback on several questions pertaining to the park design and outreach efforts.

Questions 1 and 2 asked if the design meets the goals of “retaining the area’s natural setting” and “creating a welcoming, inclusive gathering space”. Eight of the responses to both of these questions were “yes” while two were “yes, with some revision”.

Responses to the next three questions, about public involvement and notification, were positive except for one neighbor who reported not receiving any notifications of public involvement opportunities prior to the May 16 neighborhood meeting.

Seven out of ten respondents “strongly agree” with the statement “THPRD has developed a master plan that is well-suited to the needs of the neighborhood”, while just one respondent selected “somewhat disagree”.

Respondents mostly live nearby the park; eight of ten said they live “next door” or within “easy walking distance” of the site. Seven live in the 97003 area code.

In response to demographic questions, all ten identified as non-Hispanic white and not an immigrant or refugee.

### **Online Open House**

In tandem with the neighborhood meeting, an online open house website was created to present the draft master plan and solicit feedback. Mirroring the format of the neighborhood meeting, the online open house (URL: [openhouse.jla.us.com/parkatcrowellwoods](http://openhouse.jla.us.com/parkatcrowellwoods)) offered information about the site, a summary of public involvement and feedback to date, the draft master plan, and next steps. The online open house drew approximately 200 unique visitors to the site. A comment form with the same set of questions as on the comment card described above was filled out by eight visitors between May 13 and May 31.

Two respondents suggested that the park could better meet the goal of “retaining the area’s natural setting” by preserving more trees on the site. All agreed that the project has met the goal of “creating a welcoming, inclusive gathering space.”

The next three questions, about public involvement and notification, drew mixed responses. Most agreed that it was easy to provide input. Opinion was somewhat mixed regarding the statements that “THPRD has provided updates to keep me informed about the project,” and “THPRD has listened to my

input in the development of the master plan.” Six of eight agreed that the master plan is well-suited to the neighborhood, while the remaining two said they did not know. Three of the respondents had participated in one of the previous public outreach opportunities.

Three respondents left comments, which included: concern about increased traffic and safety; positive remarks about having a new park for their young child; and support for the nature play area and a wish for restrooms near it.

Demographically, most respondents were female; two identified as Asian and the rest as non-Hispanic white; and one respondent identified as an immigrant or refugee.