



## Meeting Summary for February 24<sup>th</sup> Harper Walk-shop

**Date:** Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019, 2-4 p.m.

**Location:** Harper Park, 3500 SE Southworth Dr., Port Orchard, WA 98366

**Purpose:** This was a walking meeting at Harper to engage the community in discussions about possible improvements to the park, estuary and shoreline that will be funded by a new state Department of Ecology grant. The 2019 grant supports activities for Harper Estuary restoration planning and Harper Park plan development. The tour stems from a January 30, 2019 community meeting where county officials opened discussions for park and estuary improvements, such as the waterfront, park facilities, trails, and interpretive features. This February event provides neighbors and staff an opportunity to view various park features together (the ballfield, trails, waterfront views, picnic shelter and drainage facilities), share information, and engage in a moving conversation about assets and possible improvements. Participants also got a first-hand view of the county's invasive plant removal progress.

**Community Attendees:** Twenty community members people signed in at the meeting. Of these, 17 expressed interest in volunteering or becoming park stewards.

**County Representatives:** Commissioner Charlotte Garrido; Christina Kereki, Department of Community Development; Jennifer Cannon, Commissioners Office; and Steven Starlund and Jackson Lee of the Parks Department. Also present were Parks Advisory Board members Larry Walker and John Pearson.



### **Agenda:**

1. Commissioner Garrido welcomed attendees and made introductions.
2. Christina Kereki provided background on the park improvement and estuary restoration project.
3. Steven Starlund narrated a tour of the park and shoreline, highlighting areas for possible attention. This was followed by public comments, conversations, and questions and answers. (A summary of the public comments is provided in the Community Discussion section that follows.) In addition, Jackson Lee outlined potential volunteer opportunities.
4. A map of the project area is available at: <http://westsoundwatersheds.org/default.aspx?ID=42>

## Meeting Outcomes:

- ✓ This event engaged Harper area residents in conversations about possible features to enhance or improve such as the parking lot, picnic shelter, drainage, trails, signs, ballfield and shoreline.
- ✓ Participants provided verbal and written comments on the potential park and shoreline improvements. In addition to previous input and existing project/site constraints, these discussions will help county staff shape future work.
- ✓ The conversations are helpful to distinguish actions the community members generally agree should occur, and topics that require further discussions.

## Summary of Community Comments

### Harper Park

#### Bricks

- *The four brick stacks are historic features of the old brick factory and should be so designated.*
- *The county should add a little brick playground by the picnic shelter.*

#### Trails

- *The slight grade of the trail dates back to the railroad tram that transported bricks to the estuary (for further transport). The county should apply for an ADA grant to make it more accessible.*

#### Vegetation

- *The alders that are being cut down could be used as split-rail fencing.*

#### Ballfield

- *Kids play here all summer long. As the landowner, the Department of Natural Resources may have issues with incremental improvements rather than a full upgrade. ("DNR tried to trade off this property and now wants to kick kids off, which would not be good.")*
- *The Little League no longer plays here, as the field's poor condition has led to ankle injuries.*
- *Should the ballfield dugout and backstop be grandfathered, rather than considered for removal?*
- *Everyone wants the ballfield improved. Old folks have played in worse conditions!*
- *Without a fence, balls would go into the road.*
- *A single-use feature for kids does not always make sense.*
- *A gate could be added to the fence section by the creek, so people could retrieve balls.*
- *We should look at Log Boom Park in Kenmore as an example of a good play area. (<http://www.kenmorewa.gov/LogBoomPark>).*



## Shoreline and Estuary

### Boardwalk

- *Reactions to the proposed boardwalk out to the spit are mixed. Some are enthusiastic; others fear it may be disruptive to wildlife. Some believe it is premature and should be reconsidered in the future after observing the potential impacts of bridge construction.*



### Bridge/Road

- *Residents could visualize the space if the County marks the proposed road/bridge footprint along the shoreline.*
- *Could a larger culvert opening change the dynamics of the estuary?*
- *It is important to do the work in a cost-efficient way. \$4 million has been spent, with little to show for it. Can the project consider a box culvert instead of a bridge? Another attendee says, "we can't let perfect be the enemy of the good."*
- *Several attendees said they like the crosswalk idea and want project staff to look into installing a blinking light.*

### Launch Area

- *A small opening(s) in the proposed barriers along the shoreline would allow space for people pulling small crafts, such as kayaks, on wheels.*

### Seating

- *A bench was requested along the shoreline, but Parks indicates that they cannot put benches in the road right-of-way for safety reasons.*

## Trails and Interpretation

### Bridge

- *The bridge should not use material that has a recycling value.*
- *Install a video camera on the bridge to deter vandals. Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle has such a setup.*
- *Many like the bridge idea, as this was an important spot to cross and continue on the trail.*



### Concrete Slabs

- *Several community members commented on the concrete slabs, which someone noted were put in by the Girl Scouts for camping. A suggestion is to add benches at key viewpoints, such as on the concrete slabs, to rest and to facilitate bird and wildlife viewing. Another suggests using the slabs as foundations for picnic tables -- it is nice to have more than one bench or table, for multiple parties.*

## Trails

- *Perhaps Kitsap County could add a smaller loop trail.*
- *The slight grade of the trail dates back to the railroad tram that transported the bricks. The County should apply for an ADA grant to make it more accessible.*
- *After a staffer proposal to cut off a loop trail beyond the viewpoint of the old brick factory site, where the trail passes through a muddy wetland, a participant noted that children use this section of the trail. The staffer says installing a barrier and closing off that portion of the trail would be easier to maintain and more cost-effective than repairing it or installing and maintaining a boardwalk over it. This discussion will be deferred to a future community meeting where staff will provide information about the ecology, wildlife, and wetland.*
- *Several participants like the idea of adding rock walls and other supportive features to shore up sections of the trail that are experiencing erosion.*
- *A participant pointed out that significant water flows under the historic clay pit, and they supported fish passage improvements.*
- *Kitsap County should look into buying land that is for sale on the east side of the estuary.*



