



AURORA CITY PARK MASTER PLAN
AURORA MILLS PARK MASTER PLAN

City of Aurora
March 5, 2009

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Acknowledgements

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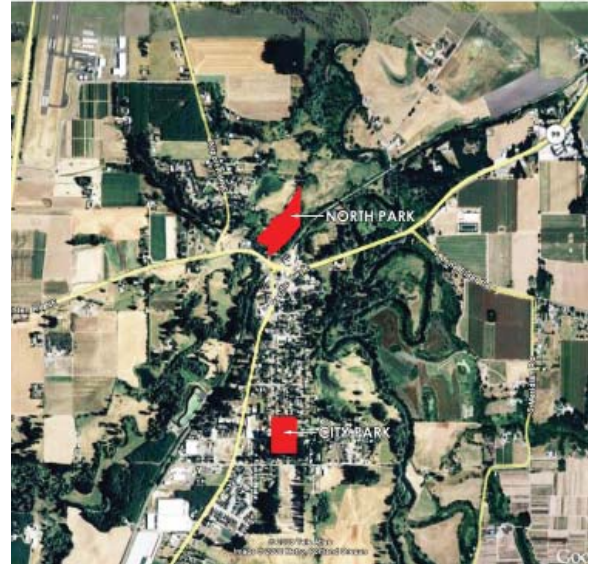
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OVERVIEW

The City of Aurora, a National Historic District, is located 22 miles south of Portland and 8 miles north of Woodburn in the Mid-Willamette Valley of Marion County, Oregon. It is a small community of nearly 900 residents that was originally founded as a religious communal society in 1856. The town's rural setting is surrounded by farmland, the Pudding River, Mill Creek and a spectacular view of Mount Hood. This rich location has historically provided a strong agricultural based economy and in the last 20 years has developed a popular antique business core.

As Aurora has grown in population its park space has not. To respond to this need, in 2005 Aurora adopted their Parks Master Plan 2005-2011. Additionally, a community wide visioning process for all aspects of community life in Aurora took place in 2007 culminating in the adoption of the Aurora Vision 2017.



In order to work toward meeting the goals of the Parks Master Plan and Aurora Vision 2017, the city hired a design team to develop master plans for 2 park sites; Aurora City Park, an existing park in need of renovation, and Aurora Mills Park, a brand new park site at the north edge of the city. The city will use these plans and associated documents to work toward satisfying State grant requirements. The City intends to apply for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's Local Government Grant, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant, and/or the Recreation Trails Grant programs.

PROCESS

The design for the two Aurora Parks was an open and interactive process with the citizens of Aurora and park neighbors. The City's Parks Committee was instrumental in setting goals, reviewing concept plans and providing input during the design process. The process began with a Parks Committee meeting that focused on the initial site analysis for the two parks and goal setting. Also, the design consultant held a series of meetings and phone conversations with key stakeholders in the City. These stakeholders included representatives from Police and Fire, the Historical Society, the Historical Review Board, interested citizens and business owners. At the second Parks Committee meeting, several concept options were shown for each park. The committee members discussed the options and provided feedback for minor modifications to the design. Based on the comments that were received, two concept plans were developed for each park and presented at an open house meeting. There was a large attendance at the meeting and a lively discussion about each of the park options. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a questionnaire which is included in this document. The next Parks Committee meeting included a review of the comments and a draft concept plan of each park that incorporated the desired improvements from each plan. This concept plan was then presented to the Planning Commission, Historic Review Board and the City Council. These presentations were for information only, as the formal Site Plan Review process will be deferred until the funding is available. The final meeting with the Parks Committee dealt primarily with costs, phasing and maintenance.

Aurora City Park



INTRODUCTION

The city of Aurora currently has only two parks; Aurora City Park and a very small sliver park in the downtown area. Based on the recent City-wide park master plan, it was determined that the renovation of the Aurora City Park was a top priority. Although the park is well-used by residents, issues such as drainage problems, gopher holes, leaf litter on the sports courts and a general lack of maintenance prevents this park from being used to its fullest potential. Although some recent improvements such as a new restroom and play equipment has been installed, the City is looking to use State Grants and other funding sources to further improve and enhance this important open space for its current citizens and future generations.

As part of the planning process, there were a number of goals expressed by the Parks Committee:

AURORA CITY PARK GOALS

1. Consider additional park amenities that bring the community together
2. Preserve the existing forest in the park
3. Provide for better pedestrian access to the park amenities and around the open space
4. Consider a central gathering plaza space
5. Improve existing ballfield to allow for better use or consider replacement for other activities
6. Improve or relocate existing tennis court and basketball court
7. Provide more covered areas for winter use and shade for summer use
8. Provide a consistent family of site furnishings including; benches, litter receptacles and bike racks
9. Remove non-native species in the gully and replant with native vegetation
10. Provide irrigation for lawn areas
11. Improve park way finding signage near the park and provide an entry park sign
12. Consider more activities on the north side of the park to better utilize the open space
13. Provide a loop trail around the park

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

The park is set on seven acres surrounded by residential homes. There are parking spaces for the park that run along Liberty Street and Main Street. The park itself is separated into a large grassy field to the north and an evergreen forest along its southern edge. These two sides of the park are further divided by an east-west asphalt path running between Main Street and Liberty Street, the only paved path through the site. A ballfield with a chainlink backstop is located in the southeast corner of the grassy field. Small bleachers and picnic benches are set up behind home plate. The park is served by a new restroom building at the center of the park. Two pump houses sit at either corner of the north side of the park.

The evergreen woodland side of the park is where you'll find the picnic shelters and children's play structures. A new play structure has recently been added here. At the very southern edge of the park is a natural gully that has become overgrown with invasive plant species. Dirt paths have been carved through this area along the desire lines of park visitors. The gully has become associated with drawing unsafe activity to this park of the park.



Park entrance from Liberty Street.



Existing Picnic Shelter and evergreen trees



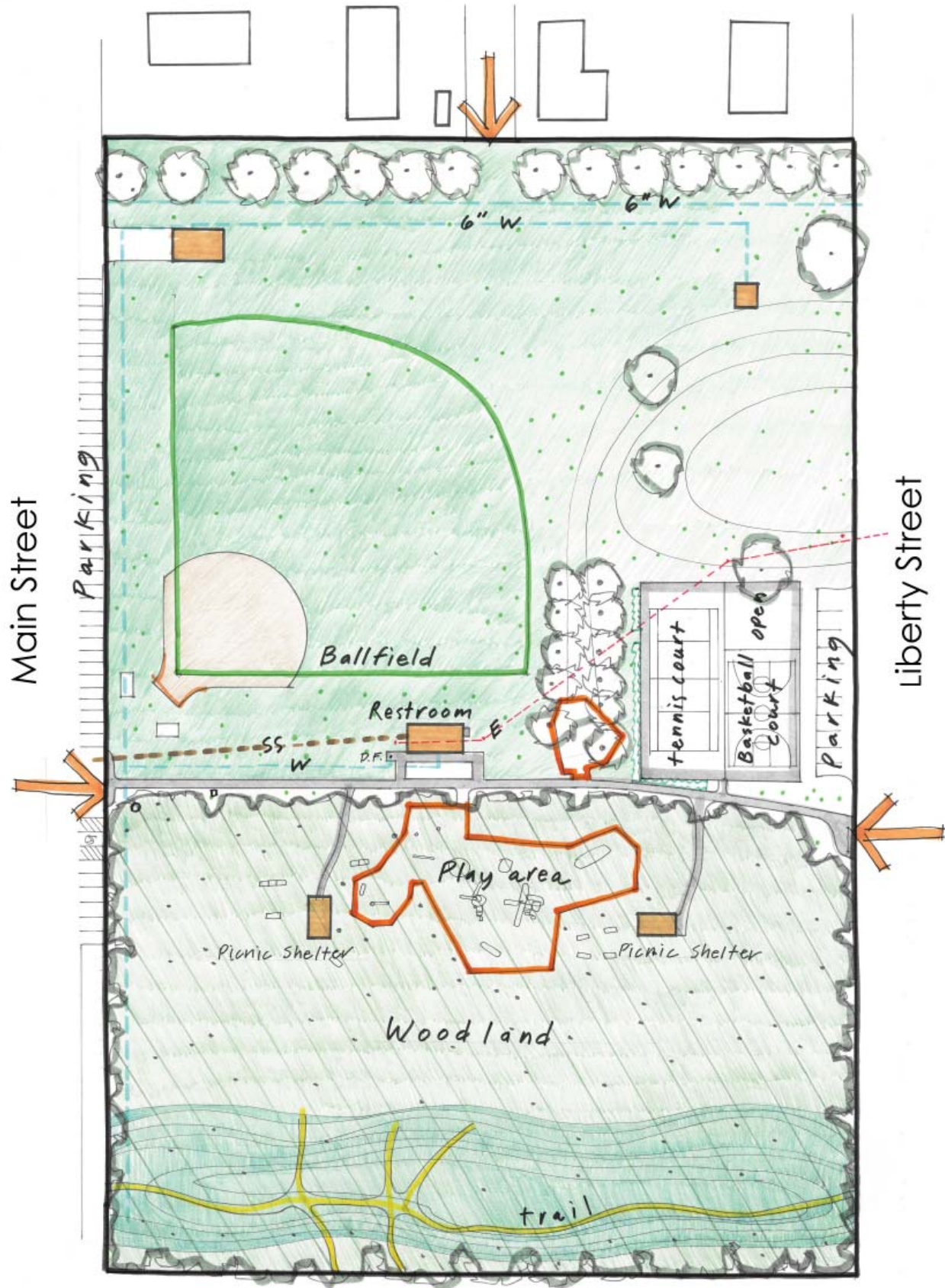
Existing play equipment



Existing bathroom, adjacent to walkway connecting Liberty and Main streets.



Existing picnic benches adjacent to ballfield.



INTRODUCTION

After initial community feedback and goals were collected from Aurora citizens two concepts were developed by the design team. The two concepts took different approaches to the new park design while still integrating all the community's goals.

