



## WASHINGTON COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, December 17, 2014  
Area 93 (Bonny Slope West) Advisory Briefing and Discussion  
MEETING SUMMARY

### Creek Access, Parks & Trails

Staff introduced guest Aisha Willits, Director of Planning for Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (THPRD).

Staff presented information on the following topics:

#### Designation of Parks and Trails:

- Comparison of the county's park and trail designation approach outside of North Bethany (non-prescriptive) with the county's park and trail designation approach within North Bethany (prescriptive approach)
- Both approaches have benefits and trade-offs
- Staff has understood that the Board has had concerns with how detailed and prescriptive the North Bethany Subarea Plan has been in general. Staff does not know whether the Board would support North Bethany's prescriptive approach to designating parks and trails within Bonny Slope West.

#### Creek Visibility and Access, and Parks / Open Space Options:

- 3 options for visual and physical access to the creek were presented at the October open house
- Option 1 is maximizing development potential and limiting creek visibility; this option would make no specific provisions for visual or physical access to the creek.
- Only two public comments were received for Option 1 – one supporting it, one opposing it
- Option 2 is maximizing creek visibility by placing one-sided Parkway Streets along the creek (housing on one side, creek on the other)
- This option provides creek visibility to all, but it also results in higher development costs
- 20 public comments supported Option 2, and two comments opposed it
- THPRD is concerned about the street construction costs associated with Option 2, if THPRD open space is located along one side of the street
- Option 3 is balancing creek visibility with development potential along the creek by placing pocket parks in certain locations and allowing development to back to the creek in other locations.
- 10 public comments supported Option 3
- THPRD has concerns about the maintenance costs of numerous pocket parks shown in Option 3, as compared to maintaining a lesser number of larger sites
- THPRD has recently suggested a fourth option, which would be locating one to two neighborhood parks adjacent to the creek, each about 1.5 to 2 acres in size. This option

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is another way to allow the community to have visual and physical access to the creek. The neighborhood parks, being larger than pocket parks, could also allow for more recreational uses such as play structures.

Creek Crossings and Trail Options:

- Staff is examining two alternative locations for a pedestrian/bike creek crossing
- Staff is also examining the potential for an auto, ped and bike crossing at the east end of Bonny Slope West
- There has been strong public support for the pedestrian/bike creek crossing
- The creek crossing(s) could be a key element of an open space/trail system
- We presented a couple options for trails at the October open house
- Option 1 is placing trails within the outer 40% of the Clean Water Services (CWS) Vegetated Corridor.
- Option 1 would allow more interaction with the creek, but would require mitigation - restoration and planning of areas outside of the vegetated corridor to make up for the trail area within the vegetated corridor. There could be difficulty siting trails within the vegetated corridor due to some of the steep slopes there.
- October open house feedback indicated some support for placing the trail within the vegetated corridor (Option 1) because it would allow more of a natural experience of the creek
- Option 2 is placing trails outside the Vegetated Corridor, in open space located between the creek's Vegetated Corridor and a Parkway Street.
- THPRD is concerned about the street construction costs associated with Option 2, if THPRD open space is located along one side of the street
- Within the Vegetated Corridor, much of the land has slopes of over 25 percent. Even outside the Vegetated Corridor, some of the nearby land is quite steep. It could be difficult to identify a feasible trail corridor for this area on a plan map without engineering.

Aisha Willits/THPRD provided feedback on the following topics in response to questions from the PC:

Designation of Parks and Trails:

- THPRD has made some park acquisitions in North Bethany; typically they have an appraisal done for the market value of the underlying land use designation and then agree on a price.
- The North Bethany prescriptive approach forces a conversation between the developer and THPRD regarding a potential land purchase for parks and trails. Without that approach, THPRD would not be included in such a conversation.

Trail Options:

- There are mitigation costs for building trails within the Vegetated Corridor
- THPRD's preference is to stay out of the Vegetated Corridor; it's more complex and more permitting is required to locate a trail within the corridor
- THPRD is looking for opportunities to provide a trail head that could include a play structure, and could not do that within the Vegetated Corridor
- When a trail goes in next to existing development, there's often fear of introduction of unsavory elements, but adjacent residents are typically grateful later for the amenity.
- The THPRD Board is generally not supportive of trails adjacent to streets, especially arterial roadways.

