

6. PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

This chapter comprises the Medina Park Plan, which is fully incorporated into this Parks and Open Space Element of the Medina Comprehensive Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The City's large open spaces are the defining elements of Medina's community character. In the early 1950s, residents of the newly incorporated City of Medina were concerned about the development that was taking place in nearby Bellevue. From 1959 to 1971 Medina acquired and developed Fairweather Nature Preserve, Medina Park, and Medina Beach Park. Other open space areas that were part of the incorporated City included undeveloped platted street ends that abut Lake Washington (present View Point Park and Lake Lane) and undeveloped street rights-of-way (Indian Trail and NE 26th Street). The vision of Medina's early residents created both active and passive parks resulted in the parks and open spaces that are enjoyed today.

Growth Management Act

The Growth Management Act (GMA) requires comprehensive plans to contain "a park and recreation element that implements, and is consistent with, the capital facilities plan element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. The element shall include: (a) Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period; (b) an evaluation of facilities and service needs; and (c) an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand."

The following planning goal for open space and recreation is provided in the Revised Code of Washington (36.70A.020):

"Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities."

Additionally, King County countywide planning policies (CPPs) direct jurisdictions to identify and protect open spaces within their comprehensive plans.

Guiding Principle

The Medina Park Board serves as the Medina City Council's primary advisory body on matters pertaining to the use, maintenance, and enhancement of the City's public parks and open spaces. The board is guided by the principle that Medina's parks are natural areas that require ongoing stewardship of the entire community so that they remain protected and nurtured. Without the requisite supervision and maintenance, the vegetation, wildlife, and quality of environment that the Medina parks provide will disappear or be altered to the detriment of the public.

EXISTING PARKS AND CONDITIONS

Recognized national park standards state that there should be 2.5 to 10 acres of neighborhood and community park space for every 1,000 residents. There are 26.7 acres of parks in Medina, which equals 9 acres of park space per 1,000 residents. The present SR 520 freeway construction overcrossing lid of Evergreen Point Road upon completion of the project will add another 0.62 acres of park open space to the City's inventory. The following is an inventory of the City's parks.

Medina Park (Community Park)

LOCATION: South of NE 12th Street, bounded on the east by 82nd Avenue NE and undeveloped 80th Avenue NE on the west.

SIZE: 17.5 acres.

FEATURES:

- The site contains a wetland and two ponds that provide storm water detention
- Off-leash and On-leash Dog Areas
- Public Works Yard/ City Shop facilities

PARK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Public Restrooms	Yes
Tennis Court	Yes
Playground Equipment	Yes
Walking Trails & Par Course	Yes
Benches	Yes
Parking Facilities	Yes
Sports Field	No
Pier/Dock	No
Swimming Area	No
Other Improvements	Art Sculptures; Community Notice Board

HISTORY

Medina Park was created in 1965 when City officials spearheaded the purchase of five properties with matching grant dollars for approximately \$80,000. Today, the combined area offers both active and passive uses: two vehicle parking areas, fields for sport activities, playground area with playground equipment, a par course for exercising, tennis court, walking paths, restroom facilities, and off- and on-leash dog exercise areas. Passive activities include quiet spaces for sitting, bird watching, lawns for relaxing, viewable art, and tables for picnicking.

The park today is a social epicenter, a gather place that is expansive enough to host large scale events like the annual Medina Days celebration, concerts, unofficial soccer and baseball games yet also serve individual needs of adults, children, and dogs. The picturesque walking paths and open areas make the park a desirable destination for human/canine socialization. In an effort to manage a compatible usage of the park by dog owners and other users, a policy was adopted by

the Council that divides Medina Park into two defined on-leash and off-leash sections seasonally (May-September) separated by the two ponds. The green lawn area in the western section of the park is watered by an irrigation system, and the eastern non-irrigated section remains the year-round off-leash dedicated area for dogs. The two original low areas of the park were developed into stormwater detention ponds and are rimmed by open grassy spaces, punctuated with trees and shrubs, seasonal plantings, artwork, meandering gravel pathways, and numerous benches for rest, introspection, and bird watching.

Other attributes include planted trees to commemorate an event, individual’s service, or were planted in memory of loved ones. The northeast corner of the park serves as a landscaped defined entry to the City. The park is an urban bird-watching destination. The site is home to a variety of waterfowl including Canadian geese, mallards, wood ducks, cormorants, and blue heron. To celebrate famed woodcarver Dudley Carter’s 100th birthday, residents purchased one of his wood sculptures, “Wind Song” and hung the piece from a rough-hewn post on the southwest bank of the northerly pond next to a gravel pathway. An additional stone sculpture stands in the southwest corner of the park and was donated by Peter Skinner, a resident of Medina.

