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Main Parks Master Plan Summary Report

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Project Description

Orting Main Parks, as it currently exists, is a treasured asset in the community, an important gathering space that has evolved as the community has transitioned from a railroad and logging community to a busy, family-oriented community with a broad range of businesses that support the citizens. The community, situated in the shadow of Mount Rainier, embraces outdoor amenities, inclusive recreation opportunities, and public events that reflect the character and interests of the citizens. Supporting that vision, the community wants to ensure their public spaces are planned to serve current and future needs.

In August of 2022 the City of Orting (City) contracted with MacLeod Reckord, PLLC, to develop a master plan for Orting's Main Parks, an area comprised of four non-contiguous sections of land totaling approximately 18.6 acres. The Parks are in the city center and are generally parallel to Washington Avenue / SR 162 to the east and Van Scoyoc Avenue to the west. The Foothills Trail, a regional shared use path, traverses all sections. The Main Parks Master Plan is intended to serve as the Land Use Development Plan for Orting Main Parks and will be complementary to the City's 2021 Parks Trails and Open Space Plan.

The objectives of the Plan include:

- Identify and describe the recreation and park uses to meet the needs of the community.
- Identify locations for specific recreation facilities (i.e., play equipment, benches, Parks Plan Capital Items, etc.).
- Develop planning level estimates, or cost ranges, for project improvements and identify possible funding opportunities.
- Identify potential phasing considerations for project development.

The scope of work consists of site investigation and analysis, conducting community engagement, preliminary park program development, master plan development, cost estimating, project phasing and programmatic SEPA Checklist.

The project area is as defined by the limits shown in Appendix A.

Public Engagement and City Leadership Input

The City of Orting leadership understands the importance of this park in the community and there has been much discussion in recent years about how it might evolve. Therefore, it was critical for this master planning process to include outreach to the public to seek opinion on what improvements were important, and what elements should be retained in the process of developing a new park plan. There were multiple opportunities during the planning process for the public to provide comments, both online and in person. In addition, there were several City Council Study Sessions at which the design team presented the status of the project, input from the community, and recorded input and questions from Council. Each of these meetings is briefly outlined below.

City Council Study Session #1

In a City Council Study Session on September 21, 2022, Council members considered and commented on existing and potential park programs. Exhibits included photographs of existing amenities across the site, a base map showing existing conditions, and a list of existing and potential program elements. See Appendix B and Program Assessment below.

Online Survey

To understand the community's current activities, problems, and needs in Main Parks, an online survey was developed and made available from September 30, 2022, to October 31, 2022. A summary of the online survey is included in Appendix C

In-Person Public Outreach #1

The first in-person public outreach event was in the park on Red Hat Days on October 1, 2022, and information was posted online around the same time. The public was provided with the same, or similar, information as presented to the Council on September 21, 2022, and were asked about their current use of the park, and what existing and proposed elements should be upgraded, replaced, or retained. Comments varied and are included in Appendix C.

In-Person Public Outreach #2

The second in-person public outreach event was also in the park during Home for the Holidays on December 3, 2022, and information was posted online concurrently. At this event, three alternative concepts were presented, and the public was asked to weigh in on their preferences, note concerns, identify likes/dislikes, and provide any general comment to inform the plan moving forward. It was made clear that the plan didn't need to consist of only one of the alternatives, the preferred plan could be a blend of elements from across all the options put forward. Exhibits included sketches of selected areas, photographs of similar facilities, and a matrix that identified the key features of each of the alternatives and how they differed from one another. These graphics provided both a visual and a narrative of opportunities for park improvements and the public commented on the plans in person and online. See Appendix C and Alternative Concepts below.

Online Open House

The three conceptual alternative plans were made available online for community review and comment from December 20, 2022, to February 11, 2023. A summary of the comments from the online open house is included in Appendix C

City Council Study Session #2

In a City Council Study Session on February 15, 2023, Council members considered the Alternative Concepts and the public input on the Alternative Concepts, and responded to a list of Decision Points that would assist the design team in developing a Preferred Plan. On March 1, 2023, there was a follow up meeting with City staff to ensure all comments were considered and differing opinions resolved in order that the design team could move forward with a Preferred Plan. Exhibits were varied and are included in Appendix B and outlined under Preferred Plan below.

