



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland



Beech Park Master Plan 2008

Beech Park Master Plan

We would like to thank all of the contributors who assisted in formulating this plan, including:

CONTRIBUTORS

Public Advisory Committee:

Cindy Bartman
Diana Brown
Andrea Bunica
Linda Cadzow
Russ George
Karen Gray
Erin Krupicka
Tom Olsen, Jr.
Linda Robinson
Steve Voorhees
Kimberly Wagner

Portland Parks and Recreation Staff:

Kathleen Wadden, *Project Manager*
Colleen Keyes, *Community Outreach/Web*
Doug Brenner
Andre Ashley

Special Recognition

Helen Vank and Trevor Todd, *SUN School Program*
Mandy Hurley, *Boys and Girls Club*
Susan Cooper, *Shaver Elementary School*
Sanjay Bedi and Brendan Gill, *Parkrose High School*
Jeanie Toscano, *Translator*
Tim Curran, *Mid-County Memo*

CONSULTANTS

Landscape Architecture/Prime

MIG, Inc. 
815 SW 2nd Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 297-1005
www.migcom.com
Sally McIntyre, *Principal-In-Charge*
Susan McKay, *Senior Landscape Architect*
Susan Goltsman, *Consulting Principal*
Tara Sawyer, *Project Manager*
Aaron Abrams, *Public Involvement Facilitator*

SUBCONSULTANTS

Civil Engineering

MGH Associates
Fred Garmire, *Principal*
Maria Cahill, *Sustainable Design*

Geotechnical

GRI Geotechnical & Environmental
Consultants
Dave Driscoll, *Principal*

Environmental

Pacific Habitat Services, Inc.
John van Staveren, *Senior Scientist*

1120 SW 5th Ave., Suite 1302
Portland, OR 97204
Tel: (503) 823-7529 Fax: (503) 823-6007

www.PortlandParks.org
Commissioner Dan Saltzman
Director Zari Santner



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Executive Summary



Beech Park is an open and gently sloping undeveloped site that is approximately 16 acres in size. A subtle landscape that references a long history of local agriculture, this hidden parkland is surrounded by a working farm, single family residences, and Shaver Elementary School, and is within walking distance of three schools in the Parkrose/Argay neighborhoods.

Open space is a valuable amenity in any growing metropolis. Two thirds of the undeveloped Beech Park has been land-banked since 1984, and the entire 15.7 acres was farmed until 2007. But the property, with its remnant farm furrows and tall cover crop, is too roughly graded for public access or children's play. Beech Park Master Plan is the first step in an effort to fulfill the promise of more developed parkland for east Portland residents.

Planning a new park on undeveloped land is always an exciting enterprise. The Beech Park Master Plan process builds upon strong partnerships with Parkrose School District, Shaver Elementary staff, students, parents, park neighbors, local businesses, and community groups.

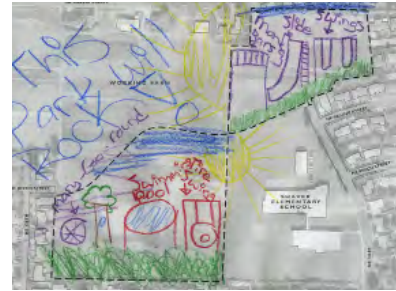
The Final Master Plan Concept activates the parkland as a central element in the community and provides facilities for team sports, free play, cultural activities, family and group gathering, school use, avid walkers, and community gardeners.

The park is comprised of two distinct parcels that touch in the middle but share no common boundary. The unusual hourglass shape of the property creates the opportunity to separate passive, neighborhood uses in the north with more active, community gathering areas and a sports field in the south. In addition, the looping, figure eight perimeter path carries the walker or biker through a variety of spaces and landscape elements. This assortment of nature/people activities and settings will offer every visitor something to enjoy.

Executive Summary

After a six month effort, Portland Parks and Recreation (PP&R), design consultant MIG, Inc. (MIG) and the Beech Park Master Plan Public Advisory Committee (PAC) are recommending their Final Park Design Concept to Portland's City Council. The Master Plan serves as a template for developing the park, even if the building process must be phased. Completion of the Master Plan document allows PP&R to pursue a variety of funding options, including grants, sponsorships, donations, and general funds and local bond measures.

Kyera T., a second grader at Shaver Elementary School, and one of dozens of youngsters who participated in a Beech Park community workshop, summed up the hopes and enthusiasm of children and adults alike when she emphatically stated, “**This Park will ROCK!**”



Project Overview



Purpose of the Master Plan

The purpose of this study is to develop a Concept Master Plan for the City of Portland's Beech Park, a 16-acre undeveloped site located between NE 122nd Avenue, NE Shaver Street, and NE Fremont Street. The Master Plan was developed with substantial community involvement to ensure that it reflects community needs and values. This Master Plan Report provides a summary of the planning process, the vision and goals for Beech Park, and a set of design recommendations. It also presents a Cost Estimate and a potential Phasing Plan for implementation. The Master Plan Report is intended to guide the future development of the park and support park funding efforts.

Planning Process and Public Involvement

The planning process for this Master Plan was open and interactive, and took place over the seven months between March and October 2008. Throughout this time, design consultants from MIG, Inc. and Portland Parks and Recreation met regularly with the Public Advisory Committee and stakeholders. In addition, a community workshop was held at Shaver Elementary School that gathered input from students, parents, and neighbors about their desires, needs, and concerns for Beech Park.