Medina Beach Park (Community Park)

LOCATION: South point of Evergreen Point Road (Historic site of Leschi Ferry terminal).

SIZE: 1.44 acres.

FEATURES:

- Public Beach
- City Hall and Police Station

PARK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

Public Restrooms	Yes
Tennis Court	No
Playground Equipment	No
Walking Trails	No
Benches	Yes
Parking Facilities	Yes
Sports Field	No
Pier/Dock (Viewing)	Yes
Swimming Area	Yes
Other Improvements	Picnic Tables; Bar-B-Q; Sandy Beach; Sailing Lessons

HISTORY

Medina Beach Property was donated to the City in 1960 by the Medina Improvement Club. Situated at the south point of Evergreen Point Road at the historic site of a former ferry terminal that connected Medina with Seattle, the park is a favorite destination for summer. The park offers swimming areas for all ages. Under the supervision of seasonal lifeguards, older children are able to swim out to a float while younger ones wade at the water’s edge or play on the beach. The site

provides extraordinary views of Seattle, Mercer Island, and Mount Rainier. The site also serves as the municipal hub of the City. The Police Station, City Council Chambers, City Manager, Department Directors and Administrative Staff are all located within City Hall on the site. The Planning Commission, Park Board, Emergency Preparedness Committee, and other volunteer groups regularly meet at the City Hall to conduct business.

Fairweather Nature Preserve and Park (Neighborhood Park)

LOCATION: At NE 32nd Street, bounded by Evergreen Point Road on the west, NE 32nd Street on the north, 80th Avenue NE on the east, and SR 520 on the south.

SIZE: 10.4 acres.

FEATURES:

- Passive Natural Forest with Walking Trails
- Stream and Natural Wetland
- Active Sports field

PARK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

Public Restrooms	No
Tennis Court	Yes
Playground Equipment	No
Walking Trails	Yes
Benches	No
Parking Facilities	Yes
Sports Field (practice)	Yes
Pier/Dock	No
Swimming Area	No
Other Improvements	Practice Tennis Blackboard; Basketball Hoop

HISTORY

Fairweather Park is composed of two distinct public use areas. The western half of the park is an active use area with a small playfield, two tennis courts, a tennis practice back board, basketball hoop, and parking area that were developed in 1962 during the initial SR 520 construction. The eastern half of the park remains as a natural forest nature preserve with a stream passing through it and winding walking trails. The northeastern portion of the forest area is a natural wetland that drains to the east to Fairweather Bay. This forest is one of the last standing natural forests in the area and is as close to a walk in the deep woods as one can get in the heart of a city.

Viewpoint Park (Neighborhood Park)

LOCATION: Overlake Drive West and 84th Avenue NE

SIZE: 0.15 acres (includes street right-of-way).

FEATURES:

- Viewing Area
- Waterfront Access

PARK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

Public Restrooms	No
Tennis Court	No
Playground Equipment	No
Walking Trails	No
Benches	Yes
Parking Facilities	Yes
Sports Field (practice)	No
Pier/Dock	Yes
Swimming Area	No
Other Improvements	Picnic Tables; Sewer Lift Station

HISTORY

Viewpoint Park is one of Medina’s lesser known parks. The upper portion of the park is a small triangle of land situated near the south end of 84th Avenue NE and Overlake Drive West. The triangle area is landscaped with the center of the area planted in grass with a picnic table and a seating area. The lower portion of the park has a limited parking area and a meandering pathway from the parking area down to the park area by Lake Washington. This area has a picnic table and a pier. The waterfront area provides a spectacular view of Lake Washington, the Seattle skyline and the Olympic Mountains. The park offers a peaceful secluded area for resting, relaxing, and contemplation.

Lake Lane (Neighborhood Park)

LOCATION: 3300 Block of 78th Place NE

SIZE: 0.10 acres (street right-of-way).

FEATURES:

- Waterfront Access

PARK FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS:

Public Restrooms	No
Tennis Court	No
Playground Equipment	No
Walking Trails	No
Benches	No
Parking Facilities	No
Sports Field (practice)	No
Pier/Dock	Yes
Swimming Area	No
Other Improvements	Sewer Lift Station

HISTORY

Lake Lane is another Medina lesser known park that is little known and rarely used. The park is found at the end of a narrow driveway that extends from 78th Place NE to a private residence located on the north side of the park. The park fronts on Lake Washington and is only accessible by walking. No parking areas are provided. The park has a public pier where one can view Fairweather Bay, Hunts Point, and the City of Kirkland to the north. Hidden away this picturesque site is an ideal spot to visit and view the waterfront surroundings.

