

Public Meeting #3 Summary September 5, 2007

The third public meeting was held to present the preferred Long-Term Strategy for Evans Creek Preserve and to solicit comments on the strategy. Roughly 30 members of the public attended the meeting.

The meeting began with a summary of the prior public meetings and the work accomplished to date. The city's consultant described the preferred alternative. The primary improvements in the preferred long-term strategy include:

- Primary entry/exit off of 224th Ave. NE
- Parking lot with approx. 40 stalls -to be constructed in phases
- A networks of pedestrian trails/boardwalks throughout the preserve
- Future equestrian trail when a trail connection is made to the south
- Group picnic shelter
- Restroom facilities
- Enhanced wildlife habitat with opportunities for interpretive information
- Informal play meadow

The meeting was then opened up for comments and questions on the preferred plan. Comments from the meeting attendees and *responses* from staff/consultants are summarized by topic area below:

Traffic/Access

Many of the comments received were regarding concerns about safe access to the site from highway 202. Several attendees who live off of 224th voiced their concerns about preserve access off 224th and their preference for access off of 220th. Some attendees stated that a 220th access was safer, but others responded that 220th wasn't any safer than 224th. 220th also created the need for a much longer access road to the site. High speed traffic on highway 202 and sight lines were raised as safety issues. Questions were raised about traffic volumes from the preserve.

Parking

Concerns were expressed that the parking lot be sited with consideration given to neighbors' privacy and security, environmental protection, accommodation for horse trailers and aesthetics. It was stated that the former Galley home site can be wet and that Evans Creek floods near the 224th culvert at times during the winter months.

Staff and consultants have begun discussions with WSDOT regarding preserve access from highway 202. Safe access is a primary concern for all. A traffic study will be completed for the preserve project.

Staff and consultants also explained why the 224th entry is preferred. These reasons include: locating the entry in close proximity to the proposed higher use areas –the open meadow areas near the former Galley house, the ability to drive into the site for surveillance/security of the primary use areas along existing roads and bridges, and to provide ADA access. The proposed parking area also locates the parking further from neighbors. The 220th site entry was explored early in the planning process, and found to be difficult, if not impossible to construction due to wetlands at the end of 220th. Also 220th is a private road with no current public right of way.

Safety/Security /Trespassing

Safety and security concerns were raised regarding after hours use of the preserve, and trespassing by preserve visitors onto adjacent private property. Fencing was suggested as one solution to the trespassing issue.

The preserve site is currently not open to the public and not closely monitored at this time. Future use by preserve visitors and regular maintenance will provide greater surveillance at the site. As proposed, the entry drive and parking area will allow for drive-by police surveillance of the site's primary use areas. Trails have generally located to keep preserve visitors within the site and away from private property. Vegetated buffer areas are included to provide screening for adjacent homeowners.

Trails

Several attendees stated they liked the layout of the trail. Others liked the future equestrian trail connection to the south, but suggested keeping equestrian uses away from wetlands and to separate horses from pedestrians. It was also suggested to use a softer/quieter material on top of the crushed rock trails.

Overall Plan

Several people stated that overall it was a good plan, liked the potential for connectivity to other park sites and are pleased to see development of the site.

Misc.

Other comments included support for outdoor rooms for education and interpretation focused on a holistic eco-system approach; not removing all the site's blackberries; and that the site is ideal for future student restoration projects.

The meeting closed with City staff discussing the next steps in the planning process. The next steps include the City Council/Parks Commission meeting on September 11. Staff will seek concurrence by the City Council to move into SEPA (State Environmental Policy Act) review. At the Council/Commission meeting several park projects will be reviewed with the two groups. There will be time for public comment at the meeting.

Following SEPA review, staff will seek formal Council adoption of the Long-Term Strategy.