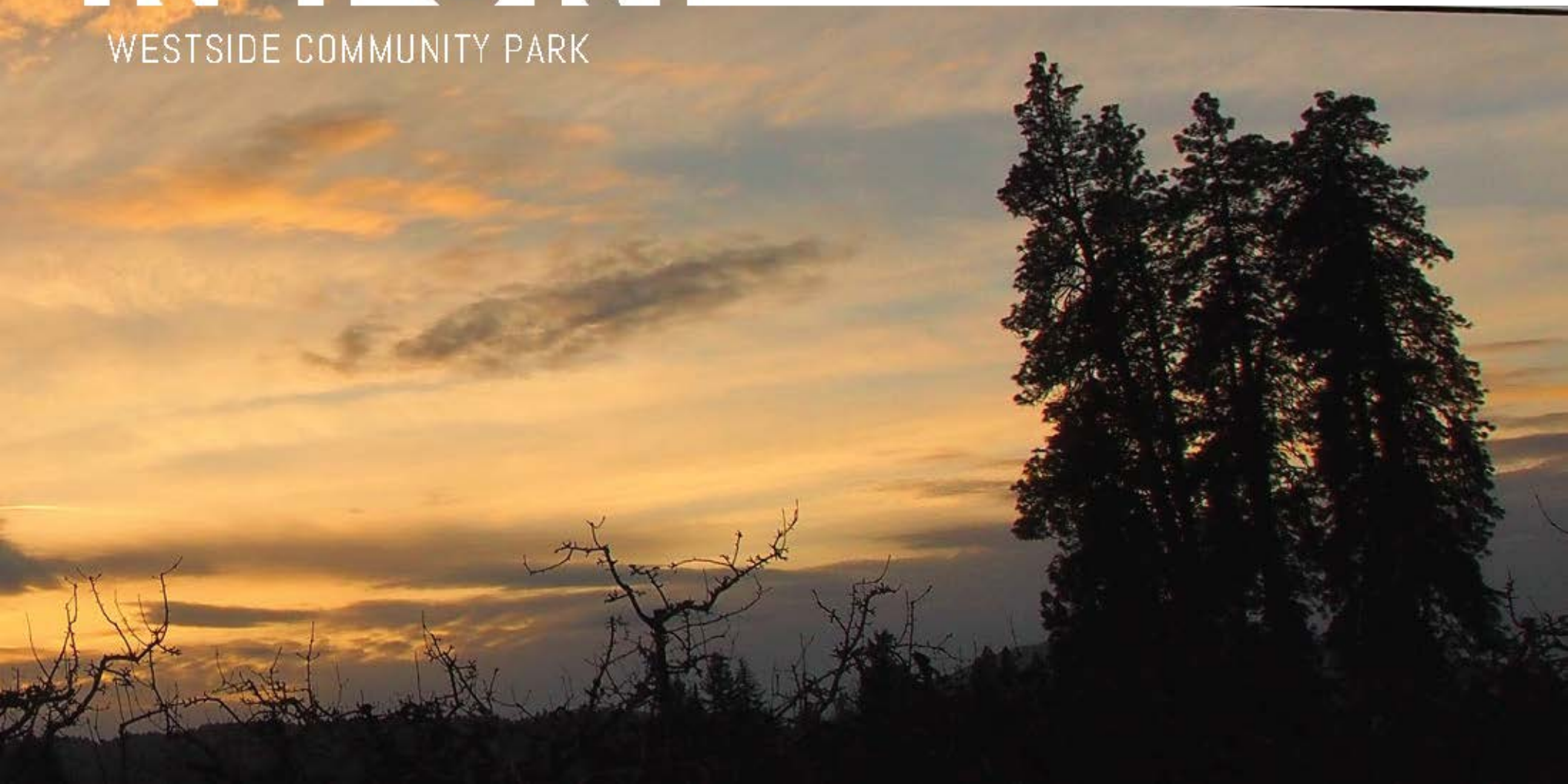


# TECHNICAL REPORT

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY PARK





*Prepared for:*



HEATHER STATEN  
*Executive Director*

POLLY WOOD  
*President*

*Board:*

LEE CHRISTIE  
RON COHEN  
MARGO EARLEY  
SCOTT FRANKE  
JONATHAN GRACA  
JUDIE HANEL  
JEFF HUNTER  
LARRY MARTIN  
MICHAEL MCCARTHY  
JOHN MILLS



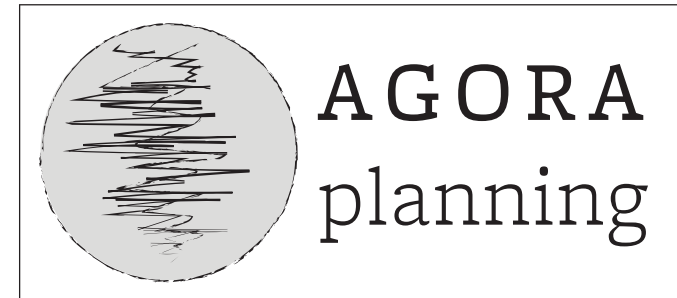
LORI STIRN  
*District Director*

SCOTT BAKER  
*Assistant Director*

*Board:*

ART CARROLL  
*President*  
GLENNA MAHURIN  
*Vice President*  
GREG DAVIS  
*Secretary*  
  
MICHAEL MCCARTHY  
MATT RUTLEDGE

*Prepared by:*



DAVID FISKE  
*project management*

NATHEN LAMB  
*research*

WILL ROBERTS  
*design*

KARA SRNKA  
*outreach*

GRACE STAINBACK  
*communications*

JEFFREY WALDO  
*data*

June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016





The Westside Community Park Concept Plan is made up of two documents. *Westside Community Park: A Vision for Public Space* summarizes the plan's most important themes, ideas and findings into a final recommended program for Westside Community Park. It looks to the future, showing what Westside Community Park could be with continued community support and sound public decision making. This *Technical Report* outlines the research and public engagement methods that led to the final vision and program. It reflects on the process, while also providing specific recommendations for the future planning, design and management of this park, and other public space in Hood River.



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan would not exist without the support and expertise of the following individuals:

## PSU FACULTY & ADVISORS

Dr. Ethan Seltzer  
Dr. Marisa Zapata  
Susan Hartnett

## COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Tina Castanares, Aging in the Gorge Alliance  
Anna Williams, Volunteers in Action, Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital  
William Weiler, Sandy River Basin Watershed Council  
Niko Yasui & Class, Hood River Valley High School  
David Case & Class, Hood River Valley High School  
Rich Polkinghorn, Hood River Valley High School  
Tod Hilstad, Hood River County School District  
Alejandro Aguilera Cano, Radio Tierra & Latinos en Acción  
Bianca Fernandez, Next Door Inc., Nuestra Comunidad Sana  
Yesenia Castro, Next Door Inc., Nuestra Comunidad Sana  
Elizur Bello, Next Door Inc., Nuestra Comunidad Sana  
Jaime Rivera, Next Door, Inc. & Hood River Valley High School  
Lorena Sprager, Next Door, Inc. & Healthy Active Hood River County (HAHRC)  
Rich Hanners, Neighboring Orchardist  
Kim Davis, Neighborhood Representative  
Jeremy Davis, Neighborhood Representative

## SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS

John Roberts, Hood River County  
Eric Walker, Hood River County  
Don Wiley, Hood River County  
Cindy Walbridge, City of Hood River  
Kevin Liburdy, City of Hood River  
Nick Kraemer, City of Mosier  
Mark Zanmiller, Hood River City Council  
Cindy Thieman, Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District  
Ryan Stee, City of Lake Oswego  
Angie Brewer, Wasco County  
Heidi Hartman, Department of State Lands  
Rick Brock, Farmers Irrigation District  
Mark Bream, Ice Fountain Water District  
Andree Tremoulet, Portland State University  
Michael Lang, Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Tracy England, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality  
Emily Alcott, Inter-Fluve  
Caitlin Alcott, Inter-Fluve  
Ken Pirie, Walker Macy  
Ryan Mattau, MIG  
Jay Pearson, McMinnville Parks Department  
Jennifer D'Avanzo, Greenworks, PC  
Mike Faha, Greenworks, PC  
Mike Schend, Former Board Member, HRVPRD  
Shawn Summersett, Summersett Civil Engineering  
Julia Reed, Fregonese Associates, Inc.  
Dylan Morgan, PLACE Studio

Thank you!

# CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY -----	1	Surveys -----	50
Project Summary -----	2	Key User Groups -----	52
Recommended Program Summary -----	4	Public Events and Activities -----	58
Key Findings -----	6	LOCAL PRECEDENTS -----	64
Recommendations Summary -----	8	Introduction -----	66
EXISTING CONDITIONS -----	10	Discovery Meadows -----	68
Introduction -----	12	Luscher Farms -----	70
History -----	14	Westmoreland Park -----	72
District Profile -----	20	RECOMMENDATIONS -----	74
Planning Context -----	24	Introduction -----	76
Land Use Parameters -----	28	Make It Official -----	88
Environmental Conditions -----	32	Maintain Community Involvement -----	80
Transportation, Circulation & Access -----	40	Leverage Community Assets -----	82
COMMUNITY OUTREACH -----	46	Optimize Access -----	84
Introduction -----	48		

# MAPS + FIGURES

## MAPS

1. Study Site -----	12
2. Site Context -----	13
3. Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area -----	24
4. Vacant Land Inventory -----	26
5. Transportation Growth Management Plan -----	27
6. Zoning -----	29
7. Environmental Conditions -----	33
8. Site Drainage -----	38
9. Unconstrained Land-----	39
10. Motor/Vehicle System Plan-----	41
11. Pedestrian System Plan-----	43
12. Bicycle System Plan-----	43

## FIGURES

1. Population Forecast, Hood River County, 2020-2060 -----	20
2. Race/Ethnicity of Hood River City, County + OR State, 2010-----	21
3. Ratio of Latino Population, Hood River County, 2000 + 2013-----	21
4. Ratio Aged 65+, Hood River County, 2000 + Predicted for 2035-----	21
5. Community Park Designs-----	59



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





**1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY**

**1.2 RECOMMENDED PROGRAM SUMMARY**

**1.3 KEY FINDINGS**

**1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**



## 1.1 PROJECT SUMMARY

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY PARK PRESENTS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC SPACE UNLIKE ANY EXISTING IN HOOD RIVER COUNTY TODAY. LYING AT THE DOORSTEP OF ONE OF HOOD RIVER'S FASTEST GROWING AREAS, THIS 20-ACRE PARK IS POSITIONED TO BE THE COLLECTIVE FRONT YARD FOR MANY NEW AND EXISTING RESIDENTS, AND PROVIDE AN ENGAGING DESTINATION FOR ALL OF HOOD RIVER COUNTY.

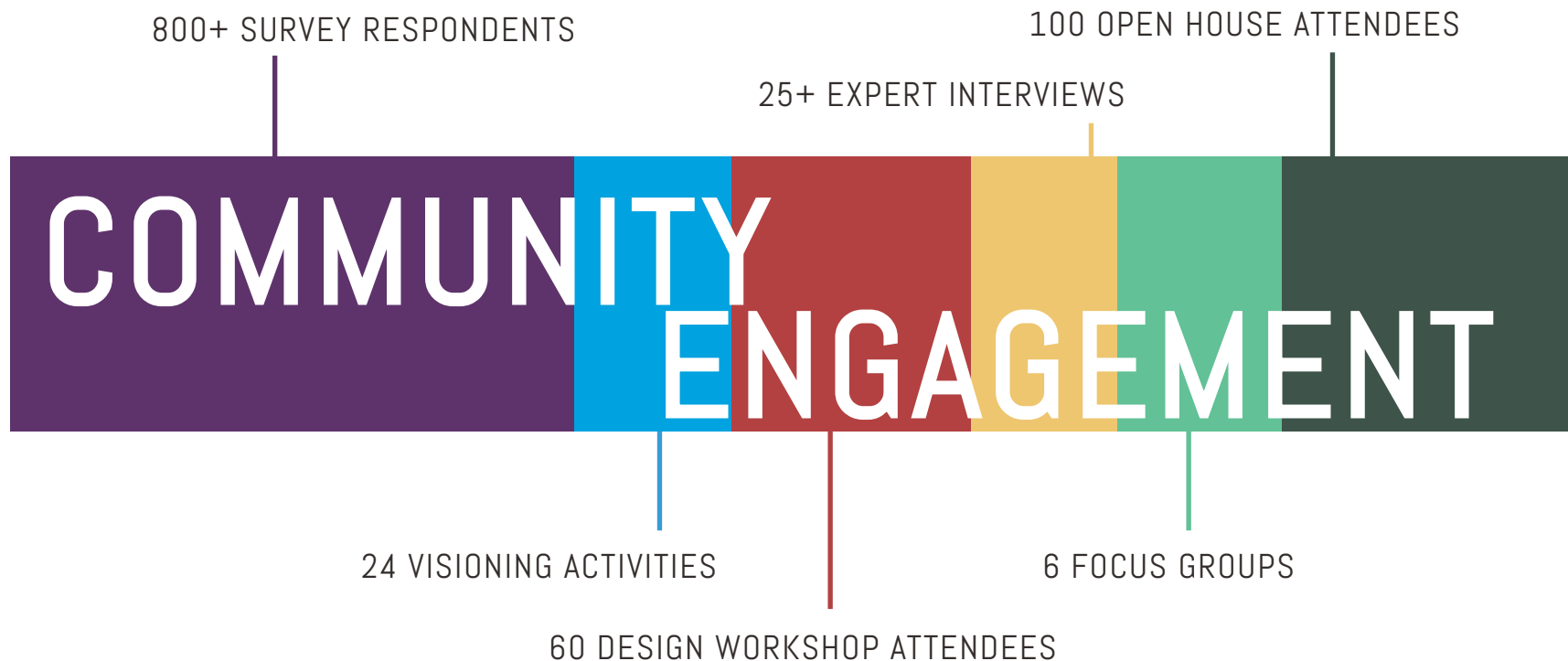
THIS TECHNICAL REPORT EXPLAINS THE RESEARCH AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT METHODS FROM WHICH THE VISION AND PROGRAM WERE DERIVED. IT IS MEANT TO PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS FOR ALL PROJECT PARTNERS, INTERESTED COMMUNITY MEMBERS, AND PUBLIC AGENCIES WHO WILL PLAY A ROLE IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PUBLIC SPACE.





In January 2016, HRVRC and HRVPRD recruited Agora Planning to conduct a site analysis, and to facilitate an extensive community engagement process to draw out the public's values and desires for a proposed 20-acre park in the west side of the Hood River urban area. Through review of the physical and regulatory conditions of the proposed park site and research into innovative park design and best practices, as well as consultation with subject matter experts and an analysis of community input from over 800 Hood River residents,

Agora Planning arrived at programmatic recommendations for the future design of Westside Community Park. Public involvement was at the core of this planning process, and this Technical Report outlines the various engagement methods used throughout the project. It also summarizes the site context and parameters, regulatory constraints, research and key findings. It concludes with recommendations for the future design, development, and management of Westside Community Park.



## 1.2 RECOMMENDED PROGRAM SUMMARY

# COMMUNITY VISION

FOUR MAJOR THEMES EMERGED AS CENTRAL TO THE HOOD RIVER COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR WESTSIDE COMMUNITY PARK. THESE THEMES REPRESENT THE KEY ROLES THIS PARK CAN PLAY IN THE LIVES OF HOOD RIVER RESIDENTS, AND THEY GUIDE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PUBLIC SPACE:

## PLAY

No community is complete without access to facilities and resources that encourage exercise and active living. However, it has proved challenging to find space for organized sports and multi-use parks given that nearly 90% of Hood River County is preserved as forest or exclusive farm use. Westside Community Park can provide a space for these important community assets without infringing on protected land.

## GATHER

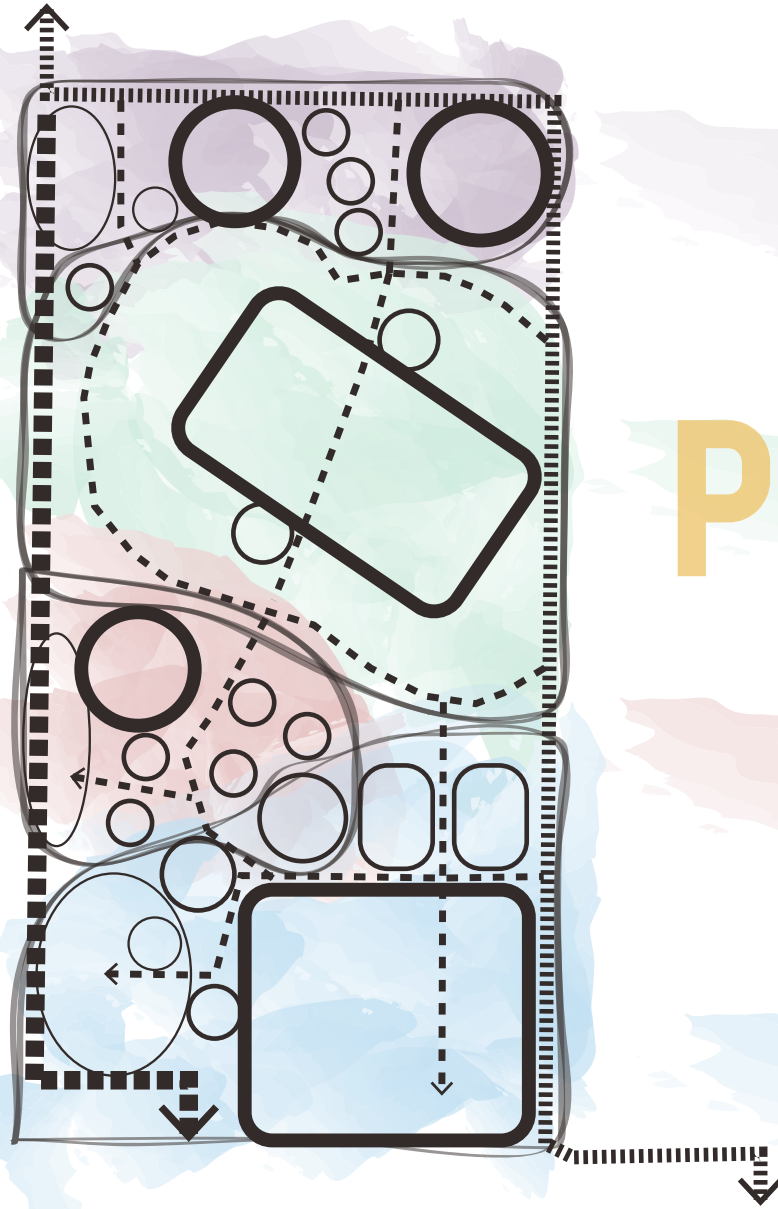
Parks are places for friends, families and communities to gather for any number of purposes, and throughout the world, these gathering spaces have proven to be at the heart of community health. The Hood River community emphasized the need for such a place, and Westside Community Park will provide a focal gathering point for the growing communities of Hood River County.

## PRESERVE

The Hood River community is proudly dedicated to environmental stewardship and the preservation of natural areas. Therefore, it is crucial that the beauty and utility of nature be preserved, enhanced and made accessible within close proximity of our living spaces. In a growing area, Westside Community Park provides an important opportunity to preserve vital green space and parkland both for new and existing residents of Hood River.

## THRIVE

Hood River must account for the growing and changing needs of the County, as access to parks and open space is essential to the mental and social health of any community. Community members emphasized their desire for relaxing and meditative areas, as well as innovative and stimulating park features. If Hood River is truly going to thrive, it is important that Westside Community Park be crafted by the unique needs of the community, both now and in the future.



THRIVE  
PRESERVE  
GATHER  
PLAY



## 1.3 KEY FINDINGS

### Existing Conditions & Site Parameters

Continued population growth within the City and County of Hood River will further increase the need for parks and open space

Most growth in or around the City of Hood River is projected to occur within ½ mile of the project site, leading to a recognized deficit in the west side of the urban area.

Latinos, youth and people aged 65 and over are key user groups in need of special considerations when planning for public space in Hood River

A community park of this size is permitted on the project site

The total unconstrained land of the project site is 12.74-acres

Lighting is permitted on the project site, though shielded, or night-sky lighting would be more compatible with the site's context

Park design could pay homage to the site's unique history through educational amenities

Wetland enhancement can be low cost and organized through a community effort in initial stages of park development

Westside Community Park presents an opportunity to increase safety at the problem intersection of Fairview Drive and Belmont Drive

## Community Engagement & Subject Matter Interviews

Physical health and exercise are a core value of the community, but very few Hood River residents desire a sports-only park

Exercise, sporting events, and community gathering are intertwined uses and suggest a mixed use park will best serve all

Preserving green space for future generations is important to many residents, and community members expressed interest in preserving and enhancing the wetland on the property

There are particular community concerns over the nature of development, given unsuccessful initiatives to build a cell tower on the site in the past, and unsuccessful build-out of Barrett Park into a space for organized sports

The youth of Hood River strongly desire a place they can “call their own”, by helping design or construct a part of the space, or the implementation of unique and creative features

The aged 65 and over community place a high priority on accessibility and safety (signage, paved paths, and oft-placed seating areas) to minimize the risk of accident or injury

The Latino community views parks as highly social spaces for large family events, and would visit a park that provides features that support that

Traffic, lighting, access and noise are the primary concerns amongst neighborhood residents, who support the park for gathering spaces but are overall skeptical as to whether this is the appropriate place for a sports complex and the features that come along with that

The community expressed sincere gratitude for involvement in the planning process, and a very strong desire to continue to be involved



## 1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The following are summary recommendations for the future planning, development and management of Westside Community park. Each of these recommendations falls under one of four broad goals that encapsulate the road map for moving forward: Make it Official, Maintain Community Involvement, Leverage Existing Assets, and Optimize Access. While most of the recommendations are site and context-specific to Westside Community Park, several are district-wide recommendations that will help drive and maintain equitable, community-driven parks planning into the future. A full explanation of each recommendation is provided in Chapter 5.