City Council Study Session #3

In a City Council Study Session on April 19, 2023, Council members considered the Preferred Plan, including a brief narrative of key components that informed the final design. There was no consensus on each of the elements of the plan so there was a follow-up meeting with City staff to determine how best to present a plan that would have adequate flexibility in implementation to accommodate both current and future City leaders. Comments varied and are included in Appendix B. The Preferred Plan was further amended and is represented as the final Preferred Plan as presented in this report.

City Council Study Session #4

In a City Council Study Session on May 31, 2023, Council members considered the final Master Plan report that summarized the Public Engagement process, Alternative Concepts, Preferred Plan, Phasing Plan, Cost Opinion, and Programmatic SEPA Checklist. See exhibits in Appendix B.

Program Assessment

The program for the park was determined based on a variety of considerations / questions:

- **Carrying Capacity.** Does the size and configuration of the site support the anticipated or planned volume for a given activity; can the various required support facilities also be accommodated in proximity (adequate parking, utilities for restroom or shelter, etc.)
- **Existing Facilities.** Do the existing facilities provide what the community needs/wants; is there need for improvement, expansion, replacement, repair; are the facilities located in the right place to ensure easy access, safe use, appropriate adjacencies; how effectively do the existing facilities relate to/integrate with the surroundings; are there better locations for certain facilities? Most of these responses come from the regular or frequent users, and from experienced maintenance and operations personnel who see daily the effects of park use on the existing facilities.
- **PTOS Plan.** Broad based community input through the Parks, Trails, and Open Space planning process. These plans are developed and updated regularly and provide the community with summary information on what park and open space facilities are currently available, what more is needed, and how much more land is needed to accommodate additional facilities.
- **Public Opinion.** Additional input from the public and targeted stakeholder groups during the planning process for the park will yield important information about what existing programs need improvement and what new programs should be considered.

An initial list of existing and potentially planned program elements was developed on September 21, 2022, identifying the program elements in each of the three main blocks of the Parks (North, Main or City, and Charter) and a listing of program elements identified in the PTOS Plan and the Capital Improvement Project list. This document is included in Appendix C.

Alternative Concepts

Three alternative concepts were developed for consideration. In general, the alternatives, designated A, B, and C, represented increasingly greater levels of development throughout the park. An Alternatives Matrix presents in summary format the differences between some of the key areas or key park components. While some aspects of the plans were considered ‘Givens’ for any plan moving forward, there was a select group of park components that had a broad array of options to consider that would significantly influence design in other parts of the park – these were titled ‘Decision Points’. It was these components the design team focused their discussion with Council and questions to the public. The Alternative Concepts are in Appendix D.

Givens

- Play area location remains unchanged but gets ADA-compliant and updated surface, structures, seating, etc.
- A “Civic Green” in front of City Hall (may include an updated basketball court).
- A centrally located picnic/family area remains southeast of and near the play area.

- The row of evergreen trees remains, with possible strategic openings to allow more light in some areas.
- Orting Station and surrounding space continues to support indoor-outdoor events (does this “indoor-outdoor event” include sport court?)
- The skate park remains in its current location and possibly expands.
- The BMX/Pump track remains in its current location and possibly expands (or gets an asphalt surface).
- The informal multipurpose field in Charter Park remains, though varies in size depending on the location of new sports courts.

Decision Points

- **Train Street.** Options range from keeping it as is with minor paving improvements to permanently closing it to traffic and making it a plaza.
- **Foothills Trail Alignment.** Options range from keeping it as is to shifting it to the north or south side of the park.
- **Parking.** Options range from keeping the existing off- and on-street parking as is to eliminating the off-street parking and reconfiguring Van Scoyoc Avenue to accommodate more parking. All options will require below grade water quality treatment / flow control facilities.
- **Sport Court Location.** Options range from only providing sport courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball) in Charter Park to providing some courts in Charter Park and some in North Park. Options may include retaining the basketball court in Main Park.
- **Washington Avenue Streetscape Improvements.** The streetscape improvements along Washington Avenue/SR162 can be pursued independently of the park improvements and potentially use transportation funding sources. Improvements range from new sidewalk along the park side, improved crosswalks, new mid-block crosswalks, corner island extensions, and revision to parallel parking.

