



# CITY OF HOOD RIVER

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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To: Mayor and City Council

From: Planning Commission

Date: October 7, 2019

Re: Recommendations for Westside Area Concept Plan Park & Open Space Framework (File No. 2018-07)

During public hearings on July 29, August 19 and September 16, 2019, the Planning Commission sought feedback from the public regarding the Westside Area Concept Plan Report's "Park & Open Space Framework." As part of the Commission's review and deliberation over this Framework a number of recommendations have been identified for consideration by the City Council.

The overall parks and open space concept features a connected system of open space created through the coordinated planning of the following concepts:

- Up to three new neighborhood parks to serve the Westside Area.
- Possibly a new community park, with a location to be determined in a future update of the Park and Recreation District's Master Plan.
- A riparian corridor and off-street path adjacent to Henderson Creek, preliminarily sized at 25 feet on both sides of the creek, measured from the centerline.
- The Westside Trail corridor and Ridgeline Trail corridor.
- Retention of tree groves throughout the project area as much as practical.
- Limited development of terraced areas that are 25% slope and greater, except where needed for street connections and pedestrian connections, resulting in a network of public and private open spaces that can benefit birds and wildlife.
- Open space tracts and community gathering spaces that are designed as part of Planned Unit Developments, and higher-density and mixed-use projects.

The Land Use Framework in the Westside Area Concept Plan Report anticipates approximately 11 acres of neighborhood park land will be needed. The needed acreage calculated in the Concept Plan Report is preliminary; the plan assumes and recommends that it be officially determined as part of an update to the Hood River Valley Park and Recreation District's Master Plan which currently is being updated.

The precise locations of parks have yet to be determined but the concept is that one neighborhood park should be located within each of the three residential neighborhoods, with the possibility of a community park of 20-30 acres that may or may not replace a neighborhood park within the Westside Area. The Park and Open Space Framework identifies "target areas" for neighborhood parks (see Figure 20). These areas are based on a preliminary evaluation by the project team of the following criteria:

- Available buildable land (no existing development or environmental constraints);
- Proximity to natural features that could be incorporated into the park (however, a grove of trees north of Sherman Ave. and east of 30<sup>th</sup> St. was cut down after preparation of the Concept Plan Report);
- Central location within the neighborhood; and

- Accessible by future pedestrian connections.

The neighborhood park target areas are preferred locations; they are not intended to be mandatory locations. Flexibility will be needed to acquire land for parks through a variety of means including advance acquisition, dedication during the development review process, gifting, etc. The Park and Open Space Framework is intended to be flexibly applied, and to help inform future efforts by the Hood River Valley Park and Recreation District to develop an updated Parks Master Plan.

### **Recommendations**

In general, the Commission supports the Park & Open Space Framework as drafted. The Commission recommends the City Council act on the following measures to implement the Park & Open Space Framework.

- Weave the Park & Open Space Framework concepts listed above into the preferred Land Use Scenario.
- Prioritize centrally located neighborhood parks where zoning facilitates greater housing capacity. However, centrally located neighborhood parks may not be essential in lower density neighborhoods.
- Link neighborhoods, parks and open spaces with trails or multi-use paths (“emerald necklace” concept).
- If park land acquisition is targeted based upon proximity to existing and future residents and not sized based upon acreage per capita, minimum standards for park amenities and size also should be considered.
- Implement a riparian corridor along Henderson Creek, preliminarily sized at 25 feet on both sides of the creek, measured from the centerline.
- The Park & Open Space Framework should complement the Bicycle & Pedestrian Framework as well as the Streets & Transit Framework. In addition to the previously approved Westside Community Trail, anticipate a multi-use path along Henderson Creek and a new Ridgeline Trail as components of the network.
- Coordinate with the Hood River County School District with respect to use of District ballfields and recreation facilities, including providing support for maintenance of such facilities.
- Establish a goal for “by-when” parks are in place, in order to serve residents and ensure that parks are delivered before all available land is otherwise committed. A reasonable goal is to have park land secured by the time 50% of the residential units have been built in a given neighborhood.
- Establish a fund for public donations to support purchase of park land, open space and related improvements.
- Adopt a Parks Master Plan in coordination with other affected local agencies and the parks district.
- Adopt a parkland and open space dedication ordinance to help implement the plan.

The Commission anticipates refining its Park & Open Space Framework recommendations in conjunction with making recommendations for a preferred Land Use Scenario.