City of Bellevue
Parks & Community
Services Department

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 1, 2012

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Glenn Kost, Planning & Development Manager
Scott Vander Hyden, Project Manager

Subject: NE 24th Street Neighborhood Park plans in the Bridle Trails neighborhood

Proposed Action: To endorse the improvement plan for the NE 24th Street neighborhood park.

SUMMARY

We will review the community process and plans for the NE 24th St Neighborhood Park in the Bridle Trails neighborhood. If endorsed, we will inform the City Council, and then proceed as outlined to develop the park.

BACKGROUND

The 2008 Bellevue Parks & Natural Areas Levy includes funds to provide neighborhood parks in the Bridle Trails neighborhood. The staff worked closely with the Bridle Trails Community to identify their highest priority projects, which were endorsed by the Park Board and approved by the City Council. One of the projects was the acquisition, planning and development of the Pashchinskiy Property, now referred to as the NE 24th Street site (*see Attachment A for background report).* On Nov. 22, 2010 Council approved the purchase of the Pashchinskiy property.

PARK PLANNING PROCESS

Four community meetings were held to discuss the plans for the park, which is a 2-acre parcel located at the northeast corner of NE 24th Street and 134th Avenue NE. All meetings were held at the North Bellevue Community Center. The first three meetings were hosted by the City, while the fourth was a general membership meeting of the Bridle Trails Community Club. Invitations to each meeting were mailed to over 2,000 nearby residents and advertised on the City's website. In addition, 66 residents responded to an on-line survey asking about their preferences and concerns, and numerous emails were fielded by staff throughout the process.

The initial meeting was attended by approximately 30 residents, 25 attended the following two meetings, and approximately 44 residents attended the final meeting.

The initial meeting, held on March 29, served as a general introduction to the project, to solicit feedback about desired park elements, and to field questions and concerns. The most popular elements included walking paths, children's play area, landscape plantings and off-street parking. Concerns were raised mainly by adjacent neighbors, which included noise, after-hours park use,

invasion of privacy, parking and maintenance access along NE 25th Street and general compatibility of a public park in a quiet residential area.

At the second meeting on May 10, survey results were shared and a concept plan was introduced based on the feedback received. The plan was well received. The staff agreed to refine the plan based on comments received at the meeting, and to schedule a third meeting which was held on June 14. A revised plan was presented that incorporated the feedback, and two parking options were discussed. The plan continued to be well received, and we agreed to present a final plan at the general Bridle Trails membership meeting in September and to present two parking design options. The proposed park plan *(Attachment B)* and parking options *(Attachment C)* were presented at the September 20 Bridle Trail Community Club's membership meeting. An informal vote was taken at the meeting and all in attendance voted unanimously to approve and implement the plan.

PLAN DESCRIPTION

The program for the park will be mainly passive, as nearly half of the park's two acres is protected wetland, steep slopes or buffer areas. The park will offer visitors with an assortment of recreation opportunities, including a loop trail, children's play area, picnic area and native plant displays. The soft-surface path begins and ends at the main park access off of 134th Avenue, and surrounds a large maintained grass area for both passive and active use. It hugs a large wetland and associated buffer that will be restored with native plantings that provide interpretive opportunities. The trail then transitions through a native plant display, wild flower meadow and forested slope at the southeast corner of the park, and adjacent to a small picnic area and children's adventure play area before returning to the park's main access point. The play area will include both natural and man-made features. The design will strengthen the connection with adjacent Viewpoint Park through frontage landscape improvements including street trees and a potential "gateway" feature to promote neighborhood identity at the intersection of NE 24th and 134th NE.

ADDRESSING NEIGHBORHOOD CONCERNS

In addition to the public meetings described above, City staff has met with park neighbors on three occasions to address concerns. We have already installed a 6 foot high privacy fence requested by the eastern neighbor to address privacy issues. In addition, the following has been incorporated into the park plan in response to additional concerns of the immediate neighbors:

- The park program is mainly passive in nature and consistent with the character of surrounding neighborhood;
- To minimize public use of 25th Street, all maintenance access will be off of 134th St., 'no parking' signs will be installed, and pedestrian access will be discouraged. We have agreed to implement one of the off-street parking options presented;
- Visibility is maintained into the park from 134th Ave NE and NE 25th to minimize security concerns;
- Heavy landscape buffering is included along the eastern boundary, and the nearest park amenity (soft-surface pathway) is a minimum of 50' from the property line;
- The play area is located as far from neighboring homes as possible.

