

# COMPILED TOUR COMMENTS

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## Parks and Open Space Commission

### TOUR #1

#### The trail at the south end of Al Anderson:

- Wonderful trail
- Used a lot by people in Talking Circle and the City of Langley
- Great connection to Maxwellton road, schools, and the bus stop
- Through private property. At the moment the owners are happy to have the public use it
- Would be worth asking for a conservation easement or trail easement from the owners of the land
- Needs signage and better marking so people will know it's there for them to use.
- Offers a great hiking loop to cover downtown to Maxwellton and back

#### Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting

- A connector trail with private ownership would need a trail easement
- The area could link to another trail along the slope or provide a loop trail/ short cut to Maxwellton and the Bus Stop/ School and Island Transit
- There is concern by the existing landowners about having the existing trail become a road to Maxwellton.
- Island County is adding a trail on the Maxwellton right-of-way to connect with the schools and South Whidbey Community Park.
- The trail is a bit obscure and could use some signage, but this issue should wait until the City could acquire an easement on the land

#### The cemetery

- I love the cemetery.
- One of the treasures of our community.
- It reflects the history of our community and has a peaceful and reflective environment.
- The Ash Garden is truly genius.
- Are there ways that other communities incorporate a local historic cemetery into their community?
- It should be considered one of our parks.
- We should publicize the cemetery more so people know about it.
- We should consider how to preserve the qualities of the cemetery into the future.

#### Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting

- There could be a sign at Al Anderson and Sixth Street to notify individuals about the Cemetery

#### Property behind the cemetery

- Exquisite property
- A wonderful trail that would be a fabulous addition to the trail loops around Langley. It would be great if there could be an easement through that area.
- Private property
- If property owner builds he would not be interested in a trail. He said he is hoping to put a driveway/road through soon.
- Contains some steep sloped areas that would require preservation during and after development.

- Does not connect well at present with Fairgrounds Road. The trail currently stops about 20 yards short of the road
- Nice hike but rather steep and confusing for someone not familiar with the area.
- Comes out onto the road in an inconvenient way, would need a better termination point.
- Important for maintaining the character of the cemetery by preserving the surrounding area.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- There is the potential for a trail easement through the area
- The area has more than one property owner
- There are other trails that connect thru private property contiguous to the trail
- There is an alternative route thru the area that could create a looped trail rather than a route to Fairgrounds road
- Options with landowners include a trail/ conservation easement or a Boundary Adjustment

**The fairgrounds**

- Has so much potential.
- One of the most underused assets in Langley.
- Could feature many creative uses that could generate money for the community.
- Would be great for RV uses. We could advertise RV use to the community and it could become another revenue stream. Would be good to find out if the sewer hook-up or our Treatment Plant could take RV waste.
- Developing RV parking could be a moneymaker (I know, that's a county decision).
- I feel that we have very little control over what the fairgrounds uses may be.
- A picnic area and playground to be used when the fair is not in operation would be good. It could be located at the north end of the campground.
- It has a great view of the city.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Consider passing out a copy of the Fairgrounds Overlay Zone to Parks and Open Space members
- There is no longer pedestrian access from Fairgrounds Road to the Fairgrounds
- Look into if county allows public access on county property

**The school grounds**

- The fields get a great deal of use out of them. They are used in the spring and fall for T-ball, football and classes.
- The track could be resurfaced and spiffed up.
- The basketball hoops could be improved.
- The district may be uncomfortable about using the grounds when no one is there because they are liable legally for what happens on their property.
- The swamp that exists on the north end could be improved, if possible, without negatively impacting the creek.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Consider a wetlands restoration partnership with the school district

**The city and school district owned land behind the school grounds**

- This area really excited me!
- The area was my #1 priority from the sites of the day.
- The work done to put in bridges and paths is outstanding.

- The city, school district and perhaps even the Commons could partner to get an AmeriCorps crew here on the south end each year. The work the crew could maintain, restore and create trails, maintain and train locals to care for parks, wetlands, and work with school students to learn about wetlands and restoration work.
- The City could give the wetland as part of a conservation easement so the district could get a tax break out of it.
- The City could update the area, put in useable trails and clear the invasive species to put the area back to its “restored” status. The City would need to get a machine to help clear the mass of invasive blackberries.
- The City could utilize an adopt-a-park program to get volunteers. They would have to be trained and organized on a regular basis
- We should contact Will Black to see if he could get any pictures of the wetland before/during and after the restoration.
- It would be great to connect this wetland to the other potential trails including: the Highlands trail, the trail to 6<sup>th</sup> street, and a trail to Northview. The property owner where the creek goes through may be interested in a conservation easement to allow a trail through to the ponds and wetlands behind.
- It would be good to add picnic tables and benches by the ponds to allow people to stay awhile.
- The area is secluded so it is important to ensure lots of visibility so kids/thugs are not hiding in there and getting into trouble. The community needs more visibility in that area which would deter those that may want to use it as a hide out.
- It would be fairly easy to cut a trail from the wetlands to the wellhead so there is more connectivity right away.
- We could ask the power company to clear a trail under the power lines.
- We could write grants to make the trail to the Highlands connect to the wetlands and make the whole thing an educational trail that informed people about the importance of wetlands and wooded lands in our ecosystems and how they connect to the sound and fish. We could also educate about the importance of wildlife corridors that this forest/wetland serves.
- The area has the potential to create a trail from 6<sup>th</sup> Street, to the school, cemetery and fairgrounds.
- We could clear out the overgrowth, connect to the electrical right-of-way access road above, put in picnic tables, benches, and reconnect the end so it is a loop out the far end.
- This is so close to being a wonderful park right now