### MAKE IT OFFICIAL

- Perform updated wetland delineation
- Further investigate soil toxicity
- Perform a Traffic Impact Analysis
- Acquire the land
- Permit a final site plan
- Preserve flexibility in a park plan

### MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Form an advisory committee to steer park planning
- Explore tactical/short-term programming
- Eliminate cultural barriers
- Keep neighbors informed and involved





## LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS

- Consider creative mechanisms for wetland enhancement
- Utilize proximity to Westside Elementary School
- Create a long-term plan for maintenance of existing facilities

## OPTIMIZE ACCESS

- Ensure equitable access
- Address the intersection of Fairview and Belmont
- Consider public transit options to access the park
- Build out trail network to link park space in greater Hood River



# EXISTING CONDITIONS





The background of the slide is a photograph of a lush green forest with tall trees. In the foreground, there is a grassy field with some small shrubs. A large, bright yellow sphere is positioned in the lower center of the image. A thin green line extends from the top of the sphere towards the top right corner of the slide. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing a list of text items.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

2.2 HISTORY

2.3 DISTRICT PROFILE

2.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

2.5 LAND USE PARAMETERS

2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

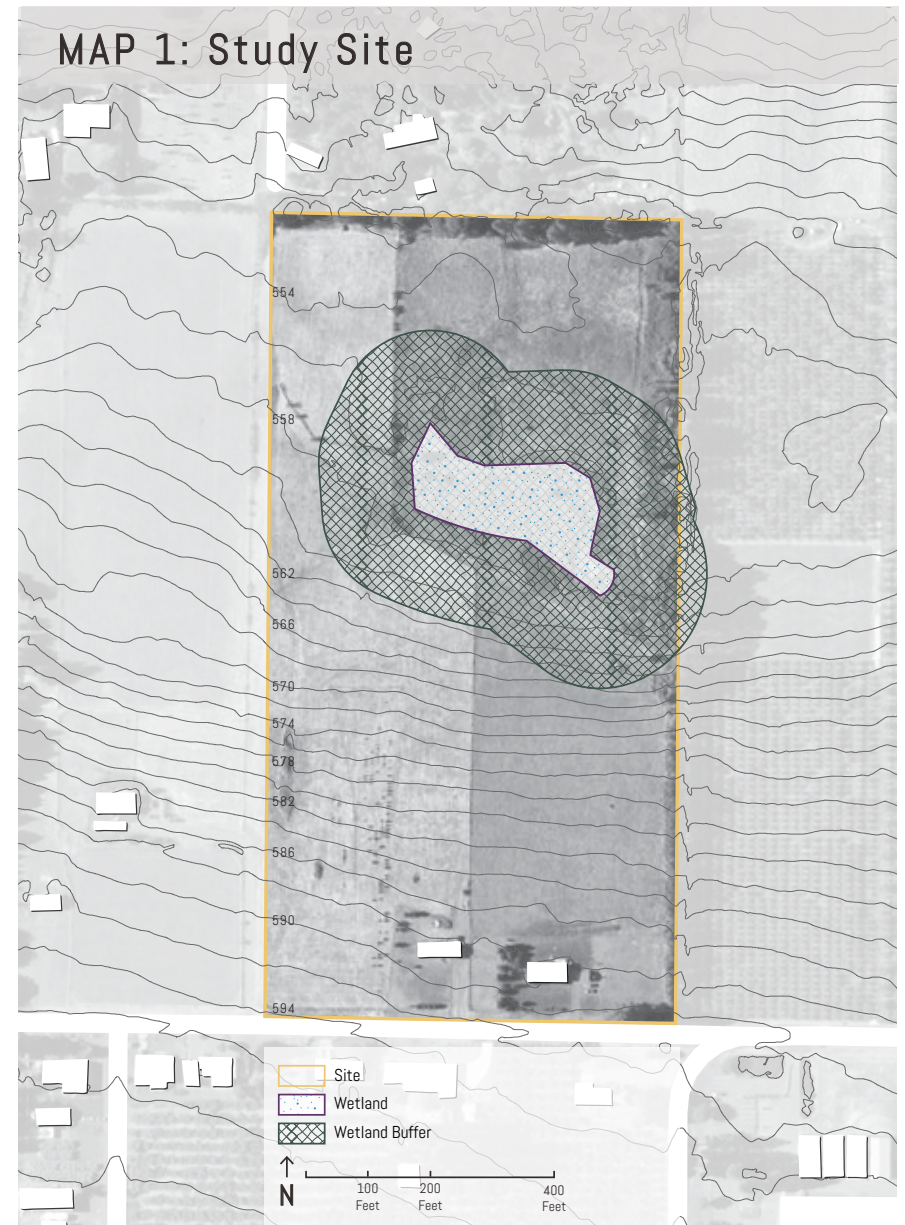
2.7 TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION & ACCESS



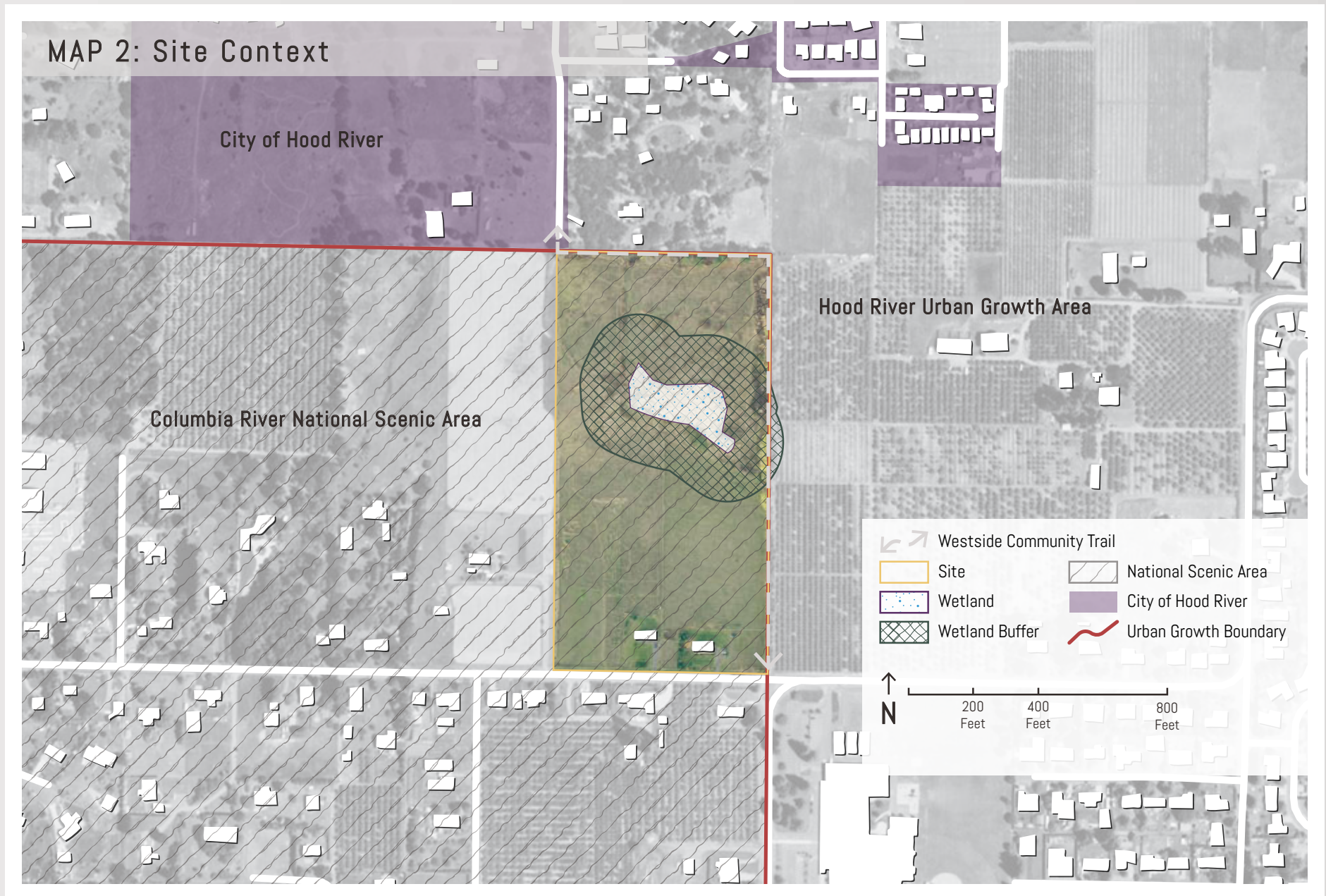
## INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure the successful planning and development of any new public space, it is necessary to consider the existing conditions of both the site and its surrounding context. Any number of factors may impact what the space becomes, and this is no less true for the site of Westside Community Park.

This chapter examines the history of Hood River as it relates to the proposed park site, and its role in the rich agricultural past of the County. It profiles the community of park users served by the Hood River Valley Parks & Recreation District, and discusses population projections that estimate the addition of thousands of new residents living in close proximity to the site. Also included are summaries of relevant information from past and current plans that affect the development of Westside Community Park, as well as issues of transportation and access to the site. Finally, the chapter includes an overview of the important environmental conditions of the site, and concludes with the opportunities and constraints involved in park development.







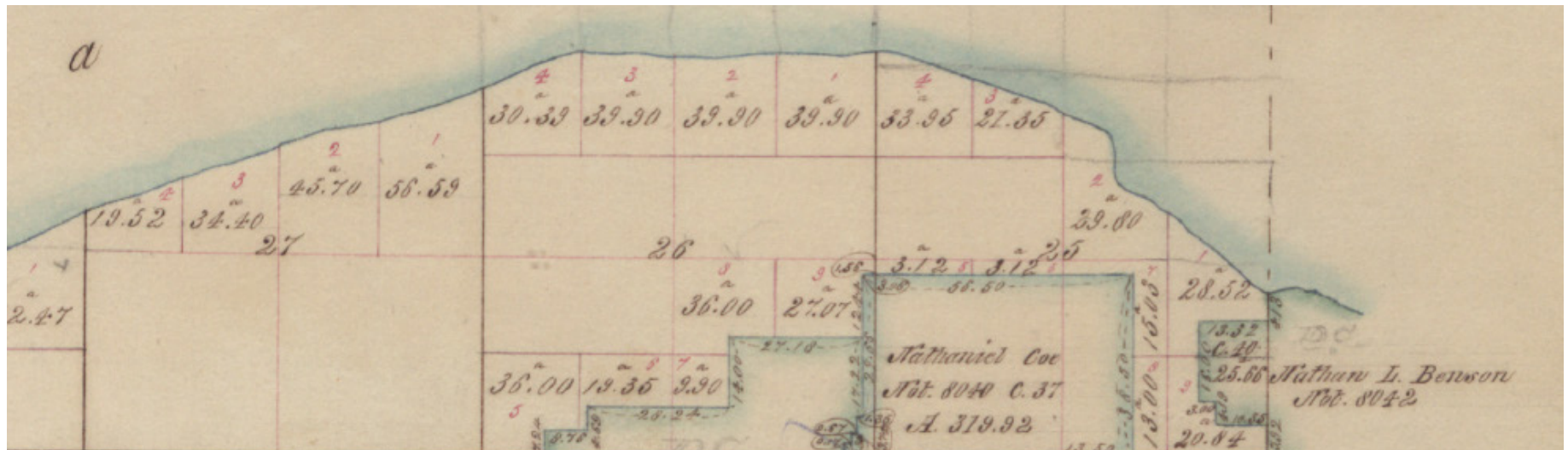


The County of Hood River is rich with historical significance, which has shaped the region into the community that it is today. This legacy can be incorporated into the design of Westside Community Park through a variety of park amenities such as interpretive signs, statues, murals, or landmarks paying tribute to a significant person or time period. By incorporating the history of the region into the park, users will have the opportunity to reflect on where Hood River has been, where it is going, and the important role that public spaces play in defining that narrative.

Prior to European-American settlement, the Hood River Valley area was inhabited primarily by upriver Chinookan Native-American people. The Upper-Chinookan peoples ranged from the Sandy River to the Deschutes River, where villages and cultures were similar, but had remained politically autonomous. Though they shared a common language, dialects were distinguishable from the Lower-Chinookan villages located along the shores of Oregon and Washington.

## SETTLEMENT AND EARLY HISTORY

The area of the present day Hood River County was first settled in 1852, then in Wasco County. However, an 1863 United States General Land Office map shows there was very little settlement of the project area five years later. The State of Oregon became the first outright owner of the project site and area when it acquired its title via a land patent from the Federal government in





LEFT: This General Land Office map from 1863 shows the survey of land plats in early Hood River. *Courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management*

ABOVE: This photo entitled "Three Friends" shows three Native American women from the Warm Springs Indian Reservation in 1902. *Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

RIGHT: This photo entitled "Early Day Indians" by Mark Weygandt born in 1880 (and a well known Mt. Hood guide at the time), shows five individuals in the Hood River area. *Courtesy of The History Museum of Hood River County*





## 2.2 HISTORY

1872. By 1880 there were only 17 families living in Hood River, but soon after the introduction of railroads, Hood River experienced rapid growth.

At this time, Hood River's economy was dominated by the production of fruit and other agricultural products. In 1881, the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company constructed a railroad system that spanned from the Dalles to Portland, along the southern banks of the Columbia River. With new transportation networks, Hood River pioneers were able to exploit new connections to urbanized areas, and participate in more traditional trade and commerce. Apples were the main commodity grown by Hood River residents, and they were now able to reach new markets across the nation.<sup>1</sup>

### JAPANESE-AMERICANS IN HOOD RIVER

The City of Hood River was officially incorporated within Wasco County in 1895, though shortly thereafter, Hood River County was created in 1908, and Hood River became the county seat. While continuing to experience growth, a significant amount of Japanese immigrants came to Hood River and settled as farm workers to take part in the thriving agricultural economy.<sup>2</sup>

This generation of Japanese immigrants is known as the Issei, or first generation immigrant, and the Nikkei community was the largest group of Japanese immigrants communities to enter the Columbia River Valley region. By 1910, Japanese immigrants accounted for approximately six percent of Hood River's population, and some Japanese families began to buy and lease farmland, becoming major contributors to the then booming industry.<sup>3</sup>

However, after the Great War, American anti-immigrant sentiments culminated into discriminatory legislation and laws that aimed to prohibit Japanese immigrants from buying and leasing land. The Hood River Anti-Alien Association persisted on ensuring rights could be stripped by Japanese immigrants. Through a series of contentious ongoing trials and hearings the Japanese



STEAMSHIP LANDING BY DEPOT IN HIGH WATER,  
HOOD RIVER, OREGON, 1894

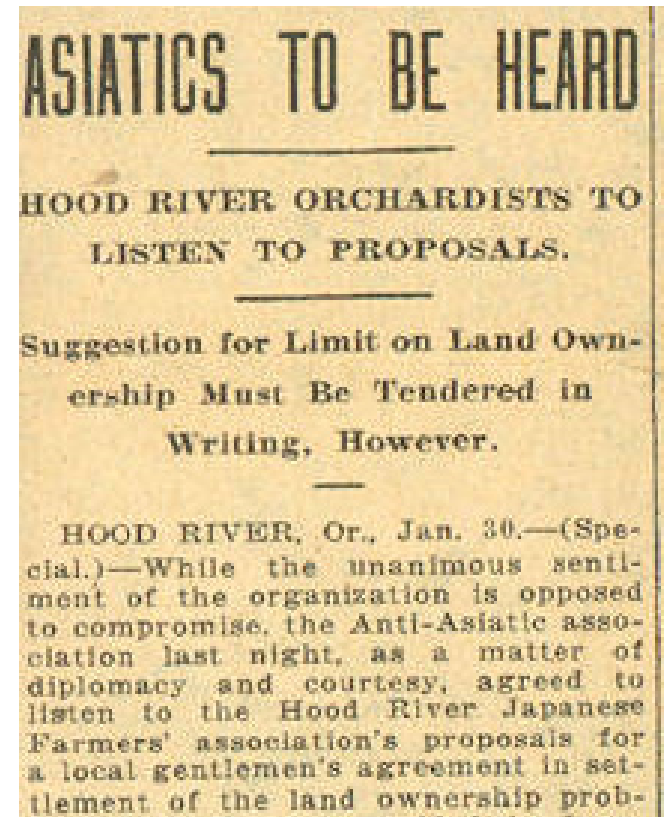
1 Archaeological Investigations Northwest Inc. Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Survey of the Proposed Hood River County School District's 20-Acre Parcel, Hood River, Oregon. Portland, OR. (2008 Aug. 26). Ethnographic Background, Historic Background. Report no. 2197, p. 3-5.

2 Mercier, Laurie. Japanese Americans in the Hood River Basin. (2014). Washington State University, Vancouver.

3 Discover Nikkei. Nikkei Farmers of the Hood River Area. (2016).

Farmers Association and Oregon Japanese Association were able to advocate for Japanese-American families, and to a certain extent some families were able to evade anti-immigration laws. Ultimately, the immigration laws stunted the economic prosperity and growth of Hood River's Japanese families and eventually reduced the Pacific Northwest's overall Japanese population by 30 percent.

By 1922, the state finished the construction of the Columbia River Highway, which further helped to facilitate increased economic activity and new connections. Though development spurred by economic growth was focused on the business district of downtown Hood River, county roads such as Belmont Ave and Fairview Drive, which converge at the southeast corner of the project site today, were also constructed in the early 20th century, helping the agricultural industry on the outskirts of the city flourish.



CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE SPREAD, TOP: "Train Wreck 6" shows men in Hood River cleaning up a train wreck sometime between 1910 and 1915. *Courtesy of Pierce Library*

Historic newspaper clipping in 1920 detailing the contentions between Hood River Valley farmers and Japanese families. *Courtesy of Washington State University Vancouver Archives*

Early Nikkei picking strawberries in Hood River. *Courtesy of Oregon Nikkei and Discover Nikkei*

Hood River in 1984. *Courtesy of The History Museum of Hood River County*



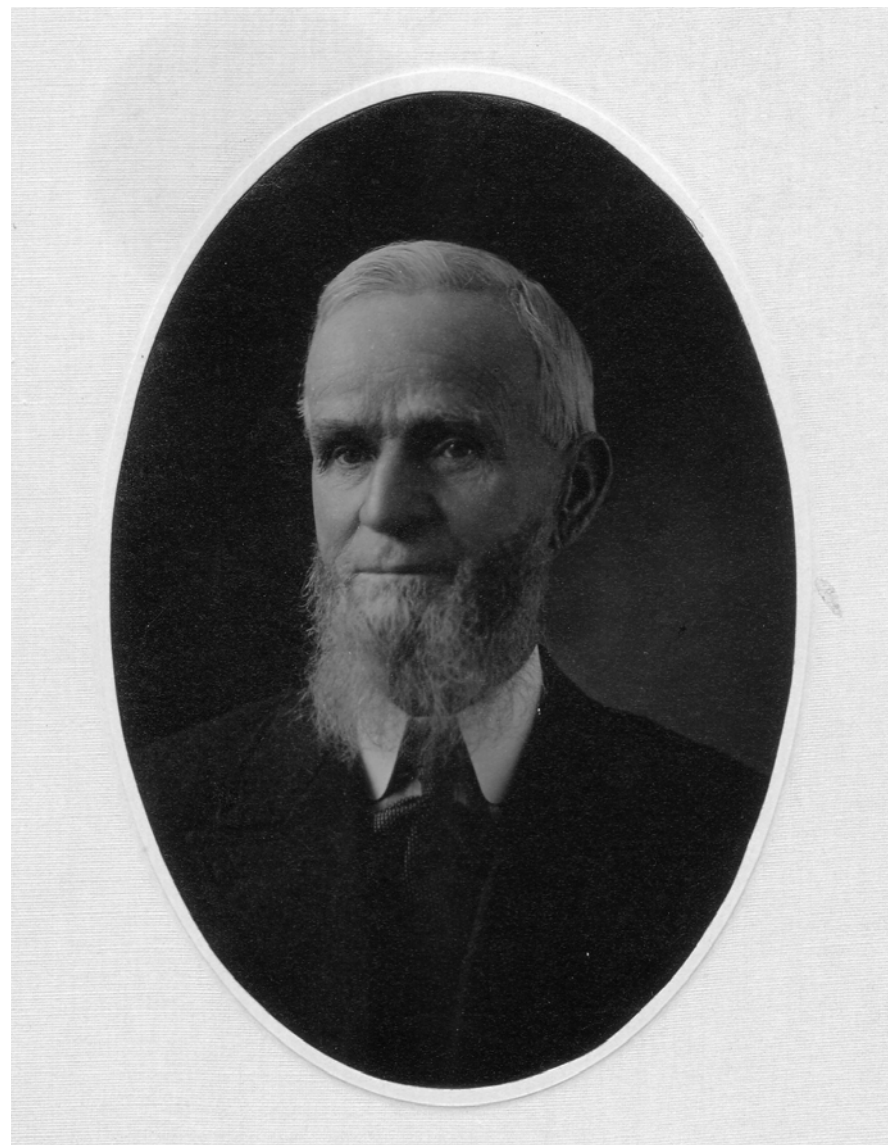
## 2.2 HISTORY

### PARK SITE HISTORY

Subsequent to the State of Oregon's land patent for the project site and area in 1872, the land was patented to Stilwell Laban who was one of the original Hood River Valley pioneers and had moved to Hood River in 1859. Mr. Stilwell's son became the second postmaster of Hood River, and was the first employed school teacher in Hood River. The project site was then conveyed to Lyman Smith in 1903, who had moved to Hood River in 1875 as part of the "Mansfield Pacific Colony" - a group of a few dozen settlers who joined Hood River's earliest pioneers. While in Mr. Smith's possession, the land use of the project site is unknown, however Mr. Smith was a primary stakeholder in the sawmill industry of Hood River, and is known to have been a large contributor to the growth of Hood River and its economy, and a prominent figure among Hood River residents.<sup>4,5</sup>

According to a recent DEQ site evaluation, the site was used as pear orchard dating back to at least the 1930s. In 1974, George Jordan, Jr., purchased the site, and maintained an orchard operation for close to two decades. In 1990, Mr. Jordan removed the trees, and used the land for livestock pasture. In 2002, the current landowners purchased the site as two individual tax lots of 10-acres each, after which the land was occasionally used for livestock pasture. In 2007, the Hood River County School District considered purchasing the site for the development of a future school, but decided against the move.<sup>6</sup>

While agriculture is still a large part of the economy in Hood River, the technology, manufacturing, and healthcare industries are growing, bringing a changing dynamic to the County, both economically and demographically. The proposed park site lies directly in the middle of these sometimes contentious growing pains, as it directly abuts an active fruit orchard, and residential development encroaches on the site from the north.

