



STAFF REPORT

Meeting Type: Parks and Trails Advisory Board
Meeting Date: July 8, 2026
From: Tiana Rundell, Parks and Recreation Director
Subject: Knight Partition, Parks Trail Easement vs Parkland Dedication

DECISION TO BE MADE:

Whether to recommend that the Planning Commission require the dedication of park land or a trail easement as a condition of approval for the Knight Partition land use application.

PURPOSE / OBJECTIVE:

The Parks Board is asked to discuss whether to support the dedication of park land or a trail easement as part of the Knight Partition land use application and provide a recommendation to the Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT:

At the May 21 pre-application conference, the applicant met with Planning and Development Services staff to review the proposed application. Because the applicant is requesting a Major Partition and associated variances, the application will be considered by the Planning Commission on August 24, 2026.

Development Highlights:

Knight Partition

- The applicant is proposing a Major Partition to create two parcels, with deed restrictions that would prohibit future development until equivalent residential units (ERUs) are available to serve the property.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS / ANALYSIS:

Several factors should be considered when evaluating this request, including the 2022 Parks and Trails Master Plan, the City's authority under the Sandy Municipal Code, and the 2025–2027 City Council Goals. Additional factors to consider include the parkland dedication calculations and the differences

between park land dedication and trail easements as well as the long-term operational impacts associated with park ownership and maintenance.

2022 Parks and Trails Master Plan

Trail 43 is not identified as a Tier 1, Tier 2, or Tier 3 priority project within the 2022 Parks and Trails Master Plan. The Master Plan prioritizes projects as follows:

Tier 1: Short-term (1–5 years)

Tier 2: Mid-term (6–10 years)

Tier 3: Long-term (11+ years)

Many of the trails and crossings identified in the Master Plan require significant coordination among multiple agencies, including the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the City of Sandy Public Works Department, Clackamas County, and other partners. While these projects are recognized as important components of a connected and safe community trail system, they were not included in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) because of their complexity, anticipated implementation timeline, and dependence on future interagency collaboration.

Although Trail 43 is not currently prioritized for construction, preserving opportunities for future trail connections through easement dedication may support the City's long-term vision for a connected trail network.

Sandy Municipal Code

Sandy Municipal Code authorizes the Planning Commission to require the dedication of land and easements as part of the land division process when necessary to implement applicable City standards and adopted plans. Chapter 17.86 further implements the City's Parks and Trails Master Plan and provides for park land and trail dedications associated with development.

2025–2027 City Council Goals

The proposed trail easement is consistent with the adopted City Council Goals:

- **Goal 5.1:** Invest in our park system for current and future residents of Sandy and continue expanding recreational opportunities for the community.
- **Objective 5.1.2:** Pursue opportunities to acquire park land for future park facilities, natural areas, and open space preservation.

While acquisition of park land remains an important Council objective, preserving a trail corridor through an easement advances these goals while recognizing the City's current financial and operational capacity.

Park Land Dedication Calculation

At this time, staff is unable to complete a park land dedication calculation for the proposed partition. The applicant is not proposing any development as part of this application, and future development is expressly prohibited through deed restrictions until equivalent residential units (ERUs) become available to serve the property. Because no development proposal has been submitted, information

necessary to calculate any potential park land dedication requirement—including the number and type of future dwelling units—is unknown. Any applicable park land dedication or fee-in-lieu requirements would be evaluated at the time a future development application is submitted, when sufficient information is available to complete the calculation.

Park Land Dedication vs. Trail Easement

The Parks Board may recommend either the dedication of park land or the dedication of a trail easement.

A park land dedication would place the property into City ownership, providing greater flexibility for future park development and public access. However, accepting ownership would also create ongoing responsibilities for maintenance, vegetation management, liability, and future capital improvements. Given current staffing levels, available funding, and existing park maintenance obligations, additional park land would increase long-term operational costs for the City.

A trail easement would preserve the opportunity for a future public trail connection while allowing the underlying property to remain in private ownership until such time as the City is prepared to construct the trail. This approach preserves the City's long-term trail vision while minimizing immediate maintenance obligations and avoiding the costs associated with acquiring and maintaining additional park property before it is needed.

Staff believes a trail easement extending approximately 100 feet from the top of the stream bank would provide sufficient flexibility for future trail alignment while helping preserve the riparian corridor and opportunities for future recreational access.

BUDGET IMPACT:

A trail easement would have no immediate acquisition or maintenance costs and would preserve an opportunity for future trail development when funding becomes available.

Acceptance of a park land dedication would increase the City's inventory of park property and create ongoing maintenance and operational responsibilities, with associated impacts to future Parks operating budgets.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Parks Board recommend the Planning Commission require the dedication of a trail easement extending approximately 100 feet from the top of the stream bank as a condition of approval for the Knight Partition application. This recommendation preserves a future trail corridor consistent with the City's long-term Parks and Trails Master Plan while minimizing immediate maintenance obligations and long-term operational costs associated with City ownership of additional park land.

SUGGESTED MOTION LANGUAGE:

"I move that the Parks Board submit a memorandum to the Planning Commission recommending that a trail easement extending approximately 100 feet from the top of the stream bank be required as a condition of approval for the Knight Partition application."

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS / EXHIBITS:

Attachment A: PTAB Presentation 7.8.26

Attachment B: Parks Board Memo to Planning Commission