

Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement

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Ross Tilghman, Chair

John Savo, Vice Chair

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

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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

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) has acquired several properties near the lower portions of Taylor Creek, between Lakeridge Park and Lake Washington. The purpose of the project is to restore creek habitat and to reduce soil erosion within portions of the Taylor Creek watershed near Lake Washington. The project proposal includes providing a sediment retention facility, accessible nature area, and corridor safety improvements along Rainier Ave S as well as replacing the existing culvert located beneath Rainier Ave S. SPU is partnering with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) to address corridor improvements and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) for the long-term ownership and maintenance of the nature area.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement Project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design for the project. After the presentation, questions, and deliberation, the SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the concept design for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement Project with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

September 21, 2017

9:00 – 10:30 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

None

Presenters**Jason Sharpley**

SPU

Danielle Devier

Natural Systems Design

Attendees**David Graves**

SPR

Diana Hasegan

Osborn Consulting, Inc.

Jason Huff

OAC

Katie McVicker

SPU

Tarelle Osborn

Osborn Consulting, Inc.

Summary of Presentation

Jason Sharpley, of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and Danielle Devier, of Natural Systems Design, presented the concept design for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project. The project is located near Lake Washington in southeast Seattle. Several major storm events have caused major sediment issues, which have negatively affected the creek habitat and surrounding private property. Project goals include creek habitat restoration, improved fish passage, and reduction of soil erosion near Lake Washington. The design proposal includes a sediment retention facility, culvert replacement beneath Rainier Ave S, corridor safety improvements along Rainier Ave S, and an accessible nature area between Rainier Ave S and Lake Washington. SPU is partnering with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to address corridor safety improvements and for the long-term ownerships and maintenance of the natural area.

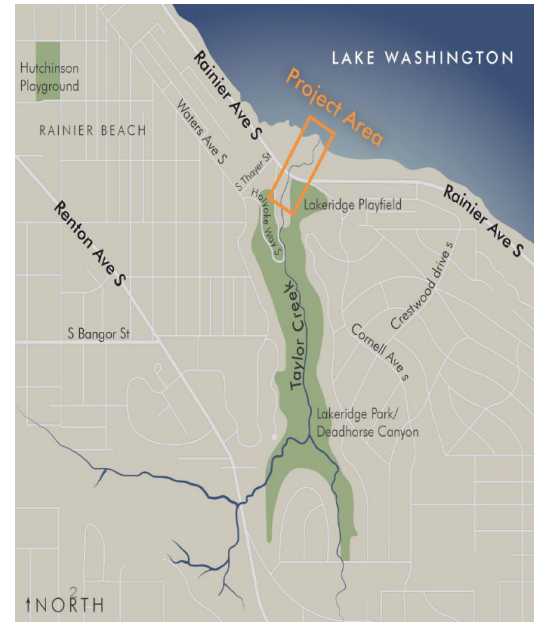


Figure 1: Project location

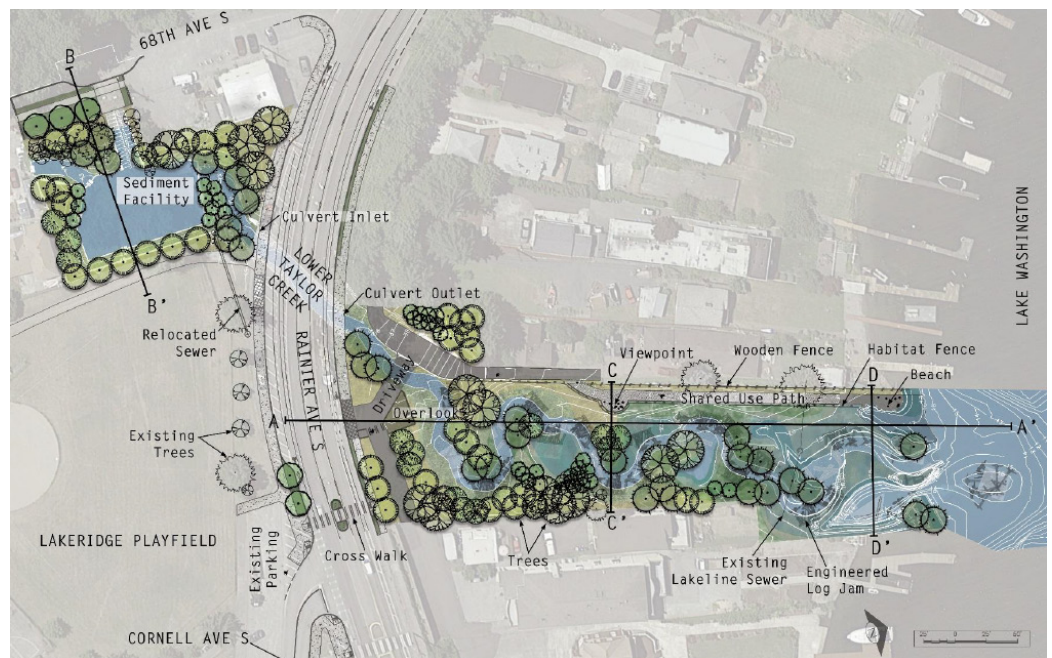


Figure 2: Natural area design concept

The Sediment retention facility will be located between Rainier Ave S, 68th Ave S, and Lakeridge Park. Taylor Creek will flow into the open-air facility prior to flowing into Lake Washington. The facility will include water pools that will capture large rocks and other sediment, while smaller sediment will be able to pass through. The facility will be surrounded by native vegetation as well as an access road, which will be used for long term maintenance. From the proposed facility, water and small sediment will then pass through a culvert beneath Rainier Ave S. The proposed culvert will include natural stream elements, and will allow for fish to pass through. Water passing through the culvert will then wind through natural area and delta before draining into Lake Washington.