Three public open house events were also held: one at the Parkrose Saturday Farmer's Market, one at Shaver Elementary School, and one at Argay Park Neighbor's Night Out. These open house events provided an opportunity to present alternative park plans to the community, and to solicit public input on a preferred direction for the park's development. Public comments, along with input from city staff, are what guided the creation of a Final Master Plan Design.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- Community Workshop: May 19
- School Service Provider's Focus Group: May 28
- Parkrose Farmers Market: July 26
- Neighborhood Night Out: August 5
- Shaver Elementary Parent's Night: September 17
- Ongoing coordination with Argay, Parkrose, and East Portland Neighborhood Associations

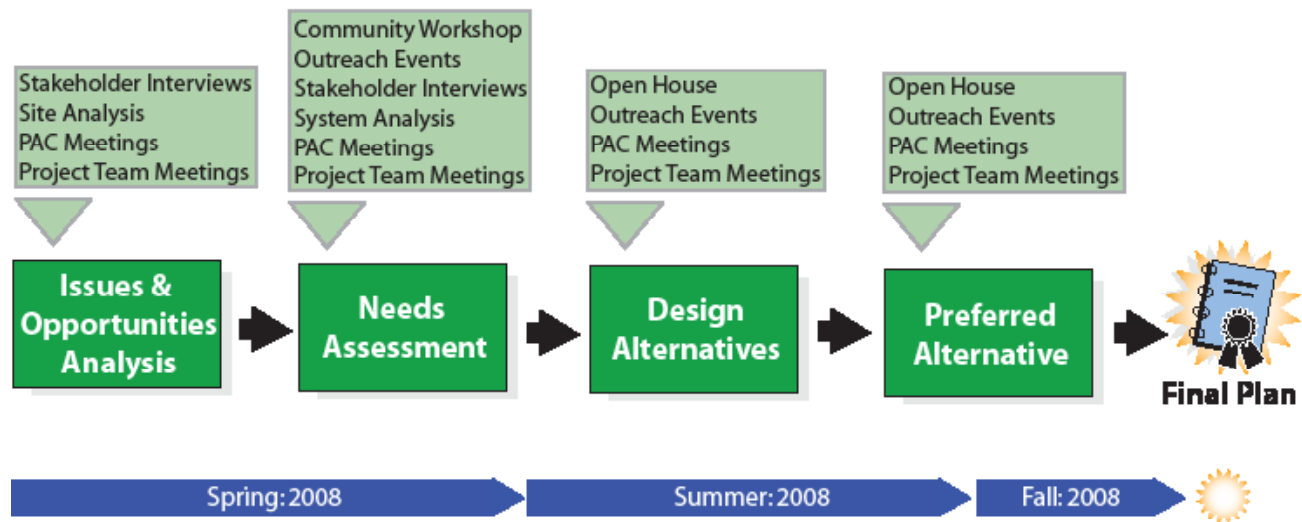
PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- PAC Meeting 1: April 30
- PAC Meeting 2: July 16
- PAC Meeting 3: Sept 24

PRESS/PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Press Releases
- (3) Mid-County Memo Articles
- Newsletters
- Website

Project Overview



Area Context Map



Project Overview



Recommendations

Project Vision and Goals

Beech Park will celebrate the East Portland community, reflect on its history and cultural diversity, and provide a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations.

The park will be an important neighborhood gathering place that builds community pride. All year round, community members of all ages will take advantage of the park's many recreational and educational amenities.

Residents will walk and bike to the park to participate in sports activities, play with their children, run or walk on a network of trails, celebrate family or community events, and enjoy nature and the views of Mount Hood.

Beech Park will be a unique and distinctive City of Portland Park, but it will also be seamlessly integrated into the recreational and community assets located in nearby parks and schools. It will serve as a learning environment for area schools, as well as a setting for out-of-school programs.

This safe and accessible park will help to build a strong neighborhood and a healthier community.



Recommendations

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Provide flexible recreation space that allows for a range of active and passive uses;
- Develop a park that reflects community pride and is safe, clean, and accessible for all ages, cultures, and abilities;
- Coordinate with current initiatives at nearby schools to avoid duplication, and to ensure that a wide range of community needs are met;
- Provide settings that enhance the use of the outdoors for both in-school and out-of-school activities and programs;
- Develop the site in an ecologically sensitive manner that respects the historic and neighborhood context;
- Work to ensure that the park is safely accessible by all modes of transportation, including bicycles and pedestrians;
- Retain and enhance view corridors within and across the park;
- Provide a community gathering space that can be used for both formal and informal events.



Park Design Program

This park design program was developed in collaboration with local residents, the Public Advisory Committee, and Portland Parks and Recreation, and was refined during the community workshop and open house events.

