

Medina Parks

Long Range Vision and Strategic Planning Document

This document is a “work in progress” and reflects the Park Board’s discussions and ideas for the future maintenance and enhancement of Medina’s public parks and nature preserve.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1950’s, residents of the newly incorporated City of Medina were concerned about the unchecked development that was taking place in nearby Bellevue and their concerns were only heightened by the construction of the The Evergreen Point Floating Bridge – SR-520. From 1959 to 1971 Medina acquired and developed Fairweather Nature Preserve, Medina Park and Medina Beach Park. The residents’ early efforts to manage the growth in the city resulted in the development of a comprehensive park and open-space plan that was created by the Medina Planning Commission with the assistance of Landscape architect William Teufel.

The design vision of Medina’s early residents resulted in the extensive combination of parks and open spaces that we enjoy today. Recognized national parks standards typically state that there should be 2.5 to 10 acres of neighborhood and community park space for every 1,000 residents. There are 26.7 acres of parks in Medina, which equates to nearly 9 acres of park space per 1,000 people. (1)

MISSION

The Medina Park Board today is an advisory body that works collectively to keep the Mayor and City Council abreast of issues pertaining to the enjoyment, maintenance and enhancement of Medina’s public parks and nature preserve. To this end, the core objective of this document is to identify and communicate the Park Board’s short term and long range goals on all matters relating to the planning, acquisition, development and operation of park facilities and recreational programs. This is a living document that will be updated annually to reflect the changing needs of the community and its’ public spaces.

Our parks are natural areas that require the ongoing stewardship of the entire community to ensure that they remain protected and nurtured. Without the requisite supervision and maintenance, the vegetation, wildlife and quality of the environment will disappear forever.

Medina Park

Medina Park was born in 1965 when City officials spearheaded the purchase of five properties for approximately \$80,000. Today, the combined area stretches out across seventeen and a half acres and is the City’s green gateway that offers a mixture of passive and active space. The Park looks much the same as it did almost forty years ago and improvement projects over the decades have attempted to preserve the natural features that were envisioned by the founding city planners and meet ADA standards.

The area has grown into a multi-use recreational park that attracts users from many surrounding communities. The park is the social epicenter, a gathering place that is expansive enough to host large scale events like Medina Days, concerts, unofficial soccer and baseball games yet also serve the needs of individuals — adults, children and pets. The picturesque walking paths and open areas also make this a desirable destination for human/canine socialization. In an effort to manage a compatible usage of the park by dog owners and other users, a new policy was passed in 2004 that seasonally divides Medina Park into two defined on-leash and off-leash sections during the peak summer months.

Today, a lush green lawn in the western section of the park is maintained by a recently installed watering system and the eastern non-irrigated portion remains a year-round off-leash dedicated space for romping dogs. The two original ponds remain and are rimmed by open grassy spaces that are punctuated with trees, seasonal plantings, artwork, meandering gravel pathways, wetlands, an exercise course with fitness stations, children's play area, picnic facilities, newly renovated tennis court, restrooms and numerous benches for rest, introspection and viewing of wildlife.

Other Notable Park Attributes Include:

Plantings:

The park has been beautified over the years by groups that have planted trees to commemorate an event or individual's service and also by residents who have planted trees in memory of loved ones.

Medina's Gateway at 84th Avenue NE and NE 12th, the northeast section of the park, has been landscaped to provide a defined entry into the city.

Par Course:

A series of exercise workout stations are situated along the walking path. The stations include an Achilles heel stretching post, a hop-kick pit, a sit-up area, a chin-up area, and balance beams.

Children's Play Area:

A small grouping of play equipment is situated adjacent to the tennis courts with facilities that are appropriate for young children.

Bird Watching:

The park is an urban bird-watching destination. The site is home to a variety of waterfowl including Canadian geese, mallards, wood ducks, cormorants and blue herons. A series of wood duck nesting boxes were constructed in 1989 by a Scout Troop and built to US Forest Service Specifications. The houses were mounted on trees in the two groves and remain today at various locations at the small pond and attract rare wood ducks and nesting birds.

