



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Mike McGinn
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

Lauren Hauck

Laurel Kunkler

Julie Parrett

Norie Sato

Donald Vehige

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

April 15, 2010

Convened 10:00 am
Adjourned 5:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

West Seattle Reservoir Park
Councilmember Tom Ramussen
Childrens Hospital Design Guidelines
Childrens Hospital Laurelon
Westlake Transportation Hub Strategy

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Brendan Connolly
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Lauren Hauck
Laurel Kunkler
Julie Parrett
Norie Sato
Donald Vehige

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Jenny Hampton



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April 15, 2010

Project: **West Seattle Reservoir Park**
Phase: Concept Design
Last Reviews:
Presenters: Susanne Friedman, Parks and Recreation
Mark Brands, Site Workshop

Attendees: Donna Hartmann-Miller, Friends for
Greater Maple Leaf Park
Pauline Marshall, Westcrest Park Steward

Time: 10:47am – 12:02pm

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks the design team for their presentation. It applauds that the designers looked beyond the tight boundaries of the project to consider the context and encourages the Parks Department to allow the designers to integrate this bigger context into the design effort. Consideration of how the park connects to the neighboring greenbelt is a strength of the planning and an opportunity that should not be missed.

The Commission unanimously approves the concept design of the West Seattle Reservoir Park with the following recommendations:

- The commission prefers concept three, especially the idea of a road that connects the various parts of the park. Even though roads through parks are not often encouraged, the pattern of use in this park, and the locations of various elements within it give this option special merit. The Children's play area is especially needing connection and prominence if it remains in the southern area of the park. Safety is an issue here as well and needs careful consideration to activate the area so it isn't so isolated. The commission is also not in favor of perimeter parking.
- Consider how the p-patch might help activate the south part of the park.
- Consider expansion of the dog park, perhaps even to the south, closer to the children's play area (without encroaching too much and allowing for safe separation.
- There is concern about the geometry of the 50 ft. setback needed to delineate the outlines of the reservoir. Possibly collaborate with the project artist to develop a more meaningful way to deal with this issue. Clarify with SPU whether the demarcation of the buffer can be subtle or must be very strong.
- The artist might also draw from what is going on below the surface, perhaps orienting the design to the rectangle of the tank below, and expressing that people are standing on a lid over water.
- The idea of standing on top of so much (invisible) water is poetic and the design could be embellished with an expression of the fundamental structure of the reservoir columns below. Use the fundamental presence of water. Some Commissioners saw the underground facility during construction and were awestruck by the rhythm and the scale of the underground part of the facility.
- There is also a lot of strength in the height and views of the lidded area. A way to feature them is also important.
- Pull together the surface water sustainability elements into a more systematic or logical and understandable configuration.
- Use slopes as attractions for kids to provide more unstructured play opportunities.
- Propose or define any sustainable features
- Connect trails of the site to the neighboring forest and greenbelt. and greenbelt. Think about the whole site and its connections, not just the park area above the reservoir and the park, and take the opportunity to allow this planning and design process to include looking at the urban greenbelt and

forest as the entire site. Make connections to these and through the site to connect this very rich area together and to other parts of the neighborhood, Continue to plan holistically and make provisions for phased development.

- **Provide a model or somehow show the undulation, slopes and richness of the site in the next presentation so we can better understand the site and the implications of the design choices**

Project Presentation

Susanne Friedman and Mark Brands presented the proposed conceptual design for the West Seattle Reservoir Park. The project is part of the Parks Levy with allocated funding of three million dollars. Future steps include another public meeting and selection of an artist.

To date, the team has had two public meetings with around 125 people in attendance. These community meetings have brought the team insights into what the community wants for this space, including such features as a trail network, parking, art, community gardens, disc golf, and a host of others. The current funding is for the development of the lid area, which poses a challenge to the team when incorporating community wants and needs for the space.

The reservoir has connections to the West Seattle greenbelt and the Duwamish River. It also has impressive views throughout the space. The neighborhood wraps around the north and south of the site and meets a dense forest. There is no vegetation management plan for this habitat/ecosystem. All of the concepts include a large wetland area, a dog park and a trail system. Parking is off of Cloverdale and it can become crowded due to the activity in the dog park.

The lid design has to match the standards set by Seattle Public Utilities. This includes a very limited soil profile and a 50 foot setback for a maintenance boundary where structures and trees are not allowed. There is housing adjacent to the park, but it is blocked by fencing and topography.

The team presented three concept designs that share the following common goals: making the park accessible, safe and whole; creating walking opportunities; capitalizing on views; providing multi-generational gathering spaces; integrating art; providing adequate parking; and improving the drainage.

