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# LOCAL NEWS



The future site of Thomas Cully Park in northeast Portland looking north toward Columbia Boulevard.

## Cully Park Closer to Reality

### Northeast site gets \$1.25 million for construction

The future building of Thomas Cully Park in northeast Portland is moving ahead thanks to new \$1.25 million investment by the city of Portland.

Parks Commissioner Amanda Fritz announced last week that the funding comes from System Development Charges – money raised from construction development, rather than general fund tax dollars.

The support comes a week after Fritz earmarked a significant investment for two other new parks in east Portland; Beech Park, a 16-acre site adjacent to Shaver Elementary in the Argay neighborhood; and Gateway Park and Plaza, a 4-acre park for the Gateway neighborhood to be built in partnership with the Portland Development Commission.

Cully Park is envisioned as a 25-acre park at Northeast 72nd Avenue, between Killingsworth Street

and Columbia Boulevard. The parks bureau contribution will go towards the first construction phase, and will address the lack of parks and natural areas in the Cully neighborhood.

“The Cully neighborhood is unique; it is one of the most diverse neighborhoods in Portland, perhaps the state,” Fritz said. “And, perhaps because of this diversity, Cully is home to some of the most dedicated and motivated community advocates in the City. I am proud to work towards our shared goal of completing Thomas Cully Park.”

In June, the Portland City Council approved an agreement between the nonprofit group Verde and Portland Parks & Recreation for developing the park.

“Investment in Thomas Cully Park will produce multiple benefits for low-income people and people

of color,” says Alan Hipólito, Verde executive director. “This new park in a park-deprived neighborhood shows a deep commitment to hundreds of our neighbors.”

Verde has successfully raised over \$2.4 million thus far to implement Phase I of the Thomas Cully Master Plan. The property was a sand and gravel mine, then a construction landfill before starting the process of becoming a park. The city purchased the property in 2002. A community garden adjacent to the site was installed last year.

The remaining improvements planned by Let Us Build Cully Park! include pathways, dog off-leash area, playgrounds and picnic areas, tribal gathering area, youth soccer field, basketball court, parking lot,

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## Teacher Strike Averted

The bargaining teams for Portland Public Schools and the Portland Association of Teacher’s respective camps were able to reach a conceptual agreement on a new contract on Tuesday, effectively diverting a planned strike by the teachers union for just a couple of

days later.

A walkout would have marked the first-ever teacher strike for the Portland Public Schools, the largest school district in Oregon.

After a 23 hour bargaining session, both teams mutually agreed to break and convene later Tuesday to

put the agreement in writing in the form of a Tentative Agreement that will require a vote of union members.

School is now set to begin at the regular time on Wednesday, Feb. 19, and release two-and-a-half hours early.

Until teachers approve the contract, details of the agreement are remaining concealed.