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**STAFF PLANNING TEAM**

City of Salem Public Works Department
Rob Romanek, Parks Planner/Project Manager
Patricia Farrell, Parks Planning & Natural Resources Manager
Toni Whitler, Parks Planner
Jennifer Kellar, Parks Operations Manager
SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

This Site Assessment Report supports the preparation of a master plan for Brown Road Park. A master plan is a document that outlines a vision for the use and development of parkland, and is the result of a planning process. This process takes into account community input, the park’s size and classification (i.e. neighborhood park, community park, urban park, etc.), unique characteristics of the property, access, surrounding development patterns, and other relevant factors, such as construction feasibility and cost. Much of this information is detailed within this report for reference through the planning process.

1.1 PLANNING PROCESS

To prepare a comprehensive vision for the site that is unique to its location, natural resources, and community preferences, the planning process is based on two key tasks: Site Assessment, and Outreach and Master Plan Development.

Task 1: Site Assessment

In February, 2018, the City of Salem Parks Planning Section began a site assessment to identify and document existing conditions at Brown Road Park. The team’s goal was to develop a clear understanding of the context, opportunities, issues and site characteristics that can be used as inspiration in preparing a master plan. This work is summarized in this Site Assessment Report.

Task 2: Outreach and Master Plan Development

In this next phase, the planning team will reach out to local community members and park users to develop a “preferred design alternative” for the Brown Road Park master plan. The process for generating this preferred design concept will include three public master planning workshops, development of multiple conceptual design alternatives, and vetting of technical design issues with the City’s Parks Planning and Operations staff.

A master plan report will then be prepared. This report will build upon the site assessment information within this document by describing the outreach process and resulting outcomes. This report will also present the preferred alternative with design details to be considered as park development moves forward.
1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

Brown Road Park, consisting of approximately 4.0 acres, is a neighborhood park located in the eastern portion of the North Lancaster Neighborhood. Access is provided by an abutting urban collector street: Brown Road. As found on the following pages, Figures 1-1 and 1-2 provide location and overview maps.

Pedestrian access to the site from Brown Road is largely inhibited by the presence of a drainage ditch along the park frontage, as well as a lack of sidewalks and formalized street crossings. The site is served by public transportation with a Cherriots bus stop is located at the intersection of Maria Avenue and Brown Road. Due to the presence of a busy road and lack of safe access, a small gravel parking lot was added to the park, even though this is not typical amenity for a neighborhood park.

A street improvement project led by the City of Salem is expected to address much of the access limitations along this frontage by adding sidewalks, bike lanes, a crosswalk, new drainage infrastructure, and traffic calming measures (see Figure 1-2). The park driveway may be relocated in order to accommodate these improvements. The street improvement project is currently in the design stage, with construction expected to begin in 2019.
Figure 1-1: Neighborhood Context
Figure 1-2: Park Overview
1.3 SITE HISTORY

The Brown Road Park property was first identified as a potential park location in a 1978 technical study. It was subsequently purchased by the City in 1996 in order to secure a location for a future neighborhood park.

An opportunity to expand the acreage arose in late 1998, when the owner of an approximately 0.77-acre adjoining parcel notified the City that the site was for sale. The City Council subsequently authorized negotiations, however, the purchase was ultimately declined as the purchase price significantly exceeded the anticipated per-acre cost for future parkland acquisitions.

An early attempt to adopt a park master plan began in November, 2000. City staff held three meetings with the North Lancaster Neighborhood Association (NOLA) to discuss park features, adjacent impacts and potential uses and facilities. Multiple concepts were developed, with NOLA favoring one of these preliminary designs. The Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommended approval of a draft master plan in April, 2001. However, the plan was not advanced to the City Council for adoption. For reference, this early design concept is shown as Figure 1-3.

Figure 1-3: Brown Road Park Draft 2001 Preliminary Master Plan (NOLA Recommended)
In 2012, City staff began working with NOLA to identify and initiate early park development in order to provide opportunities for public enjoyment of the undeveloped site. These initial improvements are considered “predevelopment,” or interim use, in advance of a master plan and future park development. To the extent practical, facilities were sited in locations most likely to coordinate with, rather than be replaced by, future park development.

Phase 1 of predevelopment was completed in 2013. It included the initial installation of a community garden, supporting irrigation, a soft trail system along the park perimeter, and a gravel parking lot. A second phase that began in 2014 included additional irrigation work and the planting of trees along a portion of the southern park boundary. An accessible picnic table and gravel pad was also added. A third phase was completed in 2016 with the installation of a seeded open field and additional supporting irrigation.

