

The 2001 and 2016 Lincoln City Parks Master Plans both demonstrate long-standing support for the Taft Park project, which prioritizes the need for a community park in south Lincoln City to address a major recreation gap.

This will be the 1st community park built in Lincoln City in over 20 years, designed to meet all ADA standards. It will also be the 1st community park in the Taft District (southern area of Lincoln City) alone. It will host the only public soccer fields, and the only public multi-sport courts (basketball/ pickleball/ tennis) in Lincoln City. It will also host a large covered outdoor special event area, which can convert to multi-sport courts, for Lincoln City.

The property offers flat land, which is scarce in LC and necessary for play fields. The site is in the AE floodplain with a base flood elevation of 14. Existing ground elevation ranges from 12 to 14 feet, thus any construction of any enclosed spaces (e.g., restrooms) will conform to floodplain regulations. Open space and Schooner Creek adjoin much of the park site.

Per development on floodplains, a park development, including playfields, is the best use of this site, as it will be mostly pervious fields and play areas that can absorb stormwater. Covered shelter will have no walls, and restrooms will be wet flood-proofed, allowing for free flow of water and easy clean-up in the event of a flood. The city engineer will select the best stormwater improvements to address any increase in impervious area. In general, minimizing impervious development (buildings or impervious pavement) within floodplains helps address climate change impacts such as rising sea level, increased storm surge and flooding. The more pervious land area, the better any water on the property can be absorbed or move off of the property so it can continue to be used as it was designed, as a park.

Per emergencies, the evacuation route is close and easy (up 51st to Bayview).

Per zoning, the site is in the R-1-7.5 zoning district and has comprehensive plan designation of “medium density residential district.” The zone allows “parks, playgrounds and other similar publicly owned recreation areas” as permitted use. Any residential use would require meeting the same code provisions above. From a Housing / Economic Development perspective, this would trigger more expensive flood insurance and building design/engineering. Typically, these costs mean that publicly-subsidized housing (like the City partnership project at NE 25th/Hwy 101) would not be financially feasible in this sort of a location.

Per Economic Development Director Alison Robertson:

With Housing development discussions, social equity is involved. Publicly subsidized housing programs offering tax breaks, grants, and other financing, to fill the gap between the reduced rents and the cost of constructing, are designed to meet underserved income requirements. The need for affordable housing stems from reduced income where many families are forced to make difficult decisions about their housing: skip payments on utilities to buy groceries; buy gas to get to work but not new shoes/clothing; use credit cards for medications/doctor visit co-pays; etc. Ultimately this is a policy decision about public purpose and priorities – using this property as a public park maintains a high value public purpose, offers an amenity for locals and visitors, improves environmental impact, and reduces risk to environmental trends (climate change) through ‘displacing’ residential use (whether low-income or market-rate development).

Building a public park in this location would bring a high degree of balance across the “people – planet – profit” foundations of sustainability.

Per Planning Director Anne Marie Skinner:

DLCD and statewide planning goal for Housing **STRONGLY DISCOURAGE the placement of any residential development in tsunami zones.**

Senate Bill 8 that was adopted in the 2021 legislative session requires jurisdictions to allow affordable housing developments on lands without zone changes or conditional uses **IF** the land is not constrained by:

- Slopes 25% or greater
- Within 100-year floodplain (this land is)
- Statewide land use planning goals relating to natural disasters and hazards (this is because it’s in the tsunami inundation zone and the flood zone)

While the property is zoned residential so SB 8 wouldn’t be applicable if someone wanted to do affordable housing or not on the site, if the property was zoned other than residential and someone wanted to do affordable housing they would not be able to under SB 8 without a zone change or conditional use. In other words, while SB 8 doesn’t specifically prohibit affordable housing in flood zones and tsunami inundation zones, it doesn’t provide lands in those areas with the special mandate that affordable housing has to be allowed.