

# SPRING GARDEN PARK MASTER PLAN

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PORTLAND PARKS  
& RECREATION  
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# INTRODUCTION

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*Spring Garden Park is a 4.65 acre site in southwest Portland. Acquired in 1999, the site is part of a constellation of parks in the Multnomah neighborhood. In an area where greenspace is at a premium, the park will be increasingly valuable as an open space and as a neighborhood park that offers a variety of recreational opportunities.*

## **Purpose of the Master Plan**

The Master Plan is designed to serve as a blueprint and a working guide for the future development and improvement of Spring Garden Park. The plan establishes a direction for future development, outlines priorities, identifies potential new facilities, and outlines an implementation strategy. The next step in the process, once funding is secured, is to prepare a set of construction drawings that will be used to develop the park.

## **Location & Context**

The 4.65 acre park is in the Multnomah Neighborhood, and is part of the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI). The site is bordered by SW Spring Garden Street and SW Dolph Court, between SW 32<sup>nd</sup> and SW 35<sup>th</sup> Streets.

The site lies roughly equidistant between the commercial strip along Barbur Blvd. several blocks to the south, and Multnomah Village, to the north. Because of the hilly terrain, neighborhood streets are often discontinuous and do not necessarily follow a strict grid pattern. There are very few pedestrian amenities such as sidewalks or crosswalks in the neighborhood and as a result, people have to walk in the streets (see photo below).



*SW Spring Garden St. is the northern boundary for the park (to the right in the photo).*

The surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of smaller single dwelling homes. Ten homes back up to the park along its length -- seven on the east and three on the west sides, all visible to some extent from the open field in the park.



*A single-family residence along the northwestern boundary of the park.*

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Once a preliminary concept had been prepared, an open house was held to review it in February, 2002. The plan also was reviewed by PPR's operations staff to ensure that the design met the agency's maintenance guidelines.

## **Acquisition**

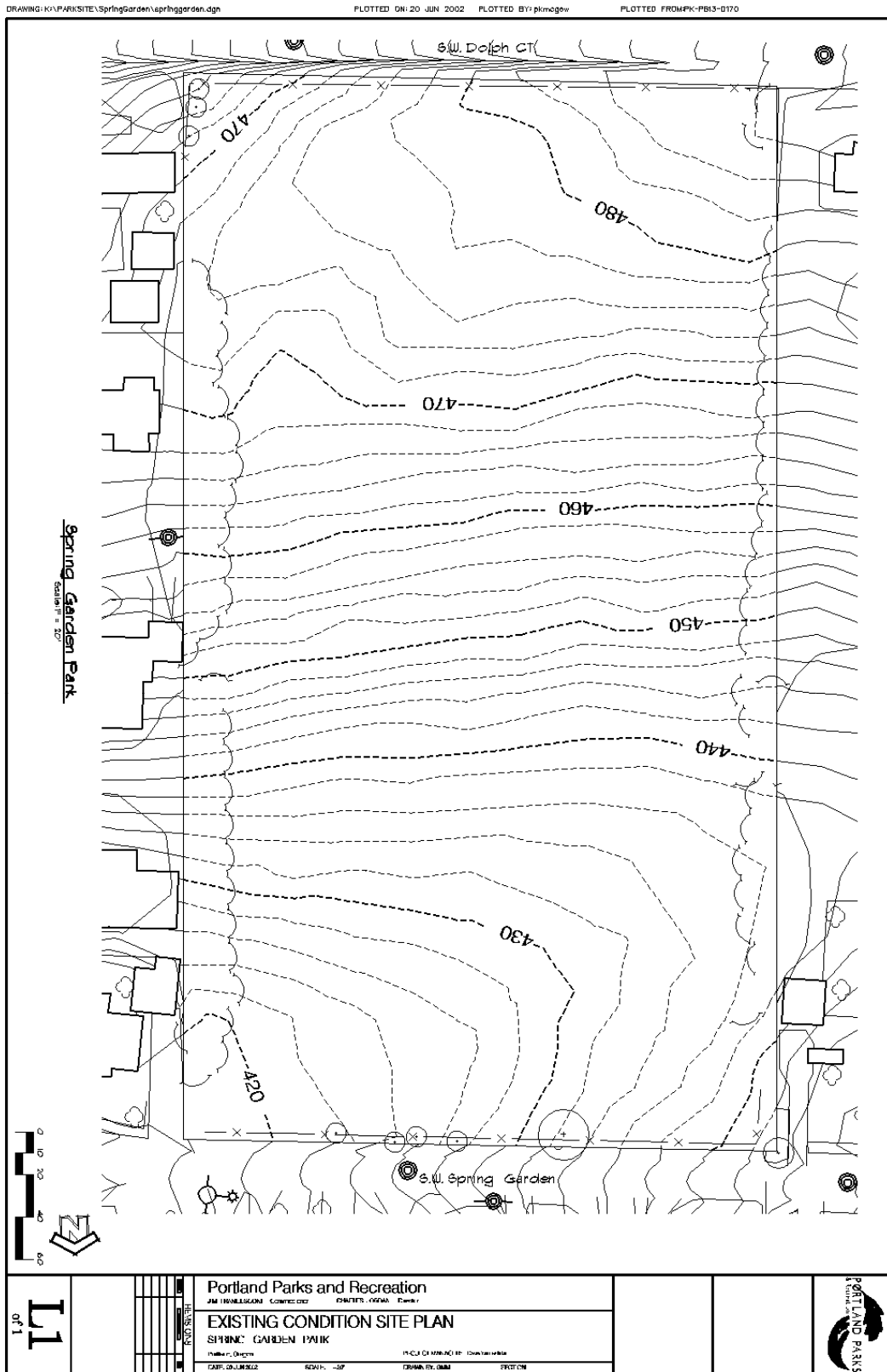
The site was acquired by Portland Parks and Recreation (PPR) in 1999 from Portland Public Schools. At the time, the school district was disposing of "surplus" lands that had been in their inventory. The park site was acquired as part of a large transaction that transferred title to six properties that became future park sites. Acquisition cost of the Spring Garden site was \$ 552,000. See Appendix C for a copy of the ordinance.