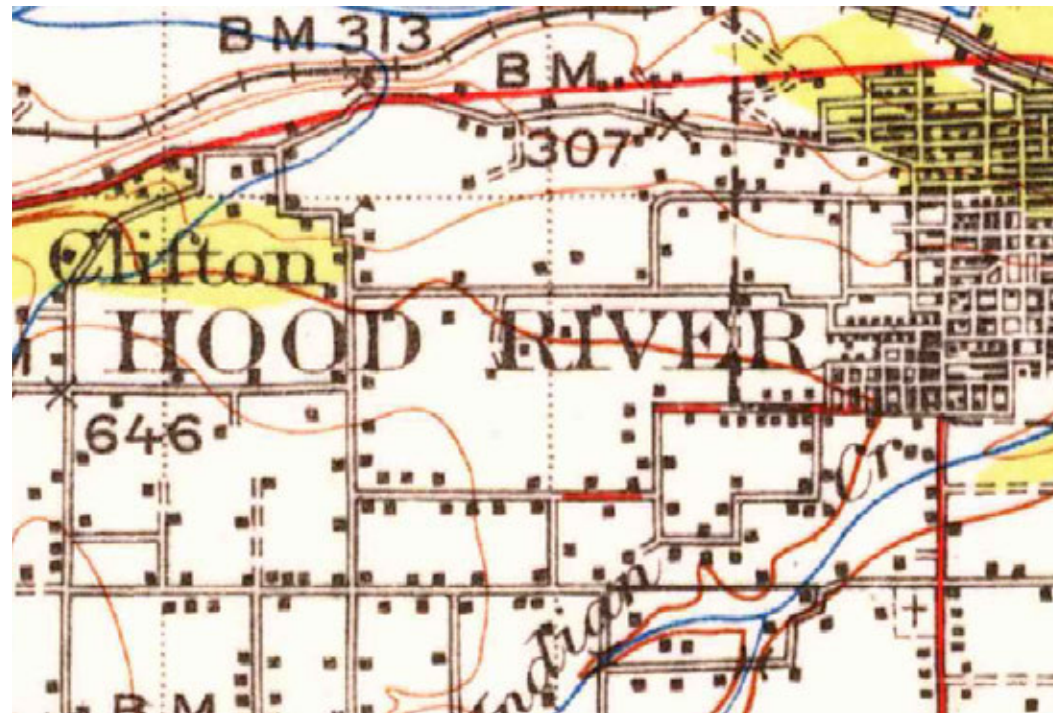


Lyman Smith. *Courtesy of The History Museum of Hood River County*

<sup>4</sup> Elmer, L. Jeffrey & Coon, D.M. (Date unknown). Mansfield Pacific Colony 1875.

<sup>5</sup> Elmer, L. Jeffrey & Coon, D.M. (Date unknown). Laban Stillwell and Family 1859.

<sup>6</sup> Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. (April 2016). Oregon DEQ Site Assessment Program – Site Evaluation.

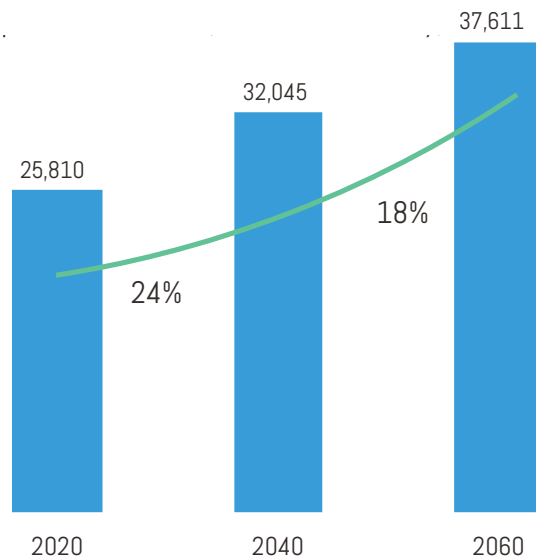


A General Land Office map of Hood River in 1926 shows Hood River's rapid development after settlement, immigration, and access to railroad networks. *Courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management*

## DISTRICT PROFILE

The proposed site of Westside Community Park exists within a County with shifting needs for public space, and a continuously increasing number of park users. The Hood River Valley Parks & Recreation District (HRVPRD) serves the entirety of Hood River County, excluding the town of Cascade Locks, and the County has experienced substantial population growth in recent decades, including a quickly expanding Latino community, a rise in youth and young families, and an aging population. While Hood River is famous for its numerous outdoor recreation opportunities, the growth of the County has created a need for more quality public parks and community spaces, and in order to fully comprehend the role Westside Community Park can play in meeting this need, it is important to understand the shifting demographics of the Hood River population.

**FIGURE 1. Population Forecast, Hood River County, 2020-2060**



## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The City of Hood River has experienced rapid population growth over the last two decades. Between 1990 and 2013 the city's population grew by more than half, with an increase of 2,828 people. During the same time period, Hood River County grew by 38%, and both are forecasted for continued growth over the coming decades. According to the most recent County forecast data, Hood River's urban area is expected to gain more than 4,500 new residents by 2035, or nearly double what it received in the previous two decades.

Not only is the population served by HRVPRD growing, but that population has been changing and diversifying at the same time (see Figures 1-4).<sup>7</sup> Since 2000, the County's Hispanic or Latino population has grown to 30% of the overall County population. Hood River's population aged 60 and over has risen to 21% - a number expected to increase to close to one third of the entire population by 2035. Families with children have also been one of the fastest growing demographics of the County, and they now make up 30% of all households, countywide. All three of these groups have been identified in Oregon's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) as key user groups in need of special consideration for parks and recreation planning – something that is also recognized in the HRVPRD Parks & Recreation Master Plan (2012-2022).<sup>8</sup>

## KEY USER GROUPS

According to the 2013-2017 SCORP *Demographic Trends and Analysis* section, it will become increasingly important for Oregon parks agencies to provide recreational facilities that preserve the health of an aging population through the facilitation of more involvement in active outdoor recreation activities. Additionally, SCORP reports that youth participation in outdoor recreation is decreasing for several reasons, and that parks will need to include "innovative

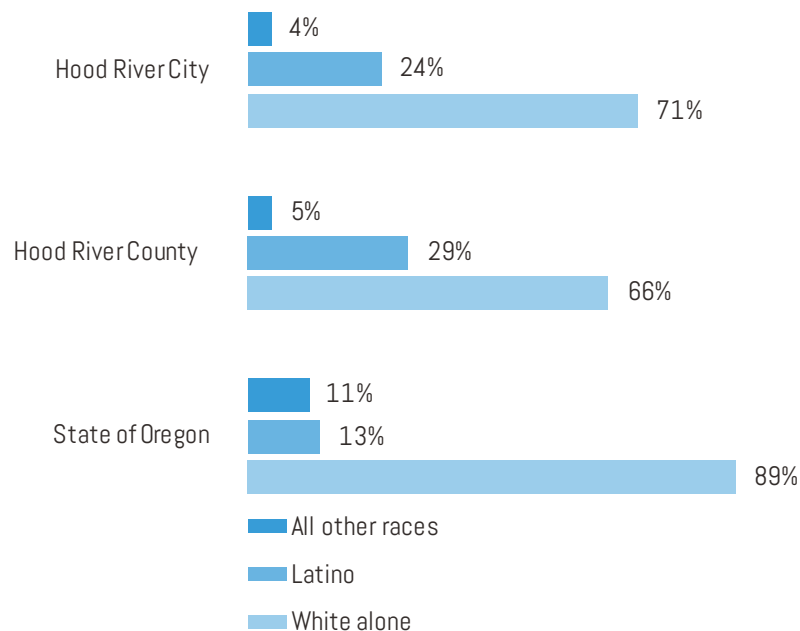
<sup>7</sup> Population Research Center, Portland State University (2016). Hood River County Forecast.

<sup>8</sup> ECNorthwest. (2015 Sep.). Hood River Housing Needs Analysis Summary Report. ECNorthwest, Portland, OR. p. 3-11.

park designs" to increase the health of this demographic, as well as promote their stewardship of the natural environment.

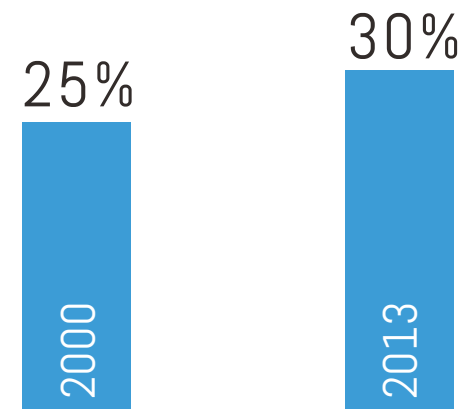
Furthermore, SCORP states that people of color are significantly less likely to utilize outdoor recreation facilities than whites, and as a result these communities lose out on the benefits that outdoor recreation provides. SCORP specifically identifies Hispanic or Latino populations as the fastest growing cohort compared to other communities of color in the state, and states that it is critical that the agencies responsible for parks and recreational facilities determine ways to attract this user group and other underrepresented communities to their existing and future facilities.<sup>9</sup>

**FIGURE 2. Race/Ethnicity of Hood River City, County + Oregon State, 2010**

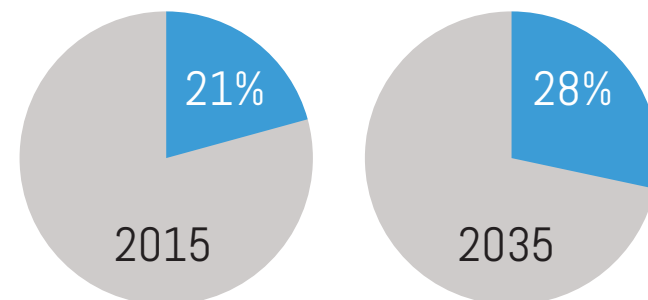


<sup>9</sup> State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. (2015). Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Program. Salem, OR. Retrieved from <http://tinyurl.com/k68w43v>

**FIGURE 3. Ratio of Latino Population, Hood River County, 2000 + 2013**



**FIGURE 4. Ratio Aged 65+, Hood River County, 2015 + Predicted for 2035**





## 2.3 DISTRICT PROFILE

### INTERGENERATIONAL PROGRAMMING



ST. PAUL'S PLAZA, CHULA VISTA CA

A 91 year-old woman uses the playground for an arm strengthening exercise, while a young mother and her child walk across a horizontal ladder in this small urban park designed for intergenerational use.

*Photo credit: San Diego Union Tribune*

One of the overarching values of parks is that recreation providers have the ability to enhance quality of life for park users. Designing parks with an Intergenerational programming (IP) framework allows park providers to more readily create recreational spaces that are inclusive, accessible, and facilitate a healthy social mix of park users. According to Parks and Recreation Business, "IP has the potential to bring together diverse groups and networks that can aid in a cultural exchange of traditions, values, and overall perceptions of people of different genders, race/ethnicity, culture, sexual orientation, and religion." Furthermore, IP benefits the community by helping youth to enhance their social skills, has been shown to enhance their academic performance, and also promotes the emotional health of aging adults by facilitating exchange with other individuals and enhancing self-esteem.

*Price-Shingles, N. June. (2015 Mar.) Intergenerational Programming. Retrieved from <http://parksandrecbusiness.com/archives/programming/intergenerational-programming/>*



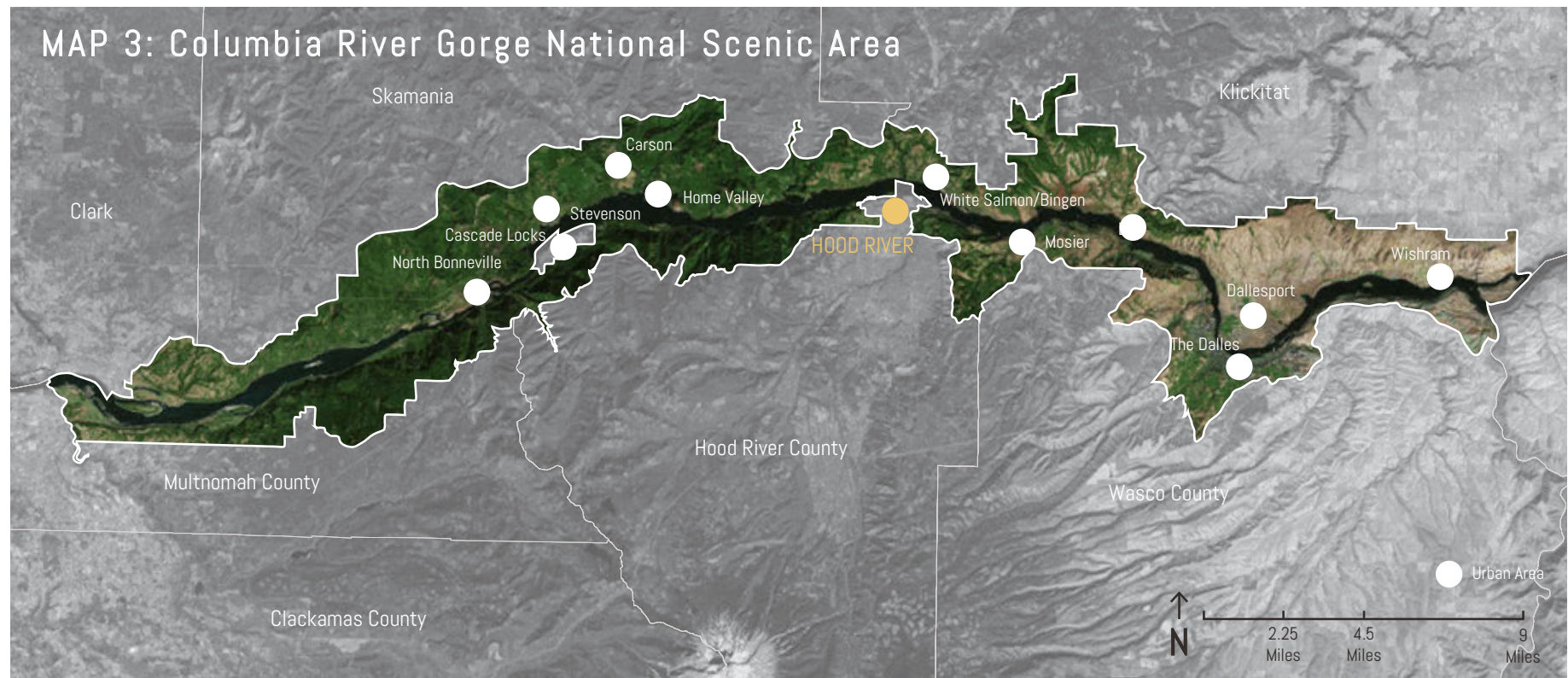


## PLANNING CONTEXT

A number of existing plans affect the planning of Westside Community Park, and they must be taken into consideration when thinking about the future development of the proposed park site. These plans also help put current trends of growth and development into perspective, showing what a critical time it is to be planning for new parks and open space.

## COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Enacted in 1986, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) was established to “protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational and natural resources of the Gorge; and to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development”. It is managed by a partnership including the USDA Forest Service, the Columbia River Gorge Commission (a bi-state regional planning agency), the states of Oregon and Washington, four tribal governments, and the six counties with land in the NSA.





The Columbia River Gorge Commission is responsible for planning in the NSA, implementing the NSA's Management Plan, providing expertise and monitoring of land-use decisions, along with acting as the appeals body during land use disputes. Four tribal governments assist the Gorge Commission in planning for the region and they work to protect cultural resources. The Forest Service oversees Forest Service land and administers recreation facilities and programs. The counties within the NSA, which includes Hood River County, are responsible for drafting and enforcing land use ordinances that implement the Management Plan. The proposed site for Westside Community Park falls within the NSA, and therefore is required to meet additional requirements within the Hood River County Zoning Ordinance that uphold these standards.

## HOOD RIVER COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Hood River County Comprehensive Plan is the legal document used to regulate land use planning in the County, and is administered by the County Community Development's Planning Department. As the project site falls within County jurisdiction, it is the document that regulates the land under consideration for park development. Originally adopted in 1984, the Comprehensive Plan is updated to ensure it reflects new circumstances in the County, and must ensure it meets the Statewide Planning Goals that apply to the County; these goals include the preservation and protection of open spaces and natural resources, as well as satisfying the recreational needs of its citizens.

A number of policies and strategies exist within with the Comprehensive Plan that apply specifically to new park development, in particular: Recreational opportunities shall be made accessible to everyone; connecting existing parks, parks to schools, schools to residential areas; the development of parks which are accessible by means of walking or bicycling shall be encouraged; and, neighboring residents should be encouraged to contribute to park development and maintenance.

The County Comprehensive Plan is further expressed through the Hood River County Zoning Ordinance (HRCZO), the primary policy document used in

determining the development standards to which Westside Community Park will be held.

## CITY OF HOOD RIVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Though the project site does not fall within the City of Hood River or its urban growth boundary (UGB), it does directly abut the urban area, and would serve many of its residents. Therefore, it is important to understand any City Comprehensive Plan goals or policies that apply to the site.

The City Comprehensive Plan states that "open space and natural areas are an integral part of the City of Hood River's livability". The document also makes the difficulty of providing these spaces to a growing community very clear: "Maintaining open space and natural areas in an urban area is a difficult task, and one that becomes more complex during periods of rapid growth. However, providing open space in the urban area for the benefit of existing and future residents is important." In a recent planning effort, the City of Hood River identified a need for 30 additional acres of open space in order to meet the demand of new and existing families and residents. In order to meet this need, the City must meet it's goal of "support[ing] coordinated efforts of public agencies, private organizations and individuals to preserve and enhance the area's natural features and open space".

## CITY AND COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANS

The City and County of Hood River, along with all jurisdictions in the State of Oregon, are required to create a Transportation System Plan (TSP) as part of their comprehensive planning efforts. TSPs act as long-term guiding documents that direct the maintenance, improvements, and development of roads, bike paths, and trails, and are meant to plan for and help ensure safety and efficiency within their respective transportation networks. The most recent City TSP includes projects directly adjacent to the project site, including intersection improvements at Belmont and Fairview, and two new arterials that would border the site to the north and east (extension of 30th and Post Canyon).