PARK IDENTITY

- beech tree
- bilingual interpretive signage
- public art

SCHOOL FACILITIES

- existing softball diamond
- existing covered basketball court
- two existing play areas
- existing play field
- existing parking area

SITE ELEMENTS

- community gathering space/pedestrian corridor
- community gardens
- children's play area
- water play area

OPEN SPACE

- sports field (330'x200')
- large group picnic area
- small group picnic area
- fenced off-leash dog area
- high intensity sports area/skate spot and bmx track
- basketball court (84'x50')
- grassy open space
- viewing area/natural play area
- natural meadow areas and native plantings



Recommendations

STRUCTURES

- group shelter
- two portable restrooms

BUFFERS

- storm water management (bioswale)
- low vegetation buffering residents, farm, and school
- berm with low vegetation at farm
- low stone wall at school

CIRCULATION

- emergency and maintenance circulation
- pedestrian/bike circulation
- parking areas
- pedestrian gateways
- two vehicle entrances

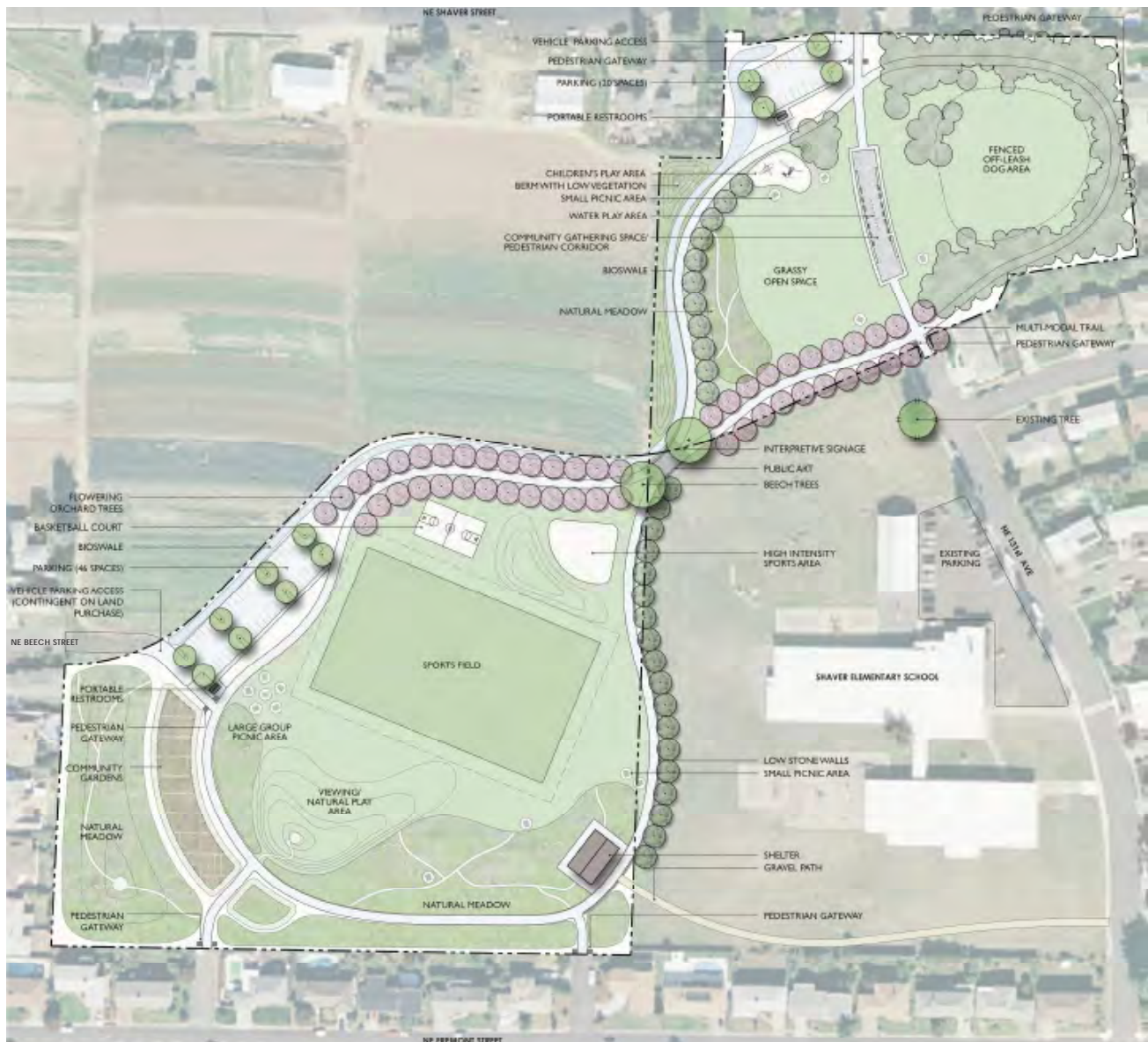


All program features should use sustainable construction methods and allow use by all ages and abilities.

Preferred Master Plan Concept

Beech Park consists of two parcels that are adjacent to single-family residences, working farmlands, and Shaver Elementary School. Located in outer Northeast Portland between Shaver and Fremont Streets, the site has a long history of being farmed, and is currently a gently sloping open grassy field with grand views of the Columbia River floodplain.

The design of the park will preserve these views, reflect the farming history, manage stormwater on site, and provide buffers from adjacent land uses. The north parcel of the site, which is 5.64 acres, will act as a neighborhood park. It features a children's playground,



Recommendations

a gathering space, a parking area, and a fenced off-leash dog area. The south parcel, which is 10.07 acres, will incorporate more active and passive community park uses, including a shelter, a full-size sports field, display and community gardens, picnic areas, parking areas, natural play areas, and a high intensity sports area with a potential small BMX track. In addition, a multi-use paved trail loops around the entire site, and public art and bilingual interpretive signage will be incorporated into key areas, such as the unique center point where the two parcels connect.