## **Planning Process**

Planning for the park began in July, 2001 with an open house at the park, which attracted over 150 people. A Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), which had been formed a month earlier, began its meetings in the fall and met several times over the next year. A survey also was sent out in July, just before the open house, to ask residents for their ideas and concerns about the project. Results of the survey are shown in Appendix A.







# EXISTING CONDITIONS

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*The Spring Garden site is typical of many parks in southwest Portland, with its steep hillside and relatively small amount of flat space. True to its name, the park includes many springs, especially along the hillside. As a result, future improvements are limited to those that are appropriate to both steep and wet conditions. The park also is bordered by a informal line of mature trees, which gives the site a pastoral quality, which belies its location just a stone's throw from a major highway. Despite this, what visitors remember most about the park are the open field, the grass, the trees, and the sky.*

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITE

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### Topography

The park is a 4.65 acre rectangular field that rises 66 feet from its lowest point at the northeastern boundary on SW Spring Garden St. to its highest point at the southwestern corner at SW Dolph Court. At approximately the 470' contour, the terrain becomes somewhat less steep.

Near the base of the slope a swale extends diagonally from the western boundary to its lowest point at the northeastern boundary corner, discharging into a drain that runs under Spring Garden Street, and emptying into the nearby tributary of Tryon Creek.

The upper (southern) property boundary drops approximately 22 feet from its highest point at the southwest corner, to its lowest point at the southeast corner. This grade change creates a steep embankment along the SW Dolph Court boundary as the road descends the hill to the east.

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*This section was prepared by Jackie Hand, a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee.*

### Access

The park is accessed by SW Dolph Court, and SW Spring Garden and SW Freeman Streets. Visitors must step over cable fencing at SW Spring Garden to enter the field. From there, an unimproved foot trail transects the length of the slope approximately mid-way, then veers towards the southwest at the point where the contour intervals widen, connecting with SW Dolph Court at the southwest corner.



*The southwest corner of the park, where many visitors now enter the park.*

Another pathway follows the treeline along the western boundary, and a third connects SW Freeman to the area where the terrain becomes less steep at approximately the 470' contour. There is also evidence of foot traffic up the steep embankment at the southeastern corner

### **Parking**

There are no improved parking spaces, although occasionally vehicles park along the shoulder of SW Spring Garden. There is no space to park at the shoulder of the SW Freeman Street entry, and room for only a couple of cars along the shoulder of SW Dolph Court. Most current park users are pedestrians from the neighborhood.

