proud past, promising future

CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

Agriculture

Historic Preservation

Community Access

Sustainable Design

Education & Research

78th Street / WSU Property
Master Plan

January 2010

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Executive Summary

The Clark County 78th Street/WSU property is a largely undeveloped site of approximately 79 acres. With gently sloping hills, fields and existing historic structures, the site retains its historic roots as the County's "Poor Farm" and more recently, an agricultural research facility.

The site operated as a poor farm until the mid 1940s. The poor farm provided residents a place to live, work and farm the land to help them recover from poverty. Some residents lived out their lives at the farm and were buried at the cemetery on the property.

Washington State University was deeded the property in 1949 to conduct agricultural research. In 2008 Clark County resumed ownership of the property and maintains a partnership with Washington State University. This partnership, with guidance from community stakeholders, will establish the future direction and development of the site.

The site is the only large, open, single-owner parcel in the heart of Hazel Dell. At the southeast end of the site is Hazel Dell Park. On the north end, along 78th Street, is the historic poor farm building or administration building. Between these two anchor areas lie agricultural lands, forest, wetlands and viewpoints. The 78th Street/WSU Property Master Plan is the first step in an effort to fulfill the County's commitment to maintain the site as a place for agricultural use, historic preservation, community learning, sustainable practices and environmental stewardship.

Planning for the property's future has presented an exciting endeavor for Clark County and the community. The Master Plan builds upon a preferred Concept Plan previously developed through an extensive public outreach process, including partnerships with WSU, Vancouver/ Clark Parks and Recreation and a community Sounding Board. This preferred Concept Plan served as the foundation for development of the Master Plan concept.

The Final Master Plan Concept activates the agricultural areas as the central element of the site and provides facilities for community learning and gathering, administrative and program functions, naturalists, avid walkers, gardeners, farmers, demonstrations and research.

Following an 18- month effort beginning with the Concept Planning process, Clark County General Services, Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation, and the community Sounding Board, are recommending this Master Plan Concept to serve as a guideline for future enhancement of the site. Completion of the Master Plan document will allow Clark County General Services to pursue a variety of funding options, including grants, sponsorships, and donations to implement the recommendations and ideas discussed in the following pages. Development will be dependent upon funding and therefore may result in phased implementation.

Project Overview

Purpose of the Master Plan

The purpose of this plan is to explore and develop a Master Plan Concept for Clark County's 79- acre site located at 1919 NE 78th Street, about half a mile east of Highway 99 in Hazel Dell. The Master Plan was developed with substantial community involvement to ensure it reflects community needs and values. This Master Plan Report provides a summary of the planning process, the vision and goals for the property's long-term future, and a set of design recommendations. It also presents a phasing and site management plan. The Master Plan Report is intended to guide the future development of the site and support funding efforts.

The Master Plan Concept reflects Clark County's commitment to preserve the property's agricultural heritage and honor its history as a poor farm by establishing uses that fairly and equitably benefit the community.

Planning and Public Involvement

The planning process for the Master Plan began in April, 2008 with the development of a Concept Plan for the property. The Concept Plan was completed in September, 2009. An open and interactive process was used for the development of the Concept Plan, which generated a high level of public interest. Throughout this endeavor Clark County General Services and Vancouver/Clark Parks and Recreation met regularly with a project management team comprised of staff from the County and Washington State University.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- 20 Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Workshop: April 9, 2009
- Presentations to community groups and Neighborhood Advisory Council
- Public comment period: online community survey & public displays.