- The THPRD Board would always prefer a buffer between the roadway and a trail facility.
- For Bonny Slope West, it is likely that there will be vegetation adjacent to the Vegetated Corridor. There may be an opportunity to site a trail that feels like you're interior to the creek corridor while still being outside of the Vegetated Corridor.

Park Needs within Bonny Slope West:

- Adjacent to the northwest corner of Bonny Slope West, THPRD has acquired two properties for a neighborhood park. The properties are heavily wooded, bisected by the creek and very wet. THPRD sees it now as more of a natural area.
- THPRD has studied our existing park amenities and what kind of reach those parks have. Our existing parks do have a reach into Bonny Slope West that's pretty substantial, but there are gaps along the eastern side of the area.
- To fill the level of service need in Bonny Slope West, we need to site a park in at least the east side of the area, on either the north or south side of the creek. The park will need to be at least 1.5 acres to accommodate the amenities that we include in a neighborhood park.
- For a neighborhood park within the study area, we like the 1.5 to 2 acre size. We require some flat area to accommodate play equipment, and some open lawn would be important to us.
- Because the trail corridor through this area will be so significant, we want to have a park site or sites adjacent to the trail corridor. Potentially there would just be on-street parking.
- If a school was sited in Bonny Slope West, it could potentially relieve some of the need for an additional park site. The challenge is if a park was located within or adjacent to a school site, the school property (including the park) would be off-limits during school hours. So we would not want to rely solely on a school site and would need additional park space.
- A linear park would present some maintenance challenges for THPRD. The flavor of a linear park or greenway is very different from a neighborhood park. We would not see a linear park as a substitute for a neighborhood park.
- If pocket parks that provide creek corridor access are included as part of a residential development and are held by the HOA, THPRD would ask for these to be public accesses.

Park Funding:

- We think the park funding will have a similar structure to North Bethany's financing plan for parks and trails, which called out that the SDC's collected in that area would be directly applied to the area.
- The 100 million dollar bond was all allocated before Bonny Slope West was part of Washington County and THPRD's service district. Generally we're looking at SDC's to fund parks in this area.

Public comments on creek access, parks and trails issues were provided by the following individuals:

Jim Goddard, Bonny Slope West resident

- He has lived in the area for about 20 years
- Locating a trail on the rim of the creek canyon would provide a much different experience than being down in the creek canyon

- The vegetative area within the creek corridor is a unique experience
- The developable area on the north side of the creek is not as great as the developable area on the south side of the creek, which is much flatter
- He supports preserving the access to the creek corridor and being able to get down into the vegetative corridor
- The pedestrian/bike crossing is a key feature of the plan, and the connection between the north and south sides of the area is an enhancement

Don Hanson/Otak on behalf of West Hills Development

- West Hills Development is planning to develop an approximately 40-acre area in the southwest portion of Bonny Slope West
- For zoning, we'd like a combination of R-9 and R-6
- We don't like the idea of putting a roadway all along the open space adjacent to the edge of the creek (Parkway Streets option).
- We prefer an option that lies somewhere between Option 3 (Pocket Parks) and Option 4 (Neighborhood Parks).
- We prefer an option where there's "portals" into the open space, views as well as trailheads.
- We like the idea of building a trail in the outer 40 percent of the Vegetated Corridor
- It's nice to have the home site's backyard a little bit above the elevation of the trail, rather than the other way around
- He thinks it's OK to have about 300 feet of trail behind home sites but then have open space connections back to the adjacent street system and neighborhood through small neighborhood parks or pocket parks
- We'd prefer a less-prescriptive approach to locating parks, showing their location more diagrammatically rather than a specific site location.

Dan Grimberg/West Hills Development

- For North Bethany, the requirement is that the developer has to have a signed agreement with THPRD if a park is designated on the property, or you don't get a land use approval.
- Although THPRD has been good to work with, it's a difficult situation when the developer has to work something out with the district whether they want to or not.
- THPRD has the ability to tell us that if we don't like the terms of an agreement, we can opt not to sign and then sit out a year of development – and that's a difficult situation for us.
- There needs to be flexibility to make this situation fair.
- With the North Bethany neighborhood parks, there is more flexibility in park siting and I would say that has worked. But for North Bethany fixed parks, the situation is inflexible and more difficult for us.
- (In response to a PC question about whether rapidly changing land prices complicate the process of land acquisition for parks in North Bethany): It was extremely difficult when the land prices were dropping in the early stages of North Bethany, because we had locked in contracts for higher land prices in the heat of the market.
- We had a high land basis because of the timing that our contracts had locked in, but then the land value was dropping and THPRD said they could only pay the current appraised value for park land.

