

Gladstone Nature Park Site Plan

City of Gladstone, Oregon



Submitted to:
City of Gladstone, Oregon

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Prepared by:



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City of Gladstone

Gladstone Nature Park Site Plan

Purpose

The purpose of this Gladstone Nature Park Site Plan is to guide the future development of the neighborhood park as a park and outdoor recreation facility. The site plan follows upon investigation of the site's physical characteristics, existing conditions, vegetation, geology, surface hydrology and wildlife. (See Gladstone Nature Park Site Analysis report, dated 9/17/20.) The site planning process included public outreach in the form of an online survey and website content, as well as input from stakeholder interviews, the Parks Board, a combined meeting of the Parks Board and City Council and city staff. The final plan was presented to the City Council at its December meeting. The site plan provides the guiding concept for the design and development of park improvements to enable the appropriate balance between conservation and recreation as a facility within the City's park system.

Property Description

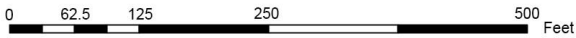
The Gladstone Nature Park is an 11.42-acre city-owned property that consists of four tax parcels (#1200-4.77 acres, #1203-1.4 acres, #1290-1.6 acres & #1300-3.65 acres) with frontage along Webster and Oatfield Roads. Both roadways are designated as minor arterial roadways and have concrete curbs and sidewalks. No buildings are located on the site except for a small storage shed with a message board located along the paved asphalt path. The park contains significant tree canopy cover with basalt rock outcroppings and is framed by steep slopes along its west, south and east sides. An open mown grass area comprises fairly level open space in the northeastern portion of the park. The Gladstone Nature Park Site Analysis report, dated September 17, 2020 provides detailed descriptions of both site character and conditions.

The adjoining 0.42-acre residential property (parcel #1500) along Webster Road just south of the park's limited parking spaces is recommended to be a future part of the park's development. The acquisition of that private property was cited in the City's adopted comprehensive Parks Master Plan and the Parks Capital Improvement Plan. Its acquisition will depend upon the willingness of the landowner and the availability of public funds to incorporate it into the Gladstone Nature Park.

Gladstone Nature Park Site Aerial Map



Gladstone, Oregon



August 2020



The Park’s Contextual Role

The Gladstone Nature Park is included in the inventory of the 2017 City of Gladstone Parks Master Plan (PMP) and listed as a public park on the Parks & Recreation information page of the City of Gladstone website. A site plan and several improvements for the nature park property were listed in the 2018-2028 Capital Improvements Plan.

The City's 1979 Comprehensive Plan identified characteristics for open space in Gladstone that would provide areas for recreation and social interaction and ensure that lands with outstanding views and aesthetic quality would remain for generations to enjoy. "Preserve some high places which will provide outstanding or pleasant views of the community" was one stated goal of the open space discussion in the plan. The 1979 Plan also noted a deficiency of the city was that "Gladstone has taken effective steps to conserve open space along most of its riverbanks, but not within the city's interior." The design and development of the Gladstone Nature Park seeks to fulfill the intention of the city comprehensive plan by providing for more outdoor recreation and views from locations within the city's neighborhoods.

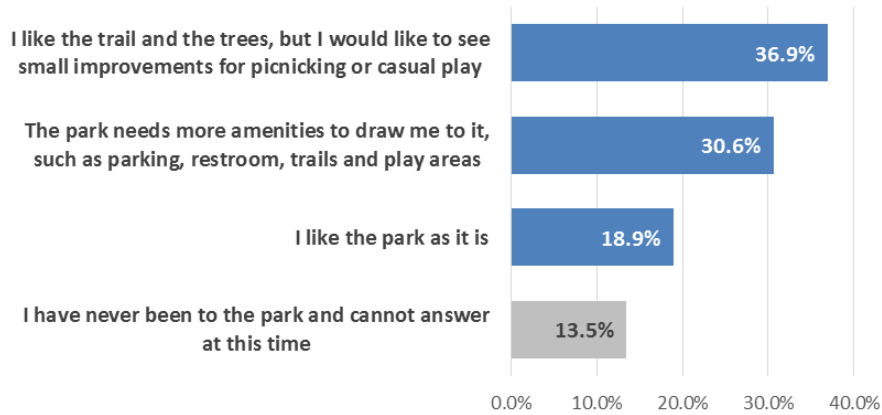
The Nature of the Park

The existing, wooded portion of the nature park provides the defining character of the park with its stand of Oregon white oaks mixed with Douglas fir, Pacific madrone and Bigleaf maple trees creating both dense and scattered tree canopies. The steep slopes that surround much of the park contain exposed basalt boulders and rock outcroppings that invite climbing and add more character to the site. As a high point in the city, perched above two major river valleys, the park is a significant stopping place for birds both migrating and in their daily travel. The park property has hosted at least 82 different bird species (according to data collected by eBird).