1.4 RELATED PLANS AND GOALS

North Lancaster Neighborhood Association

At its January 3, 2018 meeting, NOLA approved the following goals for the Brown Road Park master plan.

Goal 1: Park design and equipment should showcase unique attributes to distinguish the character and diversity of the NOLA neighborhood.

Goal 2: Park design shall incorporate amenities and facility attributes as identified for a neighborhood park in the [Comprehensive Park System] Master Plan with a focus on health and family. Park design should maintain an exception to the Comprehensive Park System Master Plan with the inclusion of a parking lot.

Goal 3: Park design should enhance visibility into the park space from adjacent local streets and residences.

Goal 4: Park design should enhance safety of the users of the park.

Goal 5: Promote tree planting to increase the urban tree canopy of the North Lancaster Neighborhood and extend the community garden of the park.

Comprehensive Park System Master Plan

The Salem Comprehensive Park System Master Plan (CPSMP), completed in 2013, is a system-wide plan that describes specific goals and policies for the City’s park system as adopted by City Council. This policy document defines park classifications and provides guidelines for park development. The classification of neighborhood parks is given to sites that are intended to provide access to basic recreation resources for nearby residents within a half-mile service area. Neighborhood parks may also include natural areas.
As described within the system-wide plan, the following identifies common facilities as either standard, optional, or not appropriate for neighborhood parks.

**STANDARD FACILITIES**
- Picnic area
- Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, Mutt Mitt, etc.)
- Playground or play features
- Internal pedestrian trails, a portion of which must be Americans with Disability Act-compliant perimeter paths or sidewalks
- Open turf area (minimum 50 feet x 50 feet)
- Trees
- On-street parking
- Park identification sign
- Security lighting
- At least one active recreation resource (see “Optional Facilities”)

**OPTIONAL FACILITIES**
- Practice sports fields (baseball, soccer, softball, or other athletic field)
- Sports courts (basketball, tennis, multi-use court)
- Other small-scale active recreation resources (skate spot, horseshoe pits, bocce court, shuffleboard lane, disc golf hole)
- Community garden
- Multi-use trails
- Soft-surface trails
- Shelter, shade structure, or gazebo
- Lighting
- Seasonal chemical toilet

**NOT APPROPRIATE FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**
- Dog parks
- Parking
- BMX/mountain bike trails
- Aquatic facilities (splash fountains or pools)
- Destination facilities or resources with community-wide draw
- Memorials (except for memorial trees or benches)
- Floral plantings (display gardens)
- Reservable facilities

While off-street parking is not normally provided at neighborhood parks, the lack of available on-street parking surrounding Brown Road Park supports an exception to this guideline. As
mentioned previously, the park currently has several optional facilities, including the community garden and soft surface trail.

**Sensitive Area Management Handbook**

The Sensitive Area Management Handbook (SAMH) is used by the Park Operations Division of Salem Public Works to identify sensitive areas within parks and to determine best management practices for maintenance activities. Sensitive features within Brown Road Park include two seasonally flooded wetlands and a forested upland area dominated by white poplar (*Populus alba*). This master planning process will consider the extent to which impacts to these sensitive features can be avoided and minimized through the placement of park facilities. If these areas cannot be avoided, the City may opt to mitigate through the purchase of off-site wetland mitigation bank credits.
SECTION 2 – SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

The project area maps, Figures 1-1 and 1-2, provide landscape context for Brown Road Park. The park is located in northeastern Salem, less than ½ mile from the edge of the Salem Urban Growth Boundary. Surrounding land use is dominated by single-family housing. Several multi-family housing complexes are located along the outer extent of the park service area.

A portion of the area intended to be served by the park lies to the east between 47th Avenue and Walker Road. For these residents, direct walking and biking access to the park is blocked by developed private property. Circumnavigating this lack of a direct connection adds a distance of approximately ½ mile for these residents, representing a notable access barrier.

Portions of the surrounding area include low-density single-family residential housing. Over time, these areas may be subject to increased urbanization by in-fill development. For instance, land zoned as residential agriculture is often re-zoned to allow for higher density residential uses. This urbanization will likely increase demand for local parks and open space.

Brown Road Park is in close proximity to several other City parks. Within a mile of the site are Weathers Street, Royal Oaks, and McKay School Park.