CONCEPT A

The Concept A design was developed with the idea of keeping all existing park features in their current layout. Locations for new park elements were chosen in areas of the park that were not heavily used. New curving paths were added around and through the park providing easier access to all parts of the park, including a well-lit path along the gully. A new picnic shelter sits at the top of a small amphitheater framed around a children's water spray area. The baseball diamond stays in its current location, but will be upgraded and improved. Entry locations off Liberty and Main Street will have been enhanced with seating, bollards and specialty paving. These entries will be served by improved and added parking along these two streets. The tennis courts and basketball court will get new surfacing, and a canopy will be installed over the tennis courts to protect the play surface and allow for all-season use. Picnic tables on concrete pads will be added between the trees in the evergreen forest and along the new path in the northern grassy area of the park.

CONCEPT B

Concept B shows more significant layout changes in the park. This design moves some of the existing park features to improve circulation, and the overall park design. The baseball diamond is rotated 45 degrees which opens up an area at the west entry, room for a series of interactive garden such as a community garden and children's water spray area. This area also provides a location for the historical jail building. Entry locations off Liberty and Main Street will have been enhanced with seating, bollards and specialty paving. These entries will be served by improved and added parking along these two streets. The existing tennis and basketball court are shifted north, and a wall ball wall has been added. In the former location of the courts is a new small amphitheater wrapping around a picnic shelter/stage. This design also has a new system of paths adding new access to all areas of the park.



Community Garden



Children's Water Spray Area



Small Seating Area



Kiosk & Bulletin Board



Picnic Shelter



Paving with Donor Names

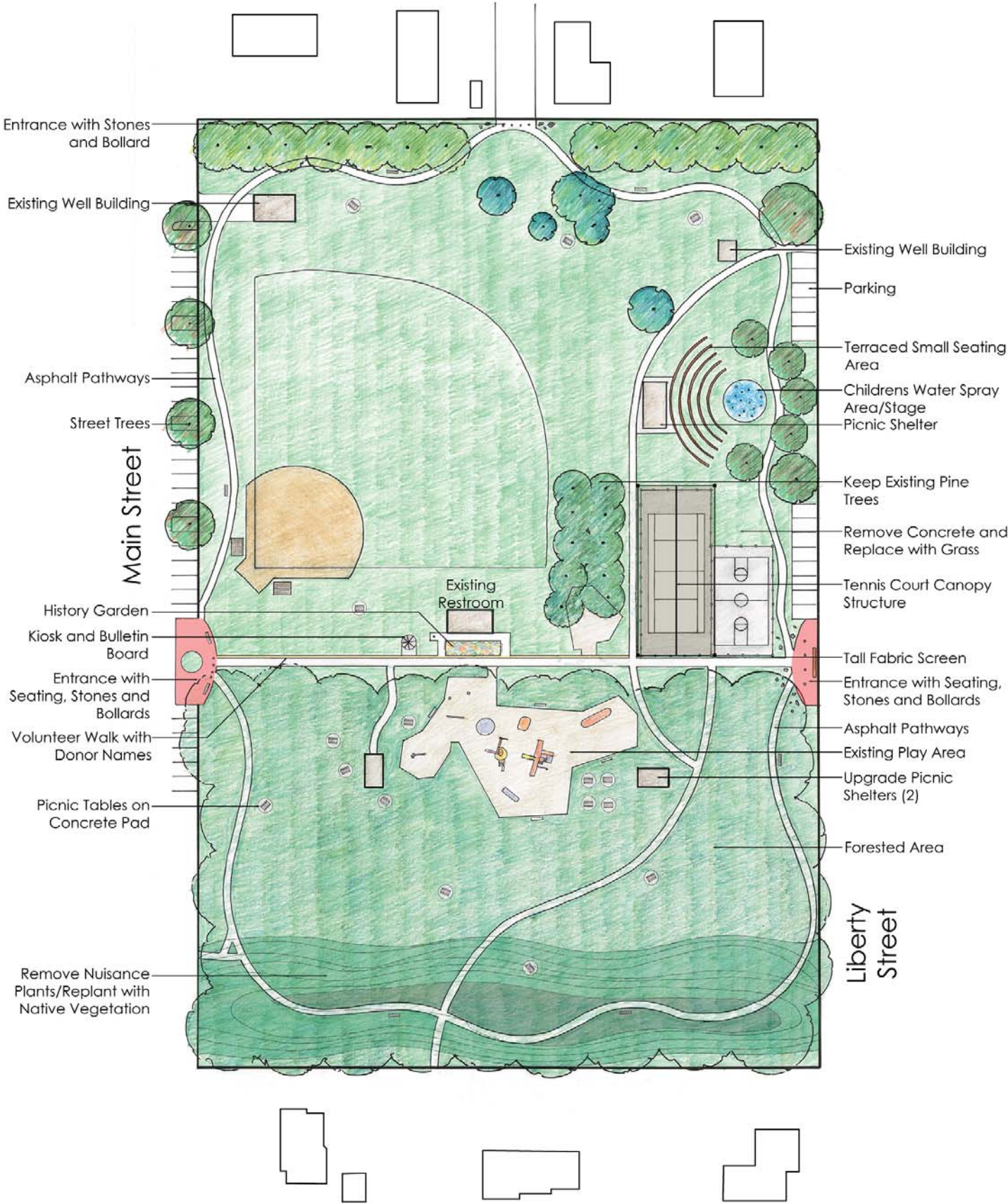


Asphalt Pathways

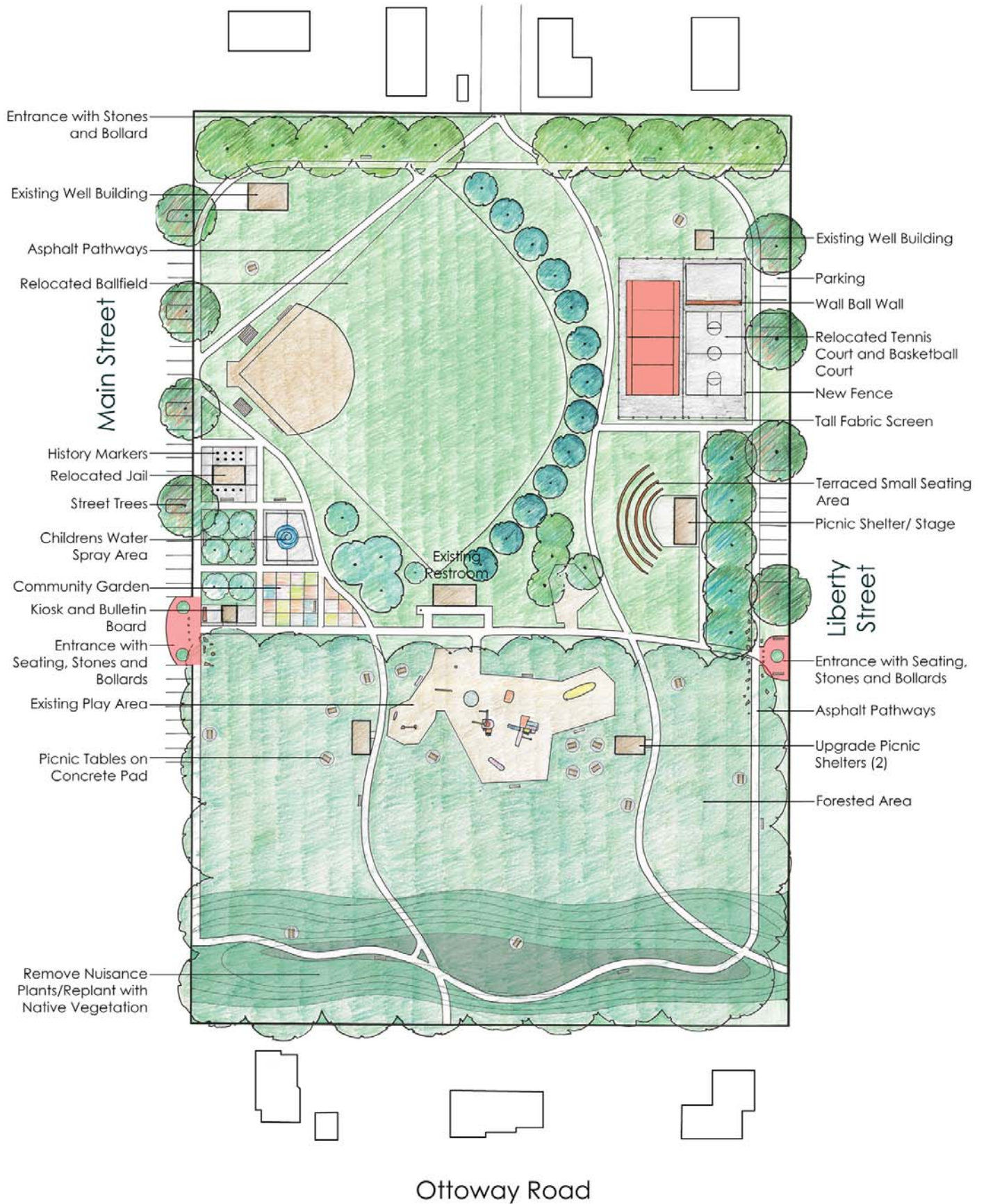


Outdoor Movies

CONCEPT PLAN A



CONCEPT PLAN B



Aurora City Park Public Comments

A public meeting was held on October 15th 2008 to solicit comments from the citizens of Aurora on the design of Aurora City Park. The following is a summary of the comments that were received.

City Park Questionnaire Summary

18 Total Responses

Naming Suggestions:

Aurora City Park (20)
Rick Johnson Memorial Park (3)
Memorial Park (2)
Giesy Park (1)
Anny Fry Park
Fry Park

In the future, generally how will you get to the park?

Walk (16)
Bike (10)
Drive (7)

What was the last thing you did at the park?

Playground (8)
Picnic (4)
Colony Days (2)
Walk under the Fir Trees (2)
Play Baseball
Run / Walk
Play with dog
Walked around the park
Haven't Been Lately
Happy People
Enjoy Outdoors

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think of city park?