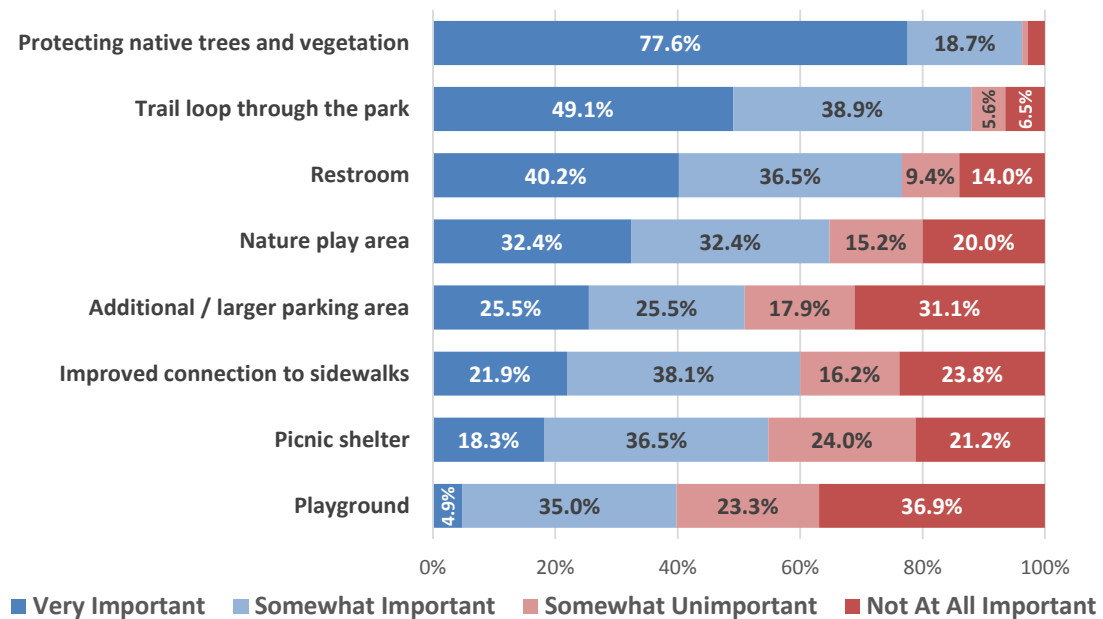
Planning the Park's Future

The site plan process enabled community feedback through the City's website for the park, City Facebook postings, an online survey, Parks Board discussions and input from the stakeholder group, Friends of Gladstone Nature Park (FODNAP). At a minimum, the primary focus for park users was to retain the natural setting of the park, its forested area, rock outcroppings and large mature oak trees. The desire for more walking experiences, parking and restrooms were high on the list of desired improvements voiced by many stakeholders and park users.

The online survey was conducted between October 5th and November 2nd to gather opinions and considerations for the nature park's future development. The survey was completed by 112 participants, with over 81% having visited the park. Of those respondents who had visited the park, almost one-quarter go to the nature park at least once a week. The majority of the respondents were interested in at least some small improvements in the park to enhance its value as a public park (see following chart).



The survey asked what amenities should be added to the park and how important those amenities might be to future use of the park. The highest ranking characteristic for the future park was “protecting the native trees and vegetation” with over 96% respondents finding this need to be very or somewhat important. The desire for a trail loop through the park ranked as second most important by 88% in the survey. The need for restrooms was important for the majority of survey respondents (76%). 64% of the respondents indicated that a nature play area was important as a future park improvement.