Alternative Access for NE 127th Street

The Preferred Design Concept for Beech Park provides access from NE Beech Street. This approach is appealing because it pushes the parking lot further into the park, closer to the sports field, and further away from residences. In addition, this entrance can be easily accessed from both NE 122nd Avenue and NE Fremont Street. The Beech Street entry also contains a variety of exit opportunities, which disperse traffic and provide safe routing to and from the site. Because it is still uncertain whether Portland Parks and Recreation will be able to acquire land for the Beech Street access, however, an alternative entrance for the south parcel has been developed.

The alternative entrance/exit provides access from NE Fremont Street and through NE 127th, and allows the park to be built without any further land acquisition or easements. Although this concept is a viable option, it does have the potential to cause vehicle backup and pedestrian safety and traffic problems. Additionally, this alternative pushes the parking lot closer to surrounding residences, and relocates the community gardens to the north of the proposed parking area.

Concept for Alternative Access at NE Fremont and NE 127th Street



Recommendations

Park Design Inspiration Images



beech tree



community gardens



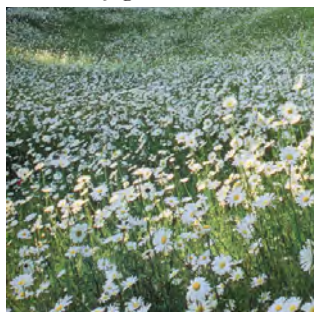
open space



orchards



display gardens



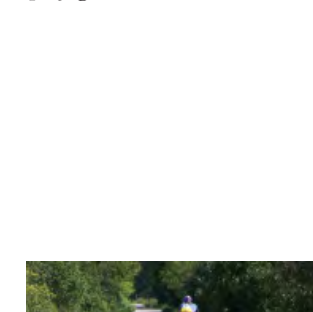
meadow landscape



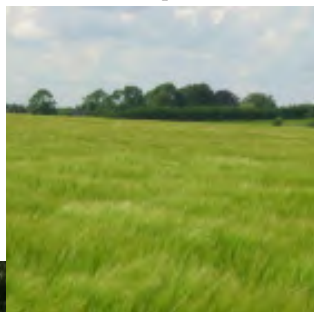
meadow landscape



water play



pedestrian/bike paths



meadow landscape



natural play



public art



viewing areas



open air shelter



bioswales



water play

Park Design Inspiration Images



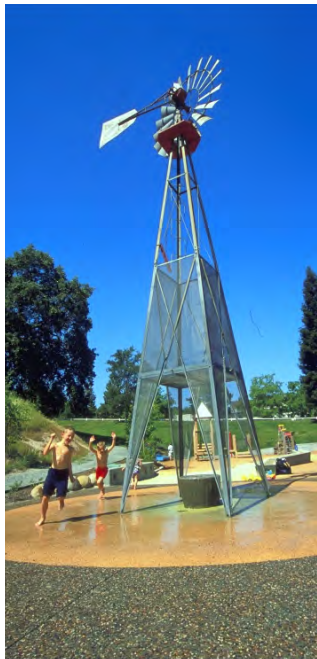
open air shelter



stone walls



paths



children's play area



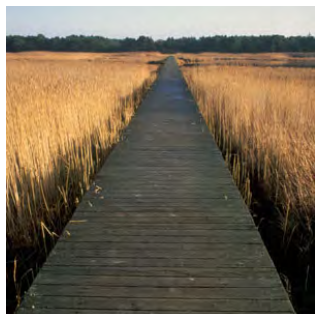
stone walls



parking area



children's play area



boardwalk



natural materials



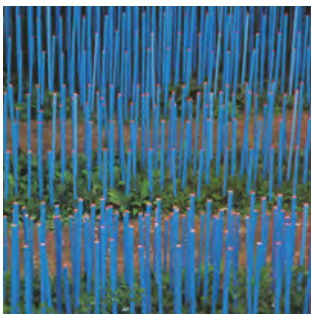
children's play area



natural materials



stone walls



public art



water play



water play

Recommendations

Sustainability Framework

In addition to all of the recreation amenities that Beech Park will provide, this site also offers a wonderful opportunity to educate visitors about sustainable design and environmental stewardship. In fact, a major priority for the Beech Park project is to incorporate environmentally sustainable materials and objectives wherever possible in the park's development. To help meet this goal, we have assembled the following list of recommended strategies to explore in this project's subsequent design phases.

LANDSCAPE SYSTEMS

- Enhance wildlife habitat on the site
- Eradicate invasive species and restore natural habitat
- Restore disturbed areas with native plantings
- Design educational signage to interpret key sustainable elements and site features
- Provide observation areas at key points for educational purposes

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

- Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle connections between the park and the neighborhood
- Provide carpool parking spaces and consider opportunities for shared parking facilities
- Provide programming to allow public meeting places and community integration

WATER MANAGEMENT

- Treat all stormwater runoff on site in a functional, educational, and artistic way
- Minimize impervious surfaces for roads and parking
- Shade impervious surfaces with trees
- Use low consumption irrigation strategies

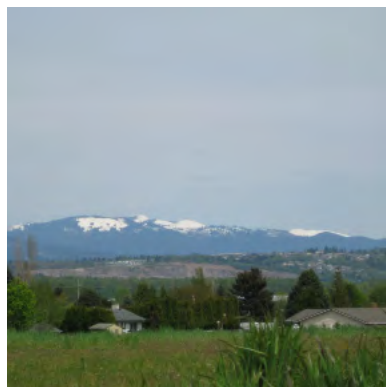
ENERGY

- Minimize night light pollution
- Incorporate low level lighting with no direct beam illumination leaving the site