### **Views**

From the base of the hill almost the entire expanse of the field and slope is visible. From that vantage point, there are only a few vertical elements (such as trees or street lights or telephone poles) that punctuate the skyline, and on rare occasions, cumulous clouds appear to rest on the brow of the hill.

Mt. Hood is visible from the southwestern corner of the site (though partially obscured by a water tower). From the crest, there are views to the north toward Multnomah Village, the West Hills, and microwave towers, and back toward apartment complexes and Barbur Blvd. From mid-field, the ten residences that back up to the park are visible, as well as houses along Spring Garden that front the park. An embankment and hillcrest prevent views into the site from SW Dolph Ct., except from the southwestern corner.



*Looking up the hill, to a meeting of sky and earth, a view that is treasured by area residents.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

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### Climate

The field is exposed to the elements, with little or no shade. According to basic climatic data, the average maximum annual temperature is 62.4°F and minimum average is 44.8° F. Rainfall averages 36.3 inches per year. During the dry season prevailing winds are from the NNW, whereas in winter the winds shift to the ESE.

The park is popular on warm summer evenings because it tends to be cooler than the surrounding neighborhood. An almost constant breeze keeps it cool in the summer and colder in the winter.

### Soils

The soil at the site is composed entirely of Cascade series soil (8B), with inclusions of other soil types, namely Goble and Cornelius soils, with these concretions being typical of upland soils.

According to the Soil Survey of Multnomah County (USDA Forest Service), the Cascade-Urban Land Complex comprises somewhat poorly drained soils that have been modified through cutting, filled, or graded. Main limitations for urban development are its seasonal high water table, slow permeability, and a dense subsurface layer at a depth of 20-30 inches.

### Hydrology

During the rainy season, a small, shallow pool of standing water can be observed in the northwest quadrant in the vicinity of the swale and bubbles can be seen rising from the mud. This pool was not, however, observed by the geologist at the time of his visit in June, 2001. Speculation is that this “spring” is the source of the name for Spring Garden Street. The adjacent ground in the swale at the lower end of the park is also “spongy” during the wet season.



*The northwest corner of the site, where much of the runoff from the slope, creates a very wet area during the winter and spring.*

Several smaller springs dot the hillside during the winter rainy season. In January of 2001, much of the water accumulating in the swale disappeared into a small sinkhole, which had, according to reports, been filled in during previous years. Across the street, a tributary of Tryon Creek runs behind the houses roughly parallel to the park boundary. This tributary ordinarily has some water flow year round. From the top of the hill, the slope also descends sharply to the south across Dolph Court, terminating in a wetland of several acres.

### Vegetation

The following vegetation has been observed at the site:

- Trees (at perimeter): Cherry, hawthorn, Douglas fir, yellow cedar, maple, plum, apple, black locust (thicket), birches, filberts
- Shrubs/Vines (at perimeter): Scotch broom, wisteria, grape
- Various grasses and clovers (at least 3 types of clover)
- Herbaceous: Queen Anne’s lace, yarrow, lupine, comfrey, daffodils

- **Pernicious Weeds:** Bindweed, thistle, nightshade, dock, plaintain, dandelion, Himalyan blackberry (perimeter).

The field is mowed several times a year by the Portland Parks staff. At the request of neighbors, stands of lupine are flagged and left unmowed. Some neighbors have cut back black locus seedlings and blackberry thickets, and regularly mow strips of the field next to their properties. Some neighborhood people harvest fruit from the trees along the property line.

Throughout the blackberry season, the park is visited by a steady stream of neighborhood families who visit the park to pick berries and play in the field.

### **Wildlife**

The field hosts animals that ordinarily inhabit the neighborhood, such as opossum, racoons, rats, moles, birds, insects, etc. and of course, cats and dogs. At least once, a blue crane was seen at the park.

### **Trees**

There are a few large trees along the east and west borders but they all appear to be privately owned. Three 8" birch and one 12" silver (or red) maple also are on the site. According to Portland Parks's Urban Forestry office, all of the trees are in satisfactory condition.

Of these, only one, the birch farthest east, is of very good quality. All the others have minor defects (multiple stems, co-dominant leaders, long laterals). They are now small enough to present any problems and the defects are not significant.