Fir Trees (8)
Community Gathering Space (6)
Playground For Kids (5)
Lack of Maintenance. Weeds, etc (3)
Play Active Sports (3)
Family activities (2)
Nice Restroom (2)
Walk / Jog (2)
Great Horned Owls
Small city nostalgia
Bike

The Master Plan for the City Park will last for the next 10 to 20 years and certainly will not be built all at once. As the City begins to apply for State Grants, what do you think are the 3 top priorities?

Pathways (9)
Water Feature (6)
Maintenance (4)
Update Picnic Areas (3)
Irrigation System (2)
Baseball Field (2)
Covered Tennis Court (2)
Seating (2)
Improve Parking (2)
Activity Areas for Families
More Trees

Cost for Development
Relocate Ballfield
Remove Trees by Tennis Court
New Park
Restroom
Lawn
General Clean Up
Benches for Visitors/Walkers
Bulletin Board/Kiosk
Dark Sky Lighting

The Design Consultants, working with the Aurora Parks Committee, are showing two options for future improvements to the park. Please describe elements you like or dislike about the options. Elements from each can be combined to create a third park design!

Aurora City Park Public Comments

Option A

LIKES:

Paved walking paths (6)
Water Feature (5)
Covered Courts (5)
Terraced Seating / Stage Area (4)
Clear non-native plants
Less expensive than Option B
Better fit for the town
Variety of Activity Areas
Keeping Baseball Field where it is
Entrance

DISLIKES:

Northern part of walking path crossing the row of trees at the North end of park
Covered Courts- scale of structure to accommodate tennis will be too big
Need more bench seating
Terraced Seating Area

Option B

LIKES:

Paved Walkways (4)
New location of tennis and basketball courts (3)
Relocated Jail (3)
Distinctive Use Areas
Wonderful gathering area
Amphitheater
Kiosk / Bulletin Board
More room for Children's Play Area

DISLIKES:

Community Gardens (5)
Moving the tennis and basketball courts (4)
Relocated Jail (2)
Overall layout
Prefer Water Feature location from Option A
Prefer a more organic layout
Moving baseball field

General Comments:

Would like to have a sand Volleyball Court
A skate park would be great (3)
What is the lighting strategy?
Add a seesaw for kids
Move Jail to site of old hotel instead
Will PDFs be available?

Like pathways that connect and route through site; enhanced community area.
PRYDE (Youth sports organization) would provide the materials for a second baseball field at City Park. This would allow 2 simultaneous games for up to 4th/5th graders (of which there are approximately 15 teams).
Consider incorporating walking paths into transportation system plan
Most interested in improving the baseball area for little league

PARK IMPROVEMENTS SUMMARY

The final Master Plan for Aurora City Park was generated from citizen comments collected at a public meeting on the Concept A and Concept B designs. A questionnaire was distributed which had the public describe their favorite activities at the park and what they liked and disliked about the park concept designs. The design team combined these ideas into one final design.

In this design most existing park elements stay where they are, except for the ballfield which has been rotated clockwise 45 degrees. The outfield is laid out to double as a soccer field. An irrigation system will be installed to keep the fields green through the summer. A concession stand will be added onto the restroom building for large events in the park such as a baseball or soccer game. New asphalt pedestrian paths create a loop path around the park. Picnic tables on concrete pads will be added around this loop and within the evergreen forest next to the play structures. The park's main entries at the east and west will become small plazas with bollards, benches, and specialty paving. Upgraded parking off Liberty and Main Street will serve the park. The existing tennis courts and basketball courts will get new asphalt surfacing and a wall ball wall will be added in this area. A cover over the tennis courts will allow for year round use of the courts. A new major feature in the park will be the small terraced seating area north of the courts with a new large picnic shelter that doubles as a stage. This area can be used for community gatherings or rented out for private events.

The relocation of the ball field allows room for a series of interpretive gardens just off the western entry into the site. Here you'll find a Kiosk and bulletin board, a children's water spray area, historical garden, and seating areas. The play structures will remain as they are, with any necessary safety upgrades. New landscaping will be installed over the entire site in the form of shade trees, path accents, formal gardens and screening. Pedestrian scale lighting will be added for park safety in the evenings. Ongoing maintenance will be required for the removal of invasive plant species within the evergreen forest. This is a great opportunity for neighborhood volunteers to get involved in the care of the park.

PHASE 1:

- New Asphalt pedestrian paths
- Relocate baseball diamond and install irrigation
- Construct new seating amphitheater and picnic shelter/stage
- Upgrade and add parking on Main and Liberty Streets
- Install new trees and shrubs

PHASE 2:

- Add new entry elements to East and West sides of the park
- Install interpretive gardens at west entry
- Construct new concession stand
- Add gravel path through evergreen trees

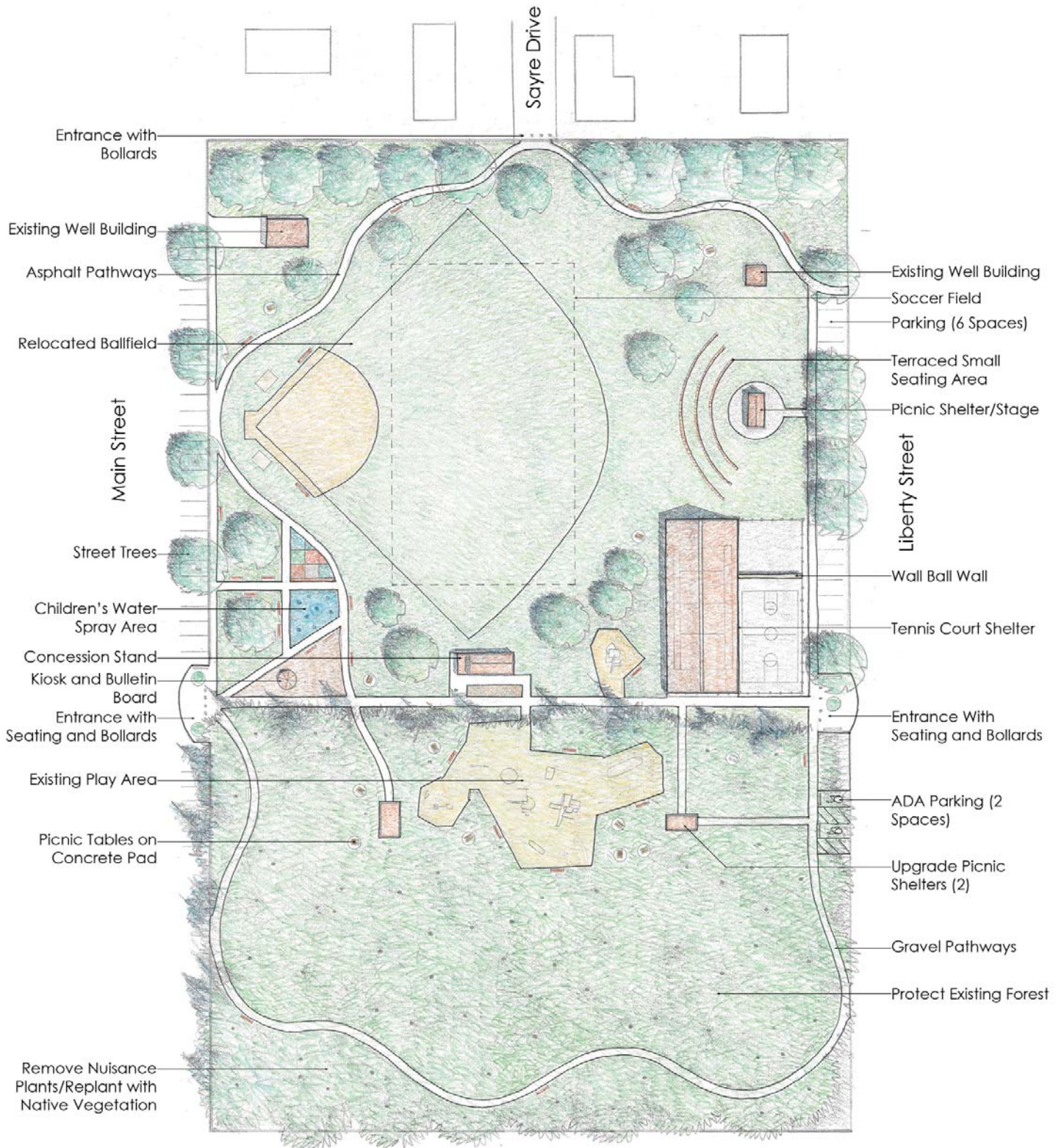
PHASE 3:

- Resurface tennis courts and add cover
- Resurface basketball court
- Add wall ball wall and resurface

ONGOING EFFORTS:

- Removal of invasive plant species

Master Plan



Aurora City Park Cost Estimate

Item	Cost	
SOFT COSTS		
1 Survey (topo & trees)	\$8,000	
2 Design Fees (approximate)	\$20,000	
3 City Permits	\$5,000	
4 Construction Contingency (10%)	\$20,000	
5 Contractor Mobilization (.8%)	\$17,084	
Total	\$70,084	
CONSTRUCTION COSTS		
1 Relocate Ballfield	\$65,000	
2 Pathways (north area)	\$68,900	
3 New Parking	\$12,500	
4 Site Furnishings	\$18,500	
5 New Shelter	\$40,000	Donated Labor to install
6 New Entries (2)	\$15,650	
7 Amphitheater (reduced seating)	\$45,000	
Total	\$265,550	
Estimating Contingency (10%)	\$26,555	
GRAND TOTAL	\$362,189	TARGET \$300,000 TO \$350,000
FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS/VOLUNTEER EFFORT		
1 New Trees	\$8,190	
2 Pathways (south area)	\$20,000	
3 Entry Gardens	\$15,000	
4 Habitat Restoration	\$10,000	Volunteer (?)
5 Kids Water Spray Area	\$75,000	
6 Wall Ball/Upgrade Existing Courts	\$10,900	(Includes cutting down pine trees)
7 Kiosk	\$5,500	
TOTAL FUTURE PHASE	\$144,590	

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Like most of the Willamette Valley, the area around Aurora was occupied by Native Americans who took advantage of the abundant resources the Valley has to offer. Eventually Settlers and Fur Traders were also attracted to this region due to the ease of salmon fishing, hunting and farming. The fertile land led to the establishment of a grist mill and spinning mills to process the grains grown in the region. The mills changed ownership several times, but remained located on what is now the Aurora Mills Park site. It was the great success of these mills brought the development of the railroad through what is now the City of Aurora. Once established, the railroad led to the construction of the saw mill and timber industry in Aurora, along with produce and flour exports. The railroad also led to the construction of the Aurora Hotel, a popular stop for travelers riding the train between San Francisco and Portland.

