

North Rainier Park Development

Tim Burgess
Mayor

Samuel Assefa
Director, OPCD

Ross Tilghman, Chair

John Savo, Vice Chair

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Laura Haddad

Brianna Holan

Rick Krochalis

Evan Fowler

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Aaron Hursey
Planner

Juliet Acevedo
Administrative Staff

Diana Settlemyer
Intern

Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis
Evan Fowler

Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis

Project Description

The project is one of 14 landbanked sites acquired by Seattle Parks and Recreation as part of the 2008 Parks and Green Space Levy to provide additional open space in neighborhoods throughout the city. The project site is located along S. Charlestown St. and 35th Ave S. The project site is located near a commercial corridor, several multi-family developments, and single-family homes. The original plan included development on one parcel located at the corner of S. Charlestown St. and 35th Ave S. An updated plan includes the purchase of 4 additional parcels to the north of the original parcel. Proposed park amenities include an open lawn, gathering space, active play area, adult exercise equipment, and street improvements.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the North Rainier Park Development. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase for the project. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 8-1, to approve the concept design for the North Rainier Park Development with several conditions and recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

September 21, 2017

3:00 – 4:30 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

None

Presenters**Lisa Corry**

Cascade Design Collaborative

Karimah Edwards

SPR

Jennifer Munde

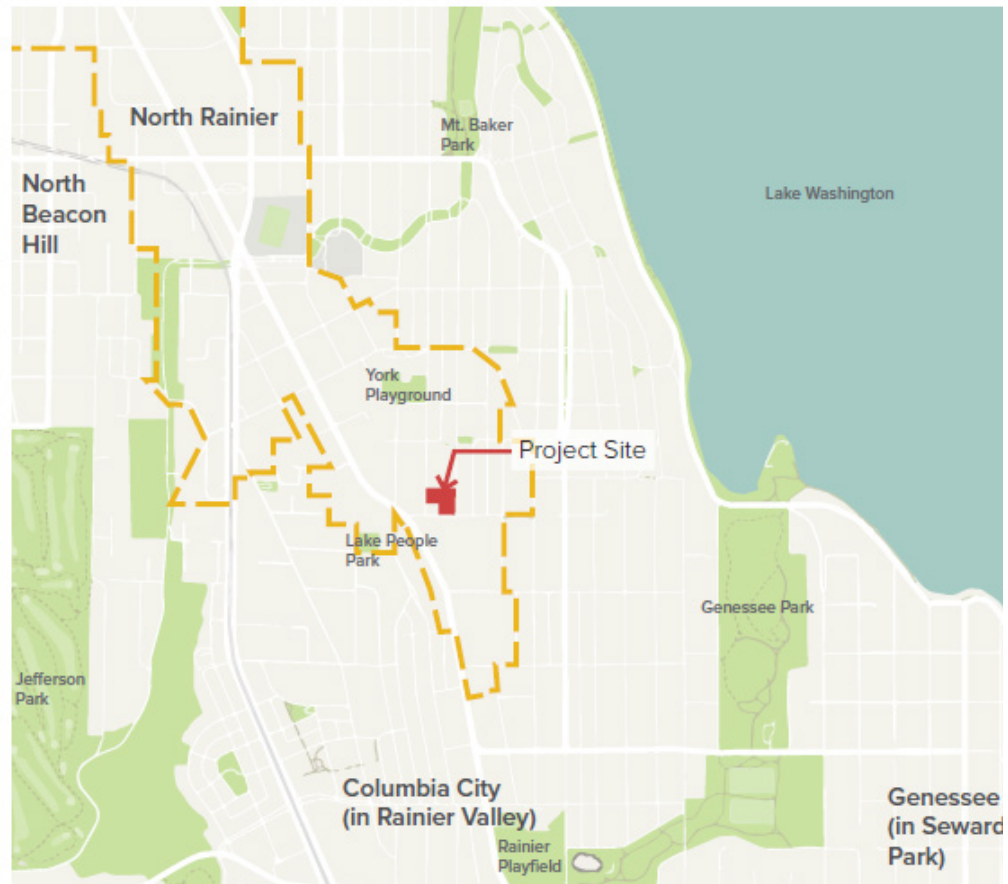
Cascade Design Collaborative

Attendees**Toby Ressler**

SPR

Summary of Presentation