SOUNDING BOARD MEETINGS

- SB Meeting 1: Aug 7, 2008
- SB Meeting 2: Sep 11, 2008
- SB Meeting 3: Oct 22, 2008
- SB Meeting 4: Jan 27, 2009
- SB Meeting 5: Mar 18, 2009
- SB Meeting 6: May 6, 2009
- SB Meeting 7: July 9, 2009

The management team provided recommendations related to potential uses for the site. In addition to collaboration with the management team, Clark County General Services used numerous community outreach tools to generate feedback and input from the public on proposed site uses. Tools and outreach activities included: seven meetings with a community Sounding Board comprised of a diverse cross-section of 15 stakeholder groups, and a public workshop held at Gaiser Middle school that gathered input from more than 160 community members. The purpose of the workshop was to share the project guiding principles, present current and considered uses for the site, and collect feedback on public preferences for other site uses. Following the public workshop, Clark County invited citizens to complete an online survey . A total of 321 people completed this survey. Public input generated through the online survey was intended to gather popular themes and preferred uses to be considered and ultimately integrated into the draft concept plan.

The concept planning process concluded with a public comment period to generate input on the draft concept plan, including an online community survey and public displays at the Clark County Fair and the Public Service Center lobby. Forty-five people submitted comments through these formats.

Other public involvement tools included online project information at www.clark.wa.gov/78WSU, nearly 20 stakeholder interviews and special presentations to various community groups, such as the Neighborhood Advisory Council of Clark County.

The Master Planning process followed the Concept Plan in September 2009 and included a collaborative public process involving both the management team and community Sounding Board.

Area Context Map

Recommendations

Project Vision and Goals

The 78th Street/WSU property will celebrate the community, reflect the area's history and provide a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations.

The site will be an important neighborhood gathering place that builds community pride. Year-round, community members of all ages will take advantage of the site's many agricultural and educational amenities.

Residents will walk, bike, use public transportation and drive to the site to participate in community gardening, farming, and educational programs; learn about the site's history, and enjoy nature and views of Mt. St. Helens, Mt. Adams and Mt. Hood. The site will serve as a learning environment for area schools, as well as a setting for growing crops for low-income families.

This safe and accessible site will help build and maintain a stronger community and will preserve this valuable piece of open land for long-term regional use.

Community Guiding Principles

To achieve the community vision for this site, the following principles will guide project and site specific decisions:

- Celebrate Clark County's agricultural heritage
- Maintain Washington State University's presence on the site through programs, research and office facilities
- Showcase and promote sustainable agricultural and building practices
- Support agricultural research that supports sustainable farming practices
- Enhance community wellness and inspire life-long learning
- Promote community volunteerism
- Integrate a variety of activities and resources that provide community access
- Reflect sound fiscal policy in decision-making matters

Site Design Program

This site design program was developed in collaboration with residents, the project management team, community Sounding Board and Vancouver/ Clark Parks and Recreation staff. The site design was refined throughout the process based on feedback received from the public and community stakeholders. All program features will use sustainable construction methods and be accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

SITE IDENTITY

- Historic Poor Farm buildings and cemetery
- Community resource
- Agricultural landscape

PROPERTY ELEMENTS

- Existing wetlands and habitat areas
- Community gathering space
- Farming areas
- Community gardening
- Existing forested areas
- Children's garden
- Existing Hazel Dell Park and expansion
- View corridors
- Existing Poor Farm Cemetery and enhancement
- Multi-use trail
- Historic interpretation, including trail signage
- Learning and demonstration areas
- Farmers Market

STRUCTURES

- Administration Building
- Greenhouses
- Maintenance buildings
- Historic duplex
- View shelter

- Living farm
- Historic wooden silo
- Community learning facility
- Future multi-purpose community building

BUFFERS

- Stormwater management
- Wetland and habitat buffers
- Vegetation buffering between area residents and living farm

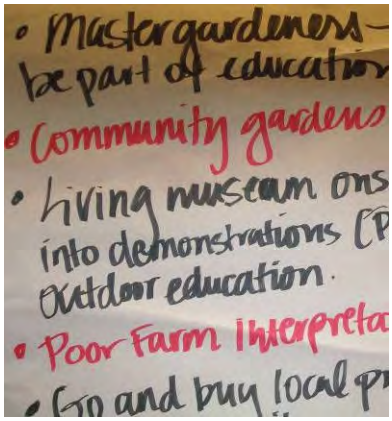
CIRCULATION

- Low impact emergency and maintenance circulation
- Multi-use trail
- Parking areas
- Vehicle entrances on north and south sides
- Proposed future road easement on east side (25th Avenue extension)