*The existing birch and maple trees along SW Spring Garden St.*

## EXISTING FEATURES, USE, AND ZONING

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### Built Features

The field is bounded on the upper and lower edges by a metal post and cable fence, with numerous small hanging signs with faded "no trespassing" signs. A trash can is a recent addition at the upper end of the slope on the trail that leads to Dolph Court. There is also a fire hydrant conspicuously located on SW Spring Garden St. There are no sidewalks or curbs. A drainage grate exists near the northeastern boundary corner.

At the upper extremity of the property there are a number of small mounds of dirt that date back to when the school district owned the property and would dump excess soil at the site. Along the path from SW Freeman St. is a large sinkhole that has visibly subsided further in recent years. Neighbors believe that an old automobile body is buried in the vicinity of the depression.

### Uses

The field has historically been used as an informal off-leash dog area by as many as 50 local dog owners, and has become a focus of neighborhood social interaction. In the winter the slope is enjoyed by sledders and cross-country skiers.

Neighbors, particularly families with small children, pick blackberries throughout the summer. Aside from these activities, the primary use is by neighborhood people who come to sit or walk and enjoy the open space. Because the slope is almost entirely open to view, with few features and no play equipment, relatively few children use the space.

As more people learn that the site is an "official" park site, more children of all ages have been visiting the park. The site is used also by families with toddlers as a place to practice walking.

### Zoning

The site comprises a base zone -- OS (Open Space) -- with and two Environmental overlay zones.

The *Open Space Zone* is intended to "preserve public and private open and natural areas identified in the Comprehensive Plan." Under the zone's regulations, some uses may require a conditional use review, such as "facilities that draw spectators to events in a park". Open Space regulations also define development standards for building setbacks, parking, street trees, and other related improvements.

The *Environmental Conservation Overlay (c)* "conserves important resources and functional values in areas where the resources and functional values can be protected while allowing environmentally sensitive urban development".



*The northwest corner of the site, which has an Ec overlay through the low draw in the photo.*

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Activities that are affected by the Environmental Overlays regulations include "development, all land divisions, removing, cutting, mowing, clearing, burning, or poisoning native vegetation listed in the

Portland Plant List; changing topography, grading, excavating, and filling; resource enhancement; and dedication and expansion of rights-of-way."

As stated in Title 33, "Public recreational trails, rest points, view points, and interpretive facilities will be approved if the applicant's impact evaluation demonstrates that all of the following are met:

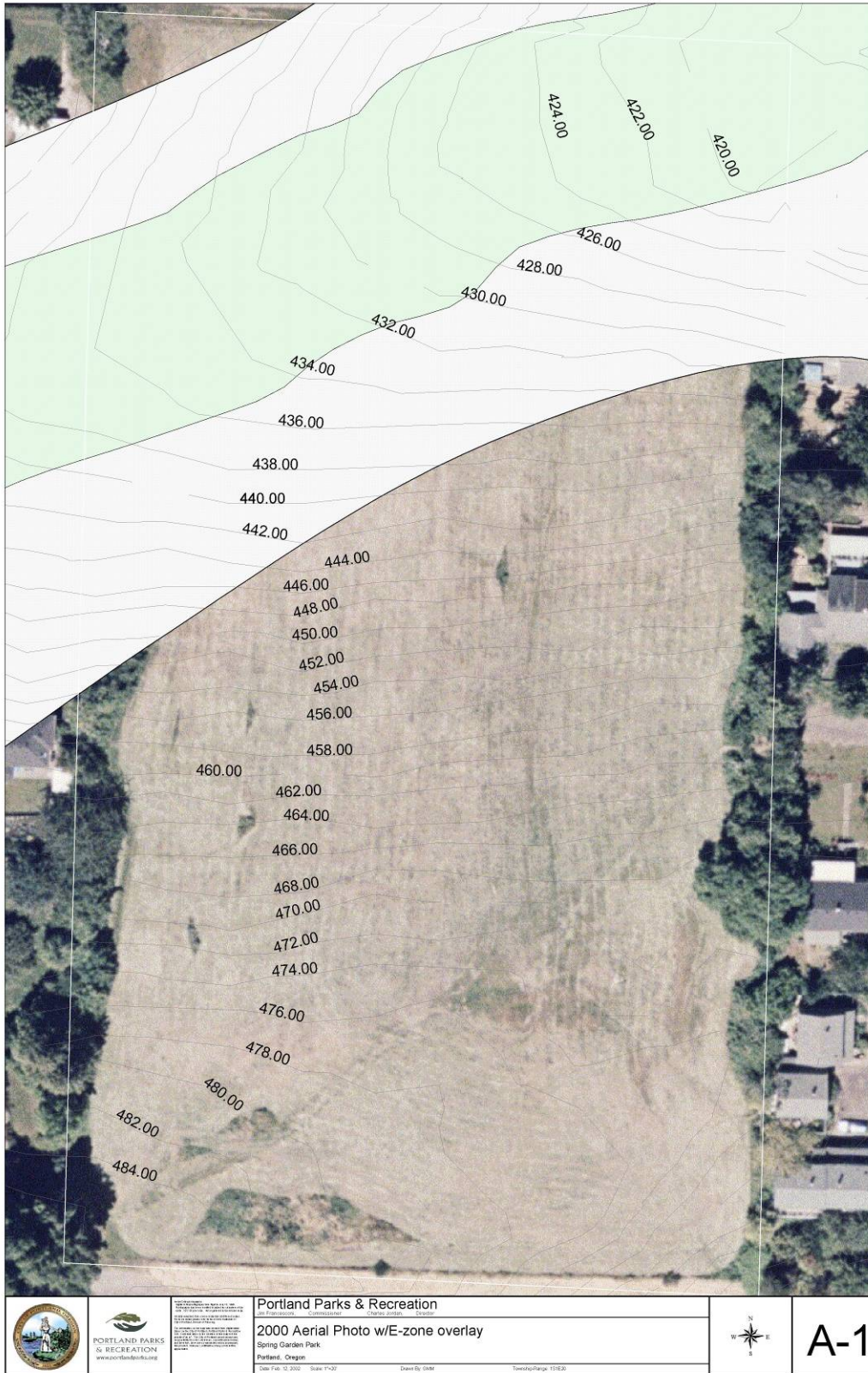
- proposed development locations, designs, and construction methods are less detrimental to identified resources and functional values than

### **Zoning**

other practicable and significantly different alternatives;

- the public benefits of the proposal outweigh all significant detrimental impacts;
- areas disturbed during construction, that do not contain permanent development, will be restored with native vegetation that is similar to the vegetation existing on the site and found on the Portland Plant List; and
- there will be no significant detrimental impact on resources and functional values in the areas designated to be left undisturbed.

# ZONING MAP



# NEIGHBORHOOD SURVEY

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## Survey

The design program for the park is based on ideas and comments generated from a variety of sources. At a kick-off meeting for the project in July, 2001, participants sketched their vision for the park. The *Citizen's Advisory Committee* reviewed these sketches and used them as a starting point in the process. The CAC provided a consistent source of ideas and information throughout the process.

An *open house* was held to review the preliminary plan in February. The event attracted about 20 people, who reviewed the four alternatives, then filled out evaluation forms.

A *mail survey* was mailed to residents in the area around the park site. Surveys were also available at open houses in the field. About 150 surveys were returned and were tabulated by staff. The primary findings of the survey are shown below.

### ◆ *Other Parks Visited*

When respondents were asked what parks they now visit, the three sites mentioned most often were Gabriel Park (90%), Custer Park (20%), and Tryon Creek State Park (14%).

### ◆ *Most Popular Activities*

When visiting other parks, respondents listed the activities they participated in most often. These included:

- jogging and walking (74%)
- picnicking and relaxing (70%)
- visiting the children's playground (43%)
- walking a dog (43%).

### ◆ *Profile of Respondents with Children*

Of the approximately 150 respondents, about 100 have children in their household.\* The age group breakdown is as follows (numbers are in parentheses):

- 0-2 years old: 24
- 3-6 years old: 25
- 7-12 years old: 42
- Teen-agers: 10

### ◆ *Improvements Preferred*

Three improvements were cited most often for the park. Trees, benches, and open grass were mentioned by over 65 -70% of respondents. Unpaved paths were listed by 53% of respondents.

### ◆ *Concerns and Issues*

The issues that people were concerned about included:

- (1) natural qualities (some want 'no development' while others wanted amenities;
- (2) parking (both for and against);
- (3) dogs (both for and against); and
- (4) security (ranging from 'no outsiders' to not obstructing views into the park)

### ◆ *Improvements to Avoid*

When asked which improvements they do not support, respondents mentioned three things most often -- development in general (leave the site alone), off-leash areas, and parking.