2.2 NATURAL RESOURCES

The park is located on flat topography that is typical of northeastern Salem. A maintained grassland characterizes much of the site. The average slope is judged to be less than 0.5%. The site drains towards the West Fork Little Pudding River, which is located approximately 250 feet from the park boundary. Site elevation ranges from 200 to 202 feet above mean sea level (msl). Further details about natural resources at the site are provided as follows, including soils, hydrology, vegetation, and wildlife.

Soils

Site soils are shown in Figure 2-1. The park property is predominantly underlain by Woodburn silt loam. A small portion of Amity silt loam has been mapped in the western portion of the site. Both soil units are considered non-hydric, meaning these soils are typically not saturated with water on a permanent or seasonal basis. Profile characteristics are detailed based on the information provided in the soil survey report of Marion County, Oregon\(^1\).

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\(^1\) Williams, L.H. 1972. Soil Survey of Marion County, Oregon. U.S. Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service, in cooperation with Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station. 95 pp. URL: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_MANUSCRIPTS/oregon/OR643/0/or643_text.pdf.
Amity silt loam (*mapping unit Am*) is a somewhat poorly-drained soil unit that is formed in alluvium on broad valley terraces. In a typical profile, the surface layer is a very dark grayish-brown silt loam that is mottled in the lower part and is about 17 inches thick. The underlying upper subsoil is mottled dark-gray silt loam with a thickness of approximately 7 inches. The lower subsoil is a mottled grayish-brown silty clay loam layer that is about 13 inches thick. The substratum is comprised of mottled olive-brown silt loam that underlies the subsoil.

Woodburn silt loam (*mapping unit WuA*) is a moderately well-drained soil unit that formed in silty alluvium, and also found in broad valley terraces. The typical profile includes an approximately 17-inches-thick surface of very dark brown silt loam. The underlying subsoil is about 37 inches think with a dark yellowish-brown silty clay loam color/texture in the upper part, mottled dark brown silty clay loam in the middle, and mottled, dark brown silt loam in the lower part. The substratum is a dark brown silt loam that extends to a depth of 68 inches or more.

Figure 2-1: Soils
Hydrology

Site contours indicate surface runoff discharged from Brown Road Park flows toward the east, likely by sheet flow, before eventually emptying into West Fork Little Pudding River. The Little Pudding River watershed is one of thirteen urban drainage basins in the City, covering an area of 9.1 square miles that drains much of east Salem. During the winter months, high groundwater levels and saturated soils are common within this drainage.

Brown Road Park is estimated to receive off-site runoff from a small drainage area to the northwest of the site that is less than 2 acres and comprised of low-density single-family residential. Anthropic contributions to runoff received by the park property is judged to be insignificant. There are no features suggestive of active water quality management, however, a storm ditch is located just offsite to the west along the Brown Road frontage.

The Local Wetland Inventory identifies one feature at the site, however, a wetland delineation conducted by the City in October 2017 and February 2018 identified two separate wetlands features within the park. The location of these wetlands are shown below in Figure 2-2. Wetland A is a freshwater Seasonally Flooded Palustrine Emergent Flat Class wetland that covers 0.18 acres. Wetland B is a freshwater Seasonally Flooded Palustrine Scrub-Shrub Flat Class wetland that covers 0.024 acres. Both wetlands are likely to be waters of the state and regulated by the Oregon Department of State Lands. Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will likely take jurisdiction over these wetlands due to a likely nexus with West Fork Little Pudding River.

Figure 2-2: Wetlands
Vegetation

A vegetation map is provided as Figure 2-3. The site is dominated by maintained/disturbed grassland composed of Kentucky blue grass (*Poa pratensis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), tall fescue (*Schedonorus arundinaceus*), hairy cat’s ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*) and English plantain (*Plantago lanceolate*). A forested area located along the northern park boundary is dominated by white poplar (*Populus alba*) trees and saplings. One black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) tree is located in the southeast corner of the park. Five black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) trees have been planted near the existing gravel parking lot. A species of alder (*Alnus spp.*) is also found along the northern park boundary.

Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*) is an invasive plant found within the park property, but particularly along the edge of tree canopies where mowing access is limited.