Preferred Master Plan Concept

This site consists of 79 acres that are adjacent to residential parcels. The property has a long history of farming and agricultural research. Currently, gently sloping fields are providing areas for community gardens, crops for the local Food Bank, certified organic gardens and demonstration farming and gardening techniques. The view corridor from the top of the slope provides pastoral views of the region and Cascade mountain range. On a clear day St. Helens, Hood and Adams are in view. The design of the site will preserve natural features and reflect its farming history, while looking forward toward use by future generations.

At the north side of the property facing 78th Street, the existing entrance will be maintained and possibly enhanced to include a gateway feature. The historic administration building may be renovated to accommodate the WSU Extension staff and a community meeting room. The existing greenhouses may be upgraded to state-of-the-art, energy efficient greenhouses to accommodate program use. A proposed parking area to the east could serve as the future home of an open air farmer's market and gateway to the trail system. In the northeast corner a parcel of land will be maintained for a future multi-use community building. This building could function as an agricultural museum and learning center, a site-supporting organic restaurant, or a community gathering place. There are many opportunities for this parcel, which will be evaluated based upon the guiding principals and with additional community involvement.



The interior of the property will be maintained for agricultural uses, such as community gardening and demonstration farming. A proposed living farm would serve as a community demonstration project focusing on sustainable, self-reliant construction and farming methods. A caretaker may live and/or work on the farm.

As visitors travel up the gentle slope, additional garden or farm plots may be situated between the two ridges. Walking destinations may include the viewpoint near Hazel Dell Community Park or to the west where mountain views will be preserved for all to see.

The historic Poor Farm Cemetery is located along the far western boundary of the property. Currently, access is problematic and the cemetery is difficult to identify since markers have long since weathered or vanished. Clark County hopes to improve access and identification of the cemetery through a grant received from the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation to survey and record the Poor Farm Cemetery and the structures on the farm site.

On the south side of the property Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation will be requesting a boundary line adjustment for Hazel Dell Community Park. This adjustment would move six acres from the north side of the park to the southwest side of the park. Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation hopes this six acres will serve as a future site to build a Community Learning Center, and children's garden. Additional public review and comment would occur once funding is identified. Until that time, this property will serve as a placeholder for a future project.

A multi-use, low impact trail will loop throughout the entire property. Interpretive signage will be incorporated into key areas or nodes on the site describing unique features and learning opportunities.

During the planning phases of this project, two future projects were identified. Extending 25th Avenue and constructing a Clark Public Utilities water tower at the highest point. These future proposals may require easements. Therefore, the proposed design reflects the potential easement locations.

It is important to note that neither of these facilities are necessary to support the vision of this project and are not proposed as part of this effort. Both projects have been identified as meeting the future needs of our growing community and therefore, a holding place for these future, proposed projects will be reflected in the preferred master plan concept.

