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Controversial housing project is a go

Teresa Carson March 25 2021

Development will cut down 250 mature firs next to protected wetlands to build 30 new homes



PMG PHOTO: TERESA CARSON - The 7.82 acre stand of trees will be cut down to build 30 new homes unless someone buys the property from the developer to preserve the firs.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003699439882-0788.jpg>)

A controversial housing development in Gresham that would cut down more than 250 mature fir trees to make way for 30 homes is moving ahead after city approval.

The city of Gresham authorized the development and nobody filed an appeal with the City Council by the Tuesday, March 2, deadline, so the housing site, called Headwaters, will proceed.

The only option now is for someone to buy the property from the developer to preserve the 7.82 acre forest. The wedge-shaped acreage is adjacent to protected wetlands and could be added to the adjoining undeveloped Southwest Community Park,

"We're moving ahead with engineering right now," said Chet Antonsen, of Bend-based SGS Development, which owns the property.



COURTESY GOOGLE MAPS - The wedge-shaped forest has homes to the west side, undeveloped park to the north and protected wetlands to the east.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003699439945-0788.jpg>)

The densely-forested site, at 3535 W. Powell Blvd., was formerly owned by the late Helen Shaull.

The city of Gresham has been in discussion with SGS about potentially buying the

property, but both the city and Antonsen are mum about how those negotiations are going.

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"The city of Gresham did visit with me," Antonsen said.

Metro regional government has also been mentioned as a possible partner in an acquisition of the property, but Antonsen said, "I have not heard boo hiss from Metro."

Carrie Belding, a communications official from Metro said they are not working with anyone regarding the Headwaters property.

"We have not been asked to do so," she said.

Antonsen earlier had said Metro and Gresham had first right of refusal on the property from the Shaull estate and declined to buy it.

The proposed development unleashed a gusher of public comment and controversy. The city received many letters and emails protesting the proposed development. Everyone from local residents to the Audubon Society of Portland objected to the housing on a variety of grounds.

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Some pointed out that in addition to the trees and adjacent sensitive and protected wetlands, artifacts from Indigenous people have been found on the site.

East County Rising, a political action group, called for Metro, East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District and the city of Gresham to buy the acreage to protect it as a natural area.

"We need you to urge them to help bring the land into public ownership," East County Rising said in an email to supporters.

Antonsen said he understands the neighbors' point of view that they don't want the land developed. But, he added, until he has an offer "acceptable to me, I'm going to keep working on it."



COURTESY PHOTO: CAROL ZYVATKAUSKAS - Gresham nature photographer
Carol Zyvatkaukas captured this Great Egret in the wetlands adjacent to the Headwaters development.

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GerMart • 18 days ago

Tell you what, I'm an East Portland resident who lives on the fringes of Gresham and pass by that area often. I'm paying 35\$ a year for an arts tax that has no discernable value in my life. I'd be happy to pay that amount to preserve those trees and make into a city park, and I'm not even a Gresham resident. Portland City Counsel...Are you reading this?

2 ^ | v • Share ›



Amy Carrick • 17 days ago

Giving up what makes Oregon so desirable for 30 homes? Gresham /Portland have plenty of homes available. These 30 homes are not being decimated to solve the housing crisis will not be sacrificed in order provide genuinely affordable housing. This is th terrible, irreversible decision that if the city actually made a real effort to let the community know what issues such as land use decisions were on the table , I'm sure you would have standing room only but given we are still trying to cope with a pandemic that has every other government office closed, it is surprising that you held a public hearing considering how risky that could be....seems as though the city of Gresham chose to run this through to get more money .

I live the idea of the city art tax for east county residents being DC diverted to buy this lot & send those vultures from California via Bend packing! Look what they've done to California - we are well on our way

1 ^ | v • Share ›



L. Goshen • 18 days ago • edited

This parcel is the last semi-old growth piece left in Gresham's dwindling wildlands inventory. Look at the sat map. It's darker in growth than most of their park assets. There's nothing left in that city. It will have to expand into Damascus, if they want any more greenway. Gresham is a done town. Time to bring in the 'big city' buildings...

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