The survey also provided two different concepts to further gauge potential development scenarios for the nature park. A “passive” and an “active” concept were illustrated in the survey and compared across the proposed features for each concept. The majority of respondents (57.4%) favored the “passive” approach which lacked a traditional playground and a multi-purpose outdoor workshop building. (Both concepts

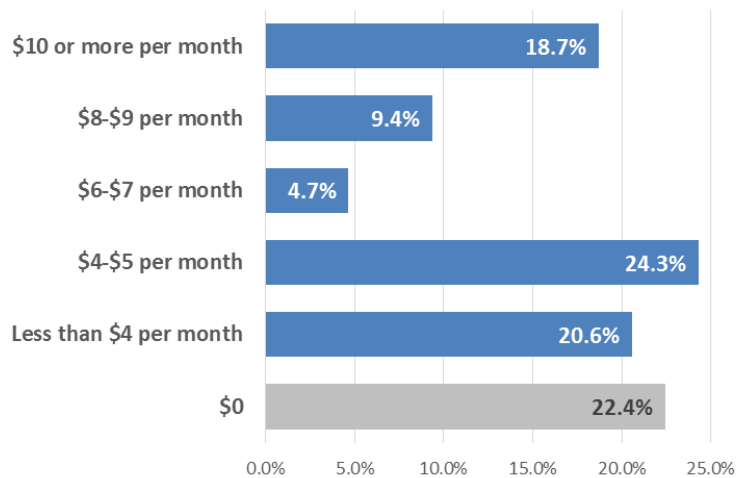
included the acquisition of the adjacent residential property and the reservation area for the water storage tank.)

The survey requested suggestions for the future of the nature park and/or other comments. Forty comments were accumulated with a few that suggested new ideas to add to the park’s design, including:

- Off-leash dog park
- References to indigenous culture
- Alternative locations for the water tank
- Space for outdoor yoga

Some comments expressed concern about the existing property targeted for acquisition and the need to retain the unique natural character of the park with any future planned improvements.

The survey asked a question about the respondent’s willingness to pay for the development and operation of parks, trails and recreational facilities that were most important to their household. The following chart highlights survey responses. Slightly more than 57% were willing to spend at least \$4 per month to support the development and operation of the park system. It must also be noted that these survey responses are not statistically valid and do not necessarily represent the views of a cross-section of the Gladstone community.



Preferred Park Direction

The park property retains significant natural habitat by retaining and restoring the oak tree canopy that covers almost 90% of the site. Significant efforts to conserve and restore the existing woods should continue, and to the extent practical, no healthy trees should be removed to achieve this park’s development. The nature park provides a place to walk in a natural setting. The open mown grass areas support picnicking, quiet

places of rest, event space for tents, booths, etc. The open mown grass area can support informal games of catch, Frisbee, soccer, and similar small group outdoor activities.

A Place to Walk & Play

Walking rises to the top of the list for most visitors to the nature park as well as across the country in park user surveys. The paved walking loop is the focus for park visitors to explore the wooded natural setting of the park. The paved loop path should have a mown edge to allow for soft-surface walkers (and dogs on a leash) to be able to explore the woods without contact with the understory vegetation.



The park can also provide a destination that includes a natural environment as well as opportunities to stay longer: picnic, play, paint, read, rest, bird or sunbathe. The three nature play areas each provide a unique set of play experiences using natural materials (primarily logs and boulders) and some neutrally colored manufactured play equipment (for nets, slides, and swings). The nature play area along the existing paved path is developed as the larger play space with the most variety of play elements. The other two nature play spaces are smaller with fewer play elements to encourage exploration into the woods (via the official paths) and keep families engaged.

Overview of Parks Features & Uses

Paved walking loop and additional natural wood-chipped trails allow for controlled access into the woods. Their alignments avoid the steep slopes and retain the majority of the woods in their natural condition. Hazard tree management can be limited to follow the trail alignment without the need to address dying trees further from public access. The pathway that connects along the eastern side of the park to Kearns Market will need to be carefully aligned to maximize universal access using outdoor recreation standards (and may not be fully ADA-compliant). The picnic shelter offers both individual, family and group gathering spaces with permanent picnic tables and BBQ grills included. Free-standing picnic tables can continue to provide alternative locations throughout the park's open areas. Park benches are added along the paved loop trail, parking lot, and at nature play areas.

Site Plan Elements

Pathways. The existing paved pathway becomes the ‘spine’ for the system of paved and unpaved trails that meander through the park and its natural areas. A paved loop provides universal access through the wooded area and connects to the existing paved path at either end of the upper section of the park. An additional paved path extends behind the adjoining residential property to connect the entry on Webster Road near Kern’s Market up to the main park entrance and future parking area. As alternative walking paths, woodchip-surfaced trails extend through the woods for a more natural experience.