The full range of public and Council comments, matrices, narratives, and graphic exhibits can be found in Appendix B.

Preferred Plan

In the Council Study Session on April 19, 2023, a brief memorandum outlined and described some of the key components of the Preferred Plan including:

- Foothills Trail Alignment
- Parking
- Train Street
- Main Parks
- North Park
- Charter Park
- Washington Avenue Streetscape Improvements
- Phasing Plan

After input from Council and further discussion with City staff the Preferred Plan combines many of the park elements and planning strategies that were most widely supported from the previously developed three alternatives to create a cohesive, well designed master plan. Below are brief summaries of some of the key components of the plan, which can be found in Appendix E.

Foothills Trail Alignment

The alignment of Foothills Trail is proposed to change in selected areas of the park blocks. While this may seem counter-intuitive in terms of minimizing the cost of future improvements, it will benefit the park design in several ways. Trail realignment will maximize park lands for other program elements, improve the safety of pedestrian and bicycle circulation between the parking areas and the park, and in general improve wayfinding or organization of all park elements.

Foothills Trail is proposed to shift to the north, closer to Washington Avenue/SR162 over the length of the Main Park blocks between Calistoga Street and Bridge Street/SR162. In addition, the Trail is proposed to shift to the south park property boundary in Charter Park between the Public Safety Building parking lot and Meadow Lane. There is no change in the trail alignment in North Park, or in Charter Park between Bridge Street/SR162 and the Public Safety Building parking lot, or in Charter Park east of Meadow Lane.

These changes allow for greater separation from the children's play areas from Washington Avenue/SR162, allow for an expanded multi-purpose field area in Charter Park, and reduce user conflict between the primary parking areas and the park.

Parking

The plan seeks to make parking more efficient within the current paved areas of the site and adjacent streets. In addition, the parking layout will improve circulation with defined crossings and will improve the aesthetic with additional planting. The off-street parking areas on the south side of the Main Park blocks between Calistoga Street and Bridge Street/SR162 have been integrated into the parking and travel lanes of Van Scoyoc Avenue to form angled parking and a single, two-way parking aisle. Van Scoyoc Avenue is currently a low speed, low volume roadway that can support a change in parking arrangement without adversely impacting traffic flow and circulation.

Parallel parking along Washington Avenue/SR162 has been retained in existing locations and no changes are proposed for the right-turn lane onto Calistoga Street.

Additional parking is provided in Charter Park at Meadow Lane to support the new park program elements there, and the configuration is intended to allow for emergency access (only) to cross Charter Park from north to south along Meadow Lane. In addition, more parking could be added at the Public Safety Building parking lot but would require relocation and expansion of the detention pond.

Existing parking count of all off-street parking in Main Park, off-street parking at the Public Safety Building, on-street parking on the south side of Washington Avenue/SR162, and on-street parking on both sides of Van Scoyoc Avenue between Calistoga Street and Bridge Street/SR162 is approximately 213. The proposed parking count for these same areas, plus the new parking in Charter Park is approximately 241, which is a net gain of 28 spaces. The two existing off-street gravel parking lots in Main Parks combined with the current parallel parking along Van Scoyoc between Calistoga Street and Bridge Street/SR162 total approximately 125 parking spaces. Parking in the proposed plan, with angled parking on both sides of Van Scoyoc provides approximately 130 parking spaces, which is a net gain of 5 spaces.

Train Street

Train Street, with its low volume of traffic, is suitable for permanent closure and conversion to a pedestrian plaza. This change creates significantly more park land, expands potential park program with the added plaza space, and creates a safe pedestrian connection between the two blocks of Main Park. The plan proposes to resurface the roadway with paving more suitable to the pedestrian environment

while still allowing emergency, vendor, and maintenance vehicles access. The plaza space is kept free of permanent improvements thereby not limiting the wide range of events and activities that can occur here. The only exception to that is the addition of a small, elevated platform contiguous with the Bell Tower base that can serve as an event stage. Support poles with connections for temporary tensile fabric tenting could be added to the plaza without limiting its flexibility.

