

North Rainier Park Development

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Commissioners Present

Ben de Rubertis, Chair
Brianna Holan, Vice Chair
Justin Clark
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis
Amalia Leighton
Vinita Sidhu
Lucas Whitesell
Elaine Wine

Commissioners Excused

Project Description

The project is one of 14 landbanked sites acquired by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) as part of the 2008 Open Space levy. The project site is roughly 1 acre in size and is located along S. Charlestown St. between 34th Ave S and 35th Ave S. The park was originally proposed to be built on one parcel located at the corner of S. Charlestown St. and 35th Ave S. SPR had the opportunity to purchase 5 additional parcels in order to expand the original park design. The current budget is \$1.28 million. Proposed park amenities include an open lawn, gathering space, active play area, and street improvements. Additional funding will be provided from Kaiser Permanente to provide adult exercise equipment in addition to the park programming budget.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the North Rainier Park Development. The SDC had previously reviewed the project in September 2017. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase (60% design) for the project. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 10-0, to approve the schematic design phase for the North Rainier Park Development with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

None

November 21, 2019

9:00 - 10:30 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design (60% design)

Previous Reviews[9/21/17](#)**Presenters**

Lisa Corry

Osborn Consulting, Inc.

Ed Pottharst

SPR

Cindy Talley

Osborn Consulting, Inc.

Attendees

Brian Dougherty

SDOT

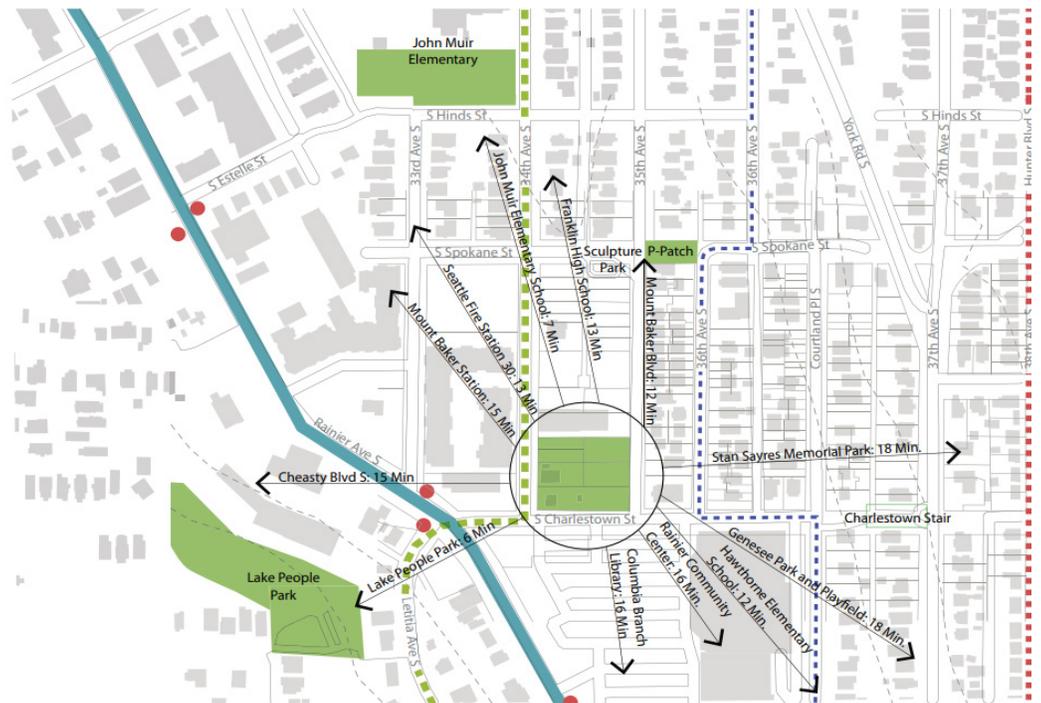


Figure 1: Site location and neighborhood context

Summary of Presentation

Ed Pottharst, of SPR, and Lisa Corry and Cindy Talley, of Osborn Consulting, Inc., presented the schematic design phase for the North Rainier Park Development. The presentation began with neighborhood history, project information, and site context (See figure 1). Since the previous review in September 2017, SPR has received additional funding for the project, increasing from \$450,000 to \$1.28 million. The project also includes \$80,000 in funding from Kaiser Permanente to provide adult exercise equipment. SPR also acquired an additional parcel for park development to increase the total project site to .89 acres. The project team then discussed how previous community outreach and recommendations from the SDC were used to influence two new design alternatives. The design team incorporated programs and elements that the community had previously expressed interest in having. Both design alternatives were presented at a public meeting held in September 2019, where participants selected their preferred alternative.

