



Meeting minutes

Meeting: Gabbert Butte Master Plan - Natural Resource Charrette #2
Date/time: Monday, Sep. 10, 2018 – 2 to 4 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center - Room 270
Purpose: Convene natural resource experts to discuss Gabbert Butte

Attendees

Susan Barnes, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife; Ellen Wyoming Deloy; Laura Guderyahn, Portland Parks and Recreation; Kate Holleran, Metro; Katie Holzer, City of Gresham; Jason Howard, Johnson Creek Watershed Council; Michael Karnosh, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; Torrey Lindbo, City of Gresham; Micah Meskel, Portland Audubon; Tina Osterink, City of Gresham; Maureen Raad, Environmental Science Associates; Bob Sallinger, Portland Audubon; Ann Toledo, Metro; Olena Turula, Metro; Mike Wallace, City of Gresham; Katy Weil, Metro; Rod Wojtanik, Metro

Topics

- Project overview
- Updates
- Draft preferred alternative
- Discuss entry area draft design
- Discuss draft trail alignments

Project overview

Olena Turula explained that the meeting will be focusing on two areas: the entry area, including the wetlands, and the trail alignment alternatives. There are still many questions about the best alignment for the east side trail network.

Background on the Gabbert Butte acquisition, interim access planning, and community engagement was given. Olena shared the three alternative entry area designs that were displayed to the public at the open houses and Connect with Nature workshops. The preferred alternative came in the form of a mix and match of elements from the separate designs. People preferred the parking lot option that was closest to Regner Road, this option also disturbs less of the site. The public also preferred the amenities to be farther away from the parking lot, in order to be more immersed in nature. Loop trails were highly preferred. Ecological interpretation signs regarding native plants and wetlands were also a favorite option. There were concerns about the proximity of people to the sensitive wetland habitat, and also about the history of landslides in the area.

Updates

The DOGAMI landslide hazard map shows the topography around the entry area and east trail network as having historic landslides. A geotechnical engineer was hired to evaluate how stable the slope was. It was concluded that the location where the proposed parking lot and entry area is should be okay, but that a geotechnical engineer needs to be a part of the trail design team for a trail along the scarp slope in order to mitigate risks.

Wetland delineation and amphibian monitoring has been done on the site. There are a variety of amphibians on the butte including chorus frogs, red-legged frogs and rough skin newts, to name a few. Katie Holzer mentioned that the wetland has a very dense concentration of red-legged frogs breeding. This is a species of concern.

Photos were shown of the wetland, the area where the proposed trail network would be, and the entry area. Two areas have been cleared, and the question came up as to why nothing is growing there. City of Gresham thinks that this soil is fill material from the development across the street.

Draft preferred alternative

The trail alignment changed so that the loop trail is no longer enclosing the wetland, but instead on one side of it. There is an accessible 0.5 mile loop trail, plant ID stations, overlook and a wildlife viewing area.

The biggest question is about the wetland: how much attention do we draw to it? How can we still provide that experience and use it as an education opportunity while still protecting wildlife? How close is too close? What has worked in the past regarding designing trails near wetlands, and what hasn't worked? The current trail design has wetlands located down a steep slope from the trail.

Discussion

The group broke up into two groups and discussed the entry area draft design and the draft trail alignments. More attention was given to the entry area draft design, as that is the area with the wetlands and trail network in need of feedback.

Entry area draft design recommendations

- 100-foot minimum buffer around the wetland.
- Shift the alignment of the trail and gathering areas further to the east.
- Consider not representing the wetland on the map or sign to decrease exploration.
- Enclose the resting viewpoint area to reduce off-trail wondering.
- Enhance the deterrent hedge to the west of the developed area, and start working on that as soon as possible.
- Consider a seasonal closure, January to March, of the south portion of trail (which is the section closest to the wetland).
- Create a vegetation management plan for impacted areas, including trails.
- Create a broad trail system: mid-slope trail that crosses streams.
- Utilize the trails that connects through the neighborhood.
- No lighting in the parking lot.
- Consider highlighting the other, smaller wetland on the site that is not of as high wildlife importance. This could be an area ripe for volunteer restoration opportunities.
- Consider an out and back trail instead of a loop due to the size of the site.
- Can the ridge top be utilized?
- Consider the current vs. future demand.
- Create water somewhere else on the butte, since this development is going to impact the wetlands negatively one way or another.

Draft trail alignments recommendations

- Connect through Meadow Court instead of east trail.
- Conduct salamander surveys.
- Storm water area enhancement.
- Community restoration projects.

Actions agreed upon

Olena Turula to ask geotechnical engineer about the history of the two cleared areas on the site.

Next steps

Feedback from this meeting will be discussed between Metro and Gresham. The final open house will take place later in the fall.

Meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.