

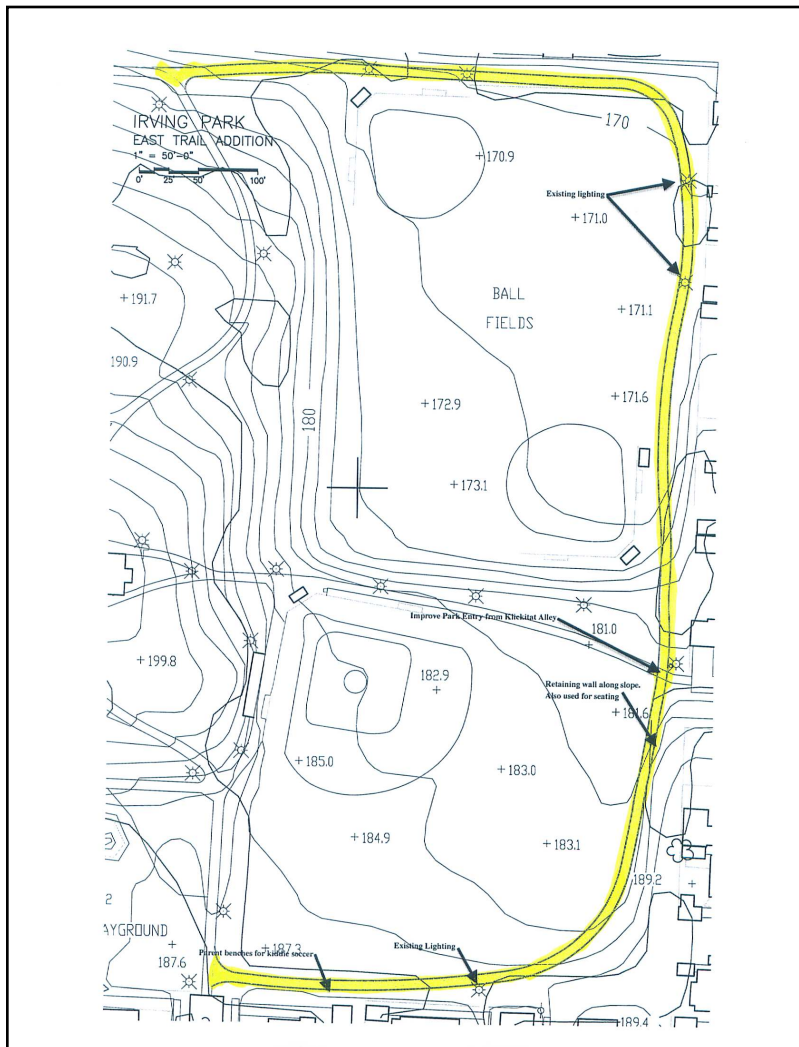
## Irving Park Perimeter Path

Something strange happens when you enter Irving Park from 9th Avenue. You are directed straight towards the middle of the Park where you can either choose to continue north or turn west and continue around the perimeter. When you reach the north side along Fremont, the walk suddenly ends. There is no “going around” the park, unless of course, you wish to walk on dirt and grass. Many people do just that - walk or jog their way along the perimeter of the east side of the park. Come the rainy season, friends and parents slish across the grass and slide around on muddy turf to watch kids play soccer, frisbee and other sports.

It wasn't planned this way. Early blueprints mined from the City archives show that Irving Park was redesigned as part of the Model Cities grant back in 1972. A pathway is

shown encircling the entire park and ballfields. Elegant lighting fixtures were spaced along the path every two hundred feet or so. After completion, the light standards were in, but mysteriously, the walkway was not. Whether the project ran short of funding or another reason prevented its construction, the fact remains that park users were denied a valuable asset.

Fast forward to 2013, momentum is gaining to finally get this pathway built. In 2010, the Parks Department worked with the Department of Transportation in hopes of finding a solution to the construction of the Klickitat Blke Boulevard where it intersects the Park. Hoping to limit cyclists from traveling straight through the park from 9th Avenue, they agreed an east side



Map showing East Side of Irving Park with Proposed Perimeter Path

perimeter path would be the best solution. In the short term it was decided to alter the course of the bicycle boulevard to bypass the Park entirely and instead jog it over to Sliskiyou at 17th Avenue. With the concept approved by the Parks Department, there

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really doesn't appear to be a good reason not to build this pathway. The only obstacles appear to be money and momentum.

A few years ago, the ICA developed a couple of capital improvement funds, one dedicated for projects in Irving Park and the other for general neighborhood beautification projects. This money will be enough to start moving the project forward. A fundraising effort will be needed to raise money for a public/private partnership with the City. For several years the cutbacks in the City forced a moratorium on new capital improvement projects. According to Eileen Argentina, PP&R Services Director, the timing for this project is excellent as the moratorium will be lifted in October. Much of the City's emphasis for projects and services is focused on the outer eastside. Because of this, for this project to succeed a strong neighborhood contribution will be critical.

Additional features to be considered include the addition of benches along the southern edge near where parents now stand to watch "kick and chase" soccer. To mitigate the sloped landscape along the eastern edge, a retaining wall would likely be built. This would provide seating to watch soccer and Frisbee matches, much like the popular Spray Pool wall constructed in 2005. Also to be considered are the enhancements of the entryways to the Park from Klickitat Alley and from 9th Avenue at both the north and south boundaries.

The coming months we will be working closely with the Parks Department to further plan and budget for this project. In the meantime your comments and input would be welcome.

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