Karimah Edwards of Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) and Lisa Corry and Jennifer Munde of Cascade Design Collaborative presented the concept design phase of the North Rainier Park Development. The project is located on Charlestown St between 34th Ave S and 35th Ave S, one block east of Rainier Ave S in the North Rainier neighborhood. The site consists of 5 parcels acquired by SPR between 2011 and 2016. The City is in the process of researching the possibility of acquiring a potential sixth parcel on the corner of 34th Ave S and Charlestown St. Currently the total budget consists of \$450,000 for the 5 parcels and street improvements, with an additional \$80,000 pledge from Kaiser Permanente for play and exercise equipment. The site is currently covered in invasive knotweed, which is preventing the project team from doing a proper survey. The knotweed and four feet of soil will be removed and the site will be regraded.



Vicinity Map

▲ North not to scale

Source: Kroll Map Company

Figure 1: Site location

Three options for the site have been developed for concept design. Option 1 shows what is possible with the current budget, while Options 2 and 3 show what could be accomplished after additional fundraising. The team will continue to advance designs for options 2 and 3 only. However, the project team will put the project on hold for a year after concept design development in order to fundraise.

The project team has conducted a thorough analysis of the demographics of the area, including nearby John Muir Elementary. Public outreach so far has included two public meetings, an online survey, a stakeholder meeting, and numerous phone calls and e-mails. The neighborhood expressed a strong desire for adult exercise equipment, including equipment that can be used by senior citizens for physical therapy, and picnic areas with barbecues. Community members were shown Options

2 and 3. Option 2 includes a looped circulation route, children's play areas, an adult exercise area, and picnic areas. Option 3 includes a raised crosswalk across Charlestown St to Safeway and features a more direct circulation route from the southeast corner of the site to the northwest corner. This path would sometimes be used by police cars in order to move more quickly around the corner of Charlestown St and 34th Ave S, a use that was supported by community members desiring safety for their neighborhood.