Indian Trail and Undeveloped NE 26th Street Right-of-Way (Community Trail System)

LOCATION: Unopened 77th Avenue NE and NE 26th Street Public Right-of-Ways.

SIZE: 2.70 acres of street right-of-way.

FEATURES:

- Unopened street right-of-way

IMPROVEMENTS:

- Walking paths from 2200 Block 77th Avenue NE to NE 28th Street;
- Public Storm Drainage System

TRAIL SYSTEM

Indian Trail is located between the residential streets of Evergreen Point Road on the west, 78th Avenue NE on the east, NE 22nd Street on the south and NE 28th Street on the north. Indian Trail extends from 77th Avenue NE north of NE 22nd Street to NE 28th Street and provides a natural walking pathway for the public connecting the neighborhood south of NE 24th Street with the Three Points Elementary School on NE 28th Street. The trail also functions as a part of the Points Loop Trail system linking Yarrow Point, Hunts Point, and Clyde Hill communities. A spur off of the trail extends from the north-south main Indian Trail along the undeveloped NE 26th Street right-of-way to 79th Avenue NE. The westerly portion of this spur is over private driveways. That portion between 78th and 79th Avenue NE is a grassy area with some trees and an informal pathway. A portion of NE 26th Street right-of-way remains undeveloped between Evergreen Point Road and the Indian Trail.

Other Recreational Facilities

POINTS LOOP TRAIL SYSTEM

This was created in 1962 by the construction of the initial SR 520 freeway. The main portion of the trail system connects the local communities of Yarrow Point, Hunts Point, Clyde Hill, and Medina. The trail is a five foot wide paved walking path that extends along the north side of the freeway from 92nd Avenue NE in Yarrow Point to 84th Avenue NE in Hunts Point, along 84th Avenue NE over the freeway to NE 28th Street, west along NE 28th Street to Evergreen Point Road. Local trails connect to this trail system, i.e. Indian Trail at NE 28th Street. Maintenance of the system resides with each of the communities through which it passes. The major construction of the new SR 520 freeway is impacting the Local Points Loop Trail and portions of it will be

replaced and realigned and new connections will be made to the new WSDOT SR 520 Regional Trail system that connects Seattle via a new floating bridge with the eastside communities of Medina, Clyde Hill, Hunts Point, Kirkland, and Bellevue. The WSDOT SR 520 Regional Trail will be constructed along the north side of the freeway connecting Seattle with the Eastside communities. A trail connection from the Regional Trail to the south end of 80th Ave NE is also planned.

EVERGREEN POINT ROAD LID

Upon completion of the SR 520 Evergreen lid (wide bridge overcrossing) in 2014, approximately two acres of landscaped passive park area will be provided for public use. The lid area will include a park & ride lot with 50 parking spaces, a transit access facility with elevator and walking steps down to the freeway bus stop area in the center of the freeway, a viewing area on the west side of the lid with a viewing vista to the Seattle skyline to the west. A seating area and steps will be provided at the southwest corner of the Fairweather playfield to provide access from the freeway lid to the park.

OVERLAKE GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB (PRIVATE GOLF COURSE)

Located at 8000 NE 16th Street, the golf course provides approximately 140 acres of open space for members of the club to play golf. The property also contains a private club house and a swimming pool.

ST. THOMAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND (PRIVATE SCHOOL)

Located at 8300 NE 12th Street, the school has 5.62 acres of land (including the church). Facilities include a playground and play structures for students.

THREE POINTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND (PRIVATE SCHOOL ON PUBLIC PROPERTY)

Located at 7800 NE 28th Street, the school has approximately four acres of land. The playfield is in the westerly portion of the elementary school property that is leased from the Bellevue School District by Bellevue Christian Church. The playground has a dirt sport field, play structure, and covered play area for the students.

MEDINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (PUBLIC SCHOOL)

Located at 8001 NE 8th Street, the school has approximately 7.88 acres of land. Facilities include a multipurpose playfield, play structures, and covered play areas for students.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Medina is a fully built-out residential community with limited ability for growth over the next 10 years. The City has nine acres of park space for every 1,000 residents, which meets national standards. The need for additional park and open space will be a reflection of the community's desire to enhance existing open space and recreational opportunities rather than a rise in demand for park usage due to population increases.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES

The City’s large open spaces are the defining elements of Medina’s community character. The open space and parks provide a major recreational resource for the City’s residents. Existing parks and open spaces should be maintained and enhanced pursuant to Medina’s needs and as opportunities arise for improvement. The City shall seek to acquire properties to enhance waterfront access, retain existing views and/or preserve important environmental resources. The following are the goals and policies guiding the City’s park plan.