The first concept included community gardens, views, and additional bathrooms. This concept provided relief points for dogs to access the dog park and reserved the majority of the lid for open space with pathways and promenades. There is also an additional loop around the forest and rain gardens brought into the parking area to provide drainage improvements

The second concept expanded the existing parking lot to the north diverting the access off of Cloverdale. The team proposed breaking up the lid to create small rooms and moving the community garden to Cloverdale. This concept opened up the bottom valley in order to include more features such as an amphitheatre.

The last concept incorporated parking throughout the reservoir space giving access to



Site Plans

multiple programmed spaces. It capitalized on the viewpoints and moved the community garden down to the southern end so that it might aid in activating this space.

The team plans to move forward on the preferred concept with another public meeting and selection of an artist.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

What is the art piece made out of?

Stone and wood.

How big is the dog park?

8 acres that is fenced and well used.

I appreciate the holistic thinking. What are your parameters and scope of work?

It is really the lid, but we need to make sure that are still connecting with the context. We have a budget, so we have to work within that constraint.

Do all your concepts meet your budget?

We have analyzed concept 1 and we were under budget. We are still reviewing the rest.

Can you talk about the relationship between the two play areas?

The play area to the south was built in 2003. The neighborhood residents suggested that it is used but not well used and the negative activity in the forest discourages people from using the playground. Once we develop the north end that will probably be where people want to be, which will be a challenge for the south end of the park. We want to provide more age ranges for play in that area.

Has there been any consideration that the dog area would expand into the south panhandle?

This came up initially and the city wants to preserve the forest area as it is one of the best in the city. We want to keep this ecosystem.

Also, this play area was created with the last parks levy and we don't want to undo what we just did what that funding.

Would the community garden do the same thing?

Yes, but would not undo the irrigation that is there.

There was a concern about mixing the off leash dogs with the kids' area. What can be done there?

Fencing the forest path is what is currently in place at the moment.

Is there transit access to this park?

On 9th Ave. there is transit access one block from the site

In the third scheme the lid is very different in plan. What happens in the cross of where the nexus points come together?

It is a good point to start to design something and break up the lid to create something distinct.

You mentioned the 50 foot setback from the lid, how are you manifesting this?

We are required to mark it on the ground and need to tell people that they are coming onto the lid, it needs to be clearly defined. It could be a path, the foundation, or vegetation. We need to figure out what shape it could take. It is a mark of maintenance.

I'm assuming that the 50 foot setback does not have to be literally straight, but could meander or something between a range that is bigger than 50 feet?

Yes, that is correct



Site Plan

Is there a goal in mind for parking? Do you have a requirement?

As a general rule, the Parks Department doesn't emphasize parking in parks. I think that given the nature of this neighborhood and the lack of infrastructure for pedestrians, we want to make sure that the parking is limited.

Would you be able to park along the road that might go through the park?

Yes, there is potential for that to take shape. We need to look to see where the budget falls.

Maybe the area of the 50 feet could be an area where the artist could start to help with the conceptualization of it as a design.

I think the reality of all the problems on the north side of the site will act as a vacuum for the south side of the site. I really favor concept number 3 as it brings vehicular circulation inside the park and gives the community garden its own distinct place. I think that this is a good scheme even given the budget restraints.

I think that the forest area is a real treasure and favor preserving this as it acts as a strong connection to the greenbelt.

I would suggest exploring pervious pavement and also suggest that the parking not be split into pieces so that people are not pulling in, finding no spots and having to pull out again, causing frustration.

I am concerned about the edge that SPU is considering as it doesn't show up in any of the concepts. You might want to take this step first and see how this can be blended into the concepts. I think that concept number 3 provides connections, visibility and many features in the park.

I think that it would be an incredible missed opportunity if this park was not thought of as a holistic plan. It would be great if this idea could be created in phases, maybe starting with the existing lid area as one phase and working through the space in this manner. I would think that the smart thing for the city and Parks to do is to look to the future and think holistically about the experience in this park.

Think about future expansion of the dog park and how it can connect to the parking lots. I would also like to see a concept with the lid more apparent and recognized.

I look forward to the next time you come to get a feel of what the experience might feel like. It would be nice to have a section through the park.

Is there anything else that you are doing with the wetland? It feels very contained.

I think that we are recognizing it as a piece of habitat that adds to the park. We talked about maybe putting a boardwalk through it. We are not intending to really go into it, but maybe around it.

There is also a question about what types of sustainable strategies are going to be incorporated?

We are not at that level of detail at the moment.