Wetlands:

A trail through the south wetland portion of the park was developed as a Scout Troop project in 1989. The gravel path was a popular nature walk until the permitting resource agency terminated the use of the trail system in this area for ecological reasons.

Sculpture:

To celebrate famed woodcarver Dudley Carter's 100th birthday, residents purchased one of his works -- Suspended Head, an s-shaped piece of red cedar driftwood carved into a female head. Renamed Windsong, the piece hangs from a roughly hewn post and beam in the southwest bank of the small pond next to the trail. An additional stone sculpture stands in the northern area of the park and was donated by Peter Skinner, a resident of Medina.

Tennis Court:

The tennis court in the western corner of the park was refurbished in 2004 and continues to draw residents, both young and old, year-round.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

It is the Park Board's recommendation that future plans focus on maintaining a natural low-maintenance environment through an ongoing organic enhancement program that will nurture Medina Park as the cornerstone of our community.

Usage of the park will increase with the addition of new park features that offer residents an expanded choice of both active and passive activities within the natural park setting that was envisioned by the original planning commission.

Specific Improvements under Consideration:

1. Upgrade the 82nd street parking lot and control usage of both lots to ensure that neither site is used for parking by commuters or construction workers.
2. Add dog amenities throughout the park to include but not be limited to: hitching posts, loaner leashes, watering and washing access.
3. Improve the appearance through enhancement of seasonal plantings and signage at the 5-way intersection of NE 84 and NE 8th
4. Repair and replace all signage, as needed, so that it is in good condition, is uniform in appearance and readable. Add new mile marking signage for walking/running trails.
5. Brochure of Medina Walking Trails with distances
6. Build the wetland boardwalk area
7. Evaluate existing children's play area and refine a plan that will be usable for children up to ten years of age.
8. Establish a Parks Donation and Memorial Policy and continue to plant trees and plants throughout the park to provide shade and visual interest
9. Investigate the community's desire to irrigate the rest of the park
10. Improve ramps and encourage their use
11. Repair or replace Par Course facility stations
12. Encourage the communal use of the park through community events like sailboat competitions and tennis tournaments.
13. Provide picnic tables in shaded areas

14. Try to find a sponsor for funding of the mutt mitts
15. Investigate a Parks Program that would offer tennis lessons among other activities
16. Investigate small game tables on the west side of the tennis courts for chess, checkers
17. Install binoculars for natural habitat viewing

Fairweather Nature Preserve

The 11-acre Fairweather Park and Nature Preserve is located off of Evergreen Point Road and is adjacent to the north side of SR-520. The site is one of the last standing natural forests in the area and is as close to a walk in the deep woods as one can get in the heart of a city. In 2000 the City of Medina and EarthCorps embarked on a major restoration project to remove hundreds of invasive plants that were taking over and planted coniferous saplings in their place in an effort to reestablish the natural evergreen environment. Little by little the forest is coming back. Today, the park consists mainly of natural forested open spaces and wetlands that may be accessed by a number of picturesque walking paths that offer varying levels of difficulty for hikers. The open western portion of the site also includes two newly renovated tennis courts, a small field for community sports practice and an unpaved parking area. Fairweather is a year-round off leash park for dog owners.

A number of ongoing maintenance projects are underway and will continue with EarthCorps funding including the placement of check dams in the streams, removal of invasive plants and the planting of new evergreens.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

The Park Board will continue to discuss the establishment of a long-term landscaping, maintenance and usage plan that will maintain this historic site in a manner that is consistent with and enhances public use.