## 2.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

### HOOD RIVER HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS

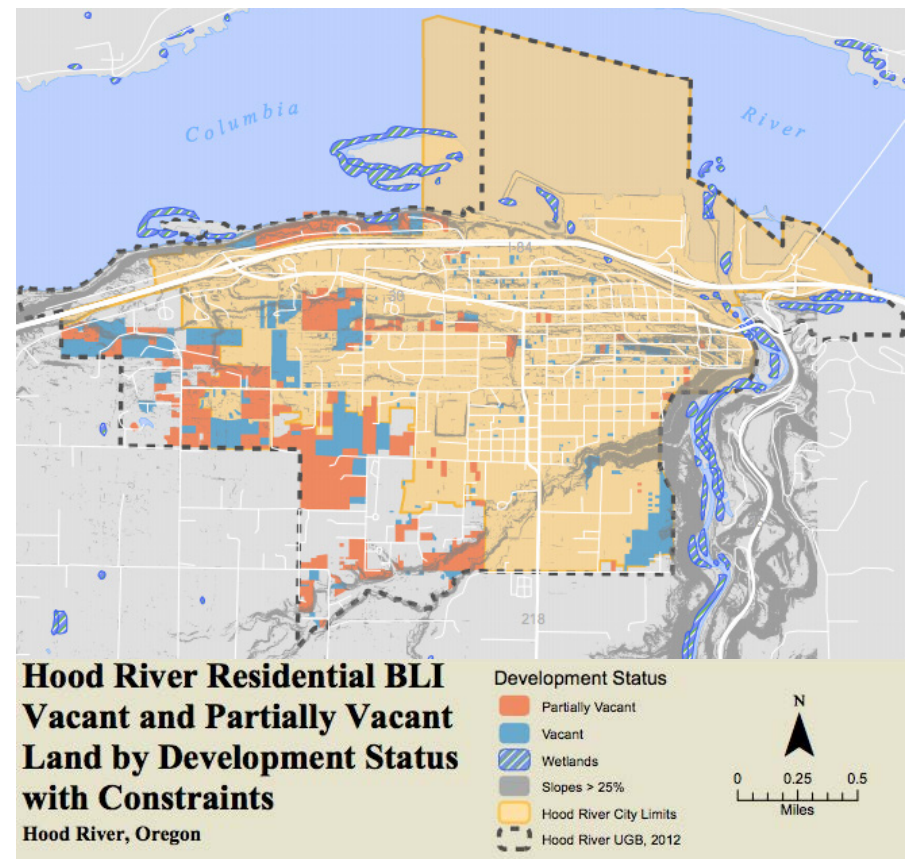
In 2015, ECONorthwest conducted a Housing Needs Analysis for the City of Hood River (Map 4).<sup>10</sup> It found that with the projected growth of the City, it would need a minimum of 1,985 new dwelling units over the next 20 years. Due to affordability issues, demographic trends, and demand for different types of housing, the City will need to provide a more diverse mix of housing types, including denser development of multifamily housing, townhouses, and smaller scale single-family detached units. Moreover, the analysis determined that although the City does have enough vacant or underutilized land within the UGB to accommodate housing needs over the next 20 years, most of the developable land is in the west side of Hood River – within a half-mile of the project site. These denser dwellings would likely include less green space than most single-family homes that currently exist within Hood River, further increasing the need for parks and outdoor recreation facilities to serve these new homes and residents.

### CITY OF HOOD RIVER WEST END TRANSPORTATION GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

In 2015, the City of Hood River was awarded a grant from the State of Oregon through the Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Oregon Department of Transportation to create a new Transportation Growth Management (TGM) plan. The plan will aim to simultaneously address affordable housing needs in Hood River and the City's transportation networks.

Through this plan, the City wants to reduce transportation costs for people while providing more transportation choices, create more walkable, livable neighborhoods, and sustain and enhance the economic vitality of the City by attracting new workers and retaining the existing workforce. Though the site is located outside of the Hood River UGA, and is therefore not within the Growth Management Plan project area, it does directly abut the project boundary. New subdivisions have sprung up on the other side of this boundary in recent years, and it is the opinion of many Hood River planning and development

### MAP 4: Vacant Land Inventory

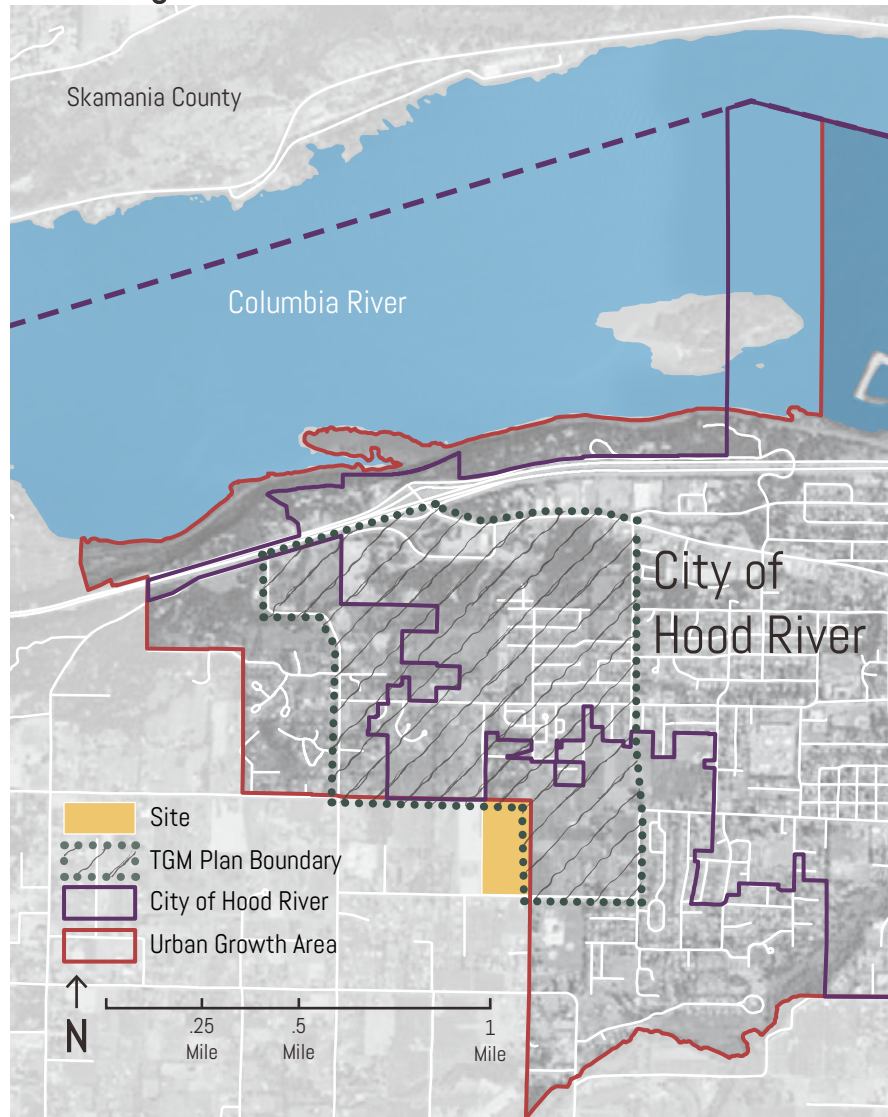


professionals that the large parcels directly northeast and east of the property are primed for new housing development within the next decade.

With this in mind, many in the Hood River community have expressed the need for a new park in order to provide open space for new and existing residents. Due to land costs and available acreage, the proposed park site has been identified as one of the last remaining sites to meet this need.

<sup>10</sup> ECONorthwest. (2015 Sep.). Hood River Housing Needs Analysis Summary Report. ECONorthwest, Portland, OR. p. 3-11.

## MAP 5: Transportation Growth Management Plan



## HOOD RIVER VALLEY PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Finally, the planning document that most directly relates to the development of this park is the Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District's (HRVPRD) 2012-2022 Parks & Recreation Master Plan. This document contains a needs analysis that calls for the provision of more outdoor organized sports facilities and gathering places. For over twenty years, community members have expressed their need for more year round sports fields, trails, and active spaces. However, it has proved challenging for HRVPRD to find space for organized sports and multi-use parks given that nearly 90% of Hood River County is preserved as forest or exclusive farm use.

The HRVPRD Master Plan also recognizes the importance of planning for the key user groups as defined by SCORP – the expanding communities of youth, seniors, and Latinos within Hood River. Westside Community Park can provide a space for these key user groups, while also developing some of the important community assets identified in the parks needs analysis, all without infringing on protected land. To do this, HRVPRD, together with HRVRC, identified a project site that they believe can meet the needs of both the city and county through the development of a new community park.

## SITE POTENTIAL

The proposed project site stands to offer a park with facilities and amenities that could address the needs of Hood River City and County residents, and particularly the key user groups identified in SCORP. While the City and County continue to grow, it will become increasingly vital that residents have space to play, relax, and gather. Developing a park at the project site will provide future residents of the City and County with an opportunity to reap the benefits that outdoor recreation offers, while helping to facilitate multimodal and safe transportation connections and circulation in the surrounding neighborhoods.



## LAND USE PARAMETERS

Due to its inclusion in the Columbia River Gorge NSA, as well as its close proximity to the Hood River Urban Growth Area, the proposed park site is located within one of the most unique land use settings found in the State of Oregon. Multiple jurisdictions and regulatory layers apply, however, the primary land use policies that apply to the site are managed by the Hood River County Community Development Department. Ultimately, these policies, and how they are interpreted by the County planners deciding whether or not to permit this park, will have a major impact on the specific uses of the site, and how they will be managed. The following section contains interpretations of these policies as they pertain to the various elements of a community park, and they were guided by the opinions of County planners and subject area experts familiar with the administration of the Hood River County Zoning Code and the NSA Management Area. These codes and parameters were integrated into conceptual park designs and recommendations.

### HOOD RIVER COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE

Is a park allowed? YES!

The most important question pertaining to the development of Westside Community Park is whether a park of this size would be allowed on the proposed site. The primary document regulating development on the site is the Hood River County Zoning Ordinance (HRCZO). Within this document, two sections apply - Article 15 and Article 75. Together, these articles determine that a community park is a permitted use within land zoned Rural Residential (RR). However, the park site, which is zoned RR-10, also falls within the General Management Area (GMA) of the NSA, adding an additional layer of review for any proposed development. Article 75, which manages land within the NSA, provides a list of allowed uses that require additional approval criteria prior to being permitted, and "community parks and playgrounds, consistent with the guidelines of the National Park and Recreation Society" is included on this list (Art. 75. 380 (7)).

## PARK ZONING REGULATIONS

### Article 15 - Rural Residential (RR) Zone

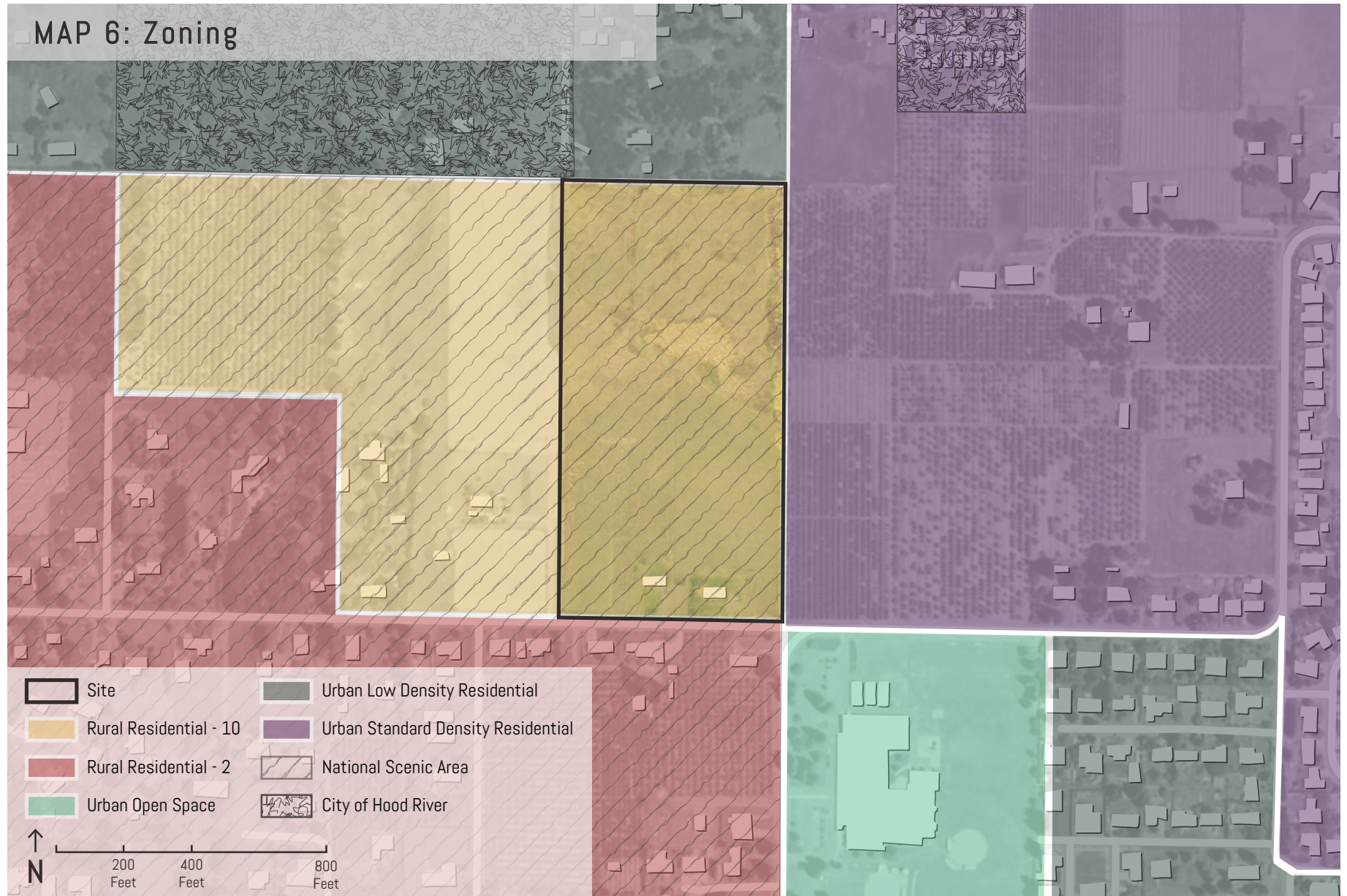
The proposed park site is currently zoned Rural Residential. This designation allows, "Parks, playgrounds, or community centers" as a conditional use. A conditional use requires County planners to use a certain amount of discretion when deciding whether to grant or decline a land use permit.

### Article 75 - National Scenic Area Ordinance

The site is also located within the General Management Area (GMA) of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The GMA designation for Rural Residential land allows "Community parks and playgrounds" as a review use with additional approval criteria. The additional approval criteria state that the park will be allowed only if the "proposed use will be compatible with the surrounding area. Review of compatibility shall include impacts associated with the visual character of the area, traffic generation, and noise, dust and odors."

For a more detailed review of how the County Zoning Ordinance will impact development of the proposed park, see: Appendix VI.

Any new development in the NSA is subject to applicable Scenic, Cultural, Natural, and Recreational resource guidelines, also included in the HRCZO. Previous studies have been conducted showing that no significant cultural resources are present on the site, though if any are uncovered during the development of the park, it is necessary to handle them with care. The only natural resource present on the site is the unofficially delineated 0.92-acre wetland, and will be subject to special considerations due to its location in the NSA. A detailed review of the site's wetland is covered in Chapter 2.6:



## 2.5 LAND USE PARAMETERS

Environmental Conditions. Due to its specific location within the NSA, the normal recreational resource guidelines don't apply to the project, which leaves the scenic resource guidelines.

These scenic resource guidelines state that recreational uses should be limited to "small community park facilities". It also mandates that any proposed uses do not generate light pollution that would disturb the current setting. The following sections outlines how Westside Community Park fits into the guidelines, especially pertaining to the size and use of the space, and any light or noise pollution that is generated on the site.

### A COMMUNITY PARK DEFINED

The National Park and Recreation Society guidelines referred to in the HRCZO are actually the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines created by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). These guidelines give a definitive classification of a community park, and are the guidelines County planners refer to when deciding compatibility of uses in the NSA. This document, which has long provided a national standard for agencies to turn to for assistance in the planning and development of park and recreational facilities, states that a community park is typically 25+ acres in size, serves several neighborhoods within a one to two mile radius, and is easily accessible to the neighborhoods served. Given the size of the project site, 20.06-acres, Westside Community Park would actually be considered a small facility by these guidelines.<sup>11</sup>

Going further into the typical uses and desirable site characteristics of a community park, these guidelines state a community park is an "area of diverse environmental quality. [It] May include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes... [or it] may be an area of natural quality for outdoor recreation, such as walking, viewing, sitting, picnicking. [It] may be any combination of the above, depending upon site. [It also] may include natural features, such as water bodies, and areas suited for intense development".

<sup>11</sup> National Recreation and Parks Association (1995). Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, A Recommended Classification System for Local and Regional Recreation Open Space.

These clear, albeit varied, descriptions of a park depict a place with a mix of diverse uses to serve a broad range of community members.

Unfortunately, these guidelines, while still technically the standard by which Hood River County will review a proposed community park on the site, are severely outdated. The organization that wrote these guidelines in 1995 has not updated them since, and they no longer consider their use a best practice for agency management and planning. According to the NRPA, the application of a "one size fits all" approach does not meet the needs of the widely varied communities and contexts that parks serve and exist in.<sup>12</sup> Given the diverse population and wide range of communities within Hood River County, this statement makes clear that if Westside Community Park is to truly meet nationally recognized standards for community park development, it must be a place that accounts for the needs of everyone in the County.

### LIGHTING & NOISE

One of the scenic resources most highly valued by Hood River residents is the night sky, made possible by the low intensity of development within the NSA protected areas. While many community members have expressed a desire to protect these night skies, others have strongly stated the need for lighted sports fields. At this time, the specific lighting features to be included on a final site plan have not been determined, however, it is assumed some lighting will be necessary for night time safety, especially around trails and parking areas. Larger lighting structures typical of sports complexes and night time sporting events, however, would likely impact views and the existing character of the site, and have therefore been one of the major questions in discussions of site compatibility. However, the proposed park site is located within a unique setting of the NSA, as all of the Rural Residential land west of the Hood River Urban Area, and east of Country Club Road, is considered a "Developed Setting". As written in the County Zoning Code, "New development in this setting shall be compatible with the setting, but not necessarily visually subordinate." (Art. 75. 520 (3) h) As such, park and field lighting is not inherently incompatible.

<sup>12</sup> National Recreation and Parks Association Web site, [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

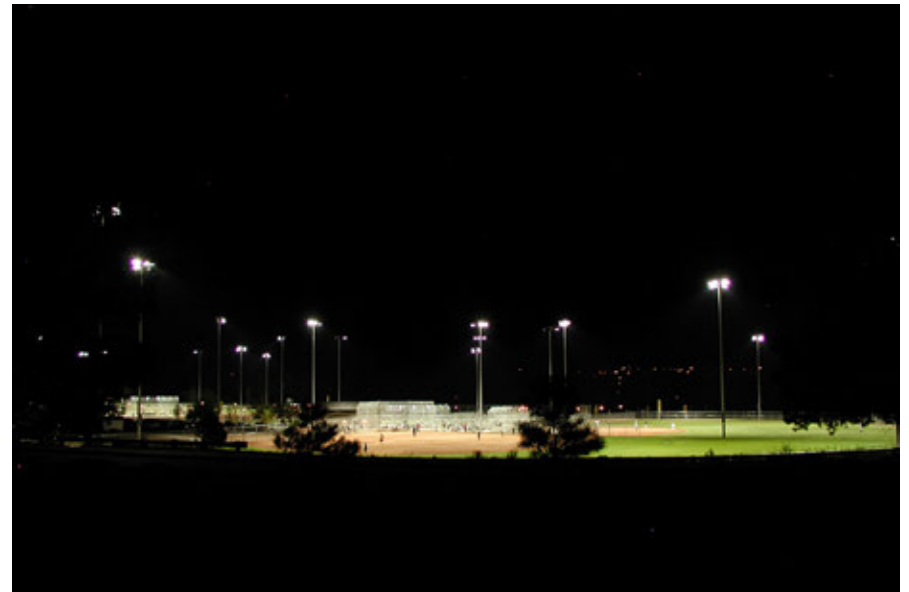


In speaking with many Hood River residents living within close proximity to the proposed site, as well as numerous parks and planning professionals with experience in the development of lighted facilities, it has been concluded that it is not a question of whether or not field lighting is allowed on the site, but rather what kind of lighting, and how it is managed. The same can be said for noise. The location of noise-generating facilities, such as sports fields or large gathering spaces, will be a major consideration when making final site plan decisions. Also, the time of day that noise-generating activities will be allowed must be carefully decided. It is imperative that neighbors of the site, as well as potential park users, be consulted throughout the process of siting and management of any and all light or noise-generating facilities.

Unshielded lighting, traditional of many sports fields and complexes throughout the United States, are some of the largest light polluters in any city or town. The typical flood lights that accompany nighttime sporting events negate any star gazing opportunities, and often negatively impact neighbors. Unshielded lights would not be compatible with Westside Community Park.

Shielded lighting is fast becoming the standard for new sports facilities that intend to host nighttime events. Modern technology effectively directs light only towards fields, while protecting night skies and neighbors from receiving the light pollution typical of unshielded lights. Shielded lighting would be more compatible with the area of Westside Community Park, and can be installed for little or no additional cost above traditional unshielded lights.

*A more detailed explanation of the HRCZO sections that apply to Westside Community Park can be found in Appendix VI.*



Before (above) and after (below) the installation of shielded lighting at a sports field in Flagstaff, Arizona.  
*Photo credit: Flagstaff Dark Skies Coalition*

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SITE

The east parcel contains a depression area in the northeast corner, but the majority of the 20-acre site is flat with mild slopes that vary between 0% - 2% with both north and south aspects. The elevation of the site is approximately 580 feet above sea level.

### VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE

The site is currently used as pasture land, and is primarily vegetated with a cover of pasture grasses and forbs. The vegetation on the site in the upland areas includes tall fescue, orchard grass, common Timothy, colonial bentgrass, and quackgrass. Forbs present in the pasture are primarily exotic weedy species such as Canada thistle, spotted knapweed, common tansy, Queen Anne's Lace, and prickly lettuce. With the exception of Himalayan blackberry along the fence lines and a smattering of English hawthorne, the shrub and tree layer is absent from the upland areas. Within the depressed area both Pacific and Sitka willows sparsely exist. The herbaceous layer in the wetland is more prolific and is dominated by soft rush and reed canary grass. The property does not evidently host wildlife habitat, indicating the proposed development poses no known threats to wildlife.

### SOILS & TOXICOLOGY

According to the USDA Soil Survey of Hood River County, Oregon, the soils at the site are composed entirely of Wind River variant gravelly sandy loam, 0 to 8% slopes. Wind River variant gravelly sandy loam is over 60 inches deep to bedrock. It is loamy over sandy, high in rock fragments, well drained and has a high permeability; water erosion is a potential hazard with this soil.

In April 2016, a Site Assessment Specialist with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality completed an environmental evaluation of the property to identify potential environmental and human health concerns. Site-specific

soil sampling data indicates the presence of near-surface lead, arsenic, DDT and Dieldrin, byproducts of site's former long-term use as an orchard and regular application of pesticides during this time. The report recommends that additional investigation be performed at the facility to ensure that human health risks are minimized.<sup>13</sup>

### WETLAND

The National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) does not identify any wetlands on the site; however, these classifications are produced based on interpretation of aerial photographs and include little fieldwork. A more detailed Local Wetland Inventory (LWI) was completed for the City of Hood River in 2004, but the site was not included due to its location just outside the urban growth boundary of the city.

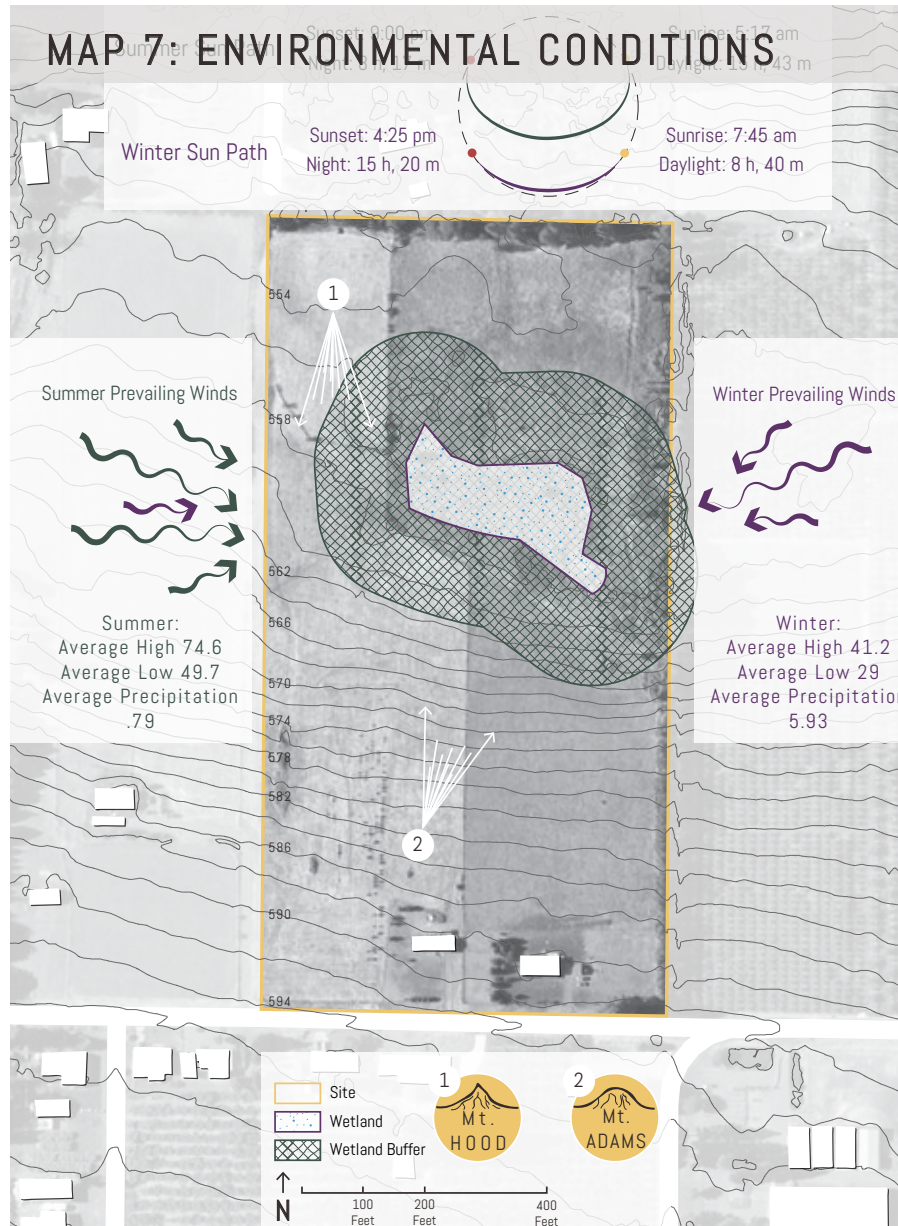
However, in August 2007, Turnstone Environmental Consultants conducted an on-site wetland delineation of the project site, on behalf of the Hood River County School District. This analysis identified a 0.92 acre palustrine freshwater emergent wetland in the northeast area of the site. The delineation report was never submitted to Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL) or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) for concurrence, which is required to officially delineate the wetland and proceed with a permit application. This delineation has now expired, meaning a new on-site analysis must be completed to submit to the DSL and ACOE.<sup>14</sup>

For the purposes of this planning process, the planning team used the conclusions made in the 2007 report. However, it is quite possible that the boundaries of the wetland have altered since 2007, due to shifting drainage conditions on the site that will be explained further in this report. Thus, it is imperative that an updated delineation be performed prior to the completion of a detailed site plan for this property.

<sup>13</sup> Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. (April 2016). Oregon DEQ Site Assessment Program – Site Evaluation.

<sup>14</sup> Turnstone Environmental Consultants, Inc. (Nov. 2007). Wetland Delineation, Skakel/Blackman Tracts, Hood River, Hood River County, Oregon.







## 2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

The 2007 delineation identified the wetland as primarily herbaceous, dominated by soft rush and reed canary grass. It is considered a depression, and is not connected to other wetlands or riparian areas. The nearest water feature is Henderson Creek, 700 feet to the west. Because of its isolation, the wetland would not be considered jurisdictional by the ACOE (although this agency must confirm the existence of the wetland in order for it to be officially delineated). This would remove the requirement to submit an application with the ACOE for development on the site. It would, however, be considered jurisdictional under the Oregon DSL and require a joint application, were a proposed development to affect the wetland.

### REGULATIONS AND ALLOWED USES

The regulatory framework for the wetland has multiple tiers. In particular, the wetland's location within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area adds additional considerations. Regulation under the National Scenic Area Act funnels into a Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which in turn has been incorporated into the Hood River County zoning code. Under Article 75 of the Hood River County Zoning Ordinance, a 150-foot buffer is required for herbaceous wetlands within the National Scenic Area. This is echoed in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan.

This creates a total protected area of 5.75 acres on the subject site, with both the 0.92-acre wetland and its surrounding buffer included. This makes up 28% of the total site area.

### ALLOWED USES WITHIN WETLAND AND WETLAND BUFFER ZONES

The uses within a wetland and its buffer zone are subject to review by the County, which implements the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan. These uses include minor water-related recreation structures including boardwalks, trails and paths (provided their surface is not constructed of impervious materials), observation decks, and interpretative aids such as educational signs. Other proposed uses must undergo a review

process and meet a multitude of criteria; most notably, the applicant must prove that no other practicable alternatives to impacting the wetland area exist, and that the proposed uses have a specific public interest.

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR WETLAND

### County level:

*Hood River County Zoning Ordinance: Article 75 (National Scenic Area Ordinance)* defines land use parameters for wetland areas in Hood River County.

### Regional level:

*Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan: Part 1, Ch. 3 (Natural Resources)* defines land use parameters for wetland areas in the Gorge.

### State level:

*Oregon Department of State Lands* regulates wetlands under Oregon's 1967 Removal-Fill Law and 1989 Wetlands Conservation Act.

*Oregon Department of Environmental Quality* reviews federal permits and licenses affecting wetlands in the state.

### Federal level:

*National Scenic Act (1986)* established the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area as federally-protected lands.

*National Clean Water Act (1972)* is the cornerstone of surface water quality protection in the U.S.





## 2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### DEVELOPMENT

There are three main development scenarios in regards to the wetland and wetland buffer zone; the first involves no direct impact to the wetland area; the second involves impacting the area and performing compensatory off-site mitigation to other wetland sites; and the third involves on-site wetland enhancement. Avoiding all impacts to the wetland is the most cost effective alternative (it is the least costly and involves the least regulatory involvement).

Filling the wetland or otherwise reducing the presence of a wetland would require an in-depth permitting process involving local, state, and federal authorities. If more than 50 cubic yards (about 5 truckloads) within the wetland area itself would be moved or filled, a Joint Permit Application with the DSL is required. The application must include a justification explaining why there is no alternative to impacting the existing wetland. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan calls for “no net loss of wetlands”; thus, the burden of proving no practicable alternatives exist would be cumbersome. Removing the wetland would also require an additional wetland compensation plan, which would outline actions to restore, create or enhance other wetlands in the surrounding area. This will require additional professional analysis, fees, and monitoring.

Finally, there are opportunities to enhance the existing wetland. While this alternative would also involve an extensive permitting process, it would be in accordance with the objectives of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan to “increase the quantity and quality of wetlands” in the NSA. There are a multitude of examples illustrating effective wetland enhancement techniques in public park space, most notably Tanner Springs Park in downtown Portland. These spaces not only serve the environment through preservation, but also the public as an educational opportunity. Furthermore, several funding mechanisms exist to support wetland enhancement projects. These can take on the form of federal grants, state-led programs or locally organized volunteer efforts. Wetland enhancement offers the opportunity for a narrative involving the public good, which can increase appraisal rates in a discretionary process.

The Hood River Valley Parks and Recreation District has expressed interest in building into the wetland buffer zone, in order to fit multi-use fields on the property. The burden would fall on the applicant—the Parks District—to make the case for this proposal and provide the necessary information to support it. Namely, the development application must prove why no practicable alternatives exist (for example, that the dimensions of a multi-use field cannot be adjusted to avoid impacts to the buffer), and that the proposed development would serve the public interest. To meet these criteria, the need for more multi-use fields to serve the growing population of Hood River must be well illustrated. A proposal to infringe upon the wetland buffer zone would be best received along with a concurrent plan to enhance the existing wetland area, according to conversations with experts well-versed in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan.

### NEXT STEPS FOR WESTSIDE COMMUNITY PARK

Whether or not a proposed site plan will impact the wetland area or buffer zone, an updated wetland delineation must be performed, and concurred with both DSL and ACOE. Furthermore, any site plan that includes a wetland must include the following in its application:

- A site plan map prepared at a scale of 1 inch equals 100 feet (1:1,200)
- The exact boundary of the wetland and the wetlands buffer zone
- A description of all actions that would affect the wetland

### DRAINAGE + WATER

During months of high precipitation, the site is saturated in the north side, particularly in the depressed area in the northeast corner. Currently, there is no drainage plan for the site on a county planning level. While the probable existence of a wetland in this area suggests a natural accumulation of water, there are other factors that may contribute to the saturation on the north end.

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF WETLAND PRESERVATION



*Photo credit: Google Commons*

The health benefits of feeling connected to nature is well documented. Enhancing the existing wetland and working within the parameters of the land-use regulations for wetland development can preserve a natural amenity for Westside Community Park in the City of Hood River. Capaldi, et al conducted a study to investigate the relationship between feeling connected to nature and happiness. The results of the study showed that people who were more connected to nature experience more vitality and life satisfaction than people who were not connected to nature, and that being connected to nature and feeling happy are indeed well-linked. Wetland enhancement can facilitate happiness amongst park users while also offering the opportunity to feel connected to the serenity and biodiversity that wetlands provide.

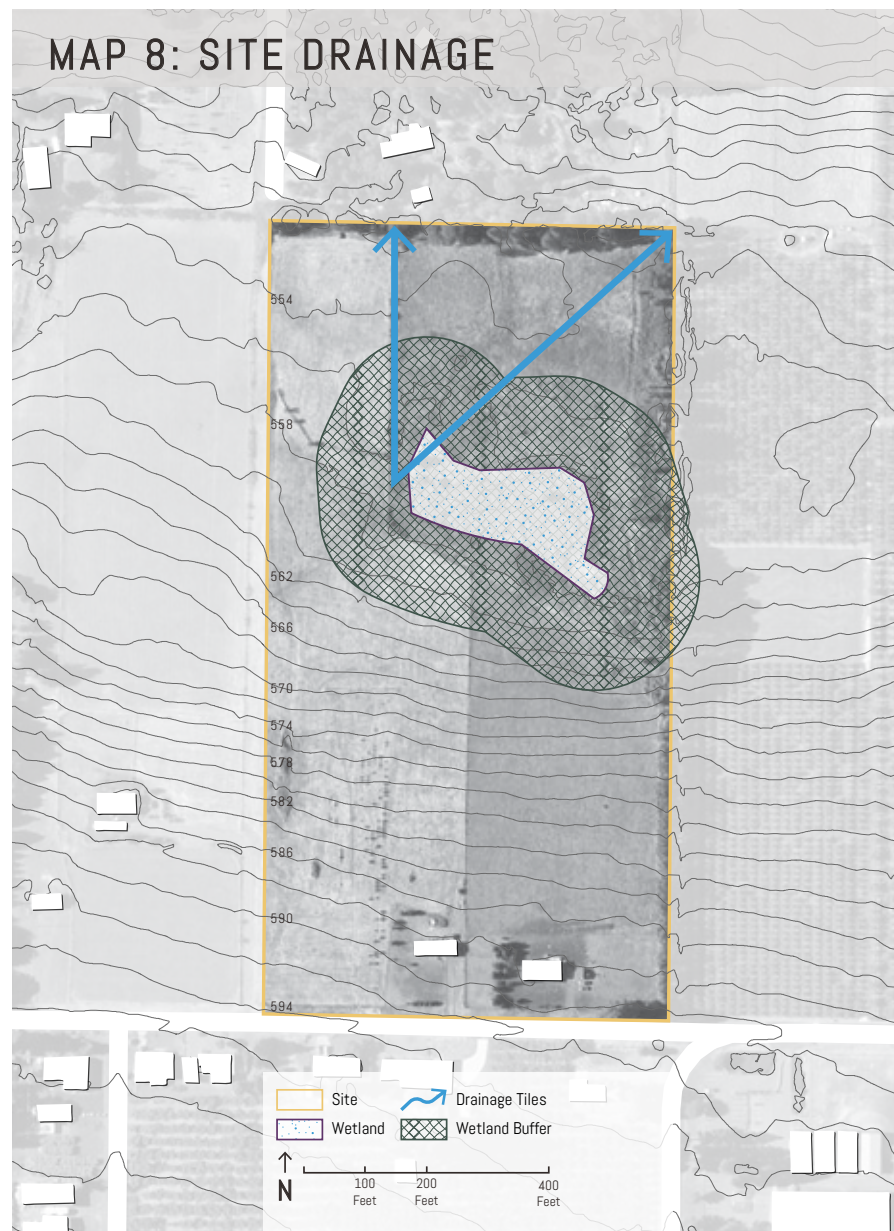
*Capaldi, A. Colin., Dopko, L. Raelyne., Zelenski, M. John. (2014 Sep. 8). The relationship between nature connectedness and happiness: a meta-analysis. Frontiers in Psychology. 5:796. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00976*



## 2.6 ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

While the property functioned as a pear orchard, drainage tiles extending to the north and northeast edges of the property were installed to maintain ideal conditions for agricultural use. Both owners of the project site agree that the saturation of the north end is likely being caused by a breakdown in the drainage tiles. In April 2016, De Hart Excavation performed a site evaluation of the property and concluded that the drainage tiles were likely blocked by the existence of tree roots. Arrangements have been made for De Hart Excavation to remove several trees from the property in July 2016, once the area has sufficiently dried out. After this time, it will become clear whether or not this action will resolve the drainage issue in a relatively low-cost fashion. Because the landscape of the north end of the site has shifted over the years due to the breakdown of the drainage tiles, it is possible that the boundaries of the wetland area have changed since the 2007 delineation was performed. Thus it is imperative that an updated wetland delineation be performed prior to the creation of any site plan.

At nearby wells, depth to first groundwater ranged from 190 to 330 feet below ground surface. The contaminants identified at shallow depths do not pose a risk for groundwater, and due to the site's hydrological isolation do not pose risk to nearby surface waters.



## UNCONSTRAINED LAND

(illustrated on Map 8)

Wetland Buffer: 5.75

*Buffer contained within site = 5.75 acres (250,397.9273 sq ft)*

ROW BUFFERS - 1.57 acres

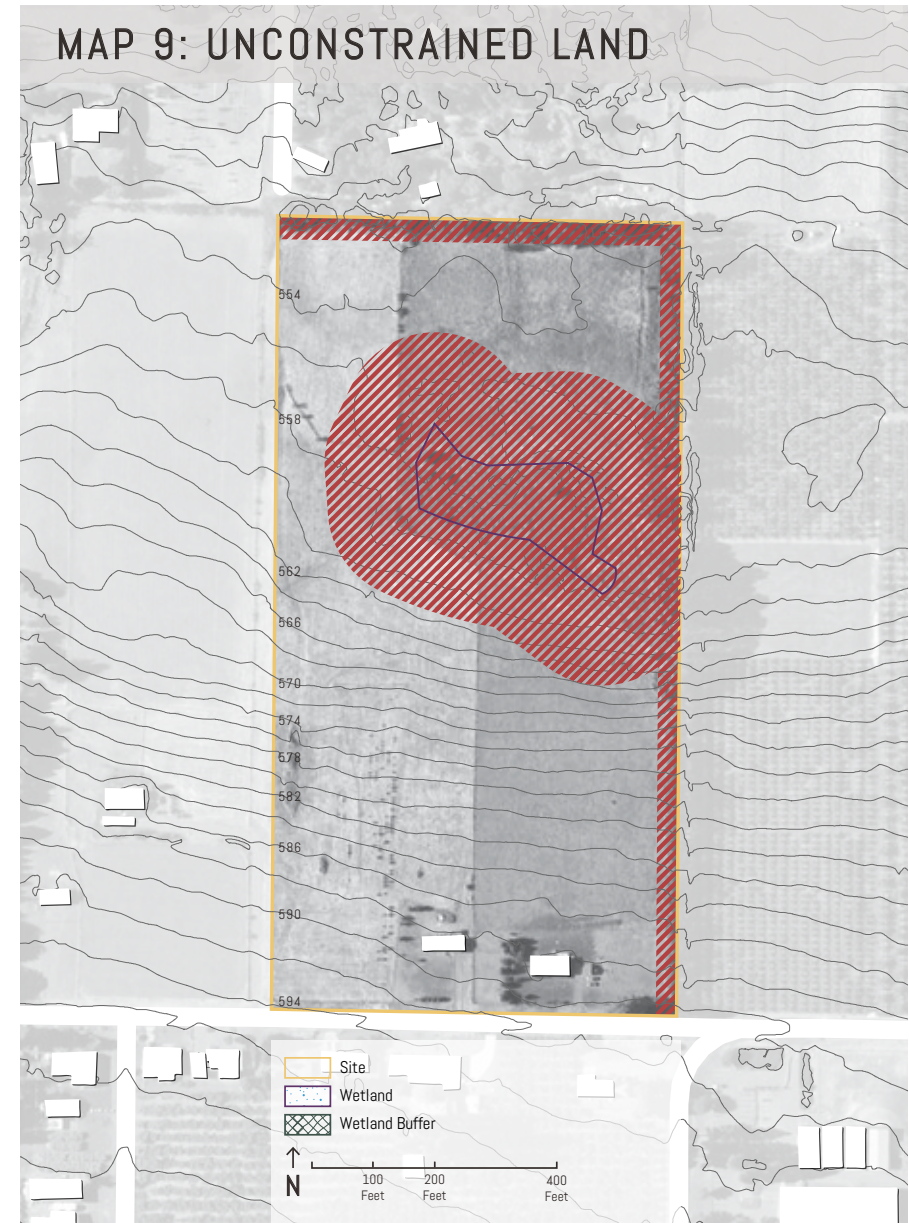
*N-side = 23,100 sqft*

*E-side = 45,500 sqft*

*TOTAL = 68,600 sqft = 1.57 acres*

TOTAL UNCONSTRAINED LAND

20.06 acres - (5.75 acres + 1.57 acres) = 12.74 acres





## TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION & ACCESS

While many nearby residents are excited about the prospect of a park within walking distance to their homes, a new park will undoubtedly generate additional traffic to the area. As outlined in the County Zoning Ordinance, “traffic generation” is a major criterion under consideration in the compatibility of this park with the surrounding area. So how will this park impact traffic, and how will it affect the development of this park?