MATERIALS

- Use low maintenance, long-life materials
- Reuse organic debris from clearing operations on site
- Balance cut and fill on site
- Use local building materials
- Use wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council
- Use stone from local locations
- Use natural materials
- Incorporate a recycling program to limit construction and building waste

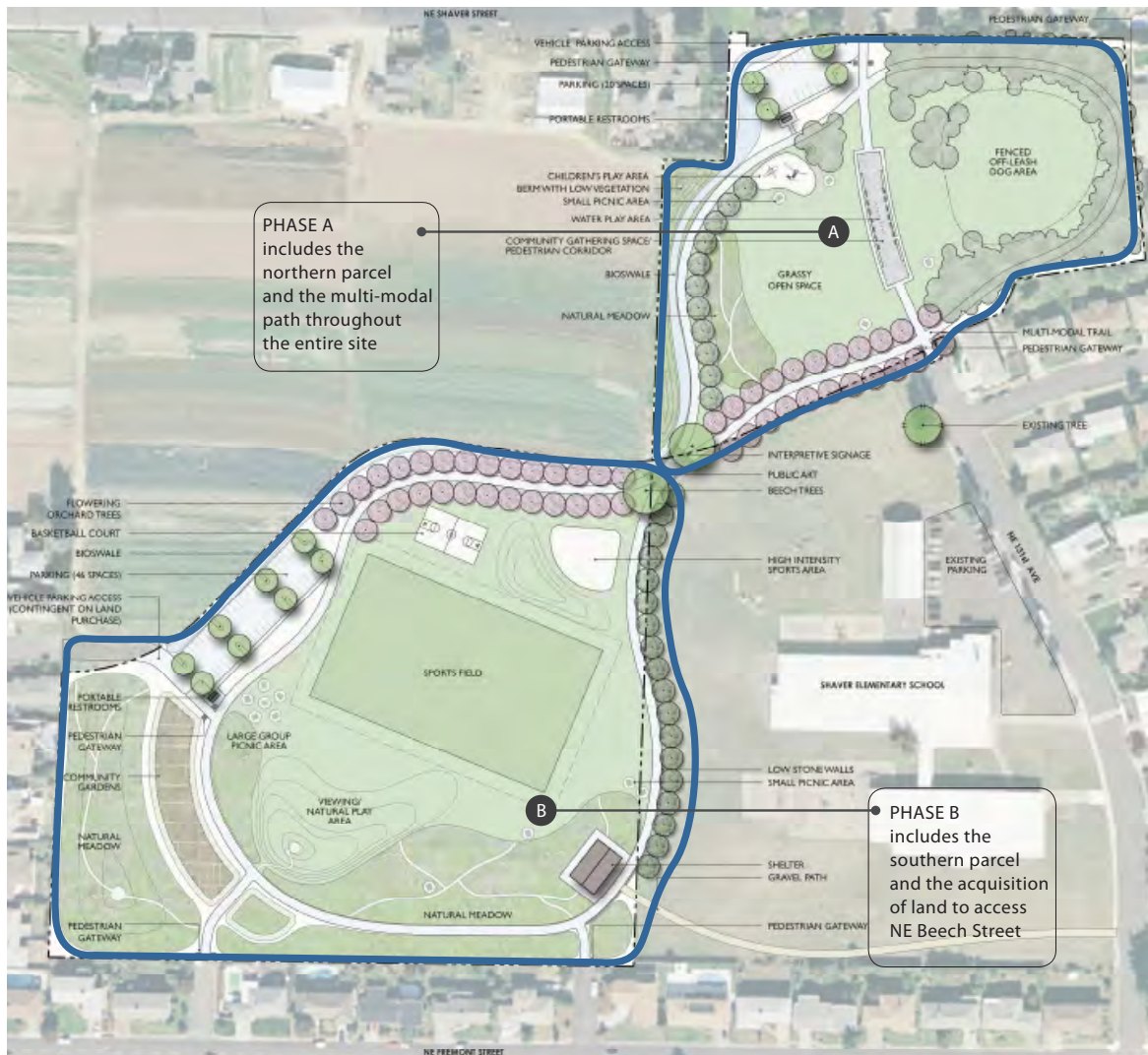
Recommendations



Project Implementation

Phasing Plan and Land Acquisition

Many factors evolve over time and can change the priorities in developing a Master Plan. As funding becomes available, for example, the project scope will be refined, the budget will be adjusted, and the order of development events will shift. The diagram below illustrates how the implementation of Beech Park can be divided into two possible phasing zones: Phase A and Phase B. Phase A will focus on the northern parcel and includes the multi-modal loop path throughout the entire site. Phase B will focus on the southern parcel and is dependent on Portland Parks and Recreation acquiring a small parcel of land between NE Beech Street and the proposed parking lot to provide vehicle access into the park. In order to be successful, however, both phases depend on a formal partnership with Shaver Elementary School.



Project Implementation

Conclusion

The Master Plan process is the first step toward realizing the goal of a developed park for this community, and excitement for the park is certainly building. This new park will be a substantial amenity to neighbors, students, sports advocates, and community organizations; and upon its completion, users will have a place to gather, celebrate, play, and enjoy the quiet beauty of this remarkable urban oasis.

