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(<http://www.palisadesneighborhood.org>)

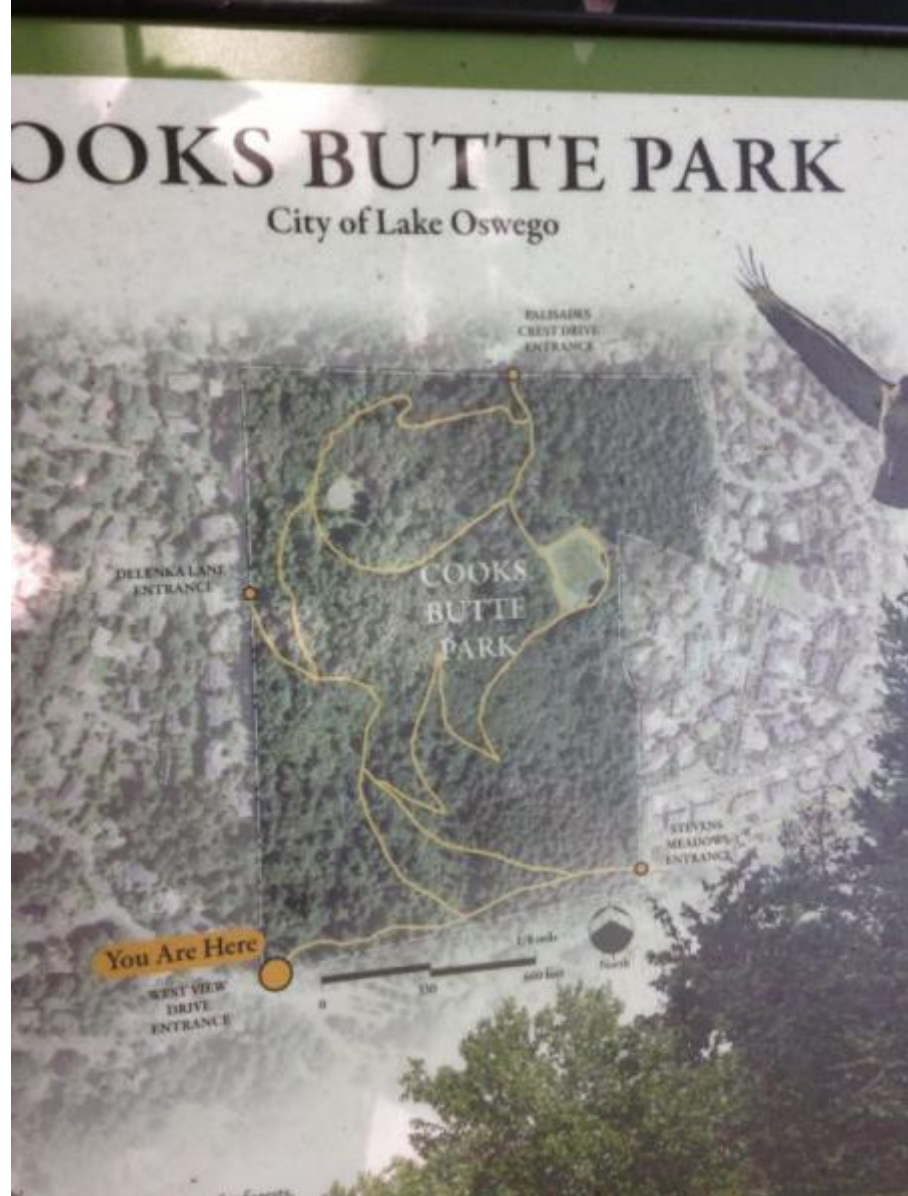
Cooks Butte Communications Tower PNA Tour

By webmaster@pna (<http://www.palisadesneighborhood.org/author/webmasterpna/>) in
Current Posts by PNA Chairperson

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September 16, 2019





The Clackamas County Public Safety Communications System, or C800 Radio Group, is planning to build a new emergency communications tower in Cooks Butte Park. The proposal is going through the planning process with the City of Lake Oswego, and a public meeting will soon be scheduled to present information on the project to neighbors and allow for comment and questions.

On July 12, 2019 four members of the Palisades Neighborhood Association Board visited the site of an existing tower in the communications network in the City of Sandy. We were met by representatives of the C800 group who gave us a tour of the installation, provided information and answered questions.

The C800 group is an intergovernmental agency that was established in 2000. The Clackamas County group is in a cooperative agreement with Washington County to provide a regional communications network for public safety agencies such as police and fire departments. The goal is to improve radio coverage for communications between agencies in the two counties, for everyday public safety needs, and especially in the event of larger emergency situations. The system consists of a network of towers across the two

counties. Each tower is designed to communicate directly with two other towers in the network. In the event that one of the towers is damaged, its connecting towers would still have a back-up channel to another tower, allowing the system to continue to function.

In 2016 Clackamas County voters approved a bond measure to upgrade the system by adding towers, retrofitting existing towers to allow digital communications, and do seismic upgrades to existing installations. This is ongoing, and the Cooks Butte site is part of these improvements. There is an existing tower near Mountain Park, one south of Milwaukie and one on Pete's Mountain, but some areas of Lake Oswego still have poor coverage. Cooks Butte is an ideal site due to its height and location.

The C800 Group has obtained a legal affidavit from the heirs of the original donors of the Cooks Butte property allowing an exception to the deed restrictions on development in the park. This exception is for this project only, and may not be used in future to allow additional construction for commercial uses, such as cell phone towers.

During our visit, we viewed the Sandy tower itself, which is 196 feet tall, including the height of two lightning rods on the top of the tower. The tower is metallic grey, which is chosen because it is shown to be less visible against the sky than dark painted structures. There are two microwave dishes on the tower oriented to communicate with two other towers in the network. The tower is on a deep concrete pad, which is designed and built to withstand a 9+ strength earthquake. At the base of the tower on the concrete pad is a communications building containing the necessary electronic and communications equipment to run the tower and maintain communication with the network. The installation has a propane-powered generator, which will allow communications to be uninterrupted in the event that electric power to the tower is cut off. The entire installation is surrounded with a security fence which has landscaping around the perimeter. In the case of the Cooks Butte tower, the Parks Department has mandated that this landscaping and any mitigation plantings for trees or other plants removed for construction be done with native species.

The next step in the process is the scheduling of a Neighborhood Meeting. The Neighborhood Association and the residents closest to the site will be notified when that is scheduled.

Information on the C800 Radio Group can be seen at c800.org (<http://c800.org/>).



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