HISTORIC TIMELINE

- Pre-history The Kalapulyan are a group of eight tribes speaking three languages, formerly inhabiting the Willamette River Valley, OR. The Ahantchuyuk sub-group lived in the vicinity of the Pudding River.
- 1782-1855 Kalapulyan tribes are ravaged by a series of epidemics after coming into contact with fur traders and settlers, and eventually cede their remaining lands to the U.S. government.
- 1849 Grist and Saw/Spinning mills with Mill Pond built on future park site by pioneer William Whitney.
- 1852 Mills taken over from Whitney by David Smith and George White.
- 1856 William Keil, a charismatic Prussian tailor and self-styled physician, purchases the George White Donation Land Claim on the Pudding River for his followers. The mills were inactive, but still standing at this time.
- 1857 The mills are reactivated and the fledgling settlement is named Aurora Mills.
- 1867 The Aurora Hotel- opposite the park site- is one of the earliest structures in town. Built along the territorial highway, it becomes a famous stopping point.
- 1870 Railroad arrives in Aurora. The Hotel serves meals to the general public and to rail passengers en route to Portland from San Francisco.
- 1877 William Keil dies and the colony is subsequently dissolved.
- 1881 Wagner and heirs take over the Mill, then sell to J.D. Hurst.
- 1883 J.D. Hurst adds roller machinery to the Flouring Mill. Capacity is 200 barrels per day.
- 1888 Cole takes over operation of the saw mill. A railroad trestle side track is constructed to connect the Southern Pacific railroad to the mill. The W.S. Hurst Company (son of J.D. Hurst) manages and ships local produce via rail.
- 1889 The grist mill is manufacturing roller granulated flour, rye and buckwheat flour, corn meal and mill feed of all kinds; The Saw Mill manufactures fir and cedar timber.
- 1890 A disastrous flood nearly washes out the mill dam. Cole and Hurst are the greatest private losers.
- 1901 A fire burns the Flour Mill to ashes.
- 1902 John and Fred Hurst start the Aurora Light Company and Feed Mill in the same location. It contains modern dynamos and machinery. They also maintained a cereal mill and a feed chopper, all powered by the water of Mill Creek. The Light Company provides electricity to the towns of Canby, Barlow, Hubbard and Aurora.
- 1915 Aurora Electric Light becomes Molalla Electric Light.
- c.1907 The Spinning Mill is no longer operational and the Mill Pond is filled.
- c.1907 The Spinning Mill building is moved to new location on site adjacent to the Mill Creek Bridge where it is used as a Sunday School and community gathering space.
- c.1908 Circus is held on the park site.
- 1911 A Band Hall is built at the former Hurst storage depot, also housing the Ehlen hardware store and other businesses.
- 1934 Aurora Hotel is torn down and the new Mill Creek Bridge alignment cuts through the site of the former hotel.
- 1936 Aerial shows Band Hall and some remaining outbuildings from the Grist Mill/Electric Plant.
- 1956 The Band Hall is torn down.
- 2008 Site is considered for a new city park

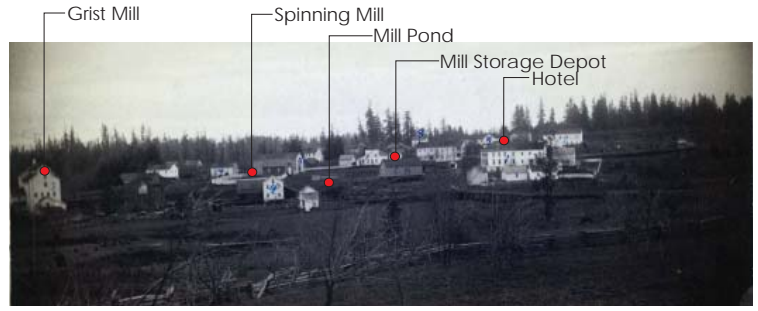
Historic Photographs



PRE-HISTORY
Native Americans of the Kalapuyan group inhabit the Willamette River Valley. The Ahantchuyuk lived in the vicinity of the Pudding River.



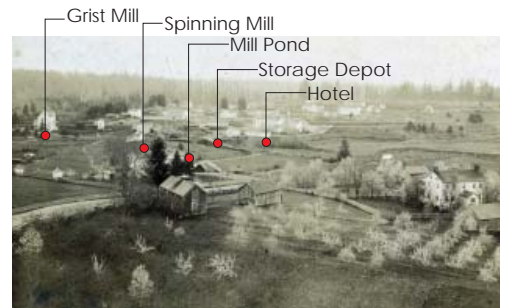
EARLY SETTLEMENT 1780s-1850s
Early white settlers to the Willamette Valley encountered an oak-savannah landscape cultivated by the native people over thousands of years of managed burning. The area around Aurora was unique in that it was densely wooded.



Grist Mill, 1849-1901
Aurora Roller Mills shown here in the 1880s or 1890s.



Aurora Hotel, 1867-1934
The Aurora Hotel-opposite the park site- was one of the earliest structures in town, built along the territorial highway, a famous stopping point for rail passengers between Portland and San Francisco.



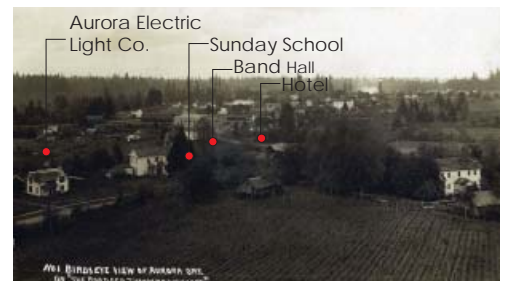
View of Aurora, c. 1880



View of Aurora, c. 1900
Note the Mill Pond and railroad spur.



View of Aurora, c. 1908



View of Aurora, c. 1912



Aerial Photograph of Park Site, 1936



Aerial Photograph of Park Site, 1966



Aerial Photograph of Park Site, Present

INTRODUCTION

The city owns approximately 8.5 acres of undeveloped property at the north end of town, off of Ehlen Road, between the Mill Creek Bridge and the railroad tracks. Due to population growth and community interest, the city is planning to use this parcel of land for a new park. The site has many natural features that make it unique-its open meadow, wetlands, forested areas, and a creek that runs along the northern property line. This site is also historically significant. The mills that were constructed on Mill Creek here were what originally spurred growth in the area. With its variety of wildlife habitat and historical richness this site has the potential to become an ideal natural scenic area for Aurora residents to enjoy. There is also ample opportunity to take advantage of the property's historical significance through interpretive signs and educational gardens. The following list lays out the community's goals for this new park.

AURORA MILLS PARK GOALS

1. Provide an attractive open space with a park-like atmosphere for the community, particularly the residents living in North Aurora
2. Create a park that provides a diversity of experiences and compliments the existing Aurora City Park
3. Preserve and enhance the natural resources and sensitive habitat areas of the park
4. Maintain, protect and interpret the existing historical features and cultural artifacts within the open space
5. Provide open lawn areas for informal recreational opportunities
6. Provide opportunities for crossing Mill Creek or overlooks and consider partnering with adjacent landowners for future park expansion
7. Consider park amenities that bring the community together
8. Include materials, surfaces and planting appropriate in a natural setting, low maintenance and reflect the historical character of Aurora
9. The design should always consider the safety and security of the user
10. Provide easy access into the park by pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles
11. The design should adhere to the City's Historic Design Review Criteria



Existing evergreen trees.



Entrance to the park from Ehlen Road.



Mill Creek



The banks of Mill Creek



Existing overhead power lines running through the site.

SITE ANALYSIS

The Site

The 8.5 acre site is an irregularly shaped piece of undeveloped property at the north end of town, off of Ehlen Road, between the Mill Creek Bridge and the railroad tracks. Mill Creek runs along its northern edge. The site slopes quickly down from the railroad, then flattens out as it moves toward Mill Creek. The property is mainly open meadow with a few trees, with a heavily planted riparian buffer along the creek. Across Mill Creek to the northwest is Albers Pond. While not on the city's property, the pond can be seen from the park, and park design should take into account these borrowed views.

Adjacent Properties

The park has a narrow access point off Ehlen Road. The park entry is sandwiched between the Union Pacific Railroad property and private residential property. Additionally, the city is hoping to sell a parcel of land in this same area to provide funding for a new City Hall. The sale of this land will likely have an impact on the entry into this park, depending how the new buyers would like to develop this site. The land across Mill Pond to the north is also private property. A boundary survey will need to be completed to define the actual property lines within this area.

Flood Plain

In order to successfully develop this park site the yearly fluctuations of the water levels in mill creek must be understood. The 100 year floodplain bisects the park from the southwest corner to the northwest corner, making up approximately one half of the park site. Code dictates that any structures within a floodplain must sit one foot above the floodplain elevation and will need to be flood-proofed. Additionally cut and fill must be balanced for any construction done in the flood plain.

PGE Lines

PGE power lines cross the site from east to west. These high voltage lines are supported by a grouping of three power poles. There are of these groupings on the park site. The electrical wires run approximately 35 feet from the ground. PGE requires that they have access to these lines, therefore no permanent park structures can be build below them.

