



May 7, 2021

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Rep. Paul Holvey, Co-Chair
Senator Fred Girod, Co-Chair
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Holvey and Girod, and Members of the Committee,

We are writing today to support HB 5534 and the inclusion of \$1,500,000 for three permanent public restrooms in key locations across THPRD's 50-square mile territory, a critical need in our community.

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (THPRD) is the parks provider for the City of Beaverton and surrounding areas and has provided respite to our 250,000 patrons throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as one example, we have had record-breaking trail counts during much of the pandemic. Clearly, our patrons see our trails system as a valuable way to take care of their physical and mental health throughout this unprecedented time.

THPRD completed a visioning process in 2020 that resulted in over 10,000 comments and ideas from our community. One of the messages we heard loud and clear from our visitors is the need for more bathrooms in our public parks. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of hand washing became a critical way to prevent the spread of the virus. With many public places closed due to the pandemic, lack of hygienic facilities created a challenge to offering complete, safe services to our community.

Adding this infrastructure to any area truly benefits all in our community. No one is exempt from the desperate feeling of searching for a restroom in their time of need. *The New York Times* even highlighted this in a recent opinion piece, “Meanwhile, it’s not just the homeless who suffer. Taxi drivers, delivery people, tourists and others are out and about all day, navigating a landscape that seems oblivious to the most basic of needs. The same is true of parents out with kids.” (*America Is Not Made for People Who Pee*. Nicholas Kristof, March 2021.)

Constructing three permanent public restrooms will cost between \$413,000 and \$537,000 per restroom to permit, build and tap into sewer and water utilities. The annual maintenance cost for each of these facilities is around \$6,000. We would look to model these bathrooms after our current modular restroom that was added outside the Conestoga Recreation & Aquatic Center. The lower cost estimate shown above is for a single toilet facility, and the larger is for a two-toilet facility that could also provide a diaper changing station. These restrooms would remain open during park hours, typically dawn until dusk. These bathrooms close automatically at 9:30 pm.

We have identified a number of locations across the district that we believe would serve our communities the most. These facilities will be located at **Evelyn Schiffler Park (5495 SW Erickson Ave, Beaverton, OR 97005)**, **Hazeldale Park (19330 SW Farmington Rd, Aloha, OR 97007)** and **the Denney Creek trailhead along the Fanno Creek Trail**. Each of these locations are close to additional THPRD properties and would provide a maximum service area.

Additional detail about each location:

- Schiffler Park - a 10-acre park located in central Beaverton and half a mile from Beaverton High School. This park is surrounded by homes (both single family and apartments) and utilized by those near and far and of all ages due to its playground options, community garden and skate park. As an example of the demographic analysis that THPRD would perform for each of its chosen sites, the Schiffler Park site would provide a needed amenity for a community with the following characteristics:
 - Adding over 15,000 people from 2010 to 2019, the Schiffler Park service area is growing fast (~10% increase in total population).
 - The area around Schiffler Park is not only growing, it's diversifying. BIPOC population growth is significantly outpacing overall population growth (African American +19.6%, Asian +26.0%, Hispanic/Latinx +18.2%, Two or More Races +19.0%).
 - The population of the Schiffler Park service area is aging. Between 2010 and 2019, the population of people aged 60+ increased by 32%. Infrastructure, like restroom facilities, will be critical in ensuring older patrons are able to enjoy Schiffler Park into the future.
 - The Schiffler Park service area contains some of the densest Hispanic/Latinx communities in THPRD's district.
 - There are many languages spoken in the Schiffler Park service area. Some census block groups within the service area report more than one third of patrons speak Spanish at home and one quarter of patrons speak some Asian or Pacifica Islander language at home. More than a quarter of patrons in some census block groups report speaking English "Less than Very Well."
- Hazeldale Park - an 11-acre neighborhood park that features three baseball fields, a soccer field, basketball courts, and an accessible playground. Located in Aloha, (unincorporated Washington County). The site is conveniently situated near Highway 10, which results in significant foot traffic.
- Fanno Creek Trail, Denney Trailhead - the trailhead features a small parking lot and provides access to the 4.5-mile ADA-accessible trail that meanders through the Garden Home-Whitford and Raleigh Hills communities. The trail connects the cities of Portland to the northeast and Tigard at its southern end.

Other potential sites that may be considered if funding is available:

- Center Street Park - an over 5-acre park, serving multiple neighborhoods and with a $\frac{1}{3}$ mile trail, it features lots of open green space and often hosts summer concerts.
- Pirate Park - a popular family park destination, accessible from the Rock Creek Trail.
- Whispering Woods - a 19-acre natural area in Beaverton's Five Oaks/Triple Creek neighborhood. The natural area includes a section of Beaverton Creek, which flows west through the site toward Rock Creek and the Tualatin River.

- Pío Pío Park - a brand new park developed in 2020/2021 located on the western edge of the district, featuring a grass field, nature and traditional play areas, and a community garden.
- Bethany Lake Park - With large grassy areas, a segment of the Rock Creek Trail, a community garden, and a fishing area, the 23.5-acre Bethany Lake site is a very popular park.

We hope you agree that having access to public toilets is critical infrastructure for our communities. Building public restrooms is something that people of all ages and abilities have requested, and we know that it will improve the health and safety of our community members by creating more access to hygienic restrooms. The legislature is in the position to fund infrastructure that will positively impact health for years to come. We believe this is a perfect match.

THPRD appreciates your consideration of this request.

Thank you,

THPRD Board of Directors

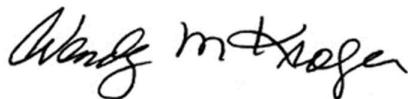


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