- In North Bethany, we have the potential to lose a very large amount of money because of the requirement to deal with THPRD on park acquisitions. Most people can't absorb that much of a loss.

Clark Vorm/Noyes Development

- Our company is in process of obtaining properties on the north side of the creek
- Regarding trails, a lot of the area in the Vegetated Corridor on the north side is really nice, not that vegetated and not all that steep in some areas. A trail could probably work within the buffer area.
- We agree with Dan Grimberg about having flexibility on where the park is sited.
- We're still figuring out what's developable and what's not, and an overall design for the area.

Sarah Harris, Bonny Slope West resident

- The creek is a valuable experience for children and parents
- The kind of play that occurs on a playground is different than what the creek affords
- The creek allows children to be creative and have introspective quiet play, and this area has a strong advantage in having the creek
- She recommends not having pocket parks, and instead creating a beautiful creek area with a linear park where quiet play and use of imagination can occur

Carol Chesarek, resident of the Forest Park neighborhood in Multnomah County

- She is concerned that Metro's designated route for the Westside Trail will not be buildable
- The currently designated trail route for pedestrians and mountain bikes goes through some properties in Multnomah County to the north of Bonny Slope West, but three of those property owners are against having the trail go through their properties
- She would like a through trail along the north side of Ward Creek to be included as an alternate route for the Westside Trail

Virginia Bruce, resident of Bonny Slope to the south of Bonny Slope West

- She would like more creativity with how density is achieved by possibly using townhouses and duplexes.
- The clustering of housing could increase the amount of available open space, increase the amount of shared facilities, provide an economy of scale that's more energy efficient, and be cheaper to build.
- This approach won't be suggested by developers or landowners, so if we want to make this an imaginative and future looking development, it will have to come from regulators.

Barbara Wickham, resident adjacent to the northwest corner of Bonny Slope West

- She likes the idea of a trail system that inside the creek canyon; it's a more peaceful environment.
- Her major concern with putting a trail in this canyon is that the flow rate of the stream will increase as more homes and hardscape are placed in this area.
- In the winter, the portion of the creek canyon on her property currently fills with white water coming off of Ward Creek, with a flow rate that could carry a car away.
- Urbanization of Bonny Slope West could result in the addition of a huge volume of water to the creek, and placing a trail next to the creek could be unsafe and increase the likelihood that a child could be swept downstream.

- An increase in the stream's flow rate could wash out the spawning grounds of cutthroat trout and western brook lamprey where Ward Creek crosses Saltzman Road.

Mike Nelson, Bonny Slope West property owner

- He understands that THPRD owns a piece of land at the corner of Saltzman and Thompson Road; he asked if THPRD had the funds to develop that property.
- He noted that this park site should be shown on staff's maps to illustrate potential park areas near Bonny Slope West.

Paul Cummings, who resides to the south of Bonny Slope West

- He thinks that the market may prove that there is a strong desire to be near or around a park.
- A lot of the vision on parks needs to come from the public sector and the Planning Commission; if the issue is defined by what the developers are going to do, that's a problem because theirs is a shorter-term perspective.
- The comments made earlier by developers about flexibility in the siting of parks results in a concern that the process won't be as transparent as it needs to be.

Members of the PC offered questions and comments on the following topics:

Designation of Parks and Trails:

- When the North Bethany parks map was created, was there a process to compensate land owners upon whose land parks were mapped?
- Has the North Bethany prescriptive approach for parks worked out when THPRD has gone to acquire something?
- With the North Bethany prescriptive approach, a developer cannot proceed with their land use application until they have negotiated with THPRD. Metropolitan Land Group has had North Bethany park negotiations with THPRD, and those transactions have been palatable.
- Because of North Bethany's prescriptive approach to parks and trails designation, THPRD has powers through the Community Development Code that are not favorable for landowners in North Bethany.
- The non-prescriptive approach of designating park deficient areas in other Community Plans has resulted in wetlands, powerline corridors and other undevelopable areas being given over for parks. It has been difficult for the park district to develop active park space with the non-prescriptive approach.
- The designation of parks and trails is an evolutionary process
- The developers' perspective is shorter than the long term character of the community; maybe we need to look at parks as creating amenities that are going to last for generations
- People want to be near parks; we should not lose sight of that
- Support for identifying general areas that are appropriate for Neighborhood Parks, rather than specific binding park sites
- Concern about prescriptively designating park locations as was done in North Bethany
- Support for a prescriptive approach to parks designation, but with flexibility
- Support for utilizing unbuildable area to accommodate park and trail features