While the particulars of any traffic generation must be determined through consultation with a traffic engineer, and an official traffic impact analysis (TIA) will be conducted in concurrence with final site design, this section identifies the most crucial transportation and access issues for this proposed park. Through the review of relevant planning documents and consultations with representatives of City and County transportation departments, it has been determined a number of transportation facility considerations will impact park development. The community has also provided tremendous feedback regarding traffic and access issues, including many of the most directly affected neighbors of the site. These community comments and concerns played a significant role in crafting the recommendations of this plan relating to safe access and smart parking management.

### TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLANS

The most recent City of Hood River TSP (2011) includes improvement projects directly adjacent to the proposed park site. These improvements include the extension of two arterial roads directly along the northern and eastern edges of the proposed site. According to City TSP road design standards, these extensions would require a 70-foot right-of-way, protruding 35 feet into the proposed site (as outlined in Map 9). While City and County officials have stated there will be no legal requirement to dedicate land or fund development of these roads during the construction of a new park, in order to maintain consistency with the long-range plans of Hood River, it is recommended that final park designs designate these 35 foot future public right-of-ways as open space or temporary uses. Both City and County TSPs have listed the

intersection of Belmont Drive and Fairview Drive as a problem intersection, and have proposed improvements for the corner. Suggested improvements to this intersection are outlined below, and a detailed list of the TSP proposed improvement projects are included in Appendix VII.

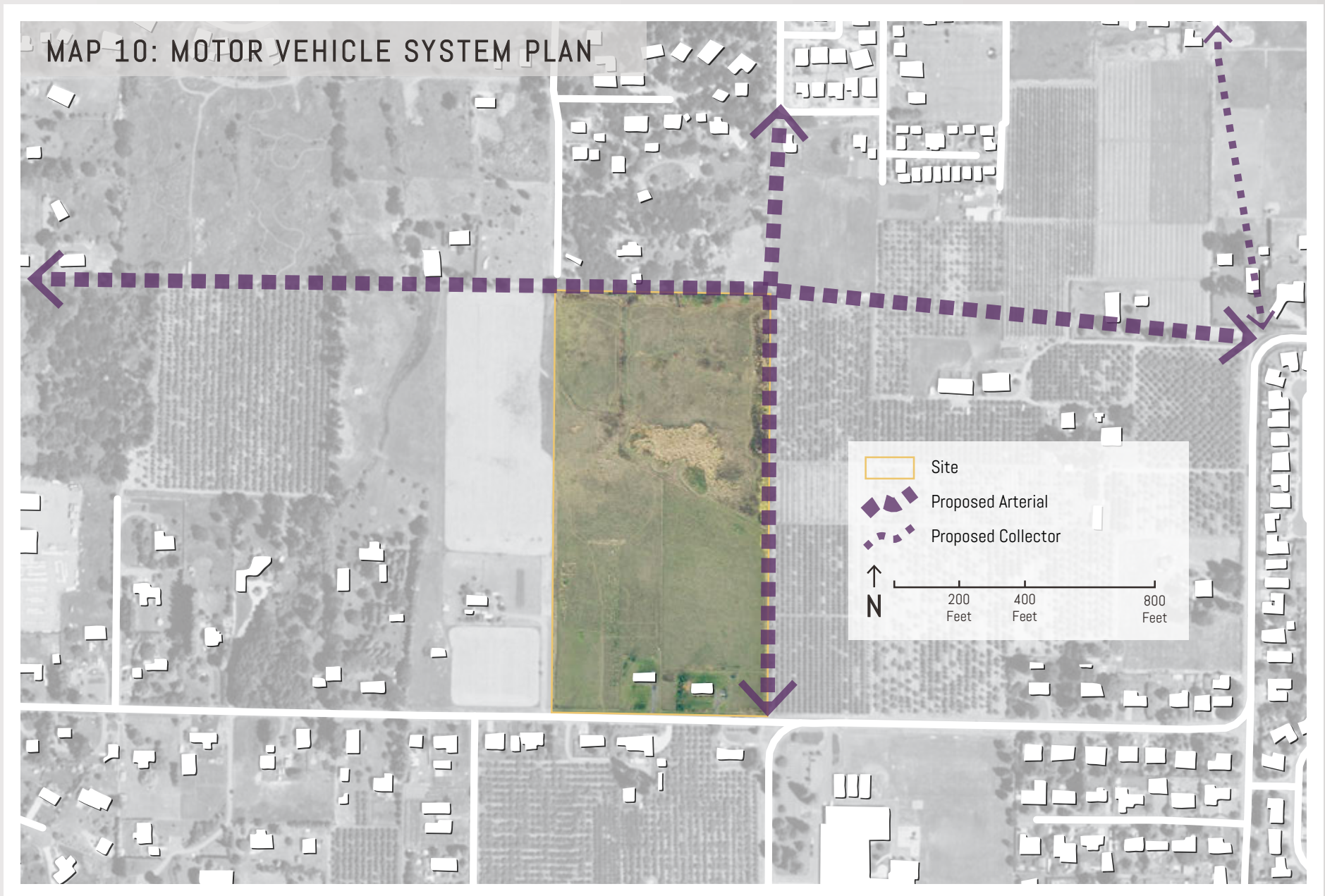
### ENSURING SAFE ACCESS

The recent development of the Westside Community Trail, which connects surrounding neighborhoods as a walking and biking path towards Westside Elementary School and other public trail facilities, has brought an increase of pedestrian traffic to the area. The trail runs along the northern and eastern edges of the proposed site, and has entrances at Rocky Road to the north, and the Fairview & Belmont intersection to the south. Both of these access points have been a major point of concern for neighboring residents, as well as City and County representatives, and must be a major consideration during the design and development of the proposed park.

The Fairview Drive and Belmont Drive intersection has long been regarded as a safety concern by both County and City residents, as many children cross this busy intersection on their way to and from school. This intersection has been identified in the City TSP as a “point/crossing improvement” project, and multiple solutions have been proposed for the intersection, including the addition of stop signs at all entrances, and the re-engineering of Belmont Drive to slow down oncoming traffic.

The development of Westside Community Park presents an opportunity for the City and County to finally address this problem intersection. With multiple entities having a stake in the betterment of this safety concern, including the Hood River County School District, as well as HRVPRD, it would be beneficial to devise a joint-agreement to improve this intersection concurrent with park development.

Rocky Road, which abuts the northwest corner of the site, presents the other major access concern for the site. Rocky Road currently serves as a connection between the southern and northern segments of the Westside Community Trail, and therefore receives considerable pedestrian and bicycle traffic. It has also





## 2.7 TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION & ACCESS

been confirmed that during the installation of sidewalks at the intersection of Rocky Road and May Street, the road was made more narrow than required under current design standards. Additionally, many Rocky Road residents have clearly communicated their opposition to any auto access to the proposed park. For these reasons, it is recommended that Rocky Road not be included in any auto access plan for the proposed park, and that parking be discouraged along Rocky Road under its current condition.

### HOW MUCH PARKING IS ENOUGH PARKING?

Getting the right amount of parking is a delicate balance. Too little can cause illegal parking, safety issues, and inconvenience. Too much parking can waste precious space that could be dedicated to open space or other beneficial park facilities.

This proposed park lies within close proximity to the fastest growing part of Hood River County, and due to this existing and expected residential growth, it is clear that many are and will be within walking distance of the site. It is recommended that the final site design strongly accounts for these walkability considerations.

However, HRVPRD facilities are meant to serve the entirety of Hood River County residents. Many of these residents, especially those within the growing Hood River Latino community, live further from the site. These residents will inevitably be driving to the site, and therefore some amount of parking must be included. The amount largely depends on the type of uses included on the site, but the final count of parking spaces will have a significant impact on the feel and character of the eventual park space.

Given the location of the park site within the NSA, as well as the desire of community members to maintain some of the natural and scenic qualities of the site (see Chapter 3: Community Engagement for a more thorough description of community feedback), it is recommended that conservative estimates be used during final parking decisions, and that extreme care be taken surrounding location of parking, use of pervious parking surfaces, and landscaping in parking areas.

## TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Prior to the final application and permitting of any proposed park, a transportation engineering firm will be hired to complete a traffic impact analysis (TIA). This TIA will take into account the potential auto and pedestrian traffic generated by proposed park facilities, and recommend site design improvements in regards to road alignments, traffic calming, and access points.

### KITTLESON TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS FINDINGS

In 2008, Kittleson and Associates conducted a TIA for the Hood River County School District. At the time, the district was proposing the development of a school at the project site, and needed to determine what impact the school would bring to the surrounding neighborhoods. The following are Kittleson's recommendations to improve traffic circulation around the site:

- County to make 30th St. a minor arterial, which will connect Historic Columbia River Hwy 30 to Fairview Dr. when finished
- If rights cannot be acquired to make 30th St. a minor arterial: use Rocky Rd. where a new east-west connection could be built to connect Rocky Road with a 30th St. extension from Fairview Drive
- Re-designate Fairview Dr. from a local road to a collector road<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Kittleson and Associates Inc. (2008). Traffic Impact Analysis Report. Project #:9351.0. Portland, OR. p. 1-23.

MAP 11: PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM PLAN



MAP 12: BICYCLE SYSTEM PLAN





## 2.7 TRANSPORTATION, CIRCULATION & ACCESS

### EMERGENCY ACCESS PARAMETERS

Pursuant to Chapter 5 and Appendix D in Oregon's Fire Code, site design will need to integrate the provisions of emergency access code to ensure compliance with emergency policy and regulations. Fire apparatus access roads shall have an unobstructed width of no less than 20 ft. In addition:

- Dead end fire apparatus access roads in excess of 150 ft shall be provided with an approved area for turning around apparatus
- No parking signs shall be posted on fire apparatus access roads
- The required turning radius shall be determined by the current fire code official
- Traffic calming devices prohibited unless approved by the fire code official

### EQUITABLE ACCESS

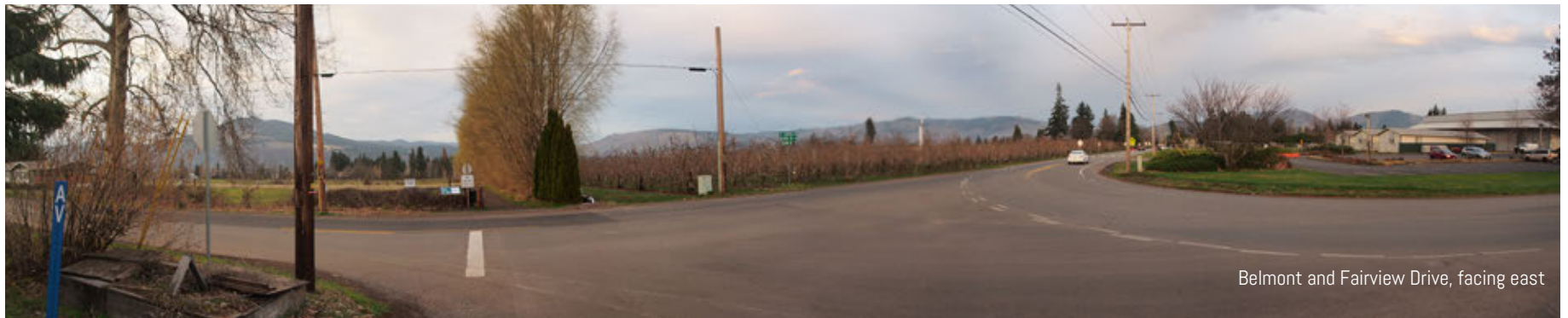
Design for site circulation will need to take into account that not all city and county residents will have transportation to the site. The Hood River County Transportation District (CAT) does provide public transportation services in Hood River County, and will pick up/drop off residents wherever they need to be. Currently, the fixed-routes provided by CAT do not provide access to the site.

### ENCOURAGING HEALTH THROUGH TRANSPORTATION DESIGN

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has disseminated specific recommendations for transportation planners and policy makers to consider for transportation facilities design. The purpose of the recommendations is to integrate public health and morbidity mitigation through transportation planning. When designing new access options for Westside Community Park, facilitating multimodal access should be a fundamental component of design. Here are some recommendations by the CDC that can help inform the design process:

- Encourage healthy community design
- Promote safe and convenient opportunities for physical activity by supporting active transportation infrastructure
- Reduce human exposure to air pollution and adverse health impacts associated with these pollutants
- Ensure that all people have access to safe, healthy, convenient, and affordable transportation

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2011). *CDC Recommendations for Improving Health through Transportation Policy*.







# COMMUNITY OUTREACH





3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.2 SURVEYS

3.3 KEY USER GROUPS

3.4 PUBLIC EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



## INTRODUCTION

The Westside Community Park planning process is an ongoing effort, based on the ideas and support of the Hood River community at large. Extensive community outreach was conducted, which constituted the driving force of this plan. Throughout the process, the community developed significant enthusiasm and a sense of ownership towards the proposed Westside Community Park, and this momentum will be key moving forward in order to make this park a reality.

In order to frame this outreach process, “community” was defined as any potential park user, as well as stakeholders who represent those users, and regional professionals whose work stands to influence the future of public space in Hood River. In particular, four key user groups were identified as important contributors to this process. These included the Latino, youth, and elderly communities, as well as neighbors located within 1/4 mile of the proposed park site. The Latino, youth, and aged 65+ communities were previously identified as key user groups for parks planning within the 2013-2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and were reflected in the Hood River Parks Master Plan. According to SCORP, it will become increasingly important for parks to provide recreational facilities for these growing demographics in Hood River. It is a priority, statewide, to preserve the health of an increasing pre-boomer and baby boomer population, to provide adequate outdoor recreation opportunities for an increasingly disinterested youth, and to better serve Hispanic and Latino populations who are historically underrepresented and significantly less likely to utilize parks and other outdoor recreation facilities. Due to its location and size, Westside Community Park represents an opportunity to serve all of these important community members. Neighbors were later added as a key user group, as it became apparent that their particular interests were integral to the success of the planning process.

Between February and April 2016, outreach efforts were focused primarily within the project study area, which encompasses the neighborhoods surrounding the study site and the City of Hood River. However, through calculated outreach methods the team reached community members

throughout Hood River County, whom would potentially be serviced by the development of a park at the proposed site. Insight was also drawn from a variety of academic, public, private, and nonprofit sources from the Columbia River Gorge Area and Portland.

At the heart of the community engagement methods were two creative visioning activities, completed at various public events during the course of the outreach period. A major goal of this visioning process was to inspire participants to think spatially, and interact with the proposed site in a way that captured their values about parks, public space and recreation. An explanation of these two activities, in addition to a full report of outreach methods and results is outlined in the following sections.

Specific outreach efforts included:

- Three surveys
- Targeted outreach with key user groups
- Focus Groups
- St. Mary's Catholic Church Outreach
- Radio Tierra Appearance
- Neighborhood Canvassing
- Mid-Columbia Today Radio Appearance
- Community-wide Open House
- Design Workshop and Placemaking Activity





## SURVEYS

Three surveys we administered in total: a primary, community-wide survey, and two supplemental surveys. The two supplemental surveys consisted of a survey specifically designed for neighbors living within a 1/4 mile radius of the site, and an online survey that was made available following the culminating design workshop, and inquired further into preferences regarding park operation. Please refer to Appendices I-IV for a detailed breakdown of individual survey question responses.

### COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY

The primary survey was developed in collaboration with HRVRC. It was distributed community-wide and available in both web and print form, and in both English and Spanish. The survey featured a mix of qualitative and quantitative questions that sought to gain an understanding of community support for specific features, but also to understand the community's overall park values. There were 17 questions in total, along with space to add a name and e-mail if the respondent chose to stay involved. 5 questions were based on demographics. 740 respondents participated in the survey, 687 of which were valid responses. Analysis of the data involved coding responses and performing inter-rater reliability tests. Analysis of qualitative responses identified commonly occurring themes and answers were categorized by keywords. Those answers were then coded. The amount of codes ranged from 3-7, based on the amount of most common answers. Agora then performed inter-rater reliability tests where several team members conducted individual analyses, followed by a comparison of results. While there was little variance among the individual analyses, these variances were reconciled for the final codes.

The survey results demonstrated overwhelming support for the park's development. The most commonly cited reasons in support of the park were: 1) It was a good location in terms of access; 2) Hood River needed more active recreation facilities; 3) Hood River was lacking in parks or a general support for more parks; 4) The space would be great for community gathering; and 5) The park would provide more space for child recreation. About 4% of respondents

were not in favor of the park's development, and cited concerns for traffic and safety, light pollution from sports fields, and the expense. Other concerns and thoughts that were noted in the comments, regardless of support for the park or not, included the following:

- The need for improved road infrastructure, including bike lanes and roundabouts
- Concerns for toxicity due to orchard spraying
- The potential for excessive trash and loitering
- Property devaluation
- Park maintenance
- Parking overflow

When asked to select from a range of natural, mixed-use and sports dominant park facilities, the majority of respondents chose mixed-use, demonstrating a need for diverse park features. The survey then asked respondents to rank a list of features based on importance. Seating areas were ranked most important overall, followed by open space, walking and biking trails, picnic space, and sports facilities. Key user groups had a slightly different ranking. The Latino community ranked seating areas as most important, followed by picnic tables, BBQ grills, playgrounds and open space. The 65+ community ranked seating areas as most important, followed by tree covered areas, open space, natural areas, and community gathering spaces. Youth ranked open space as most important, followed by seating areas, picnic tables, playgrounds, and BBQ grills. While variance for preferences exist among the general population and key user groups, it is evident that gathering is a significant community value, overall, and that there is a demand for features that support that.

The most commonly cited features that were missing from the list of ranked features on the survey were food options (i.e. concessions), water features (i.e. splash pads), amphitheaters, pavilions and skate features. Many respondents also cited the need for more pools and RC tracks in the county. Respondents were also asked what features were not desired at the park.

The most commonly cited were dog facilities, dominance of sports features, mountain bike trails, motorized vehicles (including drones and RC cars), and baseballs fields. The reported comments ultimately expressed that single-use features or features designated for select users were unwanted. Additionally, numerous comments ultimately communicated that the space should exclude uses that were already served by the community, commonly attached to dog facilities and mountain bike tracks. The final qualitative survey question asked respondents if there was anything else they wanted to share. Most responses were reflective of prior comments. However, the repetition is indicative of core needs, as well as concerns. Traffic concerns, trail connectivity, orchard spray buffers, safe access and improvements to the street plan, and intergenerational uses were the most cited responses.

## NEIGHBOR-SPECIFIC SURVEY

A second survey was developed as a supplement to the neighbors-only focus groups (described in Chapter 3.3: Key User Groups). The intention was to give neighbors the opportunity to share their voices in the event that they could not attend either of the focus groups, or simply wanted to reiterate concerns and ideas. The brief survey posed five qualitative questions, and the web link was e-mailed to a list of neighbors living with 1/4 mile of the park. There were 15 respondents.

The overall response was that neighbors supported the development of a park, especially in the place of housing development. They also said that they would love a space for their children to play, or to walk to themselves. The largest concerns for the space were related to lighting, traffic, noise and drainage, especially for neighbors bordering the north of the site. These comments and concerns were factored into final conceptual site plan recommendations.

## PARK OPERATIONS SURVEY

A final survey was developed as an online supplement to the voting exercise conducted at the community design workshop on April 16. During the in-person voting exercise, participants were asked a series of questions that gauged

the level of community support for park operations and funding strategies. Attendees held up red, green or yellow cards to indicate their support, or lack thereof, for the given strategy. After the event, an online survey was distributed with the same series of questions.

This survey was offered in both Spanish and English. There were 107 respondents in total, 1 of which took the survey in Spanish. Please see Appendix IV for a detailed breakdown of survey responses.





## KEY USER GROUPS

The planning team strove to be as inclusive as possible. Going to the places people live, work, and study allowed typically underrepresented communities to participate. Spanish translated materials and interpretation services were offered at all public events, and the team enlisted the help of a cultural liaison, Alejandro Aguilera Cano, and Next Door, Inc., a community resource for Latino residents, both of which were vital in convening the Latino community.

The engagement process included a total of six focus groups; three with youth stakeholders, one with the 65+ community, and two with park-adjacent neighbors. The first set of focus groups were held on 3/4/16 and included the youth and 65+ communities. The remaining focus groups conducted with neighbors were held on 4/6 and 4/15. Focus groups were structured differently for each key user group, as it was recognized that each group required a unique strategy to best facilitate the emergence of quality data. Targeted outreach for the Latino community consisted of two visits to a local church serving a primarily Latino population, during which time the team gave a brief presentation and invited congregation members to take the community survey following the service. In addition, two members of the planning team were guests on a local Spanish language radio show, Radio Tierra. During the one hour time slot, multiple listeners called in to ask questions about the park and engage with the team.

### YOUTH

Three focus groups were held via class visits at Hood River Valley High School on March 4. Four team members visited three different classes at different points in the day. These focus groups had a unique structure in which each class was divided in half; one half participated in a circular discussion about park preferences, needs, and deficiencies, while the other half participated in a site design exercise, placing scaled features on a large map of the park. The groups participating in the design exercise presented their designs to the class as a whole. The focus groups concluded with each student taking the community-wide survey

Overall, the students demonstrated exceptional enthusiasm about the proposed park, and shared creative suggestions for features that could be included. One of the more salient issues posed by the students was what deficiencies currently existed in terms of park features, and how they had to travel outside of Hood River to access those features. The inadequacy of basketball courts and facilities emerged several times. Students revealed that they often had to travel out of town to access desired features or pay-to-play. The students also expressed a strong desire for a trail/walkway system around the periphery of the park, particularly one that could support multiple modes of transportation and activity, i.e. biking, skating, walking, and jogging. Students expressed strong enthusiasm for community gathering space, especially with grills, fire pits, and something that would facilitate “chilling”. The students also stated their desire for food options on site, the opportunity to create a community project at the park such as a tree house, bleachers for sports fields, and an overall balance of sports facilities and natural areas.