Overlooks. The two overlooks offer more secluded spots for small gatherings or lookouts for birds watching for raptors flying overhead or other birds moving through the trees. The overlooks also contain low walls to allow seating in addition to the park benches that are fully ADA-compliant (with backrests and arms). The western overlook and its connecting path are wood-chipped surfaced. The eastern overlook along the loop path is paved for universal access.

Picnic Shelter. The picnic shelter adds a covered space for family gatherings, group activities and general shaded rest and relaxation. The architectural style of the picnic shelter should be coordinated with the proposed restrooms and kiosk to provide an overall visual identity to the built infrastructure of the nature park. The shelter includes 4-6 picnic tables and should be universally assessable.



Restrooms. Permanent restroom facilities are added near the parking lot to support longer park visits and planned park programming and volunteer activities. The restrooms should be fully ADA-compliant and offer two unisex bathrooms with an outside drinking fountain and water hose faucet (key operated).



Parking. The addition of parking will need to be coordinated with any future water storage tank access road and/or the future acquisition of the adjacent residential property. The parking lot provides up to 12 spaces. An agreement with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints across Webster Road and the City’s plans for future pedestrian crossing improvement on Webster Road could allow for special event or overflow parking on the Church site.

Signage. A main park identification sign is planned for the northeastern entrance with smaller signs at each of the other two entrances into the park. A message board kiosk at the parking lot should include a map and news about restoration efforts, planned volunteer activities, upcoming programming and similar park-related information. Small signs showing the identity of poison oak could be helpful in a few strategic locations in the woods to discourage off-trail wandering. A series of interpretive signs can be added along the paved loop path that explain the nature of the oak forest and the basalt outcroppings. A “story trail” could be implemented to share Gladstone’s history, children’s tales or special ecological life cycles.

Water Storage Tank. The reserved area for a future water storage tank should remain without park amenity improvements until the planned tank is implemented or potentially relocated to another site. If implemented, a large natural mural should be considered for the tank surface to reduce its visual impact and display a blended image that represents the nature park’s Oregon white oak character.

Adjacent Residential Property. The neighboring property along Webster Road just south of the main park entrance has been targeted for acquisition in the adopted citywide Parks Master Plan. Acquisition should be pursued when the city is able to leverage grant funding and available capital dollars to purchase the private property and incorporate into the park site.

Nature Play Areas. The desire for providing places for children to play in the park while also providing a different kind of play space is fulfilled with two locations for nature play activities. The main nature play space is located at the western edge of the open grass area within easy access to the restrooms. This larger play space is created with natural-looking or



naturally composed materials that blend well into a nature park setting. Logs for climbing, jumping and balancing; nets for climbing, hanging and stretching; a slide and swings to accommodate the most basic play activity need; are all provided in this larger

nature play space. The smaller nature play areas encourage families to explore the woods and engage in different nature play elements at each location.

Site Furnishings. Picnic tables in the proposed picnic shelter as well as free standing in different locations in the upper section of the park (in sun and shaded spots) provide places for park users to sit, eat, read, paint or gather as part of some activity or class. Park benches are provided as strategic locations along the paved trail loop, at the overlooks and near the parking lot.

Memorial Grove. The memorial grove for dedicated special tree plantings is located along the northern property boundary. As a prominent celebration of tree planting traditions, the memorial grove can be extended as occasions warrant more tree planting dedications. Additionally, the future growth of the memorial can help filter or provide some screening of the tall apartment buildings while also allowing lots of room for individual trees to grow and flourish. Since the park site has various soil types and fill material, significant soil improvements are likely needed to support long-term health of planted trees. Spacing of memorial trees should allow for mowers to navigate between fence and trees.

Restoration. The local volunteer and advocacy group (FOGNAP) as well as other nature-based organizations should continue their efforts to control (and eventually eliminate) invasive noxious weeds in the natural areas of the park. New native plantings should focus on ensuring a complete tree canopy with strong emphasis on Oregon white oak as the dominant canopy tree species. As more Himalayan blackberry is eradicated, native understory plants should be established that are compatible with a dry oak forest, especially in the shallow soils areas that exhibit more stone outcroppings.