## **Submitted Community Comments (actual written comments are shown in *italics*):**

Paper: *Harper Park and Estuary restoration project – Community input:*

### Park

1. *Keep ball park – small footprint if necessary to enhance parking. It is the only park in the area. Keep fencing to ensure safety of small children.*
2. *Install playground equipment – Family use of parks has been proven to prevent draw of drug users.*
3. *Install restroom facilities or porta potty (honey bucket)*
4. *Ensure adequate parking for use of park facilities and estuary*
5. *Remove ivy from trees – one-time project to clear ivy along with plans to remove invasive species in and near the estuary.*
6. *Adequate parking is a big concern for area residents.*

### Estuary

1. *Southeast corner of estuary. Create trails and install benches for wildlife viewing. Consider offering opportunity for donations/contributions from private individuals to install memorial benches.*
2. *Build small craft launch with barriers to prevent parking of cars.*

Paper: *To Kitsap County and Everyone who lives near Harper, Southworth, and surrounding area, we are fortunate to live in a beautiful area surrounded by a park, estuary, beach and Yukon Harbor. I personally feel blessed to live in this community! Thanks to our community and a few persistent individuals we had the Harper Pier replaced with a fantastic fishing pier including a boat/swim platform. The pier is enjoyed all year long!! Harper Park and Estuary is also a place for all of us to enjoy! This is the time to seriously make plans for the future of Harper Park and Estuary. We have all noticed that our community is growing. New houses being built, and new families are moving here. I personally welcome the children playing in my neighborhood!! I have attended most of the Harper Estuary planning meetings that started*

*a few years ago. We all voiced our concerns, opinions and wants for the Estuary's future. Phase I has been completed and Phase II is in the works. Many neighbors have been concerned about the loss of the boat ramp and access to the area. This change and loss are hard especially for those who have lived here many years, a few all their lives. We all need to keep speaking out to maintain and restore the areas we have. As personnel changes within Kitsap County we need to make sure our ideas are known. Attached is my Harper Park Improvement Ideas Wish List! Thank you! [Signature]. Harper Park, Estuary and Southeast Corner Improvement Ideas Wish List.*

### Park

- 1. Take out remaining Ivy, especially cut it off the trees. The trees are dying and falling down!*
- 2. Park benches on trails.*
- 3. Keep the lawn and ball park for the neighborhood. This is the only park in this area. Our local community is growing, and we will need more places for recreation not less.*
- 4. Playground equipment near the picnic area.*
- 5. Facilities, bathroom or porta-potty.*

### Estuary

- 1. Continue with the phase II plans and eventually add the bridge along with the small craft launch ramp on the east-southeast corner. This was discussed at past planning meetings and actually pictured in plans.*
- 2. Attractive barrier so cars/trucks cannot be driven on new area but allow enough space for small craft launch such as boats, canoes, kayaks, and SUP.*
- 3. Include a bench near the barrier and/or possibly across the street. Great area for wildlife and bird watching!*

### Southeast Corner of Harper Park

- 1. Scout out and start planning to include this property into usable area of the Harper Park and Estuary.*
- 2. Build accessible trails in the area to hike, take in views of the Estuary and Yukon Harbor, and observe birds and wildlife.*
- 3. Include benches and a picnic area.*
- 4. Eventually connect this area via trails to the small craft launch.*

### Paper:

#### Park

- 1. Pressure wash picnic shelter area.*
- 2. Redo the curtain drain around the picnic shelter.*
- 3. Fence on north side of parking lot and the (private) property.*

#### Estuary

- 4. Remove creosote logs and treated wood from the shoreline and estuary.*

#### Bridge

- 5. New bridge across ravine on railway trail to replace the previous two bridges. The last bridge was of metal and taken by metal thieves.*
- 6. Small bridge over the washout on the south side of the mine loop trail.*
- 7. If a new bridge is not made over the ravine on the old railway trail, how about steps with a hand rail.*



### Signs

8. *New trail signs at Scatherwood road easement directing travel across the road to the other side.*
9. *New sign at the Harper Hill entrance to the park.*
10. *A sign at the beach, north side of Olympiad Drive saying "No driving on the beach" or something to that effect.*

### Trails

11. *Additional gravel on the main railway trail.*

### Trees

12. *Trim trees around the picnic shelter. Remove vines from trees.*

Email: *I have a few ideas for the park improvements.*

### Park

1. *More picnic tables and BBQ stands*
2. *Street light in parking area*
3. *Install security fence along north property line to keep trespassers off of my property. Install private property no trespassing signs. Add park closed at dusk signs in parking area.*

### Bridge

4. *Foot bridge and trail improvements over the creek*
5. *Remove steel bridge from upper trail.*

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Schedule another meeting in mid-March to continue the conversation, focusing on proposed park improvements that merit further examination.
2. Review the brick feature work compiled by a Harper Community committee. The goal will be to help to integrate or reinvigorate this work into the current 2019 grant work.
3. Summarize community comments, identify themes, provide supportive information, and a summary regarding progress of the estuary cleanup as well as conceptual plan options for Harper Park upgrades.
4. Explore possible ways volunteers could contribute to tasks outlined in the stewardship plan. The Parks Department will follow up on additional volunteer and stewardship opportunities, including invasive plant species removal (English ivy), trail improvements and interpretive displays.
5. Plan additional community conversations.