Figure 2-3: Vegetation

Wildlife

A thorough wildlife inventory has not been conducted at Brown Road Park. The presence of wildlife may be reduced by park development. Wildlife within the park is expected to be limited to common urban and suburban species, including black-tail deer, raccoons, turkeys, squirrels, song birds, raptors, and possibly coyotes.
2.3 EXISTING FEATURES

Park Facilities

While described as undeveloped, several improvements have been completed at the site. These include an approximately 11,000 square foot community garden, a 55,000 square foot gravel parking lot, a roughly 2,000 square foot irrigated field, a park kiosk, an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible picnic table, a dog waste station, and soft trails. Most of the existing soft trails are deteriorating from a lack of maintenance. These enhancements were completed in cooperation with the North Lancaster Neighborhood Association with funding provided from the Salem Park Improvement Fund and the Salem Parks Foundation.

Figure 2-4: Existing Park Facilities

Utilities

A 2-inch water meter connects to an existing irrigation system. It is located near the Brown Road right-of-way in the northwest corner of the site. This irrigation system includes multiple valves that feed rotor sprinklers within the irrigated field, and provide establishment irrigation for trees planted
near the parking lot. The irrigation system also includes a quick-coupler connection and a number of faucets that serve the community garden. A potable water valve is connected to the existing water meter, however, there are no potable water fixtures currently in use at the site.

### 2.4 OTHER ASPECTS

#### Zoning

As shown in Figure 2-5, the surrounding area includes two primary zoning types, single-family residential (RS) and residential agriculture (RA). Further to the southwest is multi-family residential (RM2). Beyond the City limit, to the north and east, is unincorporated Marion County. To the north, County zoning is Single Family Residential. The unincorporated area to the west is identified as an Urban Transition zone.

Figure 2-5: Land Use Zoning
Surrounding Demographics

A census block is the smallest geographic unit used by the U.S. Census Bureau for reporting the United States Census. For the Brown Road Park, 39 census blocks have a center point (i.e. centroid) inside the park service area boundary. This selection was used to obtain neighborhood demographic information from the 2010 Census, as reported in the 2010 Demographic Profile.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder website, the total population in 2010 was 5,105 with a density of 6,134 people per square mile.

The racial makeup was: 3,549 White (69.5%); 70 African American (1.4%); 85 Native American (1.7%); 333 Asian (6.5%); 90 Pacific Islander (1.8%); 706 other races (13.8%); 272 two or more races (5.3%). The Hispanic and Latino population (of any race) was reported at 1,573 (30.8%).

The age distribution had a spread of 838 people (16.4%) under the age of 10, 745 people (14.6%) aged 10 to 19, 1,657 people (32.5%) aged 20 to 44, 1,176 people (23.0%) aged 45 to 64, and 689 people (13.5%) who were 65 years of age or older.

The American Community Survey is another source of detailed demographic information. The smallest geographic unit used for reporting the American Community Survey is the census block group. Seven census block groups where examined within and surrounding the North and East Lancaster Neighborhoods.
According to the U.S. Census Bureau American Fact Finder website, the 2012-2016 American Community Survey estimates 760 limited-English-speaking households out of a total of 4,506, representing roughly 17% of all households. Of those, 663 households are estimated to speak Spanish.

Twelve-month median household income estimates ranged by census block with a low of $19,412 and a high of $74,278. This can be compared to the city-wide estimate of $49,126 and $53,270 state-wide.

Due to the U.S. Census Bureau’s representative sampling methods, the American Community Survey estimates for census blocks are subject to high margins of error. Therefore, exact values presented here are unreliable and should be considered as a rough snapshot.
SECTION 3 – SITE ASSESSMENT

3.1 OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities and constraints to park development were evaluated based on the site analysis and the requirements of potential recreation facilities. Depending on the community’s desire for recreational facilities, expansion of infrastructure, such as paved paths, and the addition of lighting may be needed. The presence of jurisdictional wetlands may limit development in portions of the site, or increase costs for wetland permits and mitigation. Factors such as these provide the context for weighing the types of activities that could be located at and/or designed to fit into the park. Key opportunities and constraints are summarized below.

Opportunities

The following opportunities have been identified to guide concept development. As stakeholder outreach begins, this list is expected to be refined.

- Engaging local residents, park users, and other stakeholders in this planning process can help ensure the park design provides a range of facilities that serve diverse needs and appeal to a wide range of potential and existing users.
- Adding amenities within the park will increase the availability of close-to-home recreation resources for residents within the park service area.
- Flat topography provides opportunities for a wide range of park facilities.
- Tree plantings within the park may increase the urban canopy within the North Lancaster Neighborhood and would provide public health and social benefits.
- The community garden provides a natural location for neighbors to gather.