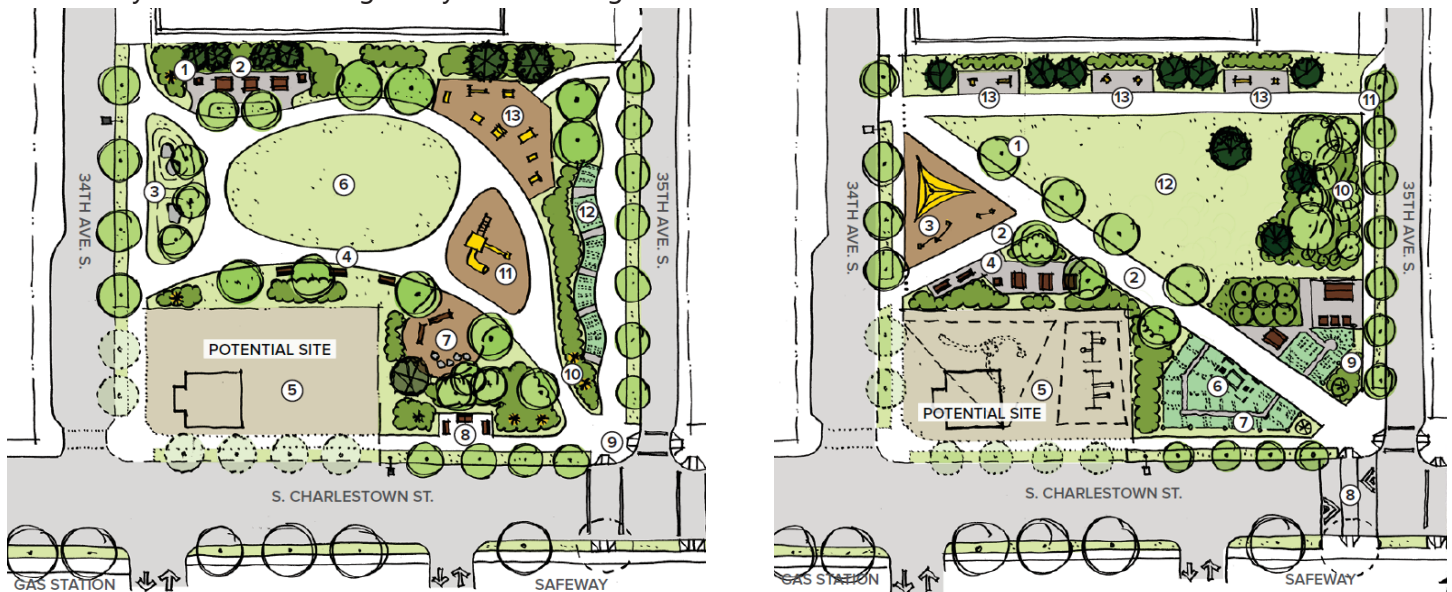


Figure 2: Options 2 (left) and 3 (right)

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Community and context
- Scope and programming
- Design concept alternatives
- Phasing

Community and context

The SDC commended the project team for providing much needed open space within the North Rainier Community. The commission stressed the importance of acquiring and incorporating the southwest corner parcel the park design. The SDC recommended the project team coordinate with appropriate SPR staff to understand the feasibility of acquiring the southwest corner parcel. Although commissioners discussed the possibility of also acquiring additional parcels north of the project site, the commission agreed that it was more important to prioritize the acquisition of the southwest corner parcel.

The commission encouraged the design team to provide an interim plan for the project site between the demolition and construction phases of the development.

Scope and programming

The SDC agreed the proposed programming aligned with the needs of the surrounding community. The Commission encouraged the design team to program the park with active uses, which will help in attracting community members, potentially reducing the need for police to drive through the park. Commissioners then encouraged the design team to incorporate "park like" topography within the design. The commission recommended including shade structures above the picnic area. Commissioners also recommended locating the play area near the picnic area.

The SDC expressed its desire for SDOT to play an active role in developing the park by addressing the sidewalk needs. This is historically underserved community that is experiencing rapid redevelopment. The commission strongly

recommended that SPR request funding assistance from SDOT to fund the street improvements. Commissioners note the Vision Zero program and Pedestrian Master Plan equity component as a starting point for conversation.

Design concept alternatives

The SDC provided limited comments on the concept design proposals. Commissioners acknowledged the difficulty of providing a strong concept design without knowing if the southwest corner parcel will be acquired. The commission recommended the project team provide a full area concept design that included the southwest corner parcel. The commission also recommended the project team include a hierarchy of pathways throughout the park. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to include a mid-block crossing along S. Charlestown St. and to not let police access direct the design proposal.

Phasing

The SDC recommended the project team include a sustainability strategy that extends beyond stormwater management to promote health and wellbeing. Commissioners encouraged the use of a planting and materials palette that will better serve the surrounding community. The SDC then suggested that street improvements integrate with the park design and sustainability strategy through the use of rain gardens. Commissioners also suggested that lighting will be an important factor in the successful design of the park.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the concept design for the North Rainier Park Development. The Commission appreciated that the project will provide needed open space in the North Rainier Community. The SDC voted, 8-1, to approve the concept design phase of the North Rainier Park Development with the following conditions:

1. Coordinate with SDOT to fund street improvements
2. Coordinate with appropriate SPR staff to understand feasibility of acquiring the southwest corner parcel for park development

The Commission also provided the following recommendations:

1. Provide a site concept design that includes the southwest corner parcel
2. Create a hierarchy of pathways through the park
3. Consider including a sun shade structure within the park design
4. Explore locating the play area near the picnic area
5. Provide sustainability features that contribute to the resiliency of area
6. Update SDC on fundraising for the park development

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

Laura Haddad – While I recognize the necessity of the park and applaud the project team for their outreach and concept design proposal, there are too many questions related to the funding of street improvements, potential acquisition of the southwest parcel, and police access. These questions need to be answered before the design team can create a viable concept design.