



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Peter Fernandez, PE, Public Works Director

SUBJECT:

Woodmansee Park 2021 Master Plan Update

Ward(s): Wards 3 and 7

Councilor(s): Councilors Nordyke and Phillips

Neighborhood(s): Faye Wright Neighborhood

Result Area(s): Natural Environment Stewardship; Welcoming and Livable Community

ISSUE:

Shall the City Council adopt the Woodmansee Park 2021 Master Plan Update?

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the Woodmansee Park 2021 Master Plan Update.

SUMMARY:

Woodmansee Park is a 30-acre park property that is classified in the *2013 Comprehensive Park System Master Plan Update* as a Community Park, meaning it provides a variety of recreational opportunities and group activities within a three-mile service area. The park is located at 4629 Sunnyside Road SE immediately east of Judson Middle School and west of Sunnyside Road SE (see Attachment 1). The previous master plan for Woodmansee Park was developed in 2001. The proposed master plan update not only reflects the desires of the community, but also provides diverse recreational opportunities for the three-mile service area the park serves. The updated master plan will guide park development for the next 20 years.

Woodmansee Park houses the City's aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells. As part of the City's continuing commitment to provide safe and resilient drinking water, an expansion of the ASR system is currently under construction. Due to the ASR system expansion and the age of the existing park master plan, the park master plan has been updated to incorporate the new ASR facilities, as well as

enhanced existing park features and future park amenities.

Woodmansee Park is partially developed. Existing features include two tennis courts, sports court, soccer field, playground, parking, restroom, shelter associated with an ASR building, a nine-hole disc golf course, and trail system. The property includes a section of Pringle Creek and forested areas of mature Oregon white oak and Douglas fir trees, as well as open meadows.

The goal of the Woodmansee Park 2021 Master Plan Update is to reflect the current needs and goals of Salem residents as expressed through the public engagement process that included three virtual open houses. The master plan provides a comprehensive vision for:

- Integration of existing park uses with new recreational development elements
- Preservation and restoration of existing natural areas
- Improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation and access, and
- Planning for integration of the future ASR facility development.

Based on public input, the proposed master plan (Attachment 2) includes the following new amenities and features for the park:

- Two picnic shelters
- Additional restroom
- Playground enhancements, including nature play with water feature
- Outdoor classroom
- Multi-use field
- Trail system enhancements
- Community garden
- Full court basketball
- Volleyball court
- Bridge to replace culvert at West Fork Pringle Creek
- Renovated disc golf course
- Natural area restoration
- Pollinator habitat
- Revised parking layout and additional parking, and
- Aquifer Storage and Recovery System current and future improvements (including tennis court reconstruction)

The proposed master plan was supported by the Faye Wright Neighborhood Association at their March 11, 2021, meeting. Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board also endorsed the plan with an 8 to 1 vote at their April 8, 2021, meeting (see Attachments 3 and 4). The full master plan report and appendices can be found at:

<https://www.cityofsalem.net/CityDocuments/WPMP-Report-with-Appendices-2021-04-15-Final.pdf>

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

Environmental Science Associates (ESA), a landscape architecture firm, was hired to assist Parks Planning staff with the park master plan update and public engagement process. These processes were coordinated with Engineering staff for the ASR system project and their consultants, Tom Walsh and Associates, MurraySmith Engineering Firm, and Barney & Worth.

Public Engagement Process. The community engagement process included:

- Stakeholder meetings
- Neighborhood groups
- Three virtual open houses
- Three online surveys
- Dedicated websites for the master plan update and ASR improvements
- Email notifications to an open email list
- Direct mail outreach, and
- Signs placed at Woodmansee Park with the introduction to the park planning and ASR improvement projects, staff contact information, and website address for additional information

The City's website was updated throughout the process with links to the open houses, dates of upcoming public meetings, and survey summary reports and graphics in English and Spanish. The opportunity to sign up for email updates was provided on all outreach materials and on the website. The group email list provided recipients current information on the planning process including upcoming meetings and open houses. Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Board) assigned Paul Rice and David Fridenmaker as the Board's liaisons to the master planning effort. All Board members were on the email list and received updates on the planning process.

Public Engagement Process - Stakeholder Meetings

The public engagement process included meetings with adjacent neighbors and certain user groups who use the park on a consistent basis. Early in the master plan process interviews were held with these stakeholder groups who had the potential to be impacted by the ASR system improvements and/or the park enhancements. The meetings were interactive discussions outlining the details of the ASR improvements and discussing the desires of these groups as to how they access and use the park. These stakeholders include:

- Buttercup Hill Preschool and Kindergarten
- Avamere Transitional Care at Sunnyside
- Capital City Disc Golf Association
- South Salem Connect Community Partnership Team
- Salem-Keizer Public Schools, and
- Public Works Parks Operations and Recreation Services.

The meeting notes from these meetings are included in the Woodmansee Park Master Plan Update

Report.

Public Engagement Process - Neighborhood Groups

Woodmansee Park is located within the Faye Wright Neighborhood Association boundary. Staff met twice with Faye Wright on the virtual Zoom platform and provided presentations regarding the ASR project and the master plan update. The meetings occurred on November 12, 2020, and March 11, 2021. At the March 11, 2021, meeting, the neighborhood was presented the draft park master plan and it was well received. There were two comments that approved of the plan and presentation, and no further comments were received. All neighborhood association chairs receive the email updates sent periodically to the email list group.

