Legislation Details (With Text)

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Type:	Action Item	**Status:**	Passed
		In control:	City Council
On agenda:	4/27/2020	**Final action:**	4/27/2020
Title:	Battle Creek Park Master Plan Ward(s): Ward 4 Councilor(s): Councilor Leung Neighborhood(s): SGNA Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community.		
Sponsors:			
Indexes:			
Code sections:			
Attachments:	1. Master Plan Report Layout 03-03-2020, 2. SGNA Letter to City of Salem Regarding Battle Creek Park, 3. SWAN Letter of Support, 4. Battle Creek Park Disc Golf Support Letter, 5. BattleCreekParkMasterPlan_SPRAB Action Sheet, 6. Public Comments, 7. Additional Public Comments received by 4:00 p.m. 4-25-20, 8. Additional Public Comments received by 10:30 a.m. 4-27-20, 9. Additional Public Comments received by 5:00 p.m. 4-27-20		

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
4/27/2020	1	City Council		
4/27/2020	1	City Council	approved	Pass

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Battle Creek Park Master Plan

Ward(s): Ward 4
Councilor(s): Councilor Leung
Neighborhood(s): SGNA
Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community.

ISSUE:

Shall City Council adopt the proposed 2020 Battle Creek Park Master Plan?

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed 2020 Battle Creek Park Master Plan.

SUMMARY:

The *Battle Creek Park Master Plan* reflects public input and community desires for a multi-function park that balances preservation of natural habitat with various recreational uses while providing areas for flood mitigation. Battle Creek Park is a 56-acre, undeveloped park property classified in the *Comprehensive Park System Master Plan* as an Urban Park, meaning it serves a region-wide service area.

The *Battle Creek Park Master Plan* was developed concurrently with development of the *Battle Creek Basin Plan*, a component of the City's *Stormwater Master Plan.* The *Battle Creek Basin Plan* provides recommendations for capital projects to reduce flood risks for the larger Battle Creek watershed and includes specific projects located in Battle Creek Park.

The proposed *Battle Creek Park Master Plan* was developed with significant public outreach and input, including three open houses and two online surveys. The master plan (Attachment 1) includes the following amenities and features for the park:

- Approximately 6,500 square foot playground,
- 40-stall parking lot,
- Picnic shelter and picnic area,
- 4-stall Restroom,
- Approximately 3,000-square-foot skate plaza/skate spot,
- 18-hole disc golf course,
- Picnic shelter/picnic area,
- Fitness/play stations,
- Soft and paved trails including an interpretive trail loop/pollinator garden,
- Outdoor classroom seating area near Battle Creek Elementary School,
- Potential public art locations,
- Enhanced existing wetlands, and restored riparian buffers along creeks,
- Enhanced year-round pond on Powell Creek, and
- Two large flood detention areas as per the Battle Creek Basin Plan recommendation.

Individual park master plans are intended to guide park development and management for the next 20 years.

The *Battle Creek Park Master Plan*, including all public outreach materials and public comments, can be found via the City's website. Link to Battle Creek Master Plan: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/battle-creek-master-plan-report.pdf> Link to Battle Creek Master Plan Appendices: <https://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/battle-creek-master-plan-appendix.pdf>.

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

A planning-level cost estimate was done as part of the master plan. Costs are in 2020 dollars, include a 30 percent contingency, and do not include maintenance costs or the cost for constructing the flood detention areas and associated infrastructure. Flood mitigation measures will be constructed as

a separate project using utility funds. The cost for the *Battle Creek Park Master Plan* is estimated at $5,806,141. Implementation of the master plan will occur over time and is dependent on available funding and will be coordinated with construction of the flood detention basins.

The master planning process involved significant public outreach, including three public open houses, eight neighborhood association presentations, two online surveys, website updates, emails, and direct mail. Over 800 people responded to each online survey. The City website was updated throughout the process and people were provided the opportunity to sign up for email updates that included online survey notifications and meeting reminders. Presentations were given to South Gateway Neighborhood Association (SGNA), Faye Wright Neighborhood Association, Morningside Neighborhood Association, and Southwest Association of Neighbors (SWAN).

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (SPRAB) assigned two board members as liaisons to the master planning effort and SPRAB was updated throughout the planning process. SPRAB unanimously approved the park master plan at its February 13, 2020, meeting and recommend City Council adopt the plan.

Because of the close relationship between park planning and stormwater planning, all the Battle Creek Park planning public open houses were attended by one of the City's Certified Floodplain Managers or the stormwater consultant (WEST consultants) involved with developing the basin plan, or both, to provide information to participants.

During the public process, most people expressed the desire for a balance between natural open spaces and recreational opportunities. A large number of respondents expressed a desire for a disc golf course and a skateboard park. Another group wanted only trails and natural areas for passive recreation and wildlife habitat. Some neighbors expressed concerns about noise, user conflicts, and loss of privacy. In response to neighbor concerns, staff made modifications to the plan, including moving some activities further away from adjacent residences. The South Gateway Neighborhood Association asked for the park master plan to be postponed until the *Battle Creek Basin Plan* was adopted by Council (Attachment 2). However, the *Battle Creek Basin Plan* is already in final draft form with no significant changes anticipated before that plan, along with a new *Stormwater Master Plan* and basin plans for Mill Creek and Pringle Creek, comes to Council later this year for adoption. SouthWest Association of Neighbors supports the park master plan (Attachment 3), as does the Capital City Disc Golf Club (Attachment 4).

The draft *Battle Creek Park Master Plan* was unanimously recommended by Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for Council adoption February 13, 2020 (Attachment 5).

