

STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission **DATE:** 2/21/2024
FROM: Roman Gutierrez, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Department

Subject: Raymond E. Shaffer Community Park Master Plan

Key Points:

- Raymond E. Shaffer Park is a 10-acre, undeveloped park located in park district B, served by the newly-formed Walnut Grove Neighborhood Association.
- The site at one time had two houses, with the first house built in 1920 and demolished 2021, and the second built in 1935 and demolished 1981. The Shaffer family used the land as a small hobby farm including a small orchard, family garden, and chinchilla farming. Mr. Shaffer, an arborist at heart, planted the majority of the trees currently on site that created this ideal location for a future park in a growing high density area.
- The land was acquired from Edith Shaffer in 2010 for a future community park, with the condition that the park be named after her late husband, Raymond. A portion of the land was open to the public as urban natural area, with approximately 1.5 acres subject to a life estate until terminated in 2020, following Mrs. Shaffer's passing.
- Raymond E. Shaffer Community Park was purchased by Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation in 2010. The park is located in what was at that time, a shared city-county Park Impact Fee (PIF) District. The purchase was funded through a proportionate share of city and county PIF funds, although the deed was held by Clark County.
- The joint Clark-Vancouver Parks and Recreation Department was dissolved in 2013. In 2014, the City purchased the County's financial interest in the property for full fee simple interest in the property, for future community park development.
- Raymond E. Shaffer is currently an undeveloped park. The goal is for it to become a developed "Community Park." Community Parks are larger than Neighborhood Parks. They have a 1.5 mile service area and offer unique amenities that users will drive for, which requires additional support facilities like parking and restrooms.
- The site currently has an open grass field, large evergreen trees forming a grove in the center of park and rows along the edges, and a popular chip loop trail and benches. It is relatively flat, with access from the south at NE 58th Street, north at NE 78th Avenue and northwest at NE 60th Street.
- This presentation is seeking approval for a park "master plan." A master plan is a big vision for the design and use of a park. For a large community park, like Raymond E. Shaffer, the master plan may be built in phases due to available funding or other site considerations. When master plans are built in phases, the community helps prioritize what gets constructed when. A master plan also makes a park eligible for grant funding. Creating and approving a master plan is an important first step in the long process of turning an undeveloped park into a fully developed and active hub for recreation.
- A comprehensive, 2-year community engagement campaign informed the master plan design and phase 1 construction plan that is being presented today.

- People participated in community engagement activities both online and in-person. Materials were provided in English, Spanish, Russian and Ukrainian.
- The community broadly supports the master plan being presented today and is excited for phase 1 construction to begin, pending PRAC approval.

Objective:

Vancouver Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services seeks to expand the recreation opportunities offered at Shaffer Park to the Community Park level. The Raymond E. Shaffer Community Park Master Plan was developed through a comprehensive, two-year community engagement campaign. It outlines additional amenities and improvements to serve the recreational needs of the community. The proposed master plan will expand passive and active recreation opportunities at Shaffer Park and fill an existing gap in the park system. The presented plan also outlines the first phase of construction, based on the amenities selected by community members to serve the broadest group of park users.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

Transportation and Mobility

- Support development of a safe, future-ready and convenient transportation system that offers affordable and climate friendly options for people to get where they need to be.

Vibrant and Distinct Neighborhoods

- Offer a variety of accessible places and spaces to interact and enjoy nature, art, culture and community.

Climate and Natural Systems

- Environmental stewardship and efforts to address climate change to ensure everyone has a sustainable future.

High Performing Government

- The City is reliable, fiscally responsible, equitable and open to compromise.

Present Situation:

Amenities currently offered at Shaffer Park include a chip loop trail with benches around grassy open areas and groves of large evergreen trees. To upgrade Shaffer Park to the community park standard, a master plan was developed that provides additional amenities and improvements. Through a 2-year community engagement campaign (in-person and online), the master plan has been refined to include: a large paved loop path with pedestrian lighting, fully inclusive play area, splash play area, sport courts, dog off-leash area, two Portland Loo restrooms, two picnic shelter areas, pavilion, soft-surface loop trail, bike pump track, nature play area, native planting areas, meadow with mounds and street frontage improvements.

Throughout the master plan process, the community has prioritized maintaining the natural setting of Shaffer Park to whatever extent is possible. It is considered a green oasis in a rapidly-developing part of the City, and there is a strong desire to maintain that feeling. Safety, comfort and accessibility were also identified as high priorities by community members. There was community concern around the size and location of the parking lot required to serve a developed community park. PRCS worked closely with the City's Transportation and Community Development

Departments to provide the most direct and accessible street frontage along NE 58th Street. The street frontage would include: widening the road along the park to accommodate parallel parking including accessible spaces, a bike path pulled into the park elevated from the road, sidewalk and street lighting. These street improvements were presented to neighbors at the final open house to ensure the plan met the park needs while responding to community concerns. There was broad appreciation for the planned street improvements, especially the sidewalk and bike lane components.

Complete implementation of the master plan will happen in phases, as funding becomes available. PRCS has worked with the community to outline the first phase of development, which will include a variety of amenities that will maintain and enhance the site's natural features while inviting more people to use the park. Phase 1 development is anticipated to include: street frontage improvements along NE 58th Street, large paved loop path with pedestrian lighting, dog off-leash area and a nature play area. Construction is anticipated to begin on Phase 1 development in early 2025.

Advantage(s):

- Expands recreation opportunities at the park
- Enhances the natural beauty of the site and expands on the existing natural resource assets
- Enhances accessibility to the site and provides a fully inclusive play area
- Fills an existing park service area gap with a high level of service

Disadvantage(s):

- Requires increased maintenance support

Budget Impact:

The approved 2023-2024 Biennium Budget includes \$2.44M for the development of Raymond E. Shaffer Community Park. The master plan is estimated to cost approximately \$12M. Development would be phased to not exceed the \$2.4M allocated for Shaffer Park through 2025. Master plan and Phase 1 development better positions us to pursue grant opportunities for future phases.

Action Requested:

Move to approve the Raymond E. Shaffer Community Park Full Site Master Plan and corresponding phase 1 construction plan.

Attachment(s):

02.03.24 Shaffer Master Plan Boards (PDF)

02.21.24 PRAC Presentation – Shaffer Park Master Plan (PDF)



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