Opinion of Costs

The following estimate outlines the construction and associated project costs for the Beech Park Master Plan, and includes all of the major site features, the program elements, and their related parts:

BEECH PARK MASTER PLAN DESIGN

ITEM	LOW RANGE TOTAL	HIGH RANGE TOTAL
General Requirements.....	\$431,165	\$503,025
Site Preparation/Demolition.....	\$15,220	\$17,750
Earthwork	\$352,275	\$410,985
Hard Surfaces	\$1,115,000	\$1,300,830
Play Areas	\$1,032,840	\$1,204,980
Park Structures	\$216,000	\$252,000
Landscaping and Irrigation.....	\$815,270	\$951,150
Site Furnishings.....	\$250,200	\$291,900
Utilities	\$218,400	\$254,800
Storm Drainage.....	\$15,000	\$17,500
CONSTRUCTION ESTIMATE	\$4,461,370	\$5,204,920
Associated Costs: Planning, Design, Construction		
Administration, and Project Management.....	\$1,115,345	\$1,301,230
TOTAL ESTIMATE	\$5,576,715	\$6,506,150

Note: This is a preliminary opinion of cost for park development. It is based on the 2008 Master Plan Concept Design and on 2008 costs. Once the detailed design and construction drawings are completed, the project budget will be revised and finalized.

Supporting Information

Natural Systems

This site slopes gently from an elevation of approximately 140 feet in the southwest corner to approximately 76 feet in the northeast corner. Both of its parcels are planted annually with a cover crop and are mowed once or twice per year.

The property is not contiguous with other open spaces, and does not form part of an important wildlife corridor. In addition, the property has been farmed for decades and contains no trees and shrubs (except for a small patch of willows). In fact, the site is dominated by non-native herbaceous species that provide little food or wildlife habitat. The site does not contain wetlands or waterways, and although a small seasonal pond exists in the center of the property, this feature was established as a stormwater detention pond for farming activities. Finally, the property does not contain any of the habitat or protected and sensitive species that are listed by the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center (ORNHIC).



Supporting Information

Geotechnical Issues

A preliminary geotechnical investigation (Driscoll and Tupper, GRI, April 15, 2008) indicates positive conditions for stormwater infiltration in general, and on-site stormwater retention and treatment along the northern portion of the south half of the park.

Utilities

STORM DRAINAGE

The entire Beech Park site slopes from south to north. The adjacent public streets include both pipe and infiltration storm drain systems, and there is an existing 15-inch pipe that extends south from NE Shaver Street to the existing seasonal pond that is located in the north-central area of the southern park parcel. Additionally, there is an existing 18-inch storm pipe that ends at the southern end of NE 131st Street at the northern limits of the north park parcel.

The goal of the proposed storm facilities that serve the site will be to meet or exceed current storm drainage requirements, and to provide a sustainable storm drainage system that may include water quality facilities and infiltration systems. If needed, the existing storm pipes mentioned above can be used to convey runoff from the site.

WATER

Public water systems are available in the public roads adjacent to the park parcels, and should provide opportunities for connection to these existing water systems at NE 129th Street in the southern boundary of the south parcel, and at NE 131st Street, NE Failing Street, and NE 131st Street where they end at the northern park parcel. Depending on the flow and pressure requirements for the park water systems, some or all of these potential connections could be used. These are typically 8-inch in diameter.

SANITARY SEWER

Public sanitary sewer service is available on NE 131st and NE Failing Streets where they end at the northern parcel, and could be extended on the site to serve this parcel. Gravity sanitary



sewer service to the southern parcel will not be available without obtaining an easement to cross the adjacent properties to the north or east of the southern parcel, and to connect to the existing public sanitary sewers in these locations.

ELECTRICAL

Based on a review with PGE, the power availability around the site is single phase 120/240 where the residential streets are either adjacent to or dead end at the park sites. Shaver Elementary School has a three phase 120/240 power conductor. If needed, a three phase service similar to this should be available to extend to the site.

Supporting Information

Needs Assessment and System Analysis

A number of parks and recreation facilities are located in the vicinity of Beech Park. School grounds in the immediate Beech Park area include the adjacent Shaver Elementary School, Parkrose Middle School, and Parkrose High School. In addition, there are five parks within one mile of the Beech Park site that are owned and operated by Portland Parks and Recreation.

SHAVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Shaver Elementary School is a K-5 grade school in the Parkrose School District. The school grounds include a covered basketball court, two playgrounds, and a large sports field. Shaver Elementary School also is a Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) site. SUN Community Schools coordinate and provide educational, recreational, social, and health services at neighborhood schools. In addition, SUN Schools offer before, during, and after school classes, parent support and involvement activities, community educational and cultural events, and social services for young people and their families.



PARKROSE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Parkrose Middle School is a 6-8 grade school that has two gymnasiums, an informal field used for soccer and football, two baseball diamonds, and four tennis courts.

