

# Shoreline 175<sup>th</sup> Street Background Research & Notes

## Ronald Bog Park

- The park is named after Judge James Ronald, an early resident in the Shoreline area. He was also the Mayor of Seattle in 1892-1893.
- The bog is a natural formation of layers and layers of peat that once supported an ecosystem that included wild cranberries.
- Duwamish people from the settlements adjacent to Lake Washington, Lake Union and Salmon Bay, and other visiting tribes came to the bog to harvest the cranberries and other edible plants.
- The bog was a central stopover place on the portage route from Lake Washington to Puget Sound.
- The bog was a peat mine in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Mining of the peat began in the 1940s, and continued through the 1960s. By then most of the peat was harvested from the bog.
- After the peat was depleted, the area was filled and became land for building houses.
- Ronald bog lies at the headwaters to the northern part of the Thornton Creek watershed. The historical peat bog covered several acres of land. Its extent was much larger than the today's park boundaries.
- At one time, the bog stretched from north of Cromwell Park to south of Twin Ponds, and west beyond Meridian where the school now stands.
- The original road (175<sup>th</sup> Street) jogged north around the bog.
- At one time, a wooden bridge was built on 175<sup>th</sup> to cross the north side of the bog.
- There is some history of grassroots activism at the park - citizens banded together to save the bog, the land was bought by King County and became a park in 1974.
- The City of Shoreline's main concern with the bog in recent years has been to keep its outflow from backing up and flooding nearby houses.
- On-going events at Ronald Bog Park
  - The annual Summer Set Arts Festival takes place in late summer and is designed to connect people with Ronald Bog's history and ecology through creative and educational programming.
  - There are a few public art pieces in the park, including the Kiss Sculpture, which will be relocated for the construction of the Ronald Bog Wetland Mitigation Site as part of the Lynnwood Link Extension; and the Pony sculptures along 175<sup>th</sup> Street is often decorated during holidays and festivities.
  - There are regular work party (led by Shoreline Rotary Club) at the Ronald Bog Park and the adjacent Pacific Northwest Conifer Arboretum that include park maintenance and clean-up activities.

## Duwamish People in Shoreline Area

- Shoreline was inhabited by Duwamish groups before the arrival of Euro-American pioneers.
- An estimated 600 members of the Duwamish lived in the Shoreline area prior to the 1850s.

- Duwamish people harvested wild foods from local ecosystems, including fish from the local rivers and lakes, shellfish and other seafood from the Puget Sound. They also hunted animals and collected edible plants from the wetlands, forests, and meadows.
- Some edible plants that were gathered include fern rhizomes from forests, skunk cabbages along Thornton Creek, crabapples at Bitter Lake, salmon berries at the mouth of Boeing Creek, cranberries at Ronald Bog, and native plants such as salal, red elderberries, kinnikinnick that were found commonly in the area.

### Interurban Rail

- Electric interurban railways played a major role in shaping the transportation routes and growth patterns in King County in the early twentieth century.
- The interurban rail, first established in Seattle in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, ran along what is now the interurban trail.
- By 1912, private interurban lines connected Tacoma, Seattle, and Everett.
- The historic Ronald Place Brick Road ran along the interurban rail. Remnants of the red bricks can be seen along Aurora Ave, north of 175<sup>th</sup> Street.
- The expansion of the Interurban Rail reached Ronald Station at Aurora Ave and 175<sup>th</sup> Street in 1907.

### Cultivated Crops - Strawberries

- Strawberries were an important crop for the settlers of Shoreline between the 1890s and 1910s.
- Strawberries from Shoreline (Richmond Beach at the time) were of the Marshall variety and considered one of the best to reach the Seattle market.
- A new variety of strawberry was cultivated by a local farmer and named Richmond Beauty. It won many prizes, including at the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition, and brought significant publicity to Richmond Beach.
- A strawberry blight ended the commercial strawberry growing operation in Shoreline in the mid-1910s.
- Despite the end of commercial strawberry production, there is still an annual strawberry festival in Shoreline.

### Meridian Park School

- The Meridian Park Elementary School used to be a junior high school called Cordell Hull, built in 1959.
- The original school was built on a bog, and had to be rebuilt because the structure started to sink.
- There was a blueberry farm on the site of the school.

### Thornton Creek Watershed

- Most of our project area (east of Ashworth) lies in the Thornton Creek Watershed. Ronald Bog lies around the headwaters of the Thornton Creek watershed.

- Thornton Creek is Seattle's largest urban stream, its 15-mile main stem empties into Lake Washington.
- Thornton Creek Watershed covers an 11.4-square-mile area between I-5 and Lake City Way. It is Seattle's most urbanized watershed, with more than 70,000 people living in the it.
- Coho and cutthroat trout have been found in the creek, as well as invasive New Zealand mud snails.
- Salmon have been struggling in this urbanized watershed, and their revival has spurred restoration projects along the creek in recent years.
- Seattle Public Utilities launched an \$11 million experimental restoration in two reaches of Thornton Creek, rebuilding a total of 1,600 feet of the channel from the ground up.

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