On March 16, 2021, the draft park master plan update was presented to South Salem Connect, one of the stakeholder groups. At the meeting, the presentation touched on the needs and desires outlined by South Salem Connect at the previous stakeholder meeting. The attendees were in favor of the plan and the presentation. There were no further comments.

Public Engagement Process - Virtual Open Houses and Online Surveys

Three interactive web platforms were created and used as virtual open houses to share project information with community members and to solicit their feedback and questions. Each open house was held open for approximately two weeks. A session, as noted for each open house, is when a viewer goes to the site and explores the information. The number of sessions reveals how many people clicked on the open house link to view all the information. Dates and usage information are provided as follows.

Open House One: July 13 to July 31, 2020. The first open house was to receive information from the public on how they access and use the park and what additional features would be favored. The Open House was accessed by 300 people and included the following sections or “tables”:

- Background on the project
- Information on the planning process and how it works
- Park features providing existing conditions of the park with a map of the site
- Site analysis showing the viewer the opportunities for improvement with photographs of the current condition of eight areas of the park
- Information on the Aquifer Storage & Recovery improvements
- Survey #1 - A survey of features currently used and what features people envision for the park in the future
- Comment form for questions and comments with an opportunity to receive a response from staff, and
- FAQ page provided answers to typically asked questions about both projects.

Open House Two: October 5 to October 19, 2020. The second open house utilized the information received from the first survey to create three design concepts, all of which included an additional restroom, pollinator gardens, trail enhancements, playground improvements, stormwater treatment,

and natural area / creek restoration. The open house had 500 sessions and included the following information:

- Background on the projects
- Three conceptual master plan designs based on input received from the first open house survey and comments
- Survey #2 - Answer questions about design preferences and which of the three design concepts is favored
- Comment form
- Aquifer Storage & Recovery improvements, and
- Updated FAQ list of answers to questions regarding the park planning effort and ASR.

Concept One was focused on keeping the park basically as it is but improving existing features such as the tennis and basketball courts. It added a multiuse field and a community garden.

Concept Two was focused on active features by adding two additional tennis courts with pickleball lines, volleyball, full-court basketball, an additional picnic shelter, and an outdoor classroom. It improved and revised the parking layout of the main parking lot for better traffic flow and added spaces in the parking lot as well as along the entry road.

Concept Three completely changed the layout of the park by moving the parking closer to the entrance road and changing the existing parking area into a play area. The activities are placed west and north of the new parking area and include additional amenities such as a water feature, futsal court, two picnic shelters, and an outdoor classroom.

The second survey revealed a three-way split in preferred design concept; however, there was general consensus around hard and soft surface trail enhancements, natural area restoration efforts, playground improvements, and picnic shelters.

Open House Three: January 25 to February 8, 2021. The third open house revealed the draft park master plan, which was a culmination of the responses received across the three open houses. The third and final survey asked participants which features of the plan they would like to see implemented first. The responses identified trail network enhancements, natural area restoration, and playground improvements as the top three features to move forward. The open house had 250 sessions and included:

- Overview of the master plan process
- Summary of input received by the public
- Review of the draft master plan update based on all input received from the public engagement
- Survey #3 - Which features are highest priority to implement
- Comment form
- Aquifer Storage and Recovery improvements, and
- Updated FAQ list of answers to questions.

The first survey collected 132 responses; the second survey 62 responses; and the third survey 40 responses. The decreasing response rates could be due to the number of high-profile events that took place from Spring 2020 through this year but could also be due to the fact that the respondents were generally happy with how the park is at present. There was not a large push for added active recreation such as additional ball courts. In addition, although there were requests for a splash pad, there were also a number of requests to not include a splash pad. This tells staff that those who participated in the surveys are generally content with the existing amenities and the natural features of the park.

The general theme across all three surveys was to expand, enhance, and improve the soft and hard surface trails and make them more accessible, restore the natural area and the West Fork Pringle Creek, and improve and enhance the playground area. There was additional interest in picnic facilities and shelters, pollinator gardens, and a community garden.

Links to the three open houses, as well as all of the materials presented at the open houses along with survey results and graphics are available at the [Woodmansee Park Master Plan Update web page](https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/woodmansee-park-master-plan-update.aspx). [<https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/woodmansee-park-master-plan-update.aspx>](https://www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/woodmansee-park-master-plan-update.aspx) Implementation of the master plan will occur in phases and is dependent on available funding and logical sequencing of construction. Funding may come from parks system development charges, grants, and/or donations. The cost for all amenities in 2021 dollars is estimated to be 6.65 million dollars. The full cost estimate is included in the master plan report.

BACKGROUND:

City of Salem park master plans are intended to guide park development and management for 20 years. The park is currently developed with a full-size soccer field; two tennis courts; a multipurpose court with basketball hoops, pickleball striping, and a ball wall; a nine-hole disc golf course; a playground appropriate for ages five to twelve years; a two-stall restroom; and a reservable, covered shelter. A significant portion of the park has forested areas of Oregon white oak and Douglas fir trees, and the West Fork of Pringle Creek runs through the park.

Over the last 20 years, Woodmansee Park has been the site of a key component of the City's water supply, called an Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) system, which provides the City with supplementary drinking water during high-demand summer months or during emergencies. The existing ASR system at Woodmansee consists of four active wells that are housed in individual buildings with dedicated water treatment facilities.

Robert Chandler, PhD, PE
Assistant Public Works Director

Attachments:

1. Woodmansee Park Location Map.
2. Woodmansee Park 2021 Master Plan
3. Faye Wright Neighborhood Association support (email)
4. Salem Parks and Recreation Board April 8 Action Report

5. Public comments