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- A good area to connect the natural area and wetlands to the open ball fields
- Could be good an exercise circuit recreational area in partnership with South Whidbey School District and South Whidbey Parks and Recreation to support a healthy community.
- The wetlands area a unique park feature that offer a contemplative atmosphere

**The trail to the Highlands**

- This is a very important area to develop into a trail system loop.
- The trail is already publicly-owned land.
- The trail has the appearance of going through people’s yards.
- The trail could be moved to avoid passing neighboring properties back yards
- If people are going to feel comfortable using the trail, it cannot have the appearance of going through someone’s yard.
- I like the idea of continuing the trail behind the houses and tying into the Highlands but is there really a right of way behind all those houses. Perhaps there is legally but are the residents looking at it that way

- Are we creating a thoroughfare for getting around the city or a future problem for homeowners who will have unwanted visitors in their back yards?

## **TOUR #2**

### **Area across from Living Green**

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Potential area for a community pea-patch

### **Generation Park**

- It's a dandy little park that gets a lot of use.
- There's lots of sunlight and room for little kids to run around.
- I like the casual quality of it. It looks and feels like a community built park.
- The existing split rail fence creates a dead space between it and the parking area on the east side of the park. The fence could be moved so it was closer to the street.
- The new fence is overbearing and secludes the park from the rest of its surroundings.
- The park could have some landscaping along the back fence.
- The garbage can could be painted or improved
- The tree on the site looks sad.

### **The north end of the DeBruyn right-of-way**

- Depending on how wide the right-of-way actually is, it could be a lovely view spot if the trees were at least trimmed.
- Could provide a portion of a walking loop down to the water
- Bluff access to the beach seems unrealistic.
- It feels like it would not be a good use of energy or funds to develop an overlook in this area. The brush is so high it would be very hard to really maintain a view.
- It feels like the street is private
- An overlook in the area would be intrusive to the adjacent property owners.
- Would have to provide a lot of signage in the area to let people know about the park.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- We should understand the exact width of the right-of-way
- The area is a low priority at this point

### **Property including the large field, Hazelnut Grove and ravine**

- Would be a wonderful park.
- The trail to the beach is spectacular.
- I did not get the idea that the property owner was interested in selling/gifting any of his land to the city.
- If there was anyway to secure the field and the ravine trail, it would be a wonderful addition to our city.
- I got the impression that the property owner is not interested in parting with his land for public uses.
- I don't think the property enters into the equation for many Langley residents as an area for maintaining the "open space" feeling of Langley. The area is completely surrounded by houses except for the DeBruyn portion and many people stay off that stretch thinking that it's a private road.
- The path to the water is steep and narrow in places making it unsuitable for many people and the end is either on private land or a very narrow beach. The logical termination of such a path

would be on the beach and any access at that point is very small. If it opened onto a wide usable beach I would probably feel differently.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- The trail along the ravine is a unique feature in the City of Langley
- We should double check about deer trails that could potentially connect with Saratoga Road
- Site restoration is essential. The ivy should be removed from the area
- The City could potentially purchase and restore the ravine
- The area would be a good location for interpretive signs

**The lands surrounding Brackenwood Avenue**

- The road is good access for people wanting to get to the water. It's steep and the loud dog could scare off some. Looks like a private road.

**General Comments about Tour 1 and 2**

- I got very excited about the beauty and the accessibility that a connected trail system could bring.
- We need to educate our citizens re: what a connected city of our size—rather than a “spoked city” could bring to its citizens and to its visitors—to share with them why that would be a good thing. From my perspective, being able to connect some of the trails –public and private— together so that citizens could walk everywhere throughout the Langley environs would be of benefit: (1) economically –the town could advertise itself, e.g. “Visit Langley and get totally connected-- Walk everywhere”; (2) to health —both physical and psychological-- would be enormous if we had trails, which provided pedestrian and bicycle ways to get around our town and more ways to experience beauty and tranquility.
- I'd love to brainstorm ways that we could educate the public—from organizing City trail clearing/connecting with potlucks following, to having “who walks where and why” story-telling socials and walk for health contests. And, also brainstorm ways we can educate private citizens about the benefits of allowing walkers access (as in England and Austria) through their lands to connect with public lands.