Best Management Practices for Stormwater

Any proposed development of the park must address changes to surface hydrology and the potential generation of additional stormwater runoff. The additional of paved areas for parking, picnic shelter and paved pathways will create stormwater runoff that needs to be treated on site as much as feasible. In some areas of the park, the existing shallow soils may not provide adequate infiltration which may necessitate the construction of various rainwater runoff collection and holding facilities. These required techniques can be incorporated into the natural setting of the park by using green infrastructure techniques as stormwater best management practices.



There is a culvert located under the paved trail near the large rock outcropping along the northern border. The field inlet is piped to the public storm drain system in Webster Road. The culvert connects two broad low areas on either side of the path. Generally, the soils are gravelly and cobble mix with rapid drainage characteristics.

The Water Storage Tank Reserved Area

The 2014 Gladstone Water System Master Plan identified the nature park site as a proposed location for a two million gallon water tank to meet future water demands in the intermediate pressure zone of the City's water system. The proposed new tank would provide equalization, fire flow, and emergency storage for the City's water system. The tank would supply the low-pressure zone by gravity and would maintain the same hydraulic grade as the existing Webster Tanks to supply the intermediate and high-pressure zones. The additional storage is shown to be needed for emergency storage. The proposed location of the water tank in the nature park site would consume a 250'x 250' tank placement area with an access road (600' long x 24' wide with a 16' shoulder) connecting to Webster Road, based on the Oberson Property Report.

Considerable discussion and debate about the future of the nature park centered on the placement of the water storage tank in a public park recognized for its natural character. The elevation of the site within the city and its current public ownership offers a favorable combination for the tank's location in the park. The expressed desire to preserve, retain and restore the existing Oregon White Oak tree canopy to the greatest extent possible in the park would be impacted by tree clearing and grading for the 1.4-acre placement area and its access road. The site plan indicates the area reserved for potential placement of the water storage tank in the event that an alternative site is not available.

If/when the water storage tank is constructed in the park, the site plan recommends that certain restoration and mitigation measures are taken to reduce the long-term impact on the park's uses and activities. The visual impact of the water tank should be addressed by installing a mural on the tank walls and planting extensive quantities of Oregon white oaks around its perimeter. The provision of water for the park's restoration and uses could also be a benefit from the tank's implementation.



Phasing Plan

The 1979 Comprehensive Plan identified characteristics for open space in Gladstone that would provide areas for recreation and social interaction and ensure that lands with outstanding views and aesthetic quality would remain for generations to enjoy. “Preserve some high places which will provide outstanding or peasant views of the community” was one stated goal of the open space discussion in the plan. The 1979 Plan also noted a deficiency of the city was that “Gladstone has taken effective steps to conserve open space along most of its riverbanks, but not within the city’s interior.” Goals, Objectives and Policies of the City’s Comprehensive Plan have been updated several times since 1979. The Comprehensive Plan designation for the nature park site was changed in 1989 from multi-family residential to community commercial C-2. None of the parcels that comprise the site carry an Open Space designation. Prior to any future development of the park, its zoning designation should be changed to Open Space.

The site plan is a conceptual guide for the future design and direction of the nature park. The site plan graphic may be helpful in applying for grants or donations and an adopted site plan is often a requirement for eligibility from granting agencies. The graphic illustrative plan that accompanies this report is intended for planning (and pursuing potential grant funding support) and is not based on a site survey. Any proposed improvements in the park may require construction drawings, specifications, bid documents, and permits prior to implementation.

Some of the proposed amenities in the site plan can be implemented as individual improvement projects, as follows:

- The relocation of the memorial grove should occur during the dormant season (preferably in the fall) when the weather is favorable for successful transplanting of trees.
- The picnic shelter and its picnic tables and BBQ grills can be installed as an independent project.
- The larger nature play area located along the existing paved path can be installed as an independent project.
- Gradual realignment of the existing natural and woodchip trails could aim towards creating the best placement of the future trail loop. This effort would involve more focused weed control efforts in the alignment of the future trail loop location and the western overlook location.
- Once the trail loop is close to its future location, the smaller nature play areas could be added in the woods along the path as well as the western overlook and

its woodchip path. However, it may be best to wait until the paved pathway is installed to ensure the best fit for the nature play area placement with the least disruption or incurred repairs.