Main Parks

Park programming for the two blocks of Main Parks has not changed significantly from what currently exists. The community expressed a desire to upgrade and update the amenities in the Main Parks blocks, but not change what the park has to offer in those two central blocks. To that end, the Main Park block between Calistoga Street and Train Street continues to support:

- A new restroom located closer to the existing Foothills Trail kiosk.
- New play areas that may be configured to retain existing play equipment as desired and potentially expanded to the south side of the fir trees. The ultimate size and configuration of the 2–5- and 5–12-year-old play areas is flexible, as is potential expansion of lawn areas that may be contiguous with the play areas.
- Relocated bear sculpture to bring it into the footprint and theme of the play area.
- New splash pad with vertical spray jets that may be activated during summer months only and can be shut down other times of the year to create additional, multi-function paved plaza. This represents the most cost-effective design for construction, maintenance, and operations.
- Expanded and improved picnic shelter and picnic areas without change to or removal of the existing barbecue.
- Additional seating and expanded paving in selected areas.
- A limited number of fir trees may be considered for removal in selected locations, and as recommended by an arborist. This would allow for play areas and plaza to expand to the south side of the fir trees to allow for a range of more comfortable micro-climates year-round.

The Main Park block between Train Street and Bridge Street/SR162 remains as open lawn, providing a flexible, unprogrammed civic green space that supports informal play, tents for community events, gatherings, and provides a foreground to City Hall and the spectacular view of Mount Rainier. The basketball court remains in its current location open, visible, and accessible to the community, but may be updated with new surfacing and standards.

North Park

North Park remains an open and flexible space, with the addition of paving adjacent to Orting Station which allows for expansion of interior to exterior events. The fountain and Orting sign located at the corner may be incorporated into the paving concept, or remain surrounded by lawn or planting, as the community deems appropriate. Any improvements to this area should have the same design aesthetic as the existing but retrofitted sandstone walls in the park, to ensure a consistent appearance between the different park blocks

Charter Park

The most significant program changes occur in Charter Park with the addition of sport courts (tennis, pickleball, basketball in numbers as the community dictates), expansion of the multi-purpose playfield, potential expansion and improvement of the skate park and pump track, addition of a restroom and picnic shelter, potential formalization of either a dog park or exercise stations, and the addition of a small

parking lot. This is currently an undeveloped area with potential for many new improvements that could be implemented over time as budget and community support allow.

Washington Avenue Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape improvements along Washington Avenue/SR162 can be pursued independently of the park improvements and may potentially use transportation funding sources. Some or all of these improvements could be made after, and/or in the event of, construction of the SR162 bypass. The character of the roadway and the downtown community would change dramatically with construction of the bypass and the connection between businesses and residential areas to the north could be further enhanced.

The intent of these streetscape improvements is to improve the connection between the Main Park blocks and the surrounding city blocks, improve safety for people walking and biking in the downtown, and make Washington Avenue feel and function more like a Main Street, which will benefit the park and the surrounding businesses. Streetscape improvements include a new sidewalk along the south/park side of Washington Ave/SR162, sidewalk extensions at intersections, and improved crosswalks:

- **New Sidewalk.** A new sidewalk along the south side of Washington Avenue provides a safe place for people to walk and access the existing parallel parking along the north side of the park.
- **Sidewalk Extensions.** New sidewalk extensions at intersections improve safety by slowing the speed of turning vehicles, shorten crossing distances (thus, shortening walk signal phases), and create placemaking opportunities.