\* Since the survey was taken, neighbors have reported that several new babies have "arrived" in the neighborhood.

# MASTER PLAN

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*Because of its size, topography, and environmental conditions, Spring Garden Park is intended to be a low-intensity park that serves its local neighborhood. But this is not to say that it won't be a popular place. The flat area at the south end will likely be the most actively used. The north end, with its natural plantings and wooded areas, will reflect the site's particular environmental conditions.*

*The master plan also envisions a park that acts as a special place for the neighborhood. a place that will remain special even as the neighborhood changes, as new people move in, as the city grows, and as the neighbors age. It should be a place for neighbors to meet other neighbors, for newcomers to meet their neighbors, for all residents to come together for special events to renew their friendships. For children, the park should be a place to discover nature, a safe place to hang out, and a place where special memories of their childhood are created. For older people, the park should be a place where they can walk, relax, and maintain long held bonds with other neighbors.*

## GOALS

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The four primary goals for the Spring Garden Park Master Plan are to:

- maintain and enhance the existing character of the park, with its broad, open areas, while meeting the long-term recreational needs of area residents;
- provide recreational opportunities with facilities that are consistent with those found in other neighborhood parks, where appropriate;
- protect and restore the natural resource areas, providing access where appropriate, but ensuring that protection of the resource values is a priority in these areas; and
- use the park as an educational resource for children and adults.

# SITE CONCEPT & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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## Overall Concept

The development concept for the park is based on four major ideas, listed below.

- *Develop a playground and sitting area along SW Dolph Ct.*
- *Connect SW Dolph Ct. and SW Spring Garden Rd. with a simple system of paths.*
- *Improve and maintain the hillside area as a passive recreation area, with native grasses and other appropriate plant materials.*
- *Protect and improve the habitat value and environmental integrity of the natural resource areas.*

## The Playground and Sitting Area

Develop a playground and sitting area at the south end of the park.

The playground will be located in the southwest corner will conform to ADA regulations, and will include equipment for both younger and older children. A decorative fence will encircle the playground and will be screened in part by a low hedge. The hedge and fence will be approximately 3-4' in height, high enough to provide security without creating a visual barrier.

This corner of the park also will be the most active part of the park, with a playground, benches, and other improvements designed to accommodate a range of visitors.

*Benches* will be installed along the edge of the playground and in areas where unobstructed views of the park are provided. *Signs, trash cans, and other ancillary site furniture* will be located here, to support the use of the area as the main gathering place.

## Lawn Area

Provide a lawn area east of the playground that can accommodate a variety of informal active recreation uses.

Two types of grasses will be provided at the park -- a traditional lawn around the playground will be installed to accommodate intensive use expected in this area.

On the hillside, a less-manicured "meadow" will be planted. This area is designed for recreational activities such as kite-flying, frisbee, and informal games involving small numbers of people. The area will likely not be mowed as often as the playground area but will still be usable for activities that do not require a manicured lawn.

## Circulation

Develop a circulation system that connects visitors with access points and with its built and natural features.

The circulation system consists of a two major walkways. One is a winding path that crosses the hillside and winds its way down to the edge of the wet area plantings in the north end of the park.

This path will be accessible and will conform to ADA standards. Because of the wet conditions found on the hillside, the path will have to be carefully designed to avoid erosion and deterioration from runoff and underlying ground water. The path also will be designed so that it is less visible when viewed from the lower sections of the park.

The second path is a direct link along the western edge that connects the north and south ends of the park. The steep slopes along this route will require that many steps be provided. Although this will undoubtedly be expensive, this direct link will likely be heavily used by visitors who do not wish to take the more meandering route. This route, with its several sets of steps, will likely be popular with runners and others looking for a more vigorous workout.

Because of the vacated streets granted to private parties, there are fewer pedestrian access streets, making access by foot difficult in the neighborhood. As a result, Spring Garden Park is often used as a shortcut for neighbors.

Develop park entry points along SW Dolph Ct. and SW Spring Garden Rd.

Several access points into the park will be developed. Major entry points are from SW Dolph Ct. and SW Spring Garden while a minor and local access point will be provided from SW Freeman.