The Wetlands

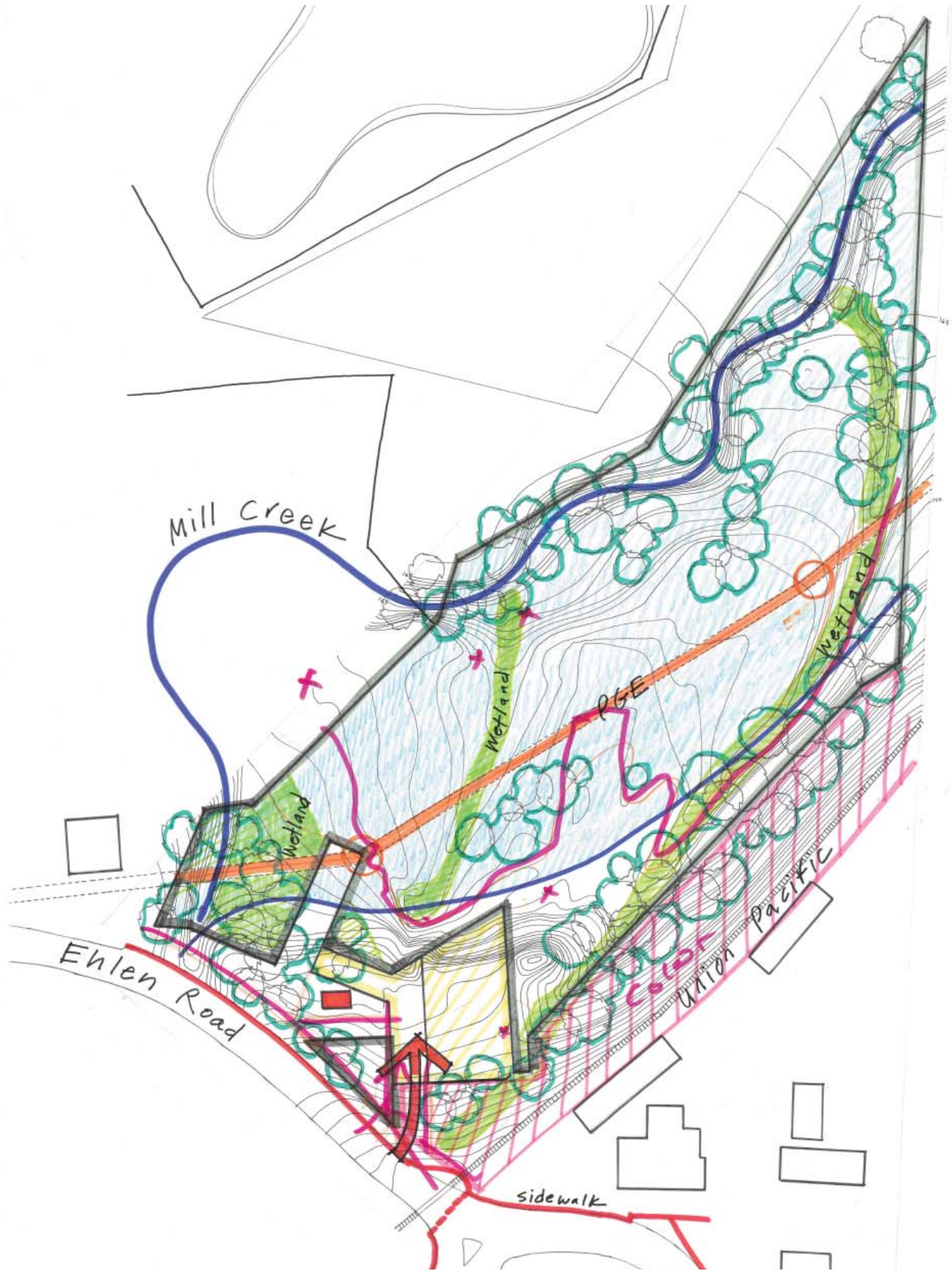
There are three wetlands on site. This was discovered through a preliminary wetland determination study done on the site in September of 2008. If these wetlands are clearly not impacted by the new park design, than a formal wetland determination does not need to be completed. This should be taken into account throughout the design and development of this new park. Invasive species will need to be removed from these wetlands and replaced with native plantings.

Existing Vegetation

The natural scenic beauty of this site makes it an ideal place for a nature park. Its open meadow, wetlands, and riparian corridor provide scenic beauty and educational opportunities. Existing trees include cottonwoods, dogwoods, black walnut and alder. From the proposed entry the site flattens out into an open meadow. Invasive species will need to be eradicated in order to preserve the habitats of native plants and wildlife. Himalayan Blackberry is a very abundant invasive plant species found here in groupings throughout the site.



The existing grass meadow is bordered with dense vegetation including non-native invasive species.



INTRODUCTION

After initial community feedback and goals were collected from Aurora citizens two concepts were developed by the design team for this new park. The two concepts have different approaches to the location of parking, access and impacts to existing wetlands, and circulation. While two concepts took different approaches to the new park design each still works to meet all the community's goals.

CONCEPT A

Pathways weave through the site in Concept Plan A, emulating the curves of mill creek. Where paths travel over the wetlands, their surface changes to wooden boardwalks. Benches are spaces along the paths for visitors to rest or take in the view. For those who drive to the park, a small 6 car parking lot is located off the park entry at the southern end of the site. Another larger parking lot is placed further into the site, where the topography flattens out. There is a permanent restroom building just adjacent to this larger lot. A large circular open lawn takes up the center of the site. It is intended to be a multi-use area for informal games such as frisbee, soccer, or a game of catch. The site has one large picnic shelter for group gathering at the northeast of this large lawn area. Dispersed along the parks pathways are a series of interpretive gardens. These include a children's environmental play area, a new water quality garden, an ecologically themed garden and a historical themed garden. New plantings throughout the site will include enhanced wetland planting, buffer planting at the creek, and general native plantings. Invasive species such as himalayan blackberry will be removed.



Orchard



Mill Creek Overlook



Interpretive Sign



Picnic Shelter

CONCEPT B

Concept Plan B has a similar curving main pathway as in Concept A, but in this design all paths steer clear of the existing wetland. Two shorter, north-south paths lead you out to overlooks for views of Mill Creek. In this design the large parking area is located closer to the main park entry. This lot is somewhat smaller than in Concept A and has a seasonal, portable bathroom to serve the park instead of a permanent restroom. Large waves of wildflowers follow the main path through the site, and are bordered to the south by a large multiuse lawn area. Concept B has two large picnic shelters, one with a 'Grist Mill' interpretive theme, and one with a 'Spinning Mill' interpretive theme, recalling the early history of the mills on Mill Creek. Seating benches are spread out along the path, along with large grassy mounds for children to play on. The center of the park also has a large grove of flowering trees which will provide shade and seasonal interest. New planting will include enhanced wetland planting, buffer planting at the creek and general native plantings. Invasive species such as himalayan blackberry will be removed.