Other Improvements

Many other improvements are proposed in the Preferred Plan; however, they are too detailed to illustrate in the illustrative plan graphic. These include:

- New stone cap on the existing sandstone walls. This work will provide two benefits – a wider and more comfortable place to sit and a protective cap to further preserve the historic sandstone.
- Potential improvements to the existing entry fountain and “Orting” sign in North Park to provide an improved sense of entry into the parks and into downtown Orting.
- Foothills Trail pavement improvements at walkway and street crossings to better alert users to areas of potential conflict. In some communities these areas are designed as ‘mixing zones’ that encourage people biking to slow down, creating a safer environment for all users.
- Sport courts may be modified in terms of number and type of courts, amount of overlay of multiple courts, permanent or temporary cover over some or all courts are all options that affect layout, size, and cost.
- The gazebo is retained as is, however there are improvements that could be made to enhance accessibility for all users.
- Lawn areas that have become compacted from overuse might benefit from aeration and/or regrading to pitch to catchment structures. This might alleviate standing water and slow-to-drain problems in the lawn areas.
- Street tree planting additions in various locations along frontage and side streets to better define and integrate the various park blocks.
- Mid-block crosswalks on Washington Avenue/SR162 were proposed in the alternative concepts and the initial preferred plan however in the final review this element was controversial enough to be eliminated from the plan. These mid-block crossings would provide additional places for people to safely cross Washington Avenue/SR 162, thus improving accessibility between the

park, the parallel parking, and the businesses and residences to the north. It may be appropriate to consider this improvement when/if the bypass project is constructed and shifts some of the through-traffic volume off this street.

Phasing

This plan represents a master plan that is not expected to be implemented in a short period of time, so phased construction is anticipated. There was much discussion by Council members about phasing for the project, and whether Main Parks, Train Street conversion, or even Charter Park would be best candidates for early phase implementation. Ultimately, and because there was no consensus, it made sense to simply identify phasing by area, which is what is shown in the Phasing Plan in Appendix F.

Based on what the design team has heard from the public, Council, and staff, there seems to be most (early) support for Train Street closure and conversion and reconstruction of Main Park North Phase (replacing restroom and improving accessibility to the play area). However, there is also support for incorporating the changes in Charter Park that could be a companion project to the development in that area.

As is typically the case with phased master plans, the early phases of plan implementation are usually a result of public support, City leadership support, successful grant applications, and maintenance/operations infrastructure replacement priorities.

Cost Opinion and Funding Opportunities

In most discussions with the public, staff, and Council, there was a range of ideas on scope and magnitude of construction for many of the park program elements. Play area expansion, play surfacing options, spray park style and size, Foothills Trail relocation, Van Scoyoc Avenue and park parking reconstruction, and sport court numbers and sizes all had varying opinions. To support the planning effort and for the public and City leadership to understand the dynamics moving forward, the design team has provided a cost opinion that includes both a **Range** of costs for various elements as well as a **Summary Cost Opinion** broken down by phases. In developing the Summary Cost Opinion, the costs are typically shown in the midrange unless it is obvious that either the lowest or highest figure is more applicable to the situation. As the City and community determine the preferred approach on phasing and the level of change appropriate to any given program element, cost opinions can be further refined. See Appendix G for both the Cost Opinion Range and the Summary Cost Opinion.

Funding for park and trail improvements may come from a variety of sources with the most common in Washington State coming from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO):

The RCO is a state agency that manages grant programs to support outdoor recreation opportunities, protect wildlife habitat and farmland, and support salmon recovery. Several RCO grant programs apply to park and open space development and non-motorized transportation. These programs are listed below.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides funding to preserve and develop outdoor recreation resources, including parks, trails, and wildlife lands. LWCF grants are applicable for a range of park and non-motorized improvements including renovating community parks, building sport courts, athletic fields, and trails.

Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to rehabilitate and maintain recreational trails and facilities that provide a backcountry experience for motorized and non-motorized uses. While RTP grants are not intended for new non-motorized projects, they can be used to maintain, rehabilitate, or upgrade existing trails, in particular any unsurfaced trails beyond the urban center.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program

The Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP) provides funding for a broad range of land protection and outdoor recreation, including the acquisition, development, or renovation of most elements found in parks, including non-motorized trails.

Because the existing Foothills Trail was constructed utilizing RCO grant funding, the relocation of the trail would not qualify for additional grant funding. Other opportunities may be available for selected improvements along the trail and road frontage:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Program

The Pedestrian and Bicycle Program objective is to reduce collisions between pedestrian and bicyclists and improve the transportation system to enhance safety and mobility for people who choose to walk or bike for transportation.

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School funding is for improvements within two-miles of primary, middle or high schools that provide children a safe, healthy alternative to riding the bus or being driven to school.