BACKGROUND:

The City acquired the property in 2008 and 2009 using a combination of stormwater utility funds and park system development charge funds with the intent of providing both enhanced floodplain detention and recreational opportunities. The park is located, west of Commercial Street, east of Sunnyview Road, south of Waln Drive, and north of Battle Creek Commons subdivision. The property is surrounded by residential development with the Battle Creek Elementary School on the northwest boundary of the park. The site encompasses the confluence of four creeks: Waln Creek, Scotch Creek, Powell Creek, and Battle Creek. "Spring Creek" converges with Battle Creek just downstream

of the park. The site also includes areas of wetlands and remnants of the previous golf course such as ponds and fairways. The site also contains the Waln Creek Stream Mitigation Bank restoration area.

Public Engagement Process - Online Surveys

Two online surveys were made available to the public through email notification, Facebook, Salem Community Connection, informational signs posted at Battle Creek Park, and the City of Salem website. The two surveys coincided with the public open house meetings in June and September 2019. The intent of the surveys was to focus on the public's recreational desires and elicit feedback for proposed design options. Over 800 people responded to each of the two surveys.

Public Engagement Process - Neighborhood Associations

Staff met three times with South Gateway Neighborhood Association (SGNA) who was very involved throughout the planning process. Staff also met once with SGNA specifically to address flood detention and the draft Battle Creek Basin Plan. Since Battle Creek Park is classified as an Urban Park with a regional draw, invitations were sent to all neighborhood associations offering to present the preferred alternative and provide opportunity for feedback. Morningside Neighborhood Association, Faye Wright Neighborhood Association, and SouthWest Association of Neighbors (SWAN) asked for and received presentations.

Master Planning Process

Public engagement is a critical component in all park master planning. During the Battle Creek Park planning process public outreach included a variety of methods. The public was notified about meetings and public comment opportunities through a project-specific email list for Battle Creek Park Master Plan, neighborhood associations, the City's website and Facebook accounts, signs posted in Battle Creek Park, fliers at local venues and events, "Community Connections" electronic newsletter, three public open houses, and two online surveys.

The first open house was located at the South Salem Senior Center. The following two public planning meetings were held at the Battle Creek Elementary School cafeteria. The meetings were held on June 5, September 11, and November 13, 2019. In August 2019 a lecture about the history of the battle at Battle Creek by a state archeologist was held at Louck's Auditorium.

The first open house provided an overview of the existing conditions as well as opportunities and constraints to consider when developing the master plan. Site constraints included jurisdictional wetlands and streams, the Waln Creek Stream Mitigation Bank area, 100-year floodplains, desired flood detention areas per the draft *Battle Creek Basin Plan*, and riparian areas along streams. Adjacent residential areas bordering the property were also considered.

Per the *Comprehensive Parks System Master Plan*, site amenities in an Urban Park are wide-ranging and include standard features such as parking, restrooms, playgrounds, group shelters, and trails. Optional amenities include community gathering areas, sports courts, skate park, community garden, disc golf, and off-leash dog areas. While many of these options are allowed, site constraints limit the feasibility of many of these features; however, all amenities were presented to the public as options at this phase.

At the open house and in the following online survey, participants were asked to rank their preferred

program amenities. Most people valued combining natural beauty with recreation. Of the activities the park could accommodate, a skate park, unpaved walking/jogging trails, and natural areas were the top three choices. Respondents were not enthused about sports courts. The main concerns involved increased traffic, congestion on adjacent neighborhood streets, and compatibility with adjacent neighbors.

More than 100 people attended the first open house and 828 people responded to the first online survey. The results from the open houses and survey informed the design of three park options. The three park designs captured a range of recreational uses and a variety of amenity sizes. All park design options included common features of flood detention areas, trails, parking, restroom, play/fitness stations, and enhanced habitat. The three design options were presented at the second public open house and included a habitat-focused plan (Option 1); a recreation-focused plan (Option 2); and a blended version of the two (Option 3) that included habitat with a moderate amount of recreation. The participants were asked to indicate their preferred option and provide feedback on what was and was not desirable about each option.

The three options were presented at a second open house and in an online survey, along with precedent images and perspective views. Participants were asked to rank their preferred option and provide feedback about the three design options. Responses highlighted differences between adjacent residents' desire to have minimal development and the desire of broader Salem area residents for mixed recreation and natural, open spaces.

Forty-nine percent (49%) preferred Option 2 (Recreation); 29% preferred Option 1 (Habitat); and 21% preferred Option 3 (Blended). Based on these results, 70% of those responding preferred some level of higher recreation as shown in Options 2 and 3. Many respondents commented that only Option 2 provided a full 18-hole disc golf course, which was their main motivation for selecting that option. Trails were identified as a key feature for all options. As in the previous survey, some respondents expressed concerns with increases in traffic and with noise-related uses occurring near adjacent homes. Many respondents wanted flood mitigation to be a priority.

The preferred design was presented at the third public meeting that represented a combination of desired amenities and programmed uses based on the public feedback received at the second public meeting and from the online survey. The design reflected a combination of recreation and habitat values. Public feedback resulted in the relocation of the parking lot and skate plaza away from the northeast corner of the site to the north-central portion of the Waln Street frontage to minimize impacts to eastern neighbors. The southern basin was also reduced as a result of improved hydrological modeling that indicated a smaller area was needed. Powell Creek's existing pond was retained and enhanced as a result of desires not to eliminate year-round open water for wildlife. Disc golf fairways were moved off existing berms and away from adjacent residences, a pollinator habitat area was included near the interpretive trail, and potential public art locations were identified.

Robert D. Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Battle Creek Park Master Plan 2020 Site Plan
2. South Gateway Neighborhood Association Letter, November 2019
3. SouthWest Association of Neighbors Letter, February 2020

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4. Capital City Disc Golf Club Letter, undated
5. Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Action Sheet, February 2020
6. Public Comments