Wetland Enhancements



Wildflower Meadow

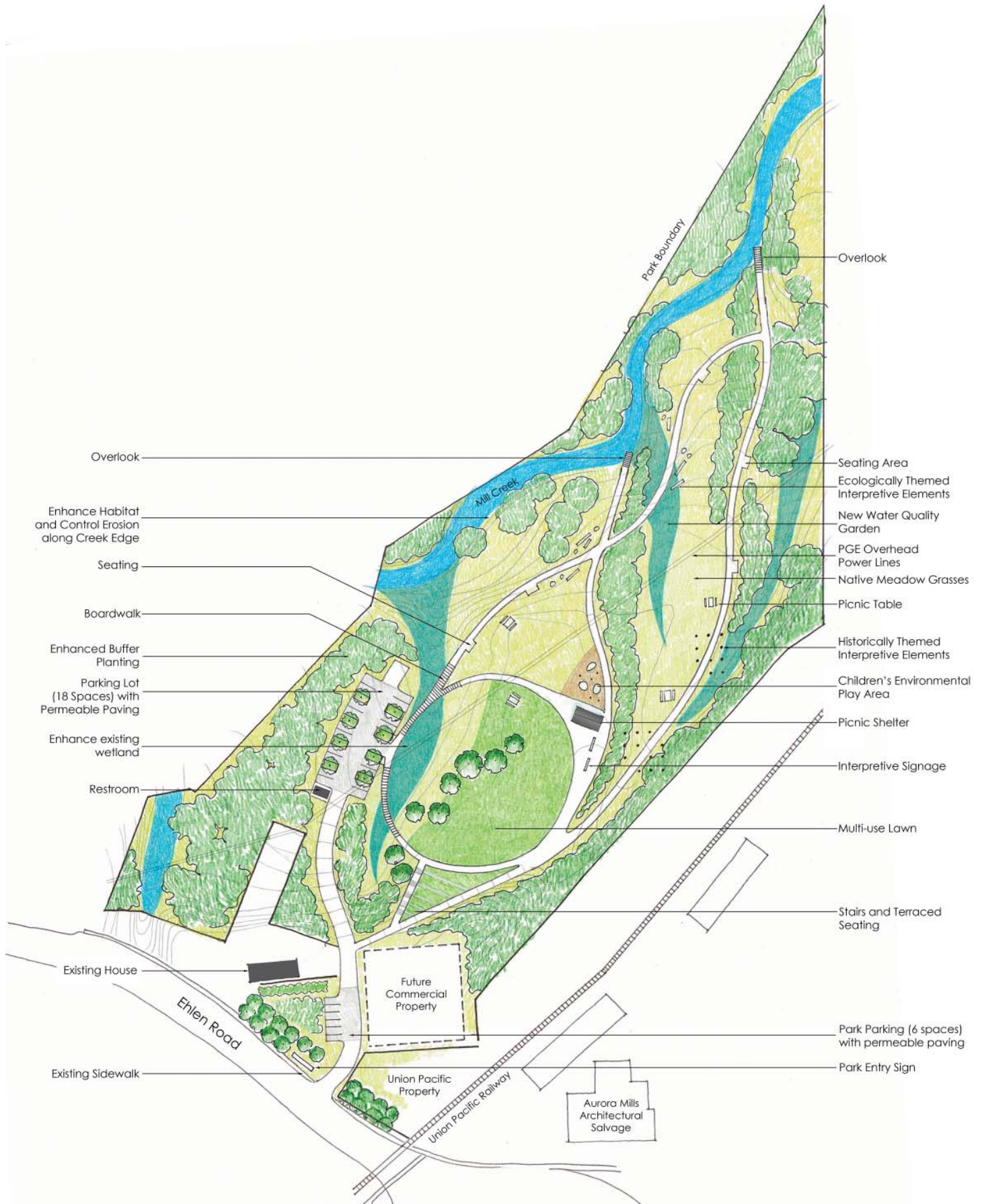


Interpretive Elements

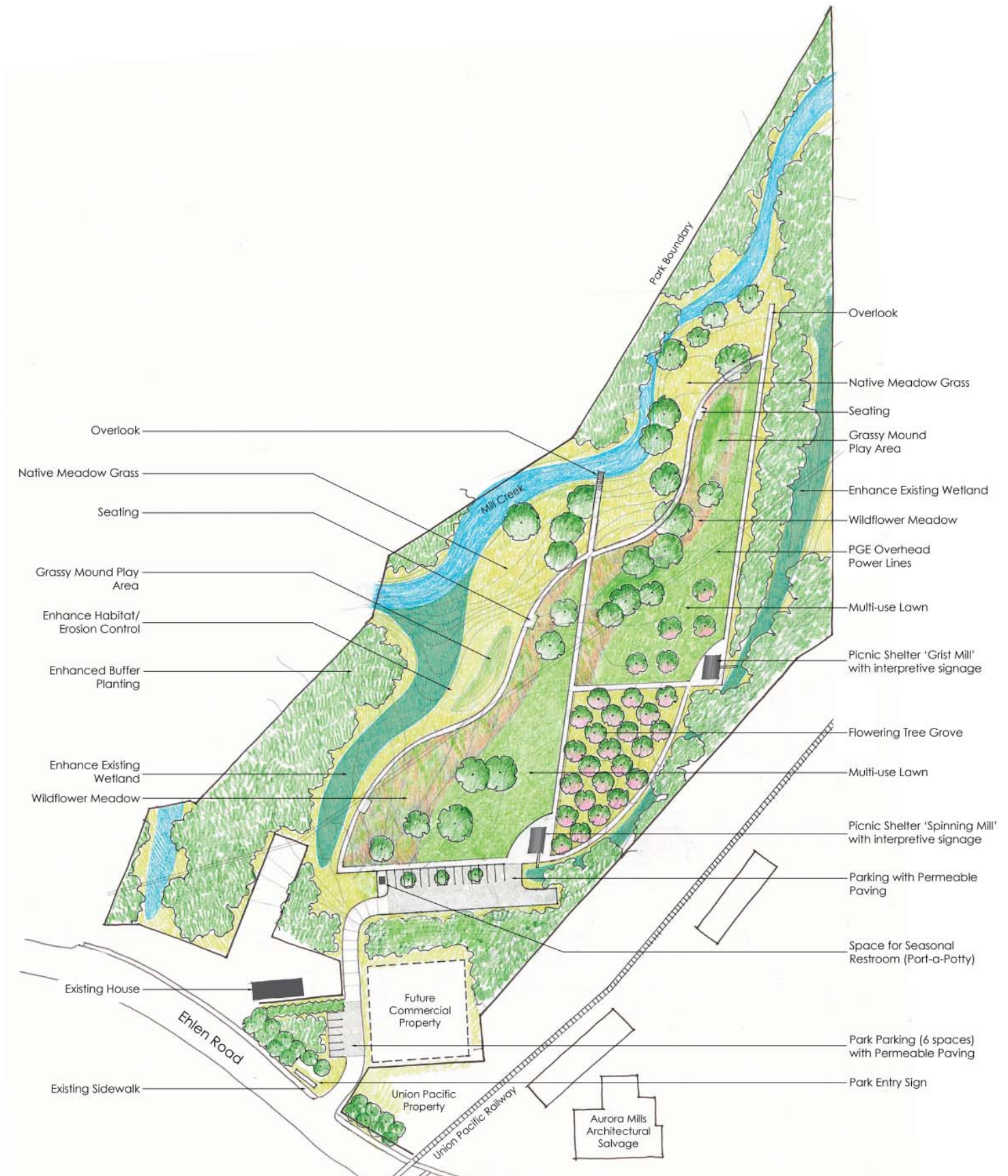


Ecologically Themed Interpretive Elements

Concept Plan A



Concept Plan B



Aurora Mills Park Public Comments

North Park Questionnaire Summary

19 Total Responses

In the future, generally how will you get to the park?

- Walk (16)
- Bike (11)
- Drive (8)

The Master Plan for the North Park will last for the next 20 years and certainly will not be built all at once. Please help us determine the priorities for the first phase of improvements. Choose from the following categories and rank them in order of importance (1 being the most important):

	1	2	3	4	5	Average													
Blackberry and Nuisance Plant Removal	2	3	4	4	3	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	5	3	4	3	1	2.44
Parking	4	2	2	5	1	3	3	2	2	5	4	2	5	3	5	5	4	5	3.44
Paths and Trails	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	2	1.61
Interpretive Elements (like History Signs and Markers)	5	5	5	3	5	4	5		5	3	5	5	4	4	4	6	5	3	4.47
Habitat Improvements including Native Planting	3	4	3	2	4	5	4	4	4	4	2	4	2	2	2	2	6	4	3.39
Other :																			
Restroom (3)																3	2		
Structures (1)																			

The Design Consultants, working with the Aurora Parks Committee, are showing two options for future improvements to the park. Please describe elements you like or dislike about the options. Elements from each of the plans can be combined to create a third park design!

Option A

- LIKES:
- Path layout, especially the circular trail.
 - Overlooks
 - Native Plants
 - Open Spaces / Central Area
 - Good visibility of parking from road.
 - Terraced seating for movies/concerts
 - Childrens Play Area
 - Boardwalk over wetland
 - Wetland / Water quality area
 - Practical parking design
- DISLIKES:
- Parking takes up valuable park space.
 - Not enough parking

Option B

- LIKES:
- Grist Mill historic connection
 - Wildflowers would be nice if maintenance isn't prohibitive
 - Less parking in natural area
 - Less money to build
 - Prettier!
 - Grassy Mound
- DISLIKES:
- Orchard doesn't seem to fit with wetland theme.
 - Linear paths

General Comments:

- Feel that the park being proposed is unnecessary. Existing park needs attention first.
- Concerned about bridging over Mill Creek now or in the future.
- Water/Flood area needs more consideration. What happens when it floods every year? Is it clean?
- Is it possible to have a canoe/kayak entrance point on Mill Creek? Idea was brought up by the Vision Committee.

Naming Suggestions:

- Aurora Mills Park (18)
- Mill Creek Park (7)
- Colony Park (3)
- Mill Race Park (2)
- Three Mills Park (1)

PARK DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

The final Aurora Mills Master Plan incorporates input from the public meeting and integrates the most successful ideas from Concept A and B. While much of the open meadow in this design is planted in an informal, native grass mix, there is a multi-use lawn area at the center of the park. Picnic tables on concrete pads are dispersed around this lawn area. Parking is laid out close to the park entrance, wrapping around the future commercial property. The upper and lower parking lots provide 17 spaces total for the park. A series of asphalt pathways weave through the property, curving to reflect the undulation of Mill Creek, while providing access to nature overlooks. The paths form a loop around the park, passing by a series of themed gardens: A Children's Environmental Play Area, a garden themed on the history of Aurora and an ecologically themed garden. The pedestrian pathways generally steer away from the existing wetland, although there is one wetland crossing- a boardwalk bridges over the enhanced wetland and leads out to a seating circle with boulder benches arranged on a concrete pad.

One large picnic shelter sits off the main entry path into the park. It can provide shelter for group gatherings or can be rented for family reunions or other get-togethers. Three overlook areas will be constructed to capture the views of Mill Creek, and across the creek to Albers Pond. Removal of invasive plant species will be an ongoing park maintenance task. Native plant species will be planted throughout the site, to enhance the riparian corridor, for additional screening and buffering, and for wetland enhancement.

PHASE 1

- Clear the site for future park development, Remove invasive species
- Install gravel walking paths

PHASE 2

- Install upper parking lot (6 spaces)
- Add asphalt walking trails
- Install wood boardwalk over wetlands
- Enhance Wetland with native plantings
- Add benches and seating areas along paths
- Install overlooks
- Construct picnic shelter