GOALS

- PO-G1 To maintain and enhance Medina’s parks and open spaces to meet the City’s needs. Examples of priority items include installation of a picnic shelter at Medina Park and reconstruction of the playfield at Fairweather Park for use year-round.
- PO-G2 To expand and improve the City parks and open spaces through property acquisitions as special funding allows and when opportunities arise.
- PO-G3 To identify annual revenue and special funding sources to maintain and improve parks and open spaces.

POLICIES

- PO-P1 The City shall seek to acquire additional waterfront access along the shoreline, when opportunities arise and continue to maintain the public piers.
- PO-P2 The City shall seek to develop additional view parks at appropriate points in the City.
- PO-P3 The City shall seek to acquire view rights to preserve the views of view parks.
- PO-P4 The City should preserve easements to protect unique trees and tree groupings.
- PO-P5 The City should consider landscape improvements along Overlake Golf & Country Club frontage and seek participation in the project from the Country Club.
- PO-P6 The City should retain the Fairweather Nature Preserve in its natural state and provide maintenance only when necessary.
- PO-P7 The City should improve the Fairweather playfield for year-round use.
- PO-P8 The City should develop a long-term landscaping and maintenance plan to maintain Medina Beach Park and Medina Park in a manner that is consistent with and enhances public use.

EVALUATION OF FACILITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While residents enjoy park space that meets nationally recommended standards, the Medina Comprehensive Plan sets forth goals for the need to maintain and enhance existing park space and to acquire new park space when such opportunities arise.

Medina Park

This park offers both active and passive uses. The tennis court represents a significant investment and is frequently utilized for games and practice. Children have been observed playing on the court with metal toys and carry rocks and other objects onto the court for play which can damage the court surface. Signs have been added to the court entry to restrict the use of the court for tennis. Should violations continue, in order to protect the court, a push button combination lock on the entry may become necessary.

The children's playground area next to the tennis court is frequently used. There are two climbing apparatus, two swing sets, a circular rotating toy (NOVA), a seesaw, a sandbox, and some movable toys that have been donated by residents for children to use in the play area. Consideration should be made to add toys or change some of the equipment to provide variety and to add to the playground use.

A priority need is to improve the park for use during inclement weather by the construction of a picnic shelter appropriately located for public access and use.

The Public Works Shop and Yard are located in the southwest portion of the active park and should be screened from the park by adequate landscaping.

Medina Beach Park

The primary use of this park is beach access and swimming. Milfoil and debris that is washed up on the beach area is undesirable. Power boats operating too close to the shore create a wake and are a safety concern.

The rock jetty and shoreline armoring with large rock are not easy to walk on and injuries could result. While the jetty is marked NO PUBLIC ACCESS, it is recommended that steps to the water be clearly marked.

The City Hall emergency generator and enclosure intrude into the former park area and if possible should be placed underground or moved to a non-use area of the park.

Fairweather Park and Nature Preserve

The playfield area is a practice sports field of grass. The field becomes too muddy for play during the winter months. A priority need is to improve the field drainage for use year round. The parks proximity to the freeway should be accounted for in the screening of the park in the area that is not at the gateway to the park.

The nature preserve should be maintained in its natural state by continuing to remove invasive plants and ivy, and to replant native species as trees are lost due to wind and age.

The winding natural trails should continue to be maintained with natural wood steps and remain rustic in appearance. Fallen trees should remain in place, except where they obstruct a trail. Wayfinding maps should be considered to assist hikers and trail walkers.

Viewpoint Park

The park triangular overlook (viewing area) provides unique views of the Seattle skyline. The recently added picnic bench provides added ability for users to eat lunch or picnic. It is recommended that a drinking fountain be added.

The beach front area provides a place for picnics, dock access, and swimming at the pier end.

Lake Lane

The dock is the only current park physical asset at the park. Adding a bench or picnic table would be beneficial. Milfoil continues to invade the beach front area and should be controlled.

Indian Trail and Undeveloped NE 26th Street Right-of-Way

The present trail is an asset that should be maintained in its natural condition. Limited plantings that will enhance the natural appearance of the trail are encouraged to be native and drought tolerant.