PROJECT TIMELINE & NEXT STEPS

If the plan is endorsed by the Park Board, we expect to complete construction drawings and submit for permits by year's end, and construction should be completed next year. The Bridle Trails community strongly supports the park plan and early implementation, and believes that neighbor concerns have been adequately addressed. We will prepare an informational report for the Council, and if no concerns are expressed, we will proceed with the project as described.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Park Board Memo Oct. 4, 2010
B. NE 24th Street Park Plan
C. Parking Options

City of Bellevue
Parks & Community
Services Department

MEMORANDUM

Date: October 4, 2010

To: Parks & Community Services Board

From: Pam Fehrman, Project Manager – Parks & Community Services
Bridle Trails Community Club – Park Levy Sub-Committee

Subject: Endorsement and recommendation of the proposed Bridle Trails Neighborhood Park Levy Project(s) *(Board action is requested)*

As indicated at the June 8th Park Board meeting, on October 12th, the Bridle Trails Community Club's Park Levy Subcommittee and City staff will return to summarize neighborhood outreach efforts, project evaluation process, share neighborhood preferences and present final recommendations for the Levy-funded park and natural area project(s) in the Bridle Trails Neighborhood.

Park Board Proposed Motion: Move to endorse and recommend to City Council the Bridle Trails Community Club's recommendations for the Levy-funded park and natural area project(s) in the Bridle Trails Neighborhood.

SUMMARY

As you will recall, the 2008 Bellevue Parks & Natural Areas Levy *(Attachment A)* includes $2.5 million to acquire, develop or enhance parks and open space in the Bridle Trails neighborhood (*Attachment B*). The Bridle Trails Community Club (BTCC) approached the Parks Department, interested in working with the City and the neighborhood to help inform the selection of park and natural area Levy-funded projects for their neighborhood.

An active, non-profit neighborhood organization, the BTCC regularly works with the City to make sure policy updates represent the neighborhood's perspective. The BTCC appointed a seven member Parks Levy Subcommittee to work with City staff to gather neighborhood input, evaluate options and ultimately make a recommendation to the City. The Sub-Committee began by developing principles and project criteria to help evaluate project suggestions. The principles and project criteria were shared with the neighborhood and ratified by the BTCC Board.

Neighborhood outreach over the past year and a half has included an effort to understand neighbors' preferences for park and open space site and program opportunities in the Bridle Trails Neighborhood. Approximately 1800+ neighbors were invited to make suggestions through community newsletters, neighborhood block and park parties, City and BTCC web pages and at multiple BTCC and general neighborhood meetings.

BRIDLE TRAILS COMMUNITY CLUB RECOMMENDATION

The BTCC Subcommittee has completed its evaluation of all project suggestions, calling upon neighborhood input, project principles and criteria, property potential, project feasibility and estimated costs of acquisition/improvements to inform the park and natural project recommendations for the Bridle Trails Neighborhood. The Subcommittee has presented its recommendations to the BTCC Board, and their membership has ratified the recommendations. On September 30th the BTCC presented its recommendations to the neighborhood. Although neighborhood input is ongoing, people have overwhelmingly supported the recommendations (85%).

The Subcommittee recognizes the variables and unknowns of going forward with property acquisition and unknown development parameters. However, the Subcommittee hopes that this recommendation can serve as a framework that can accommodate those variables and inform appropriate Bridle Trails Neighborhood, Park and Natural Area Levy projects.

The Bridle Trails Community Club recommends committing at least $2.5 million voter approved Parks & Natural Areas Levy funds towards neighborhood park development and natural areas in the Bridle Trails Neighborhood. The recommended projects, to the extent projects and development are feasible and can be Levy funded, are identified in the preferred order:

1. Obtain an agreement with the State of Washington to develop, operate and maintain the property at 5220 132nd Ave NE (aka Acheson property) as a public park.
2. Pursue acquisition of the property located at NE 24th and 134th Ave NE for the purposes of providing park and open space.
3. Proceed to develop a Master Plan, with the Bridle Trails Neighborhood and with owners of contiguous property, for a neighborhood public park at 5220 132nd Ave NE.
4. Proceed to develop a Master Plan, with the Bridle Trails Neighborhood and with owners of contiguous property, for a neighborhood public park at NE 24th and 134th Ave NE.
5. Develop a neighborhood public park at 5220 132nd Ave NE.
6. Develop a neighborhood public park at NE 24th and 134th Ave NE.

NEXT STEPS

The Bridle Trails Community Club's and Park Board's Parks & Natural Areas Levy project(s) recommendations for the Bridle Trails Neighborhood will be forwarded to the City Council.

PROPOSED MOTION

Move to endorse and recommend to City Council the Bridle Trails Community Club's recommendations for the Levy-funded park and natural area project(s) in the Bridle Trails Neighborhood.

ATTACHMENTS

1. City of Bellevue Parks & Natural Areas Levy Summary
2. Vicinity Map – Bridle Trails Neighborhood

Proposed NE 24th St Park Plan

Viewpoint Park Trailhead & Parking Improvements

Parking Option B