Creek Visibility and Access, and Parks / Open Space Options:

- Option 2 has half-street improvement requirements that have become a real sticking point for THPRD in North Bethany, correct?
- Can we require development to include open spaces that would provide access to the creek?
- Support for the Neighborhood Parks option or the Pocket Parks option, or a combination of the two
- Lack of support for the Parkway Streets option

Trail Options:

- Support for a trail along both sides of the creek
- Although there may be mitigation costs associated with locating trails in Vegetated Corridors, there are also costs associated with locating trails outside of Vegetated Corridors. If the trail is outside the Vegetated Corridor, the acquisition cost would be at developable land prices.
- Is there some way to leave the trail location open and not specify whether it has to be within or outside of the Vegetated Corridor? Or will that lack of specificity force the trail into the Vegetated Corridor every time?
- If you left the trail location open and provided the possibility of the trail being on developable land, the potential trail corridor would have to be pretty wide.
- Support for placing the trail within the creek's Vegetated Corridor in order to give the trail user a more natural experience.
- Support for placing the trail within the creek's Vegetated Corridor in order to utilize areas that are not buildable.
- When THPRD constructs trails adjacent to property lines, the adjacent owners' reactions likely differ if the trail goes in after the house is built versus having the trail already in before the house is built.
- The millennial generation is much more receptive and supportive of having trails through their communities and adjacent to their property lines without viewing them as potential highways for crime.
- Would it be possible for a homeowner's association to maintain ownership of the creek corridor and have a section of the trail that is actually owned by the HOA?
- Support for requiring regular connections to the trail through "portals"
- Would the Community Development Code's block length standards require connections to a creekside trail at regular intervals?
- Support for appropriate connections (such as pocket parks or portals) to a trail within the Vegetated Corridor
- Request for staff to check with THPRD about liability issues associated with placement of a trail near the creek, given potential creek flows
- Support for genuine access to the natural areas, even right down to the creek itself

**Transportation**

Staff introduced County Engineer Gary Stockhoff as a resource for the Planning Commission's questions about road engineering.

Staff presented information on the following topics:

Existing transportation conditions within and near Bonny Slope West:

- Thompson Road is designated as an arterial, and is currently a two lane road
- Laidlaw Road is designated as a collector, and is currently a two lane road
- Thompson and Laidlaw Roads are both designated as three-lane facilities
- The proposed cross section for a three-lane Thompson Road includes bike lanes on both sides, sidewalks on both sides, and a center turn lane where it's needed for turning vehicles
- The proposed cross section for a three-lane Laidlaw Road looks fairly similar to the proposed cross section for Thompson Road – similar amenities but some slightly different widths of the amenities
- Onsite local streets within Bonny Slope West would typically be laid out through the development process
- Traffic counts for the Laidlaw/Kaiser intersection and Thompson/Saltzman intersection are well within the parameters of what we would anticipate for collector and arterial streets
- We recognize that the public has expressed safety concerns about the Thompson Road curve, and about Saltzman Road between Thompson and Laidlaw Roads
- There are public concerns about multi-modal safety (including safety of pedestrians and bicyclists)
- There's an incomplete pedestrian and bicycle system, and existing roadways are not built to urban standards at this time
- The crash data from the 2011 inventory in the Transportation System Plan update does not identify any area in the vicinity of Bonny Slope West as an existing high hazard or high crash location
- We take the public's safety concerns seriously, but we don't have statistical evidence to evaluate how those concerns compare with other areas in the county
- The information that we have on traffic incidents is based on accidents that are reported to the state

*Anticipated changes in transportation conditions within and near Bonny Slope West:*