**TOUR #3**

**Noble Creek North of Edgecliff**

- Potential to connect to Edgecliff and the waterfront

**Edgecliff Right-of-Way**

- Potential to add bench or a piece of art in the right-of-way as a neighborhood amenity.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Areas with a view along the right of way could be a good location for a bench

**Wetlands South of Edgecliff**

- I am all for restoring wetlands on the south side of the road. However, when a wetland restoration is done, it should definitely fall under the term “open space”, rather than “park”. Public access should be restricted to preserve the integrity of the plantings, as well as minimizing further soil compaction. The compacted soils that are already present, like the swath where the house was moved, severely affect the hydrology, and cause further flooding issues in adjacent property.
- The City could preserve 10 acres of land if it acquired the development area and the property next to it. What are the possibilities with the lot that is for sale?

- What is/can the City do (within its legal rights) to facilitate the wetlands/drainage issues:
  1. Restrict land use to prevent further environmental imbalance, i.e., earth compaction; removal of wetland plants which secure bank and hold water/earth in place
  2. Facilitate resident support and communication of preventative infrastructure such as proper drainage, permeable surfaces---is there public monies available to assist homeowners in maintenance/integrity of the high bank; of the water run-off from mismanaged wetlands
  3. Provide education/information/ clear rules (existing legislation) to prospective developers
  4. Condemn land no longer suitable for building and appropriate tax breaks to the owners of said land

### **Lookout North of Edgecliff**

- Would be good as an overview park
- There is potential to link improvements to the stormwater outfall and the creation of a park on the site
- If a picnic table or bench was installed, there certainly would have to be a fence for safety along the bluff edge.
- Would make a wonderful observation point with bench and/or picnic tables.
- Parking and making it a secure location, with no kids or animals getting too close to the bluff would be major issues.
- Don't want to jeopardize the view or the integrity of the bluff.

#### **Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Preservation of the area should be fairly easy

### **Path between Edgecliff and Sandy Point Road**

- A path somewhere towards the end of both roads would be great so that it would be possible to walk a loop between the two roads. It could occur on the property under discussion for development.
- Would like to see the end of Edgecliff for trail connector possibilities

#### **Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- A connector trail between Edgecliff and Sandy Point Road should be located further down from Furman Avenue.
- The City could receive an easement between the end of the county road and Sandy Point Road. We should check to make sure that the neighboring road, Indian Point Drive is a public road. The property that the easement would go through was recently sold

### **Property on Sandy Point Road**

- Turn property into a destination location. Wow! It's amazing what they have done. Who knew what was down that drive?

### **Cedars Tract 100**

- I was shocked/ surprised that the City would spend its scant resources on the maintenance of land which is virtually a private park, though technically a public one.
- The park in the Cedars was very nice but I don't see that being used by anyone outside the community on a regular basis.
- How could this park be better used by all Langley citizens, and, is it even appropriate, given the location (within a private development)?

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- We should utilize strategies to make the community aware of the park. Strategies could include signage and the naming of the park

**Sandy Point Road**

- It's a pretty busy road so a secure path to the side for pedestrians would be nice, but not a sidewalk with curb.

**Noble Creek Wetlands and Forest**

- I think we all really enjoyed the Noble Creek trail.
- Every effort should be made to preserve that tract in open space, with the possibility of the city purchasing it for public land.
- I would like to see the trail and the surrounding land be available to the public in perpetuity-- whether privately or publicly. How can we facilitate appropriate dialogue with the current owner to achieve this end?
- The protection of Noble Creek was the highest priority for me on this walk
- The area could possibly hook into the Fairgrounds area with access through the area to the south.
- We could use conservation futures money to preserve the area.
- This is already a local path - designated or not. People are using it and maintaining it. Should find out who is taking care of it now.
- Better entrance needed from Sandy Point – pretty steep path in.

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Preservation of the area is possible

**General Comments about Tour 3**

- I was struck by the variability of the land--uphill and downhill-- in the area we walked, particularly as we walked through the property to get to Sandy Point and then over to the Cedars. I wonder if the citizens of Langley know/understand about these varying conditions and what it means in terms of open space and park development. What financial consequences does this land variability have for the City?
- I walk down Edgecliff frequently, but I never fully appreciated the critical nature of the area.
- There is very little room for parking on Edgecliff Road which would have to be a consideration for any park/open space located on the road.

**General Principles**

**Comments added at the 10.27.08 meeting**

- Looped trails
- Right-of-ways through private property connecting public lands (education of landowners re: state statute)
- What is criterion for ownership?
- Partnership with the school district, Fairgrounds/ Island County Fair Board, South Whidbey Parks and Recreation
- Trail surfacing criteria
- Identify unique features/ areas
- City right-of-way uses
- Wetlands preservation and maintenance and landowner responsibility (landowner education)