## ENCOURAGING YOUTH PARTICIPATION



FREMANTLE PARK, AUSTRALIA

Fremantle Esplanade Youth Plaza in Australia is an award winning park that worked specifically with the youth in the community to incorporate designs and features that would be conducive to attracting youth participation. The park includes a skate park, parkour area, rock climbing wall, ping pong tables, an entertainment stage, shelter, and a generous amount of seating for relaxing and congregating.

*Photo credit: Project for Public Spaces*

In a 2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation report by The Outdoor Foundation, researchers found that “lack of interest” is the number one reason youth do not participate in outdoor recreation. The Outdoor Recreation Participation report also highlights that youth who are exposed to outdoor recreation are more likely to lead active lifestyles as adults, and that like other outdoor participants, youth are motivated to participate when they can be with their friends and family, and can get exercise. Furthermore, Project for Public Spaces (PPS) reports that too often, youth are not involved in parks and public space placemaking. Parks are usually built with small children and adults in mind, but PPS finds that “by being actively engaged in youth-friendly spaces, young people can feel like they have investment in their community and they can develop a strong sense of ownership in these places”.

*Project for Public Spaces. (2015, Jun. 2). Young People and Placemaking: Engaging Youth to Create Community Places. Retrieved from <http://www.pps.org/blog/young-people-and-placemaking-engaging-youth-to-create-community-places/>*

*Outdoor Foundation. (2014). Outdoor Participation Report. Retrieved from [www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2014.pdf](http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2014.pdf)*



## 3.3 KEY USER GROUPS

### 65 + COMMUNITY

On March 4, a focus group was held at Providence Medical Center with residents aged 65 and over, and several professional caregivers. Both caregivers and their clients were included in order to understand the needs of the caregiver in caring for clients, as well as what clients need and desire in park amenities. The focus group lasted two hours, beginning with a roundtable discussion on park needs and deficiencies, followed by the park design activity. There were 8 participants in total.

The most impactful feedback from this group highlighted the importance of more minute details of park design, in particular signage, grading for paths and trails, and the transitions from walkways to steps and other park infrastructure. The group highly recommended that the park be designed in a way that minimizes the occurrence of accidents and injuries for older users. The volunteers also recommend multiple, strategically placed bathrooms since older users are likely to use bathrooms more frequently, a “snack shack” feature, and features that facilitate meditation and light exercise for the 65+ community. The visioning activity was reflective of earlier comments, and features a demarcation of passive and active use, with bathrooms and natural features on the North end. The 65+ stakeholders were supportive of active uses, but did advocate for natural open space in the north and wetland enhancement, to lend to a space for quiet relaxation and observation of nature.

### LATINO COMMUNITY

There is traditionally a lack of participation from the Latino community in larger planning processes. However, the planning team made every effort to support the Latino community's participation by intentionally crafting outreach activities to capture this community's vision. 23% of survey responses were Spanish-language surveys, and roughly 1/4 of the design workshop attendees were Spanish-speaking. In addition, the team connected with local faith leaders and visited two Spanish language services at a St. Mary's Catholic Church.

With the help of a Community Health Worker from Next Door, Inc., the team was able to enlist the help of a strong leader in the Latino community, Alejandro Aguilera Cano, who ultimately became the cultural liaison for the planning process. Mr. Cano set up a tabling event during Easter weekend, and promoted the survey on his radio show. He also distributed the survey during Latinos en Acción meetings, which are monthly meetings for local leaders in the Hood River Latino community. Additionally, Mr. Cano brought attendees to both the open house and design workshop, increasing Latino participation and diversifying these community-wide events.

While Latino attendance at the open house event was relatively limited, attendance at the final event was substantial. The community as a whole felt connected, and non-Latino participants were most interested in the stories, designs, and thoughts from Latino participants. What emerged from this process was a vision for a highly social park space for the entire family. One of the most oft-listed missing features in the written survey, and a center of discussion at the community design workshop, was the kiosk, or large covered gazebos that play a prominent role in public space in Mexico. Kiosks are traditionally used for parties, celebrations, live music, picnics and general community gathering, and were cited as a large potential draw to this space for the Latino community.



## 65 + ACCESSIBILITY



Hood River community members complete a Westside Park design activity at Providence Medical Center on March 4, 2016.

A new study by the RAND Corporation titled First National Survey of Neighborhood Parks (2016) found that park users mostly tend to be younger men, with lower usage rates by older adults, seniors, and women. The study found that walking loops and trails can increase park use by people 65 and older and generate moderate to vigorous physical activity for this age group. Studies show that America's parks are not designed with people over 65 in mind. The 65 + key constituency group identified by HRVPRD is one of the key groups that finds park space unusable or inaccessible. National park observations suggest that walking tracks can turn this around. Other key park features used by people 65 and older include outdoor exercise and fitness areas. This report is mirrored by the 65+ Hood River community's desires in a park space.

*RAND Corporation. (2016, May. 18). First National Survey of Neighborhood Parks Shows Low Use by Adults, Seniors and Females. Retrieved from <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2016/05/18.html>*



## 3.3 KEY USER GROUPS

### DIVERSE CLIENTELE

In *Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele*, researchers used on-site surveys at a large park to gauge preferences for park features and usage trends of park users from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Gobster (2002) found that "all minority groups were more likely to engage in passive, social park activities than whites...picnicking was a frequent activity of Latinos and Asians...Recreation preference studies complement the perception work and show a greater orientation of minority groups to developed facilities and amenities that promote social interaction" (p. 147-154). Furthermore, Tinsley and Tinsley (2002) found that "Hispanic and Asian culture are regarded as collectivist, because of the greater emphasis given to the family unit in Hispanic culture and the importance of larger social organizations in Asian culture. Hispanic park users were likely to visit the park with their extended family or with an organization" (p. 216).

*Tinsley, J. Diane., Tinsley E.A. Howard. (2002). Park Usage, Social Milieu, and Psychosocial Benefits of Park Use Reported by Older Urban Park Users from Four Ethnic Groups. Leisure Sciences. 24:199-218.*

*Gobster, H. Paul. (2002). Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele. Leisure Sciences. 24:143-159.*

### NEIGHBORS

The neighbor-specific focus groups were held on April 6 and April 15 at a neighbor's home, located in Rocky Ridge Court. These focus groups were less structured than the others, and based entirely on discussion of the concerns surrounding the park's development. The purpose of these discussions was to give the neighbors ample opportunity to make their voices heard, as they stand to be the most affected by park development. Two members of the team

facilitated the discussion and provided information where necessary. The first focus group had limited (2) participants, which provided an opportunity to discuss concerns at greater depth. The second focus group was more robust, with 15 participants. The discussions lasted approximately two hours. In addition to these focus groups, two members of the team visited a dozen neighbors during an afternoon of door-to-door visits along Fairview Drive, and a neighbor-specific survey was administered (described above).

The neighbors identified multiple concerns including water drainage, potential field lighting, noise from games, and access to the park from Rocky Road. It was discovered that drainage issues were a concern for only a few neighbors, while lighting, noise and access were concerns for the majority of neighbors. Almost all neighbors were concerned about lighting and noise, given that the park is located in the National Scenic Area. However, the greatest point of contention concerned traffic and the potential access point from Rocky Road. Rocky Road is relatively undeveloped, and neighbors living on the street were highly concerned that an access point to the park from this road would affect the safety and walkability of the street. Neighbors located on Fairview Drive, conversely, were primarily concerned that a park development would increase traffic on Fairview Drive to the point of posing danger to pedestrians. Overall, neighbors support park development, notably as an alternative to more dense development such as housing. However, they were adamant that continued engagement and inclusion in the planning process would be required in order to maintain their support for the park.

In addition to the neighbors focus group and survey, members of the planning team canvassed the neighborhood surrounding the park. On Sunday, April 3rd, the planning team went door-to-door to engage with neighbors. The intention was to make an additional effort to ensure that the neighbors understood the importance of their support, but also their concerns. The conversations held gave neighbors the chance to meet the planning team face-to-face, as well as the opportunity to share any thoughts that they had about the planning process. Finally, this effort was conducted with regard to HRVPRD's request to increase engagement with neighbors directly adjacent to the park.

## ON THE RADIO!

### Mid-Columbia Today Radio Show

One member of the planning team was interviewed on KICR's Mid-Columbia Today Radio Show in February 2016. The interview was conducted by Mark Bailey, who asked questions about the planning team, planning process, and the potential park space. This provided the opportunity to engage with the community-at-large and introduce the planning team. The interview also provided the opportunity to announce the then-upcoming open house, as well as the community-wide survey.

### Radio Tierra

In April 2016, two members of the planning team were guests on a local Spanish language radio show, Radio Tierra. Alejandro Aguilera Cano conducted the interview, and together they answered questions posed by the show's callers. This appearance allowed the planning team to further connect with Hood River's Latino community, and listen to voices that, until this time, had not been heard. It also served as a way to get the word out about the upcoming Design Workshop.



## PUBLIC EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### OPEN HOUSE

The initial community-wide event took place on March 5 at Westside Elementary, across from the proposed site, from 9am to 2pm with over 100 attendees. Childcare, refreshments, and Spanish language interpretation services were provided. The event was structured so community members could arrive and depart at their convenience, and included several elements to engage attendees. First, large informational poster boards were set up near the entrance; the boards included information about the project and the team, existing land use regulations impacting the site, and a map illustrating opportunities and constraints of the site. Members of Agora and HRVRC were present to meet community members and answer questions about the content displayed on the boards. There were paper surveys and survey web stations set up for those who had not yet participated in the survey, and “visioning stations” were setup for attendees who chose to participate in the same park design activity that was administered in the youth and 65+ focus groups. Attendees were also invited on a site tour every hour, during which time participants were escorted onto the site and explained some of site context. A photo booth was set up on the site, where attendees could pose with recreational props and toys in a large cutout frame, with the park space in the background. The intention of this activity was to foster a sense of connection to the site.

The intention of this event, overall, was to make an initial connection to the community as the planning team, and to provide an introduction to the park planning process. Many ideas came from the open house, most of which involved ideas for the space, ideal features and placement, and initial concerns. Most of the data from this event was obtained from the visioning exercises, which provided insight into the different types of design concepts that were reflective of the community. The participants had to negotiate and work together to find optimal uses and facilities within the park space. The additional surveys gathered from the event also augmented the already rich data regarding preferences and ideal features.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR PUBLIC SPACE PLANNING

The American Planning Association (APA) has described community engagement as being an essential ingredient for successfully creating a shared open space. Community engagement not only builds connections for public officials and their constituencies, but also helps make community stakeholders feel better about being able to inform park planning processes through design, planning, and management. The APA raises three key points about community engagement during parks planning processes:

1. Parks are one of the quickest and most effective ways to build a sense of community and improve quality of life.
2. Parks provide places for people to connect and interact in a shared environment.
3. Parks channel positive community participation by getting diverse people to work together toward a shared vision.

*American Planning Association. (2016). How cities use parks for community engagement.*

### VISIONING ACTIVITY

The visioning activity that occurred at the event and focus groups was designed in an effort to gain an understanding of the potential design concepts that were reflective of the community. The exercise asked participants to place scaled cut-outs of park features onto a map of the site. The map included land use restrictions such as street set-backs and the wetland buffer. The features were selected in accordance with the HRVPRD Parks Master Plan, internal deliberation, and the HRVRC Park Survey. Features such as bathrooms, water fountains, and trails were not included because such features are more

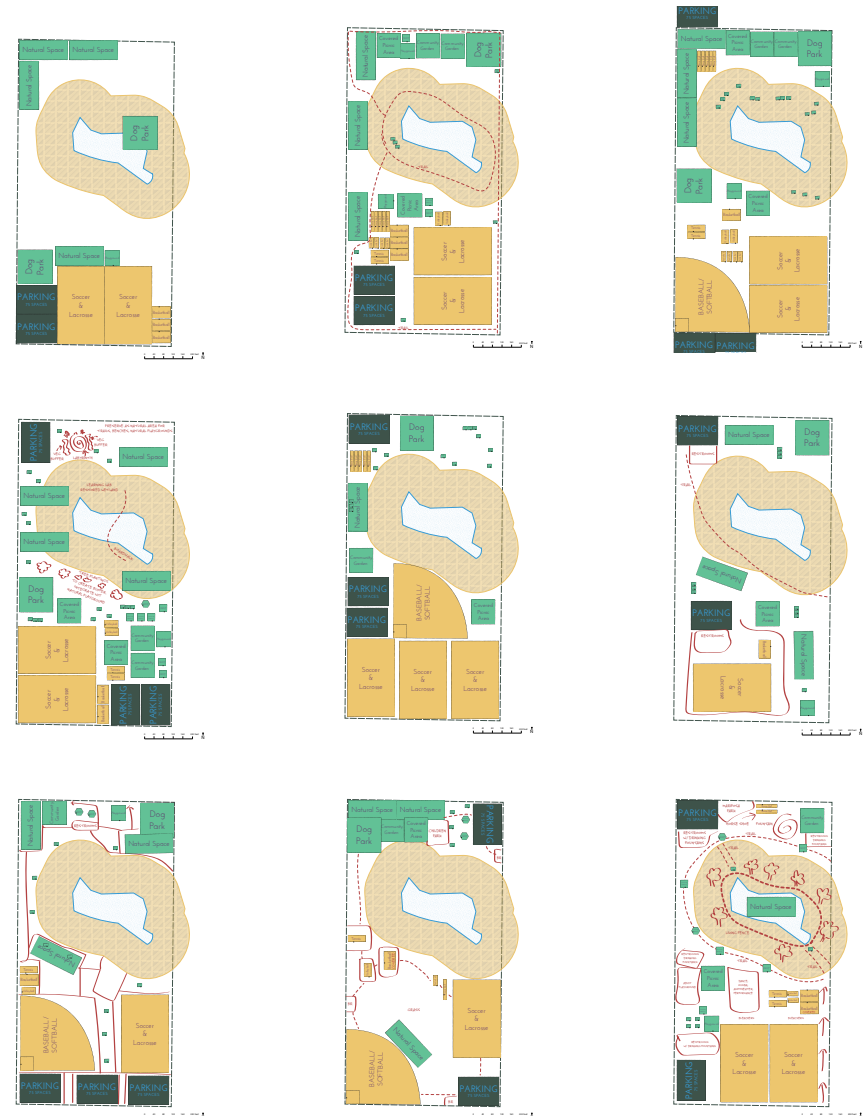


or less required in park design. The cut-out features and map were laminated, and wet-erase pens were provided to allow participants to add trails and other features. Members of the team were present throughout the activity to answer questions, facilitate conversation, understand decisions, describe the rules, and record the data.

24 total visioning activities were completed; 15 were completed at the open house event and the remaining 9 were completed at focus group sessions. While the group sizes varied, an average of 4 participants participated in each completed activity, with an overall estimated total of 100. Participants approached the exercise with a varying degree of detail which produced a variety of designs. The results expressed a clear separation of passive and active uses. Beyond separation of uses, the community visions clearly illustrate a desire for significant passive use and less focus on active uses such as sports fields. The exercise ultimately provided an understanding of how the community values features, as well as what they envision for the space. Please refer to Appendix V to view each of the digitized community site plans.



FIGURE 5. Community Park Designs



## 3.4 PUBLIC EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### DESIGN WORKSHOP

On April 16, the team held a final public event - a Community Design Workshop. Around 60 community members attended the event, and roughly 25% of the attendees were from the Latino community. In addition to translating the majority of printed and projected materials, the team hired an interpreter to translate for the Spanish-speaking attendees.

Initial survey results and more in-depth site parameters were presented, a voting exercise was facilitated, and attendees were invited to experience a “day in the park” on the site, including a picnic lunch and installation of temporary park features. However, the bulk of the two-hour event was focused on a creative design activity. This event marked a departure from the approach employed by in previous outreach efforts, and aimed to inspire attendees to think less about features and more broadly about the values they attached to public space. This was achieved through a dot voting exercise, and a creative placemaking exercise inspired by James Rojas.

#### *“DOT” VOTING*

A dot voting board was displayed at the design workshop in addition to several informational boards documenting survey results and community designs from the park design activity administered at previous outreach events. The dot voting board listed “value categories” with illustrative photos in one column, with a blank column placed next to it. Participants were invited to place dots near the value category that they identified with the most.

#### *VOTING EXERCISE*

The voting exercise asked community members a series of questions regarding park operations. This was not intended to be an inclusive or official vote, but instead an initial method of gauging support. The first question asked what hours community members would mostly use the park. Roughly one third said early morning hours, and the rest varied greatly. The next question gauged support for lighted sports fields, of which there were more red and yellow cards than green, indicating a lack of support.

Next attendees were asked how late they would like the park to be open, of which the majority voted for 8pm, followed by 9pm. There were no votes for later hours. All respondents voted yes when asked if they would support a levy or bond for park development, operations and maintenance. The majority of respondents indicated support for directing City-based System Development Charge (SDC) funding towards development of the park, with a few yellow votes indicating hesitation. Respondents were then asked if there should be a fee for user groups (i.e. sports teams, gardeners, facility rentals) to support park maintenance, of which there was a mix between green and yellow. Finally, attendees were asked if visitors should have to pay for parking. The response was almost entirely red, indicating a firm lack of support for this funding mechanism.









## 3.4 PUBLIC EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### ARTS-BASED PLACEMAKING

Project for Public Spaces defines arts-based placemaking as, “an integrative approach to urban planning and community building that stimulates local economies and leads to increased innovation, cultural diversity, and civic engagement. Since creativity fuels place value, the benefits of using arts and culture to tap into a place’s unique character extend well beyond the art world.” Planners and policy makers are increasingly realizing that using various types of art mediums can help to inform decisions about creating public spaces. Here are some programs that have spent time in developing creative placemaking best practices:

- ArtPlace America
- Citizens’ Institute on Rural Design
- The National Endowment for the Arts
- Kresge Foundation Arts and Culture Program

*Project for Public Spaces. (2016). Creative Communities and Arts-Based Placemaking.*

### PLACEMAKING ACTIVITY

The placemaking activity was intended to inspire participants to think creatively about park space through art making, collaboration and an exchange of ideas. Participants used a variety of craft materials, from ribbons and flowers to everyday materials like wine corks and straws, to “create a park”. First, participants were asked to create individual designs based on each participant’s fondest park memory. Next, participants collaborated on a group design that reflected the common values discussed by the group, assigning a collective identity to the abstract craft items to represent their physical space. Members of the planning team guided the activity, asked questions about what the designs meant to participants, and took notes and photos. After roughly 45 minutes, the entire group visited each table, where representatives described

their team process for designing their “park” and explained the values behind their preferred park design.

Design findings included “kioskos” and “natural play” features, from a table representing a majority Latino population and a table consisting mainly of children and parents, respectively. Kioskos are traditionally a covered plaza that serves as a central gathering space for social events in Mexico. This feature, in addition to the important function that parks play as a social gathering space amongst Latino populations, was discussed at length by a representative of the Latino community. Additionally, two groups were primarily focused on natural play, which involves a playground layout designed for children comprised of natural materials instead of manufactured features.

Ultimately the activity was well received, and participants enjoyed the non-traditional design approach. There was genuine interest among attendees in viewing the designs of each group, and participants enjoyed exploring one another’s values surrounding parks. The final event was a success in not only gathering both “hard” and “soft” data, but most notably in bringing the community together, and engaging in quality connections.

### WHAT IS A PLACEMAKING ACTIVITY?

The placemaking activity took its inspiration from an innovative public engagement exercise created by James Rojas, founder of PLACE IT!, a design- and participation- based urban planning practice. An urban planner, community activist and artist, Rojas works with communities to help translate their dreams, ideas and values into actual planning decisions. Through the use of everyday materials, attendees of PLACE IT! workshops build abstract models that represent their personal stories and thoughts of a place, causing a deep engagement with the planning process, and generating plans, drawings, and policy recommendations for municipalities, NGOs, and elected officials.





# LOCAL PRECEDENTS





A landscape photograph showing a grassy field in the foreground with some bare, reddish-brown branches. In the background, there is a line of bare trees and a distant industrial building with a tall chimney. The sky is overcast and grey.

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.2 DISCOVERY MEADOWS PARK – MCMINNVILLE, OR

4.3 LUSCHER FARMS – LAKE OSWEGO, OR

4.4 WESTMORELAND PARK – PORTLAND, OR



## INTRODUCTION

These local precedents represent some of the best park spaces in the region. Based on community ideas and preferences, the site parameters, and professional insight, it was determined that these examples of community parks provide excellent models to look to in the design and development of Westside Community Park. Together, they encapsulate some of most successful mixed-use parks programs in the region, as well as some of the most innovative feature designs in the United States. While the unique context of Hood River means none of these parks can be completely replicated here, many of the ideas and lessons garnered from these spaces can serve as guides for the future.