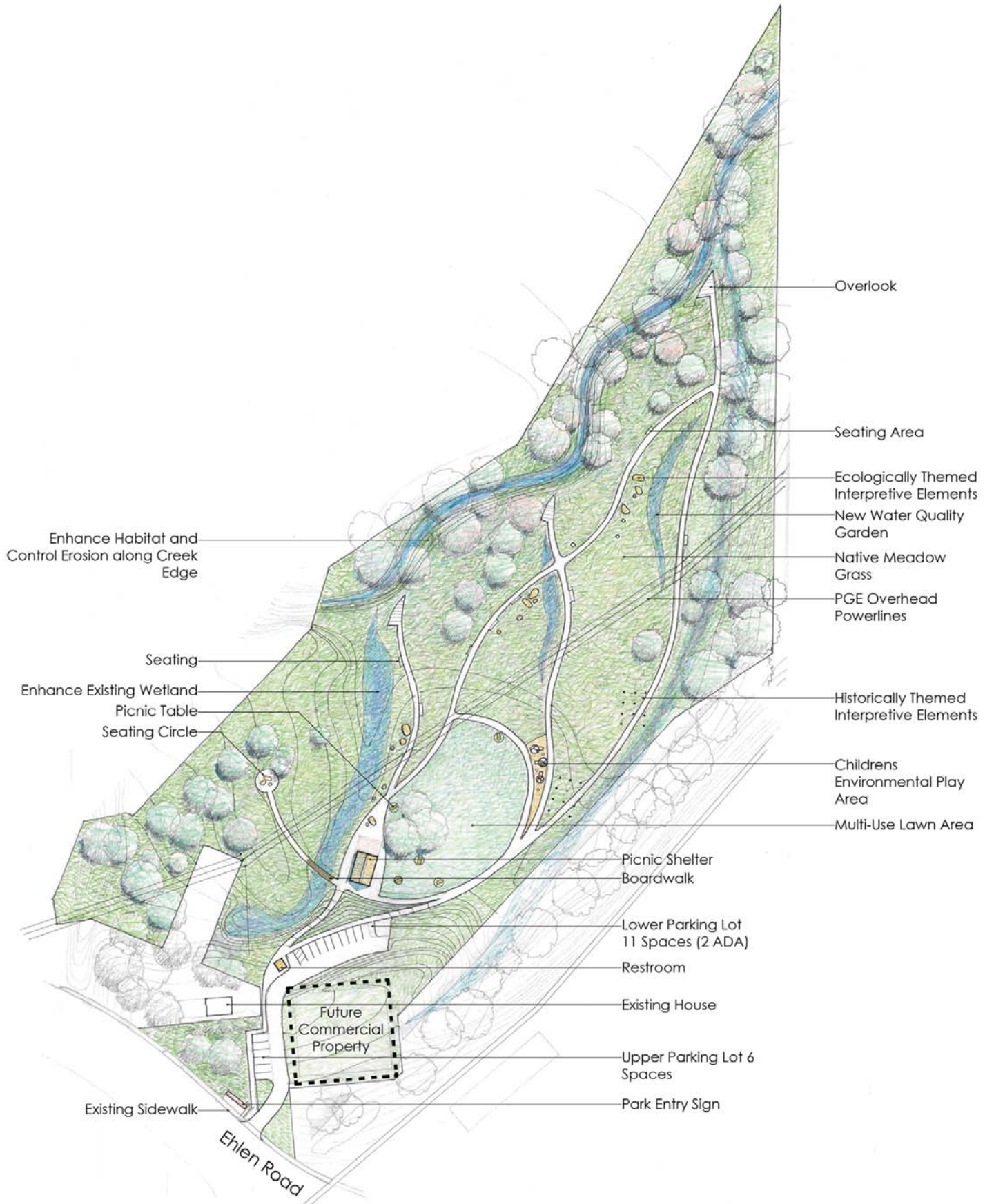
PHASE 3

- Install lower parking lot (11 spaces)
- Plant and irrigate large lawn area
- Install restroom building
- Construct and plant interpretive gardens, including Children's Environmental Play Area, and Historically and Ecologically themed interpretive gardens.

ONGOING EFFORTS

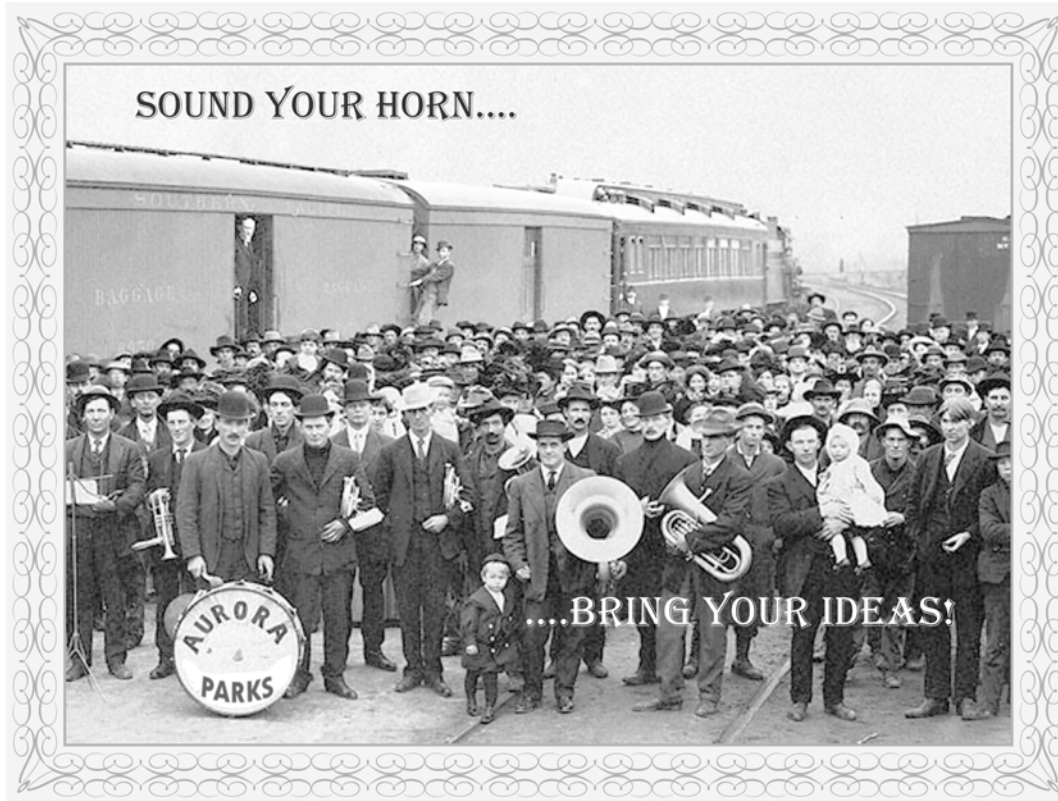
- Removal of invasive plant species

Master Plan



Cost Estimate

Item	Cost	
SOFT COSTS		
1 Wetland Survey	\$10,000	
2 Site Survey	\$7,500	
3 Archaeology	\$5,000	
4 Design Fees (approximate)	\$20,000	
5 City Permits	\$5,000	
6 Construction Contingency (10%)	\$20,000	
7 Contractor Mobilization (.8%)	\$17,084	
Total	\$84,584	
CONSTRUCTION COSTS		
1 Upper Road/Parking	\$60,000	
2 Pathways	\$110,250	
3 Shelter	\$40,000	Donated Labor & Installation
4 Portable Restroom Pad	\$1,000	
5 Blackberry Removal	\$0	Volunteer
6 Native Planting (1st Phase)	\$20,000	Material Cost/Volunteer Planting
Total	\$231,250	
Estimating Contingency (10%)	\$23,125	
GRAND TOTAL	\$338,959	TARGET \$300,000 TO \$350,000
FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS/VOLUNTEER EFFORT		
1 Lower Road/Parking	\$125,000	
2 Overlooks (each)	\$10,000	
3 Meadow/Native Grasses	\$67,730	
4 Lawn Area	\$45,500	
5 Restroom	\$210,000	
6 Site Furnishings	\$38,100	
7 Interpretive Elements	\$65,000	
8 Mill Creek Enhancements	\$15,650	
9 Wooden Boardwalk	\$8,000	
10 Habitat Restoration (Phase 2)	\$20,000	Material Cost/Volunteer Planting
TOTAL FUTURE PHASE	\$604,980	



You are invited to attend an interactive open house for a new park in Aurora and enhancements to our existing park. Ideas, concept designs, goals and naming of the parks will be discussed.

Drop by anytime!
Refreshments provided.

Oct. 15th, 7-9pm
American Legion Hall
21510 Main St NE

Sponsored by the Aurora Parks Committee

Image on Reverse: *Aurora Band Greets Southern Pacific Farm Train, 1910.* Credit: Oregon Historical Society. (The sign in the original image reads 'Aurora Band'.)

AURORA CITY PARK

DRAFT MAINTENANCE PLAN

02-27-2009

Introduction

Park maintenance has long been cited as a concern among Aurora citizens. In 2005 the City Council passed Ordinance 443 citing “The City will strive to improve level of maintenance in the current city park facilities...” Since then, the City has improved the park infrastructure with new restrooms, new playground equipment and a refurbished basketball court area and added additional staffing for park maintenance. However, the issue continues to surface. When residents were recently asked to list their priorities at a Town Hall meeting on October 15, 2008 improved park maintenance again topped the list.

As the City moves forward in implementing its Parks Master Plan (2005), it is essential that citizens’ maintenance concerns be addressed. The public perception created by not doing so places our efforts to expand park facilities at risk.

The purpose of this document is to begin a conversation with the City staff to document current practices and expenses. Eventually it will outline a maintenance plan and budget that will achieve the level of care the citizens expect and the City can afford. It is the intention of the Parks Committee to present this maintenance plan to the City Council for final approval and implementation.

Evaluation

Although the Aurora City Park includes many amenities, the overall quality of the landscape is poor. Most notably, the ball field is in very rough condition and therefore is underused. It appears that day-to-day maintenance of the park is performed on an as-needed basis rather than as a preventative “landscape management” approach. An immediate and significant improvement could be achieved in the quality of the park landscape by simply developing an overall plan for better maintenance practices.

It is unclear what specific maintenance tasks are currently carried out, at what frequency these are performed, who performs them, how much time each task takes and how much each task is costing the City.

Also, little is documented regarding the park’s plant inventory or requirements, irrigation system components or operational data.

Cost of Maintenance

Current annual park maintenance costs for 2007-2008 were \$30,381 and budgeted for 2008-2009 is \$49,552. Included in these figures is \$10,000 spent annually on cleaning and

landscaping the downtown restroom area. Although we do not know how many labor hours are spent on park maintenance, we do now that these figures include: seasonal twice-a-week bathroom cleaning (Easter-October), seasonal once-a-week mowing, and twice a week trash removal. No routine pest control, week control or fertilization is currently practiced.

Is the current \$20,000-\$39,000 budgeted for the Aurora City Park adequate to achieve the level of service desired? Based on information from other cities, it should be. This budget about equates to \$3000-\$5500 per acre annual cost. Most cities spend between \$750-\$4500 per acre.

The Aurora City Park Master Plan (2008) calls for three phases of development over the next several years that is expected to increase maintenance costs annually by \$1000-\$2000. Again, based on data from other cities, our current budget levels should be adequate.

Role of Volunteers

Volunteers have historically played an important role in the continued maintenance of the park. Each year volunteers have led and participated in work parties to clean up the park, and spread the chips for the new playground. Volunteers can continue to be used to fill maintenance voids that existing staff cannot fulfill. Volunteers should work under the supervision of public works staff. This requires flexibility to be available on weekends when most volunteers are available.

Proposed Maintenance Schedule

The attached schedule outlines a level of maintenance we believe will result in improved quality of park experiences. Because no data exists on current practices, this schedule will need updating as the level of understanding increases. Many of these tasks are likely already being carried out on this or a similar schedule by City staff or contracted employees.

