

Neighborhood Association History

The Ashcreek Neighborhood Association was one of the original neighborhood associations in Portland in the 1970s. A City of Portland archives map dated October 1974 shows the neighborhood in the “Jackson” neighborhood at the time. A May 1980 city archives map shows the Ashcreek neighborhood boundary about the same as the current Ashcreek-Crestwood Neighborhood boundary.

The Crestwood Neighborhood Association was formed in 1980 because the neighbors around SW Taylors Ferry Road and SW 48th Street wanted a neighborhood association and at the time, Ashcreek was not active. The neighbors wanted to focus along SW Taylors Ferry Road and didn’t want to take on Garden Home Road or Multnomah Blvd. At that time, bulk mailing was the only way to reach neighborhood residents. Email hadn’t been invented yet. So, they asked the Post Office for the number of houses that they needed to qualify for bulk mailing. They got the number and then looked at a plot map and drew the boundaries from the inactive Ashcreek NA to make the boundaries for the new Crestwood Neighborhood Association. The name Crestwood came from the residential development at the top of Taylors Ferry Road. Since Ashcreek was inactive, there was no one to ask permission from to create Crestwood. In the spring of 1981, there was a meeting at the West Portland United Methodist Church of neighbors to vote on the Crestwood NA. The vote passed (probably unanimously). The first president lived on SW 53rd Street a couple of houses south of Taylor’s Ferry Road. Eventually Ashcreek became active again and discovered that they had lost a chunk of their neighborhood association and couldn’t do anything about it. In 2016-2017 the two neighborhoods adjusted their boundaries and SW Taylors Ferry Road became the boundary between Ashcreek and Crestwood. By 2024 both neighborhoods began to discuss merging the two neighborhood associations, which was unanimously approved on January 13, 2025.

A neighborhood association (NA) in the City of Portland is different from a Homeowner’s Association (HOA). Portland City Code 3.96 defines a Neighborhood Association as an autonomous organization formed by people for the purpose of considering and acting on issues affecting the livability and quality of their neighborhood. Neighborhood Associations must be recognized by, and comply with, neighborhood standards currently administered by Portland’s Office of Community and Civic Life. Some of the standards include giving residents adequate public notice of meetings and conducting business in meetings that are open to the public.

Community History

West Portland was one of the earlier non-native settlements in southwest Portland outside of downtown Portland. SW Taylors Ferry Road dates back to the 1850's as a military wagon road that connected the Willamette River (near Fulton) and Tualatin River (near 99W). SW Capitol Highway was built as a wagon road connecting Portland and Salem, the state capitol, in 1892. West Portland Park was platted as a subdivision in 1889 supported by a short-lived electric railway.

The transportation system and the neighborhoods evolved in tandem. A major project was the construction of the Oregon Electric interurban railway between Portland and Eugene in 1908.

Railway stations included Multnomah, Maplewood and Garden Home in the vicinity of what is now SW Multnomah Blvd. Many people moved to our neighborhood because they wanted to live in a more rural setting that was connected to major cities by transportation improvements over time.

SW Capitol Highway was paved in 1916 (one of the first roads to be paved in Oregon). Pacific Highway 99 was built in segments as one of the original automobile roadways between Canada and Mexico. The SW Barbur Blvd segment of 99W was constructed in 1934. Pacific Highway was replaced by the Interstate Highway System and in December 1961 the last segment of Interstate-5 in Oregon opened to connect West Portland to downtown Portland.

West Portland has had a grocery (Barbur World Foods), gas stations (Master Wrench), Auto Repair (Classic Collision), restaurants, motels and schools for almost 100 years. During the early 1940's, Southwest Portland was divided among four elementary schools: Capitol Hill, Multnomah, West Portland and Collins View. Students attended Lincoln High School in downtown Portland. Maplewood Elementary was constructed in 1949, Markham Elementary was constructed in 1951, Smith Elementary was constructed in 1958, Wilson (now Ida B Wells Barnett) High School was constructed in 1965 and Jackson High School (now Middle School) was constructed in 1966. Today, our neighborhood is served by Maplewood and Markham Elementary Schools, Jackson Middle School and Ida B Wells Barnett High School.

West Portland was designated a Town Center in 1996 as part of Metro's original 2040 regional growth strategy. The City of Portland, Oregon Dept. of Transportation and others conducted many studies and developed many plans over the years since then. The West Portland Town Center Plan was adopted by Portland City Council on November 20, 2022 (ordinance 191079).

Garden Home in the western part of our neighborhood is one of the unique commercial areas in the City of Portland that is in Washington County. Portland City Council ordinance 165422 dated May 13, 1992 transferred jurisdiction of SW Garden Home Road from Washington County in large part because it was, and continues to be, a high accident location and priority safety project in our neighborhood. The City and Washington County jointly funded the Garden Home Road/Multnomah Blvd Intersection Safety Project in 2016, but it has yet to be constructed.

Garden Home has a historic bell and clock tower in the Trader Joe's store. The plaque reads "This bell was first installed in the Garden Home Community Church. It was located at SW 71st and Garden Home Road in 1918. In 1961 the bell was moved to the new Garden Home Community United Methodist Church on SW 81st. The bell hangs here to recognize its role in the life of the Garden Home Community." Old-timers tell us about the bell ringing in the Old Church to announce the end of the World War I. The bell has hung in the Lamb's Thriftway (now Trader Joe's) clock tower since 1995. "This bell tower is dedicated to youth in memory of CPL. Lyle S. Tate, USMC, who gave his life in Vietnam 9 May 1967".

Ashcreek Crestwood Neighborhood History Compiled by Marianne Fitzgerald, May 2025