- We expect approximately 570 – 670 dwellings in the planning area; that number may get refined through the planning process
- Approximately 40% of the development is expected to be located north of Ward Creek, and would take access from Laidlaw Road
- Approximately 60% of the development is expected to be located south of Ward Creek, and would take access from Thompson Road
- After a complete build-out of the planning area, approximately 25% of the traffic on Laidlaw would be directly related to Bonny Slope West, and approximately 15% of the traffic on Thompson Road would be related to Bonny Slope West
- This is a fairly modest amount of impact
- After complete build-out of the planning area, none of these roads (Laidlaw, Thompson) are expected to come close to the capacity of the roadway.
- There are no road capacity or congestion issues to resolve in this area
- However, these roads are not built to urban standards and they don't necessarily perform safely for all modes of travel
- A potential Marcotte Road connection to Laidlaw Road, if constructed, would be used by approximately 18 – 20 percent of Bonny Slope West traffic
- Local streets and neighborhood routes are not expected to be identified on this plan unless we needed to identify Parkway Streets. If the Parkway Streets concept goes

forward, some way of providing a flexible generalized location for those streets may need to get developed

Public comments on transportation issues were provided by the following individuals:

Martha Moyer, Washington County resident

- She questions staff's assumptions, especially regarding the use of Saltzman Road
- The northern end of Saltzman Road must be addressed; there's no place for pedestrians or bicycles and yet they both use it
- The Saltzman Road alternative route has got to be built

Kevin Hoar, resident of the neighborhood immediately west of Bonny Slope West

- Many public comments submitted at the October open house were objections to extending Millford Street eastward into Bonny Slope West
- About 70% of the residents of Millford Street have small children
- Millford is currently a dead-end street and there doesn't appear to be transportation value in extending it into Bonny Slope West
- Traffic into and out of Bonny Slope West should be via a direct connection to Thompson Road
- Many of the other residents along Millford Street share the view that Millford Street at the west edge of Bonny Slope West should continue to be a dead-end for motor vehicles

Renee Shirley, resident of the neighborhood immediately west of Bonny Slope West

- She echoed the concerns about Millford Street being extended into Bonny Slope West

Paul Cummings, resident of the area south of Bonny Slope West

- Addressing the curve in Thompson Road may require some of the mature trees to come down, and those trees currently provide sound barriers and visual screening of Thompson Road for the residential community to the south
- He asked for clarification of the information that staff presented on traffic loads and capacity issues in the area

John Wickham, resident at the corner of Laidlaw and Saltzman Roads

- He's part of a group of citizens that are concerned about Saltzman Road between Bayonne and Laidlaw
- The county created a Saltzman Road study area in 2004; since then, a number of developments have been completed but no changes have been made to Saltzman Road
- Our group would like to recommend that Saltzman Road either be improved and realigned before development of Bonny Slope West occurs, or shut it down and divert traffic somewhere else

Barbara Wickham, resident at the corner of Laidlaw and Saltzman Roads

- She questioned the traffic counts that staff provided for Saltzman Road, and projected the traffic numbers as being higher than portrayed by staff

Members of the PC offered questions and comments on the following topics:

Existing transportation conditions within and near Bonny Slope West:

- Will putting another 500 or so homes in Bonny Slope West create problems with the existing transportation system?
- If so, what are the issues and how will they be addressed?

Anticipated changes in transportation conditions within and near Bonny Slope West:

- The development of Bonny Slope West will increase multi-modal conflict because those roads have no shoulders or very narrow shoulders currently
- Given the topography in the area, do you have any concerns about the ability to improve Laidlaw and Thompson Roads to urban standards?
- Is Laidlaw along the eastern edge wholly inside Bonny Slope West or only partially inside the planning area?
- It's important that we have a road that's built to something that would be considered urban standards, along the eastern boundary of the planning area
- Are Laidlaw and Thompson Roads on the Transportation Development Tax list?
- Are there any identified MSTIP projects in this area?

Millford Street and its potential extension into the planning area:

- The purpose of extending a dead-end street is often to create connectivity and a grid pattern, because cul-de-sacs and dead-ends are not functional
- Millford Street, like other streets in the Remington neighborhood that stub to the west edge of Bonny Slope West, is clearly set up to be a future extension – this is apparent from looking at Google Maps photos
- The Planning Commission is going to be reluctant to recommend that staff allow Millford be maintained as a dead-end street
- Millford residents would benefit from working with transportation staff to look at things like traffic calming and speed management
- The Planning Commission's hands are tied on this issue; the street connection standards are a part of the Community Development Code and are requirements of Metro and state planning rules
- Every neighborhood has this concern and this issue