Some proposed park features depend on the successful acquisition of the adjacent residential property and the subsequent installation of the off-street parking lot that supports a higher level of park visitation. The construction of restrooms, kiosk and park vehicular entry also rely on the conversion of the existing residential property to a park addition. The acquisition of the private property also provides easier access to public utilities, including water, sewer and electricity for future park improvements.

Any improvements along a proposed paved pathway should be implemented after the pavement installation. In general, combining a number of proposed improvements into one project will allow for a more cost-effective capital improvement and limit the disruption of construction activities in the park to fewer events.

Successful and sustainable restoration plantings will require better and more reliable access to water for irrigating newly planted trees and other plantings. While the current FOGNAP volunteer efforts continue to work towards eliminating invasive plants, controlling vegetation along pathways and planting new plants, further park improvements will trigger a more active involvement of park maintenance operations. As the park improvements are phased in, the City will need to be intentional about park labor capacity to care for the enhanced neighborhood park.

If the water storage tank must be located in the reserved area at its unknown future date, then improvements that are in the pathway of access to the reserved area and any improvements immediately adjacent to the reserved area should be deferred until post-construction of the water tank and its support facilities. If the construction of the water storage tank can be coordinated with park development, the entry driveway and parking lot could be constructed as part of the water tank project since it could serve as a staging area for the tank's construction. Cost efficiencies for park improvements could occur if linked to the water storage tank project.

Cost Estimates

The eventual fulfillment of the site plan will likely require phased implementation and the successful award of outside grant funding. The proposed cost estimates are based on current 2020 park construction costs and are intended for planning purposes only. Engineering, design and permitting would be required prior to developing more refined and specific cost estimates.

Park Improvements				
Description	QTY	\$/Each	TOTAL	Comments
Paved loop pathway	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	Approx. # linear feet, 8-feet wide
Paved pathway to Kearn's Mkt	1	\$60,000	\$60,000	Approx. # linear feet, 5-feet wide
Parking lot w/ entrance drive	1	\$85,000	\$85,000	Dependent on property acquisition
SWM BMP	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	For mitigating new pavement/buildings
Restrooms	1	\$150,000	\$150,000	Two unisex stalls w/ plumbing chase & storage area
Drinking fountain	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	At restrooms - could be attached to building or freestanding
Picnic shelter w/ tables	1	\$45,000	\$45,000	Sized for 4 tables
Main Natural Play Area	1	\$50,000	\$50,000	Western end of open lawn area, w/ eng. wood fiber surfacing
Secondary Nature Play Areas	2	\$15,000	\$30,000	Along loop path in woods w/ eng. wood fiber surfacing
Kiosk	1	\$5,000	\$5,000	At west end of parking
Main park ID sign	1	\$2,000	\$2,000	At vehicular entry to parking lot
Park side entry signs	2	\$1,500	\$3,000	At Webster Road (SE) & Oatfield Rd (NW) entries
Interpretive signs	4	\$2,500	\$10,000	Located along loop trail & at overlooks
Picnic tables w/ pads	3	\$7,500	\$22,500	Separate from the picnic shelter. ADA compliant w/ paved access
Benches w/ pads	5	\$2,500	\$12,500	along paved pathways
BBQ grills	2	\$1,500	\$3,000	At picnic shelter
Trash receptacles	3	\$1,500	\$4,500	At pathway intersection, shelter & restrooms
Bike rack	1	\$2,500	\$2,500	Near main entry & parking lot
Overlooks w/ seating walls	2	\$20,000	\$40,000	Decorative concrete pavement w/ stone seat walls
Tree plantings	50	\$50	\$2,500	Small Oregon white oak trees added along new pathways
Woodchip pathways	1	\$4,500	\$4,500	To western overlook and thru the woods
Park improvement subtotal			\$602,000	
Engineering & Design (15%)	1		\$90,300	
Property Acquisition - parcel #1500	1		\$416,437	Based on METRO RLIS taxlot information
Park Total Cost			\$1,108,737	

The total estimated cost for park improvements including construction documentation reaches to \$692,300. The acquisition of the neighboring property is estimated at approximately \$416,237 based on METRO's RLIS tax lot data. The total cost for developing the nature park as an enhanced neighborhood park would be in the range of \$1,108,737.

Site Plan Diagram

Gladstone Nature Park Site Plan FINAL CONCEPT