PARKROSE HIGH SCHOOL

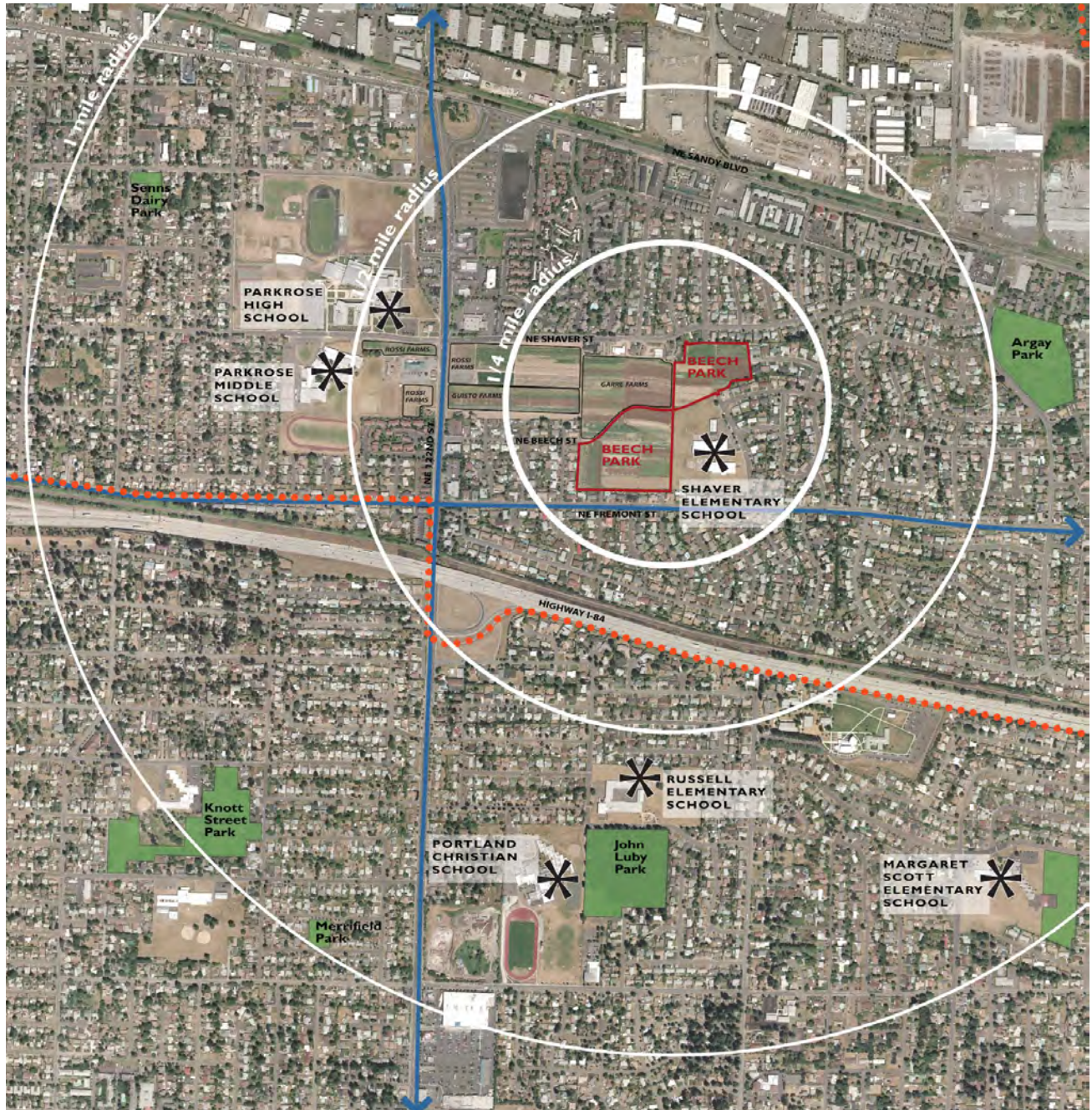
Parkrose High School is a 9-12 grade school that provides a number of indoor and outdoor activities. It includes a community center that provides classrooms for public rental, a 600-seat performing arts theater, music rooms, a public library/media center, police and county offices, a health clinic, and a gym and training room. It also features a swimming center, which has open swim hours that are available to the public. Lessons are available for preschool and school-age children, as well as adults. Pool rentals are also available. Parkrose High School is also a Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) site that contains a County Health Clinic, one multi-use soccer/football field, one soccer field, two softball fields, two baseball fields, and tennis courts.



PUBLIC PARKS

The five City of Portland parks that are located within one mile of the property are Argay Park, John Luby Park, Senns Dairy Park, Merrifield Park, and Knott Park. At almost 16 acres in size, however, Beech Park will be the largest park in the area.

Context and Facility Map



Opportunities and Constraints

The Site Analysis Map below illustrates the park's site features, including its surrounding land uses, traffic circulation and community connections, community and neighborhood facilities, area utilities, and existing physical conditions such as topography, drainage patterns, views, and climatic conditions.

OPPORTUNITIES

Beech Park is adjacent to Shaver Elementary School, which is a source of neighborhood pride and a center of neighborhood activity. Because of this proximity, there are numerous opportunities to create a successful park that expands this sense of community, including the following:

1. Environmental Systems

There is a wonderful opportunity to enhance and restore native plantings and wildlife habitat. When options for the park are



considered, native trees and shrubs should be part of the site revegetation.

2. Active Uses

The relatively flat topography of the site will support active uses, such as sports fields, playground, trails, skate park, water spray elements, off-leash dog parks, community gardens, etc. This is one of the great benefits of this site, especially for those active uses that require larger areas and may be more difficult to accommodate on sites with a sloping terrain. This becomes even more important when we consider that Outer Eastside Portland is currently deficient in active recreation experiences.

3. Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Site topography will easily support uses by residents of all ages and abilities.

4. Passive Uses

The views of Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, and the Columbia River enhance the site's sense of place and could be used as an outstanding setting for picnicking and quiet contemplation, or to provide views that could make trail-related recreation more enjoyable. The site also presents opportunities to build a closer connection between the environment and its residents, including its youth.

5. Area Culture and History

The diverse cultural groups in the area, their history, and their culture provide additional opportunities that can be expressed and interpreted through site design.

6. Sustainable Design Concepts

Sustainable design concepts, including stormwater treatment, materials, and energy systems should be part of the development plans. These systems can be interpreted as elements of a sustainable community and become examples for the neighborhood.

7. Geography and Geology

The views of Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, and the Columbia River could form the basis for interpreting the geology and geography of the area, and should be emphasized to retain the site's identity and sense of place.

8. Health and Wellness

The open landscape could incorporate multi-purpose loop trails that provide fitness opportunities and information. Other active recreational opportunities could be provided to further support health and wellness.

Supporting Information

9. Year-round Use

Given the area's temperate climate and the site's easily navigable topography, residents will be able to use Beech Park throughout the entire year. Attention should be given to ways of further extending use during the rainy season with covered areas for picnicking or active use. These areas could be used by Shaver Elementary School and other program providers, as well as by community members.

10. Adjacent Land Use

Potential land acquisitions and partnerships with other agencies, such as the Parkrose School District and adjacent farm properties, would greatly increase the effectiveness and possibilities of this site. Ideally, the site would be planned and designed as one unit that includes the school site, the farm land, and the street frontage along NE 122nd Avenue. In addition, the many residences that surround the site and the presence of Shaver Elementary School will create "eyes on the park" that promote safety and security.

11. Interpretation and Education

The site presents many excellent opportunities for interpretation and education. For example, the site's agricultural past is a rich source of material for historic interpretation and education about the area's history, as well as the food growing process from field to table. Creating and sustaining community garden space could also be a part of this experience.

12. Programming

The adjacent Shaver Elementary School presents the opportunity for teachers and students to take advantage of educational opportunities provided at the park. The site also can be used as an outdoor classroom for all subject areas, as gathering places for outdoor performances, and as a site for the SUN School's after school programs. Involving youth in the planning and design of the site, in the development of interpretive displays, and possibly in the site construction would also be a learning experience and instill a sense of ownership. PP&R also could utilize interpretive areas and gathering places in ongoing or special event programming.

13. Maintenance

The park planning process provides opportunities to effectively involve the maintenance staff in the park's planning and design. For example, there could be a demonstration of the site's design to ensure effective maintenance that incorporates sustainability and child-safety concepts, and maintains accessibility for all ages and abilities. In the end, the park maintenance must be both cost-effective and affordable.

14. Revenue Generation

The size of the site and its potential to accommodate a variety of uses also presents the opportunity to create revenue-generating facilities for Portland Parks and Recreation. These may include amenities that can be rented by permit or operated by others, such as group picnic areas, sports fields, community gardens, performance areas, and a space for local fairs and other events.

15. Park Identity

At Beech Park, there is the potential to develop a unique identity that attracts users and serves as a new model for Portland Parks and Recreation park design. The site should complement other Outer Eastside parks, and should address gaps in recreational opportunities in the Outer Eastside and in the City as a whole. Essentially, the development of Beech Park and other Portland parks creates opportunities for collaboration and synergy in planning and outreach.

CONSTRAINTS

In addition to all of the aforementioned opportunities, the development of Beech Park must also address the following challenges:

1. Entry/Limited Access

The road network and traffic patterns around Beech Park make access difficult, especially if active recreation uses are provided that attract larger groups of users. Additionally, the auto-oriented nature of the neighborhood makes walking and bicycling a challenge. However, the 1-84 Regional Trail connects to NE 122nd Avenue near the site, and the 40-mile Loop and the Springwater Corridor lie, respectively, to the north and south.

2. Parking

Adequate parking is needed, especially if active recreation uses are provided to attract larger groups of users. To fulfill a portion of this need, however, the opportunity exists to develop a joint-use agreement with Shaver Elementary School for the use of their parking lot when school is not in session.

3. Connections to the Neighborhood

Pedestrian and bicycle connections between Beech Park and the Argay Neighborhood should also be improved. If the aim is to build a community park that all residents can enjoy, then residents of all ages and abilities must feel comfortable accessing it, especially with small children in tow. Also, better connections to the neighborhood will contribute to an enhanced sense of park ownership among its residents.

Supporting Information

4. Visibility and Views of Mt. Hood, Mt. St. Helens, and the Columbia River

The outstanding views must be preserved, and adequate sight lines must be provided to promote user safety and security.

5. Utilities

Gravity sanitary sewer service to the southern parcel will not be available without obtaining an easement to cross adjacent properties.

6. Adjacent Uses

All adjacent uses present both opportunities and constraints, including:

Residences

Neighbors may have concerns about additional traffic being routed through their street to provide park access, about additional lighting, about locating active uses or certain types of amenities near their homes, or even about developing a park site on a formerly undeveloped open space area.

Shaver Elementary School

The park must be designed to allow its use during school hours, but its design must also ensure its safety and protect the school from undesired intrusions.

Farm Properties

How the farm property will be used must be considered, and must take into account any equipment access and weed control procedures.