Along SW Dolph, two entry points will provide access into the more developed part of the park, all leading into the area around the playground. A parking space for visitors who are disabled also will be located in the vicinity of these entry points.

Along Spring Garden, two major entry points will be developed. One entry will be marked with a planting bed and will connect to the path that bisects the ash-alder forest. Another entry will be at the northwest corner of the park and will offer a direct route between SW Dolph and SW Spring Garden.

Install sidewalks along SW Dolph and SW Spring Garden Sts.

Over the long term, sidewalks will have to be provided along the two streets as part of the city's long range transportation plans and policies. For park projects, it is sometimes possible to develop small-scale improvements such as playgrounds without triggering the sidewalk construction requirement. This provision is based on the assumption that the improvement will not result in higher levels of traffic and pedestrian use.

## Site Furniture

Install and place benches and picnic tables along the paths and in appropriate areas in the park.

*Benches and picnic tables* will be distributed at key points through the park. In general, these are located around the playground and along paths and at viewpoints. Specific locations will be determined when construction drawings are prepared.

## Bollards

Install a barrier along the northern and southern edges of the park.

A *bollard and cable barrier* will be installed along the northern edge of the park to prevent unauthorized vehicles from entering the park. Decorative, removable bollards may also be installed at the park's entrances.

## Plantings

Revegetate the low, wet area along the north side of the park as a natural resource area.

The northern third of the park includes a draw that extends diagonally towards a low point in the northeast corner of the park. This draw acts as a drainage course for runoff from the hillside and is very wet during the winter and wetter months.

An ash-alder plant community is proposed to reflect what would naturally occur in wet conditions. The overstory of ash and alder would be underplanted with native shrubs such as snowberry, salal, and ferns.

Although the goal will be to mimic a native plant community, plantings will be selected and maintained so as not to become so dense and high that it creates a security problem.

A boardwalk will cross the drainage way through this draw, as part of the park's path system that curves along the hillside.

*Install planting beds at selected points in the park to mark entries, landscape steep slopes, and act as vegetative buffers.*

*Planting beds* will be developed along the southern edge of the park, where it drops off to the street. The beds will add seasonal color and will also help to prevent cut-through foot traffic, which could create erosion problems.

Where possible and appropriate, plantings will be those that attract wild life and/or are native. This will not preclude the use of ornamental plants, which can provide seasonal interest and serve as an effective vegetative barrier.

Perimeter plantings will be selected carefully, to avoid creating hiding places and situations that may compromise security.

## COST ESTIMATE

The estimate shown below provides a range of potential costs and *should be considered an "order of magnitude" cost*. It does not account for unexpected situations and there may be additions and revisions.

Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Amount
Mobilization	LS	1	4,000	4,000
Clearing and Grubbing	LS	1	5,000	5,000
Earthwork	CY	1,500	7	10,500
Asphalt Walk	SF	12,688	2	25,376
Aggregate Base	SF	12,688	0.4	5,075
Concrete Sidewalk	SF	3,836	3.5	13,426
Concrete Stairs	LF	240	20	4,800
Concrete Pad	SF	1,042	3.5	3,647
Concrete Curb	LF	548	9	4,932
Concrete Curb @ Play Area	LF	251	9	2,259
Storm Drainage	LS	1	5,000	5,000
Erosion control	LS	1	2,000	2,000
<b>Landscape</b>				
Lawn	SF	28,209	0.5	14,104.5
Deciduous Trees	EA	18	350	6,300
Shrubs / Ground Covers	SF	20,055	2.5	50,138
Wetland Plantings	SF	14,955	1	14,955
SW Dolph Ct. Plantings	SF	7,055	2.5	17,638
Perimeter Plantings	SF	15,787	2	31,574
Street Trees	EA	10	450	4,500
Restoration Seed	SF	20,000	0.1	2,000
<b>Irrigation</b>				
Meter	EA	1	2,000	2,000
Backflow Preventer	EA	1	500	500
Irrigation	SF	35,264	0.5	17,632
<b>Furnishings</b>				
Picnic Tables	EA	2	1,200	2,400
Benches	EA	4	500	2,000
Boardwalk	SF	400	40	16,000