Constraints

There are several elements that constrain future development within the park. These include the following:

- The site is largely isolated, with limited visibility from Brown Road and no direct pedestrian connections to residents located to the east.
- Brown Road is an urban collector street. For active park facilities, such as playgrounds, a buffer may be desirable for safety.
• Existing wetlands limit options for park circulation and development. Removal would likely come at a financial cost through payment of permitting and in-lieu mitigation fees.
• Proximity of adjacent residents may limit the type and intensity of uses.
• Safe pedestrian access to the park will remain an issue until the proposed street improvements along Brown Road are completed.

Brown Road lacks safe pedestrian connectivity to the park
SECTION 4 – STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

A thorough outreach campaign has been incorporated into the larger planning effort to ensure local residents, park users, and other stakeholders are heard at critical milestones in the decision-making process, and that their input is incorporated as park development moves forward.

Postcards, fliers, handouts, and direct communications to the North Lancaster Neighborhood Association will be used to notify City residents within the park service area about the projects, and to invite their participation through a number of engagement opportunities. These opportunities include a series of master planning workshops and online community surveys.

Additional outreach tools include use of the City website and social media noticing. These electronic forums will be used to disseminate information about participation opportunities and to provide links to online surveys, project materials, and staff contact information.

Both print and online communications will encourage stakeholders to subscribe to receive project notices through email-based newsletters. These newsletters will be used throughout the project to announce engagement opportunities, major project milestones, and meeting dates relevant to the City Council adoption process.
Public notification strategies include:

- Announcements and presentations at regular North Lancaster Neighborhood Association meetings;
- Direct mailing of postcards to City residents within the park service area (1/2 mile);
- Posting of fliers at targeted locations or local events;
- Creation of a City web page with information about the project, participation opportunities, and project contacts; and
- Distribution of notices through:
  - Email-based newsletters,
  - North Lancaster Neighborhood Association, and
  - Local public schools as handouts to be sent home with students.

To maximize the number of participants, the first two workshops have been scheduled for weekday evenings at a location close to the project site: McKay High School. The third workshop is anticipated to be scheduled for a Saturday and held at the project site, subject to weather conditions and the identification of a suitable parking management strategy. Workshop dates seek to avoid times that may conflict with holiday activities and major community events.

The first public workshop is intended to provide participants general background about the planning process and potential uses of the site. City staff will provide a virtual fieldtrip using photos to help participants better understand the complexities of the site and the range of possible uses. This will be followed by a question and answer session.

To conclude the first workshop, the use of an interactive yard sale activity is proposed. Participants will have the opportunity to place money stickers on posters that feature various amenities and site uses identified as possibilities for Brown Road Park. Participants will also have the opportunity to write in and vote for additional park features. The exercise will allow participants to engage with the project team, learn, ask questions, and identify their priorities for the master plan via a spending exercise. Participants will be invited to spend their activity money on approximately 16 different site features. The community participants will also have the opportunity to add amenities to the yard sale list.

At the end of the workshop, participants will be encouraged to complete an online visioning survey. The survey will also be advertised to stakeholders that are unable to participate in the workshop. It will be opened at least two weeks prior to first workshop and will remain open for approximately two weeks following.
A second public workshop will begin with a presentation of multiple design alternatives for the master plan, developed based on the input received from the first workshop and visioning survey. The remainder of the workshop will be dedicated to collecting feedback about components of each alternative design, as well as the solicitation of additional and/or alternative ideas. Participants will be invited to indicate their likes and dislikes by placing stickers on posters that describe components of each site plan concept. Additional comments and suggestions will be solicited and recorded on large notepads.

Similar to the first workshop, participants will be encouraged to reinforce their comments by completing a second online survey. The survey will also be available to stakeholders that are unable to participate in the workshop. It will open immediately following the second workshop and remain open for approximately two weeks.

Input from the first two community workshops, survey responses, and internal City staff meetings will guide the development of a “preferred alternative” design concept. The preferred alternative will be presented at the third community workshop. Following a staff presentation, participants will have the opportunity to engage with the project team one-on-one, ask questions, and submit written comments.

Following the third workshop, the project team will offer stakeholders a two-week review and comment period. A review of written comments, as well as input from the Salem Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, may result in revisions before the preferred alternative/draft park master plan is brought before the City Council for a public hearing and consideration to adopt.