The preferred design alternative included a central open space surrounded by program elements such as adult exercise equipment, basketball half-court, play areas, small gathering spaces, and picnic and grill areas. The central open space is surrounded by a loop path that provides connectivity to each program, while park entrances are located at each of the four corners of the site. The loop path will also include Pedestrian lighting. The main entrance is located at the southwest corner of the site and will include park signage, seating and special planting. See figure 2 for more detail.

The design will also include the development of right-of-way (ROW) improvements along S Charlestown St, 34th Ave S, and 35th Ave S to include curb and gutter, plantings, street trees, and sidewalks. Curb bulbs and on street parking will be located along S Charlestown St. The project team is continuing to coordinate with the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to provide one or more crosswalks across S Charlestown St.



Figure 2: Preferred design alternative (top) and design renderings (bottom)

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Response to prior comments and community engagement
- Overall vision and programmatic elements
- Connection and integration with surrounding neighborhood
- ROW Improvements and SDOT collaboration
- Sustainability, resiliency, and equity

Response to prior comments and community engagement

The SDC commended the project team for updating the park design that addressed previous concerns and reflected ongoing community engagement. The commission encouraged the project team to continue to engage the community during the next phase. The Commission was excited about the impact that the additional parcel at the northeast corner of S Charlestown St and 34th Ave. S. had on the overall project

design Commissioners encouraged the project team continue to think about connectivity between program elements, including the relationship between the grill and play areas. Commissioners also recommended that the project team consider providing larger gathering spaces for family, community, or other social events.

The Commission requested that the project team provide a planting palette during the next review. Commissioners also mentioned that SPR should commit to the maintenance required for special planting areas near the southwest entrance. The SDC also encouraged the project team explore opportunities to show community inspired elements within selected materials, such as through stamping or painting of walkways or a mural on the basketball court.

Overall vision and programmatic elements

The SDC reiterated its support for the updated design proposal. Commissioners commended the project team for their ability to distill community input into a well thought out design concept. Commissioners also appreciated the project team designing the park for all ages and the relocation of park entrances to the corners of the site, which provide a direct connection with each intersection. The Commission encouraged the project team to create a more fluid edge between the entrance and landscape edge to create for larger gathering spaces.

The Commission did express some concern with the proposed design of the northern edge of the park. Commissioners are concerned the proposed planting area, which abuts a vacant property, will limit visibility for park users. Several commissioners also questioned the use of dense vegetation to block off the abutting property as it could possibly be redeveloped in the future. The SDC then recommended the project team continue to look at options for the northern edge of the park, including how programming and planting can provide connections to future development abutting this portion of the park.

The SDC then commended the project team for their use of a limited materials palette that will support the proposed programming without overwhelming park users. Commissioners requested information on how the pervious concrete areas will tie into other program elements and materials.

The Commission encouraged the project team to consider including edible plants within the landscape palette, given the inclusion of grill areas as well as the park's proximity to a major grocery store. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to think about a design solution to limit balls from running into the street from the basketball court.

Connection and integration with surrounding neighborhood

The SDC acknowledged the increased integration and connectivity within the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioners appreciated the location of park entrances at each corner of the project site.

ROW improvements and SDOT collaboration

The Commission strongly recommended the project team continue to work with SDOT to implement enhanced crosswalks and other traffic calming measures across S Charlestown St as well as at the adjacent intersections. The Commission then recommended the project team partner with SDOT to look for ways to integrate art and cultural into the sidewalks and crosswalks.

Sustainability, resiliency, and equity

The SDC appreciated the team addressing resiliency as part of the project. Commissioners then stated that the project site has experienced several changes in environmental conditions and is currently being redeveloped and replenished with new soil, which should be reflected in the selection of materials and plantings. The SDC then recommended the project team consider site furnishings that are sustainable. The Commission also encouraged the project team to think about amenities that will support the park being a community gathering space, such as through the use of a message board.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the schematic design phase (60% design) for the North Rainier Park Development. Overall the Commission appreciated the design update and how the project team responded to previous concerns as well as the project team's approach to community engagement.

The SDC also appreciated changes in programmatic elements and layout, sustainability approach, and the simplicity of the materials palette. The SDC voted, 10-0, to approve the schematic design phase (60% design) for the North Rainier Park Development with the following recommendations:

1. Consider larger gathering spaces for family sized events
2. Continue to explore design options for the northern edge of the park including programming and planting that will provide a connection to future development
3. Consider adding a drinking fountain near play areas, to support active elements within the park
4. Seek opportunities for art and culture integration into the park that reflect community identity and goals
5. Think about naming of the park to reflect the history and culture of the neighborhood
6. Work with SDOT on opportunities to integrate cultural elements into sidewalk and crosswalks
7. Work with SDOT to implement crosswalks and other traffic calming measures on Charlestown to provide pedestrian friendly connections between the park and the commercial development
8. Consider sustainability in the selection and placement of site furnishings