Clark County 78th Street / WSU Property

PREFERRED CONCEPT

January 2010

Site Design Inspirational Images

Historic Administration Building

Boardwalk

Open Air Shelter

Produce/Farmers Market

Demonstration Gardens

Historic Landscape

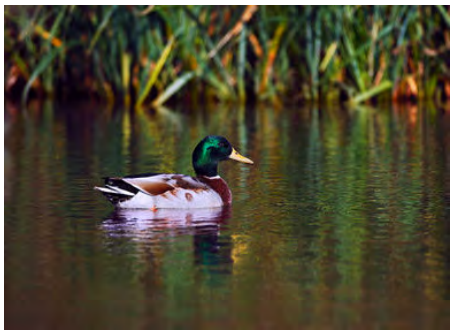
Viewpoint Pavilion

Pedestrian/Bike Paths

Community Garden

Children's Gardens

Viewing Areas



Wetland Habitat

Natural Materials

Agricultural Areas

Walking Paths/Trails

Parking Area/Bio Swales

Stone Wall/Fence

Meadow Landscapes

Food Production

Interpretive & Directional Signage

Demonstration Gardens

Covered Silo

Rainwater Harvesting

Orchards

Sustainability Framework

In addition to the historic features and community gathering venues the 78th Street/WSU property will provide, this site also offers an exciting opportunity to educate visitors about sustainable design and environmental stewardship. One major project component includes incorporating environmentally sustainable materials, techniques, methods and practices wherever possible in the site development. The following list of recommendations will be explored to help establish the project framework in its subsequent design phases:

Gardening/Farm and Landscape Systems

- Enhance wildlife habitat where indicated on the site
- Eradicate invasive species and restore natural habitat
- Use low impact or pesticide free gardening techniques
- Design educational signage to interpret key sustainable features of the site
- Provide observation areas at key points for educational purposes

Water Management

- Treat all stormwater runoff on site in a functional, educational and artistic way
- Minimize impervious surfaces for roads and parking
- Design a state of the art irrigation system, in conjunction with low consumption strategies
- Educate gardeners on efficient watering techniques
- Harvest rain water where appropriate

Energy

- Minimize night light pollution
- Incorporate low-level lighting with no direct beam illumination leaving the site
- Research alternate power sources as appropriate

Materials

- Use low-maintenance, long-life materials
- Reuse organic debris from clearing operations on site, or use County/City compost
- Use local building materials when available
- Use wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council as appropriate
- Use local stone as appropriate
- Use natural materials
- Incorporate a recycling program to limit construction and building waste
- Adaptively reuse existing, historic buildings as appropriate

Project Implementation

Phasing Plan

Many factors can evolve over time and change the priorities in implementing a Master Plan Concept. As funding becomes available, for example, the project scope will be refined, the budget will be adjusted and the order of development events may shift. It is our intention to adhere to the project guiding principles set forth by the community and the Board of Clark County Commissioners in all decisions that may arise as funding becomes available.

The first phase in the project will set the stage for Master Plan improvements. This will include a site survey, water-use plan, administration building renovation plan and historic silo placement design.

After appropriate funding is identified, the next phase will involve initial improvements to the site. This may include construction of the irrigation system, upgrades to the administration building and parking lot, trail construction, security measures such as fencing, and the previously discussed boundary-line adjustment for Hazel Dell Park.

Over the next several years the view point or view shelter, additional trails, cemetery improvements, and greenhouses would be constructed. The Living Farm would be constructed as funding becomes available.

Securing partnerships with groups or individuals who have the expertise in a variety of specific areas will be imperative to the site's long-term success. To do so, Clark County has developed a site management model that calls for the creation of a site technical advisory team comprised of partners from Washington State University and the area neighborhoods along with individuals with hands-on experience and expertise with agriculture, sustainability, historic preservation, education and environmental stewardship. A non-profit foundation will be established to oversee fund-raising and donations. These groups will assist Clark County General Services in the long-term operations, maintenance and programming of the site.

The property will be used to its greatest capacity during the implementation of the Master Plan. Some of the programs that have already been initiated on the site during the interim period include:

- 37 community garden plots
- Two acres of crops harvested for low-income families through the Clark County Food Bank
- Agricultural workshops and demonstrations
- Programs and activities coordinated by the Master Gardeners
- Limited agricultural research

Conclusion

The Master Plan process represents a significant step toward realizing the goal of creating a center for community learning and sustainable, historic agriculture. This site will serve as a substantial amenity for neighbors, students, gardeners, farmers, researchers and community organizations. Upon completion, users will have a place to gather, learn, celebrate and enjoy the historic, quiet beauty of this remarkable, open location in an urban setting.