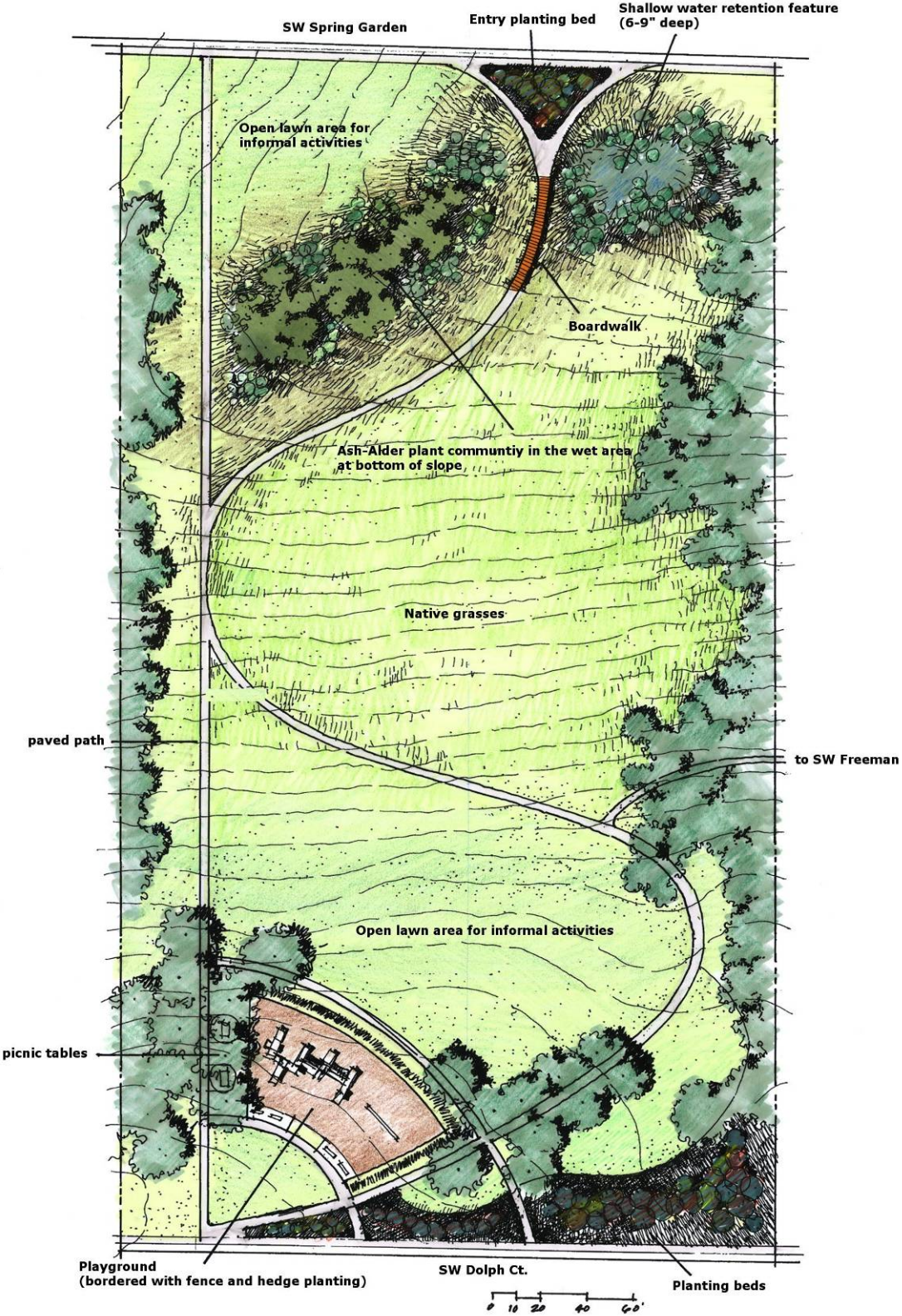
Bollards	EA	2	300	600
Play Equipment*	ALLOW	1	75,000	75,000
Play Surfacing	SF	3,667	4	14,668
Fencing @ Play Area	LF	250	13	3,250
Park Identification	EA	1	1,500	1,500

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	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 362,774</b>
	<b>Contractor OH &amp; P (12%)</b>			<b>\$ 43,533</b>
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$ 406,307</b>
	<b>Contingency @ 20%</b>			<b>\$ 81,261</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 487,568</b>

\* Play equipment costs can vary considerably. The figure shown is a very rough estimate that assumes a medium size playground.

# Master Plan Concept





Representative North-South Section  
Through the park