## 4.2

## DISCOVERY MEADOWS PARK – MCMINNVILLE, OR

Discovery Meadows Park has won awards for park programming and design, and can be used as a precedent for Hood River for creating a space to gather, play, thrive, and preserve. The site context and environmental conditions of Discovery Meadows are very similar to that of Westside Community Park. The impetus for Discovery Meadows was to preserve recreation space for a rapidly developing area of McMinnville. The park was constructed on a 22 acre rectangular site, which has two access points, contains a wetland, has a multi-use sports field, and two open space areas.

The park was designed based on the feedback from several community engagement events held by the McMinnville Parks and Recreation Department and Murase Associates. Through public involvement and design reflective of community values, the park provides amenities that can be used by all demographic groups, while facilitating cohesive relationships between the variety of park features and elements for different user groups. The north end of the park is primarily dedicated to active uses, while the south end is dedicated to passive uses.

Takeaways for features and programming at Westside Community Park:

- Successful integration of an enhanced wetland, sports field, and gathering spaces
- Water fountain feature for summer months
- Attractive and inviting park shelters for gathering spaces
- Trails and natural open space for passive recreation









## LUSCHER FARMS – LAKE OSWEGO, OR

Though the entirety of Luscher Farms is located on 152 acres, the park exemplifies a mixed-use recreational space that offers amenities for all demographic groups. Like Westside Community Park, the Luscher Farms Master Plan was driven by public outreach feedback, to reflect community values and meet the demand of future population growth. Luscher Farms has successfully integrated its geographical history, natural resources, and cultural identity, to preserve recreation space that will be passed down to future generations to play, gather, and thrive.

Takeaways for features and programming at Westside Community Park:

- Integration of historic resources
- Community gardens and agricultural educational area
- Coupling of active recreation and open spaces for passive recreation
- Wetland enhancement and natural resource preservation
- Sustainable design and green infrastructure asset leverage

RIGHT: *Photo credit: Janet Goetze, The Oregonian.*

OPPOSITE SPREAD: *Photo credit: Ross William Hamilton, The Oregonian.*









## WESTMORELAND PARK – PORTLAND, OR

Westmoreland Park is a 43 acre site that has been used as a recreational space since the 1930's. Through the years, it has served as a community park and has been utilized by a wide range of user groups. However, in the early 2000s, Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R) identified the need to redefine the park's programming for future generations. PP&R partnered with Greenworks to identify key interest groups to inform a new master plan for the park, which was adopted in 2004. Through an extensive public outreach process, PP&R and Greenworks synthesized and prioritized stakeholder values and created a concept plan with additional features for the park. Several stakeholder groups voiced their values in what features the park needed to have, and what purpose the park should serve. Because several user groups had voiced their values for the park, the process became contentious, at which point a citizens advisory committee was formed to help PP&R evaluate conflicts, and prioritize new programming strategies.

One of the most notable changes to the park was the removal of an outdated playground structure, which was replaced with natural play materials for children. Greenworks partnered with an environmental artist to design the playground, which was the first permanent natural playground in Portland, and has since become renowned in the Portland area. Playground materials include boulders, logs, sand, branches, stones, and fencing to corral younger children in the play area. PP&R also enhanced Crystal Springs Creek which meanders through the park, and added a new casting pond.

Takeaways for features and programming at Westside Community Park:

- Natural materials playground for children
- Water feature enhancement and natural resource preservation
- Successfully met the needs of different stakeholder groups and values

## HARPER'S PLAYGROUND



Harper's Playground at Arbor Lodge Park is Portland's first and only fully inclusive playground, which opened in 2012. It has become a destination for families across the metropolitan region. Westside Community Park should be designed with the same accessibility and inclusivity values that Harper's Playground has exemplified.

*Photo credit: Harpersplayground.org*





Photo credit: Play-scapes.com



# **MOVING FORWARD**



The background of the slide features a low-angle shot of several tall, dark evergreen trees. Their silhouettes are set against a sky with soft, warm light from a low sun, creating a gradient of orange, yellow, and light blue. The trees are positioned on the left and right sides of the frame, with a white rectangular box containing text in the center.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.2 MAKE IT OFFICIAL

5.3 MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

5.4 LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS

5.5 OPTIMIZE ACCESS



## INTRODUCTION

Each of these recommendations fall under one of four broad goals that collectively encapsulate the road map for moving forward: Make it Official, Maintain Community Involvement, Leverage Existing Assets, and Optimize Access. These pull on the community driven planning process for Westside Community Park, as well as research into existing site conditions and innovative park design. Most of these recommendations are geared towards making Westside Community Park become a reality, but several can be seen as district-wide recommendations that will help drive and maintain equitable, community-driven parks planning into the future.

### MAKE IT OFFICIAL

- Perform updated wetland delineation
- Further investigate soil toxicity
- Perform a Traffic Impact Analysis
- Acquire the land
- Permit a final site plan
- Preserve flexibility in a park plan

### MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Form an advisory committee to steer park planning
- Explore tactical/short-term programming
- Eliminate cultural barriers
- Keep neighbors informed and involved





## LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS

- Consider creative mechanisms for wetland enhancement
- Utilize proximity to Westside Elementary School
- Create a long-term plan for maintenance of existing facilities

## OPTIMIZE ACCESS

- Ensure equitable access
- Address the intersection of Fairview and Belmont
- Consider public transit options to access the park
- Build out trail network to link park space in greater Hood River

## MAKE IT OFFICIAL

In order for the ideas captured within this plan to move forward, the potential for development on the site must continue being explored. The Hood River Valley Parks & Recreation District, and any others involved in the planning process must formalize their intentions to create Westside Community Park and move it towards permitting.

### PERFORM UPDATED WETLAND DELINEATION

Many site concerns are centered on the wetland area. It will be impossible to ascertain development constraints, or prepare a detailed site plan, until an updated delineation is performed and concurred with the Oregon Department of State Lands. This delineation will also determine the exact geography of the buffer zone, which can inform feature placement and allow the Parks District to begin to prepare an argument, were the development proposal to affect the buffer zone.

### FURTHER INVESTIGATE SOIL TOXICITY

Based on an April 16 site assessment, the Oregon DEQ recommends that additional investigation be done on the site, given the presence of lingering contaminants based on the long-term use of pesticides. The DEQ manages a Voluntary Cleanup Program to ensure compliance with Oregon environmental law, with two pathways: one in which the DEQ oversees the entire process, and the other in which property owners manage the investigation and cleanup with minimal DEQ oversight. The former has more direct costs associated with the project than the latter. The investigation and cleanup, and coordination with the DEQ, can be managed by the current property owners, the Residents Committee, the Parks District, or as a partnership.

### PERFORM A TRAFFIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Kittleston and Associates performed a TIA in 2008 for the School District on the subject site. However, a TIA based on the parameters of the proposed park development must be completed by an Oregon Registered Professional Engineer to determine traffic impacts and make recommendations for parking. Many involved in the planning process recommend that engineers consider neighborhood walkability considerations in making conservative parking estimates.

### PERMIT A FINAL SITE PLAN

A park on this property is possible, and once the necessary environmental and traffic-related investigations have been completed, a final site plan should be designed that incorporates the parameters and community vision identified in this Concept Plan, and brought to County permitting.



---

## ACQUIRE THE LAND

Due to the overwhelming support and potential of the park, it is strongly recommended that HRVPRD, or any capable party, move forward with the acquisition of the property, or look to negotiate an option on its purchase contingent on further feasibility studies. It will be challenging to maintain community momentum if acquisition is delayed.

## PRESERVE FLEXIBILITY IN A PARK PLAN

There is significant potential for this space, and the future of the surrounding area is somewhat undetermined. Open space should be considered not only a current asset, but also a blank canvas for future community needs. Park design should be treated as a multi-phased process with the future in mind. As such, park design should be flexible and development should not be rushed. Leaving space for future development can ensure that this is a space that is reflective of both the existing and future communities of Hood River. In addition to leaving space open for future development, Agora recommends that developed spaces be multi-use and adaptable. For example, parking lots can be utilized for a farmer's market when not in use for games, and field space can be used for gathering or events when games are not being played. This will open up opportunities for Hood River residents to take advantage of the space for other needs, and can maintain a high level of diverse uses on the site.

## MAINTAIN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Countless community members have been the driving force of this plan. Their continued involvement is critical to shaping this park according to their needs and desires. In particular, all future community involvement efforts must pay close attention to the key user groups identified in this plan: the youth, aged 65 and older and Latino communities, and neighbors.

### FORM AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO STEER PARK PLANNING

Organize a group of community participants into an advisory committee, to maintain ongoing community engagement through the next steps of parks planning, design, development and management. This group can serve as the primary liaison between community voices and public bodies as plans for Westside Park move forward. Potential advisory committee members have been identified, and HRVRC has demonstrated interest.

### EXPLORE TACTICAL/SHORT-TERM PROGRAMMING

Development is a long-term process; however it will be beneficial to keep the space active in the interim. Building off the April 16th Community Design Workshop, the community should be invited to use the space for short term programming, allowing them to connect with the space and express their desires for future uses. There are several ways to conduct short-term programming, including: picnics at the site, art installations and classes, temporary facility construction, and other ideas that emerge from the community. In order to pursue this recommendation, the site owners would first need to be contacted to ensure that they would support activities at the park. It is recommended that these events take place in a routine manner, over an extended period of time, ideally following the path of the planning process.

### SNAPSHOT: ADVISORY COMMITTEES IN ACTION

While Advisory Committees come in many forms, in parks planning they are most often representative bodies that develop recommendations for City or District action. The City of Troutdale recruits volunteers to fill various committees, one of which is a Parks Advisory Committee that meets monthly, making recommendations to City Council on the operation and future direction of the parks and recreation system. A more site-specific example, San Dieguito River Park in Escondido, CA, has a Citizens Advisory Committee that advises the board on land use matters that impact the park's planning area and those within it. Advisory Committees have voting power and are relied on for their expertise, demonstrating the value of citizen involvement and local knowledge.



---

## ELIMINATE CULTURAL BARRIERS

Members of Hood River's Latino community have been active in the park's early planning stages, and are eager to remain involved. It is critical to ensure that this important piece of Hood River's community continues to be engaged in the next steps of park planning. Latino access to park space is closely tied to the mission and driving goals of Hood River's Regional Health Equity Coalition (RHEC), the Mid-Columbia Health Equity Advocates (MCHEA), and SCORP. These organizations can be leveraged to continue Latino involvement.

One of the most direct ways to increase Latino use of sports fields, and park space in general, is to include features that matter the most to them. Findings from outreach reveal that gathering spaces and areas for children are features of importance, although continued engagement will generate additional ideas. Furthermore, HRVPRD and HRVRC should continue to create and publicize Spanish language materials that explain procedures for using public space in

Hood River. Finally, the Latino community needs to have a seat at the table. A representative from the Latino community should be on the Westside Park Advisory Committee, and another should consistently hold a position on the HRVPRD and HRVRC boards.

## KEEP NEIGHBORS INFORMED AND INVOLVED

Neighbors of the proposed park site stand to be the most impacted by any new development, and they have expressed a strong desire to be involved in the decision making process moving forward. Ensuring that they are consulted on subjects including access, parking, lighting and noise-generating features will be vital to the successful development of Westside Park. In addition to having neighbor representation on the advisory committee, they must be updated at every stage of the planning process and invited to discuss issues at neighbor-specific meetings.

## LEVERAGE EXISTING ASSETS

HRVRC and HRVPRD should capitalize on existing conditions within and around Westside Community Park.

### CONSIDER CREATIVE MECHANISMS FOR WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

Community members have clearly voiced their support of preserving the natural wetlands of the space, as well as the importance of continued enhancement of existing and planned areas of environmental quality. There are a multitude of examples illustrating effective wetland enhancement techniques in public park space, most notably Tanner Springs Park in downtown Portland. These spaces not only serve the environment through preservation, but also the public as an educational opportunity. Furthermore, several funding mechanisms exist to support wetland enhancement projects. These can take on the form of federal grants, state-led programs or locally organized volunteer efforts.

The Westside Community Park Advisory Committee should survey the community to develop a pool of volunteers who can assist in the development and implementation of a grassroots environmental enhancement strategy. Wetland enhancement can be relatively simple and cost effective. Simple restoration methods, such as planting native shrubs and trees can significantly increase the function of a natural wetland. It also provides an opportunity for the community to get together. There are national guidebooks available online to help communities every step of the way, most notably the EPA's An Introduction and User's Guide to Wetland Restoration, Creation, and Enhancement.

### SNAPSHOT: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN WETLAND ENHANCEMENT

Tidal Influence is a restoration organization in Long Beach, CA, founded by two ecologists in 2008. As firm believers in community-based restoration, Tidal leads wetlands restoration throughout Los Angeles and Orange Counties. They believe in community-based restoration because it engages and educates the public, all the while giving them a role that leads to appreciation for their land and a sense of ownership. They utilize a Web site for education and promotion of two-hour habitat restoration events that are held monthly and open to the public.

Seattle Tilth, on the other hand, recruits restoration volunteers through an application process and requires a 6-month term of monthly participation. This approach, while more selective, ensures consistency from volunteers and more reliable restoration goals. This organization is part of a citywide effort that empowers volunteers to help improve park space.

### SNAPSHOT: GRANTS TO SUPPORT WETLAND ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

The Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program is an effort of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, focused on developing nation-wide community stewardship of local natural wildlife and the preservation of resources. Due to their focus on community stewardship, the grant program requires either the establishment or enhancement of diverse partnerships, as well as a robust education and outreach component that helps shape restoration goals.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Grant Program (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) provides matching grants to wetland conservation projects in North America. The programs are rigorous and require significant advanced planning, as well as an additional funding source to match.

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that provides grants to enhance the vitality of streams, rivers and natural areas. OWEB provides a variety of grants, both small and large-scale, including restoration funding and technical assistance.



---

## UTILIZE PROXIMITY TO WESTSIDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The neighboring Elementary school can be leveraged as an asset in multiple ways. Parents, staff and organizations connected with the school represent a community body that will likely be closely involved in parks planning, as Westside Elementary students stand to be a large user group. Once in operation, the Parks District can partner with Westside Elementary to share programming resources, parking space, and equipment for Westside Community Park.

## CREATE A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING FACILITIES

Planning does not end with the initial build-out; maintenance and long-term parks programming and management will play a key role in the success of a space over time. Maintenance should be considered a high priority for this and all parks in the district. HRVPRD can reduce the strain on existing fields by forming partnerships with various recreation facility managers in the county to maintain facilities. Enhance coordination with the five existing park management agencies to augment resources and improve maintenance overall. Get School District stakeholders, parents and elementary school staff involved early on.

### SNAPSHOT: PARK MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIPS

In 1999, the City of Hutchinson, Minnesota and the local School District reached an agreement that led to the “Joint Grounds Maintenance Program”. The agreement expresses that all “sponsors” establish a program of shared equipment, labor, and materials to more effectively and cost-efficiently maintain parks and recreation areas, including requirements for joint maintenance of athletic fields and playgrounds in areas owned by sponsors. The City of Hutchinson and the School District together maintain 400 acres of park and school property, and have a park maintenance staff. Although they have a small population and small budget, they maintain a recreation center, two ice rinks, a conference/senior center, and a campground, in addition to parks and trails. This collaborative agreement serves as a sensible precedent for collaborative park maintenance, namely in how multiple agencies might work together to increase maintenance and decrease cost.

## OPTIMIZE ACCESS

How people get to Westside Park, and how they use it once they get there is important. “Access” refers not only to modes of transportation; it also refers to how community members interpret and navigate the space.

### ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS

Make a pointed effort to foster access to the park for both the Latino and aged 65+ communities. Park signs and all printed materials related to parks planning and programming should be in Spanish as well as English. Furthermore, pay attention to details that will maximize safe circulation and use for aging park users. These include informational signs, paved pathways, and frequent provision of bathrooms and seating areas.

### ADDRESS THE INTERSECTION OF FAIRVIEW AND BELMONT

The development of Westside Park presents an opportunity to address an already problematic intersection in Hood River. Traffic and speeding at this intersection was mentioned consistently throughout community outreach, as was concern over increased traffic anticipated along with park development.

Coordinate with the City of Hood River, Hood River County, the Hood River County School District and transportation consultants to develop a strategy for the improvement of the Fairview & Belmont intersection. This strategy should prioritize the accommodation of safe, multimodal access to the park that meets the needs of a growing community. Specifically, the strategy should prioritize non-autocentric access and traffic calming to enhance safety and encourage site access by foot or bike. This could be accomplished

through a vegetated buffer or separated multi-modal path that connects the park entrance on Fairview with the Belmont crossing to Westside Elementary. An improved pedestrian crossing between Westside Elementary and the park entrance is essential for safety reasons, and will also foster a relationship between the two sports facilities and parking areas.

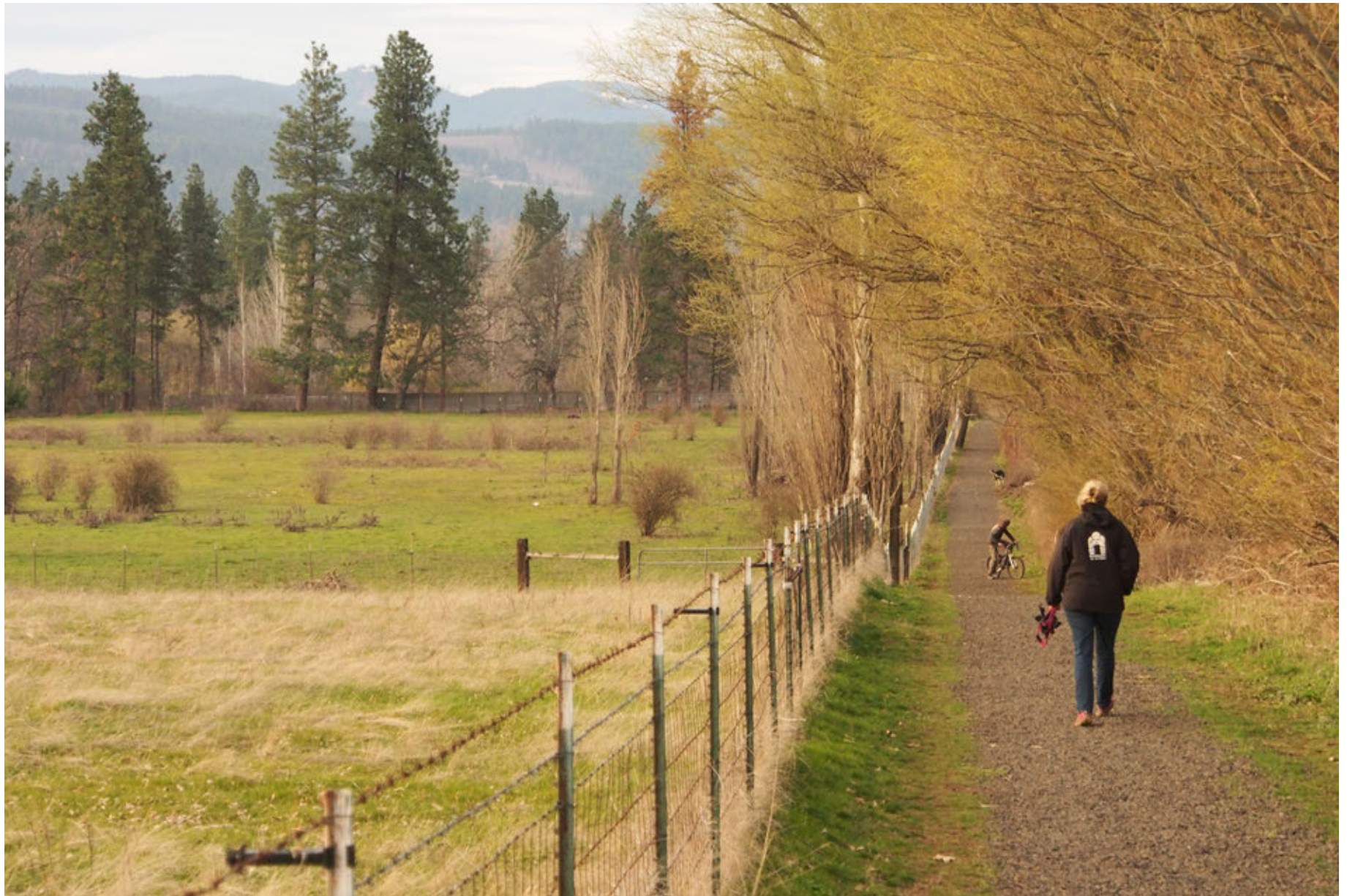
### CONSIDER PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS TO ACCESS THE PARK

Currently, the Hood River County Transportation District (CAT) does not route their services to the location of Westside Park. Because this park is to be a community asset, and non-motorized access is preferred, a public transit option will be essential. Outreach has determined that a large number of residents would drive to the park, as many residents live too far from the site to walk or bike. In order to improve park access for Hood River residents in all parts of the County, Agora recommends that the planning team coordinate with CAT to create a bus stop at the new park.

### BUILD OUT TRAIL NETWORK TO LINK PARK SPACE IN GREATER HOOD RIVER

This recommendation is already a goal for HRVPRD, and will continue to increase use of the existing Westside Community Trail, and connect Westside Community Park with other park spaces.









"QUALITY PARKS AND GATHERING SPACES MAKE  
THE COMMUNITY BETTER IN EVERY WAY..."

- HOOD RIVER RESIDENT