Trees and Plants

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Notes
Planting	X				
Fertilization		April	June	Sept	
Mulch		X			
Pest Control		X	X		
Plant Repair	X	X	X	X	
Pruning	X				

Ground Covers

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Notes
Planting	X				
Fertilization		April	June	Sept	
Mulch		X			
Pest Control		X	X		

Trimming	X				
Weed Control	X	X	X	X	

Field

	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Notes
De thatching	X	X			Mow once a week during growing season.
Aeration		April	June	Sept	
Mowing		X	X		
Re-seeding				X	
Fertilizing		X	X	X	
Weed Control		X	X	X	

Standard Furnishings (benches, tables, bike rack, trash cans, shelters)

		Weekly	Monthly	Bi-Annually	Yearly
Maintenance	Clean tables, benches, shelter counters, water fountain with water and mild soap to remove food, gum, graffiti, bird feces and dirt.	X			
	Inspect for chipped or cracked paint and rust spots			X	
	Re-apply wood treatment to exposed wood				X
Repair	Repair fixtures and other components per manufacturer	As needed			
Replace	Replace irreparable furnishings with the same make and models	As needed			

Playground

		Weekly	Monthly	Bi-Annually	Yearly
Maintenance	Remove trash from play area.	2			
	Inspect for sharp edges, rust, loose bolts and other hazards.		X		
	Remove graffiti.		X		
	Level out wood chips.	X			
Repair	Repair hazardous equipment	As needed			
Replace	Replace irreparable furnishings with the same make and models	As needed			

Ball Field & Courts

		Weekly	Monthly	Bi-Annually	Yearly

Maintenance	Remove trash and natural debris.	X			
	Inspect fences, bleachers, nets, bases for tears, sharp edges, rust, loose bolts and other hazards.		X		
	Remove graffiti.		X		
Repair	Repair hazardous equipment	As needed			
Replace	Replace irreparable furnishings with the same make and models	As needed			

Restrooms

		Weekly	Monthly	Bi-Annually	Yearly
Maintenance	Clean counters, toilets, floors, sinks and door handles with disinfectant solution. Stock toilet paper and soap. Remove trash.	2			
	Inspect for damage and graffiti. Remove graffiti.		X		
Repair	Repair broken fixtures.	As needed			
Replace	Replace irreparable furnishings with the same make and models	As needed			



9450 SW Commerce Circle, Suite 180
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September 10, 2008

Kurt Lango
Lango Hansen Landscape Architects
1100 NW Glisan #3B
Portland OR 97209

In Re: Aurora determination

Dear Kurt:

Pacific Habitat Services (PHS) completed an on-site wetland determination on several tax lots located north of Main Street and the Union Pacific Railroad in Aurora, Oregon on September 8, 2008. The purpose of the site visit was to identify potentially jurisdictional wetlands or other waters of the state/United States within the study area. Field work included an assessment of existing soils, vegetation, and evidence of hydrology. The approximate limits of suspected wetland and waterways on the site were drawn onto an aerial base map of the site; a delineation has not been completed and no wetlands or waterways were flagged.

Site Conditions

The site is characterized by a riparian buffer of variable width along Mill Creek in the north portion; a forested hill slope along the south side of the railroad tracks which define the southeast site boundary; by grassland through the west central portion; and by a predominance of Himalayan blackberry across the east central portion.

Mill Creek flows generally northeastward across the northern portion of the study area. Though no means of access could be obtained to areas north of the creek, due to relatively deep water at the only accessible reach of the creek, a visual assessment of conditions was possible through the narrow strip of riparian vegetation on the north bank of the creek. An assessment of existing vegetation north of the creek, along with a review of low elevation photos of the site, revealed it is unlikely that there are any wetland areas within the narrow strip of land located north and west of the creek.

In addition to the main channel of Mill Creek, the site also includes a second drainage, located generally just beyond the base of the hill side north of the railroad grade at the southern limits of the site. The eastern half of this channel was still very muddy through sections, though its central extent was quite dry. The western portions were completely inaccessible due to coverage by

Himalayan blackberry. The channel appears to begin near the southwest portion of the study area and presumably begins west of Ehlen Road before flowing across the site. It is very likely that a high percentage of the volume of flow in this channel is stormwater driven, though the wet sections at the east end suggest that groundwater sources likely contribute as well. Debris within the channel indicates that through the forested area in the south-central portion of the site seasonal water depths may approach four to five feet. Downstream (east) of a short break in the channel, which is likely connected via culvert, the channel is a bit wider and shallower. The channel location was verified nearly to its confluence with Mill Creek before trees and shrubs including willow, red osier dogwood, and nootka rose growing within and adjacent to the channel blocked further passage.

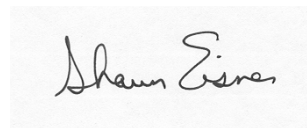
Though the grassland and Himalayan blackberry thickets that lie between Mill Creek and the intermittent drainage are generally upland, there is a narrow wetland swale with a direct hydrologic connection to Mill Creek. There is also a forested wetland located along the western boundary of the site. Again, due to the extent of Himalayan blackberry, there was no real opportunity to accurately verify the actual boundary of this forested wetland. The boundary as drawn on the attached photo is approximated, and based primarily on the presence of wetland tree species, primarily Oregon ash and willow.

The wetland swale in the central portion of the site continues south and then west from the creek, through the grassland and up to the northern limits of a relatively steep slope located in the general vicinity of the platted road that crosses the site. The wetland continues west into a small depression north of the Old Telephone Building. Though not confirmed, the wetland may extent further west, into the forested wetland west of the site. The northern portion of the wetland is characterized by wetland species including reed canarygrass and meadow foxtail; adjacent to the hill slope at its southern extent the wetland includes a thicket of nootka rose; the small depression at the west end is dominated by reed canarygrass, with Himalayan blackberry.

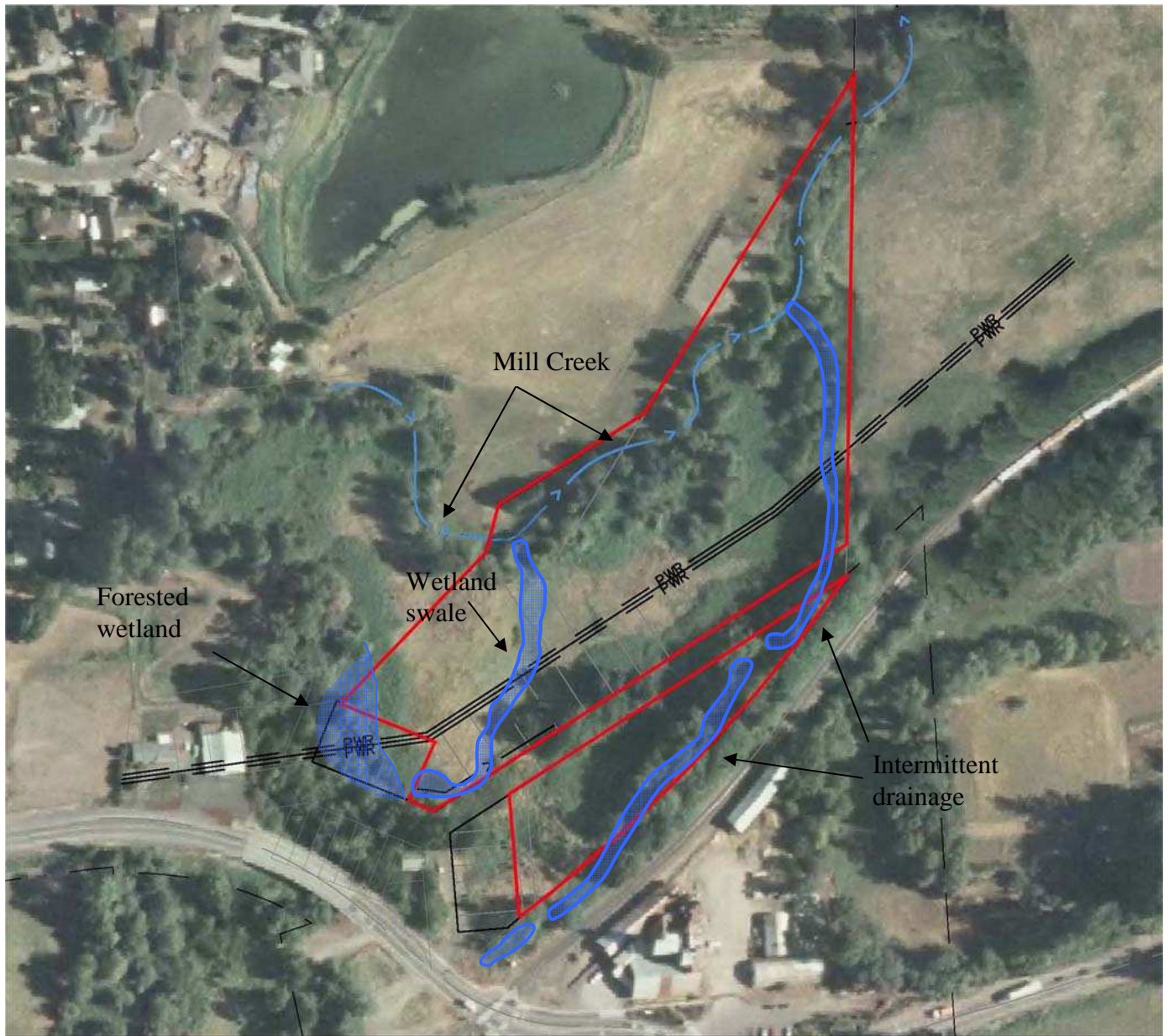
Conclusions

The site includes Mill Creek, a season to intermittent drainage that is a tributary to Mill Creek, a small portion of a forested wetland across the western site boundary, and a narrow wetland swale that crosses the central portion of the site generally from south to north. Forested and riparian areas across the remainder of the site are predominantly representative of upland conditions. Though field evidence suggests that the eastern half of the site which is dominated by blackberries is entirely upland, access to that area was extremely limited and there may be additional wetland areas hidden within the thickets.

Please contact me if you have any additional questions regarding the results of this determination.



Shawn Eisner
Pacific Habitat Services



All potentially jurisdictional boundaries are approximate and subject to change. A wetland delineation has not been completed on this site and no boundaries were flagged in the field.

9/9/08

4357

Potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the state/United States north of Main Street and the Union Pacific Railroad in Aurora, Oregon.

FIGURE
1