Specific Improvements under Consideration:

1. Park identification signage and an educational board
2. Improve parking lot surface
3. Upgrade the foot bridges
4. Make field drainage and general field improvements
5. Add picnic tables and benches in gymnasium area
6. Add steps to the field
7. Add handicapped access parking spots and ensure that the site meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility standards.
8. Place a bench at the NW corner of the field
9. Add dog watering capabilities
10. Restrooms
11. Volleyball, basketball and badminton courts
12. Batting cage for softball and kids baseball
13. Giant Chess Board
14. Environmental information that educates the visitor on the importance of maintaining healthy forests
15. Investigate ability to light tennis courts during the winter months

16. Addition of a natural climbing structure for children and adults
17. Review Anderson Ray Fairweather Plan to capture additional ideas for site improvement

Medina Beach Park

Situated at the point on the south end of Evergreen Point Road, the park is the historic site of the former ferry terminal that connected Medina with Seattle. The park is a favorite destination as it offers a protected bulkhead for swimming and provides extraordinary views of Seattle, Mercer Island and Mt. Rainer. The site also contains a public pier, benches and picnic facilities for year-round use. Reminiscent of a simpler day, the park remains a summer haven for children from the first hot day of Spring until after school begins in the Fall. Under the supervision of lifeguards, older children are able to swim out to a diving platform while younger ones wade at the water's edge under the watchful eyes of their mother's who can set up picnics nearby.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

The Medina Beach Park Project has positioned the City as a leader in the protection of fish and wildlife. The newly installed docks will allow light to pass through and thereby limit the build-up of algae, encourage the fingerling fish population and return designated beachfront sites into spawning areas. The bulkhead remains but is protected by the addition of a graded beachfront that will hamper future erosion of the site.

Specific Improvements under Consideration

1. Current Medina Beach Park Project
2. Offer swimming and sailing lessons
3. New lawn irrigation system
4. Boat rentals
5. Community Center
6. Ecological Information Board describing the fish preserve renovations

Lake Lane Dock

This little known and rarely used Lake Washington dock stands at the end of the lane off of 78th Place NE. The dock was replaced in 2004 to meet current standards and to encourage the return of fish habitat to the Lake Washington shoreline. Hidden away, this picturesque little gem is an ideal spot to visit and view the waterfront surroundings and an ideal spot for dogs that enjoy swimming.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

Specific Improvements under Consideration:

1. Fish-friendly dock improvements
2. Picnic table
3. Dog Mitts and Trash Can

View Point Park

One of Medina's "hidden" parks, the upper portion of this site is comprised of a small triangle of land that is situated near the south end of 84th Avenue NE and Overlake Drive West and is landscaped with seasonal plantings and a seating area. The lower portion of the park has limited parking spaces for visitors who are able to leave their car behind and meander down a short rustic trail to reach the floating dock. The site offers breathtaking views of Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline and Olympic Mountains. This is an ideal destination for swimmers, picnickers and those in search of a peaceful secluded spot. The dock is also a place to bring dogs that like to swim.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

It is proposed that the upper portion of the park be landscaped with a new ground cover that would minimize the need for constant weeding and the lower picnic area to be spruced up with new plantings and/or bark which will make it more visually appealing. Given that this is a "party destination," the Board will pursue discussions regarding after hour's use of the site and how the situation might be best controlled.

Specific Improvements under Consideration:

1. Spruce up picnic area and surroundings
2. Improved staircase
3. Fish-friendly dock improvements
4. Revisit the existing security and safety lighting to improve upon coverage of area

Indian Trail

The trail that extends from NE 28th across NE 24th to the end of NE 77th has grown from an unopened street into a lovely walking lane with natural landscaping that is part of the Points Loop System.

LONG-RANGE PLAN

It is proposed that the City integrate the trail into the Medina Park system and allow walkers and runners to travel an uninterrupted path from Evergreen Point to NE 26th.

Specific Improvements under Consideration:

1. Name change
2. Add the Indian Trail to the city's list of designated parks
3. Discuss the proposed addition of an elevated boardwalk that would allow unhampered pedestrian access from the Indian Trail to Evergreen Point Road
4. Identify improvements to increase pedestrian use and safety

1. City of Medina Comprehensive Plan May 9,2004, Page 26.