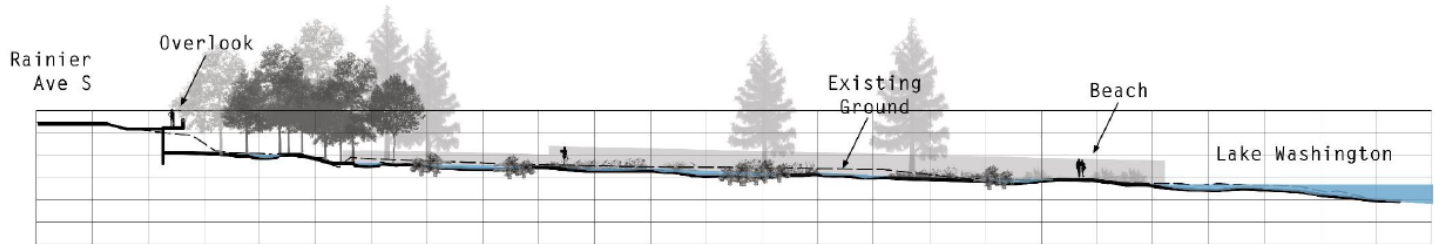


Figure 3: Natural area section looking west

The proposed nature area will reverse conditions caused by large sediment deposits in Taylor Creek, creating a new flood plain that will restore forest, wetland, and aquatic habitats. The nature area will be accessible to the public and will include shared use pathway, viewpoints, and beach area on lake Washington.

Agency Comments

David Graves, of SPR, commented that there has been great collaboration between city agencies. Mr. Graves stated that SPR has been engaged throughout the process and that he looks forward to continuing work on the project.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Public access, wayfinding, and project integration
- Vehicular circulation and safety
- Placemaking
- Art

Public access, wayfinding, and project integration

While the SDC commended the project team for designing a restoration project that includes public access, commissioners are very concerned that the pathway is not designed for universal accessibility. The commission strongly recommended the project team provide a pathway that is accessible for everyone. The SDC then encouraged the project team to prioritize ecological design and habitat restoration over pedestrian movement and strongly discouraged the use of ramping to provide universal accessibility as it would greatly impact the ecological design of the nature area. Instead, several commissioners encouraged the design team to, if possible, provide a universally accessible shared use pathway to the beach for pedestrians and maintenance vehicles along the northern edge of the nature area. Commissioners recommended the shared use pathway could include a turnaround area that, when not in use by maintenance vehicles, could also serve as drop off for disabled vehicles. Several Commissioners recommended the project team explore the feasibility of purchasing additional land north of the nature area to accommodate an accessible pathway.

The SDC then recommended the design team to integrate this portion of Rainier Ave S into the project design. Specifically, commissioners encouraged the project team to design a bridge that is perceived as crossing over a natural ecosystem rather than serving as a barrier. Several commissioners then mentioned the proposed bridge design should allow natural light to filter through to the creek below. The commission also recommended the design of the adjacent sidewalk should visually express elements of the natural system.

Vehicular circulation and safety

The SDC expressed their disappointment that a team member from SDOT was not at the meeting in order to address questions regarding the critical pedestrian flow and road design aspects that must be successfully integrated with the stormwater and public access components of this project. Commissioners highly encouraged a team member from SDOT be present at all future meetings. The commission then expressed their concern with the proposed design of the pedestrian environment along the southwestern edge of Rainier Ave S. Commissioners highly recommended the project team better integrate this area with the surrounding pedestrian network through the use of plantings, pavement material, and adequate site lines. The SDC is also concerned with safety as pedestrians cross this section of Rainier Ave S. Commissioners recommended the project team consider eliminating the center median to further reduce the width of the road.

The Commission then encouraged the design team to provide wayfinding measures, additional to providing signage, so pedestrians know they can access the shared use pathway.

Placemaking

The SDC acknowledged the importance of providing educational opportunities throughout the project site. The commission recommended the project team include programming, such as educational and interpretation opportunities, near the bridge, viewpoint, and beach to create spaces that will encourage users to explore the site. Commissioners then recommended the design team consider long term maintenance when selecting plant and landscape materials.

Art

The SDC strongly encouraged the use of art throughout the project.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the concept design presentation of the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement Project. The Commission appreciated the project's goal of ecological restoration as well as continued collaboration between city agencies. The SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the concept design phase for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement Project with the following condition:

1. Coordinate with SDOT to address the following issues:
 - Bridge design and fish passage
 - Traffic calming along Rainier Ave S
 - Quality of the pedestrian experience

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Provide wayfinding that addresses public access routes, specifically west of Rainier Ave S
2. Consider providing alternative design concepts that address the feasibility of providing an accessible drop off point closer to the lake without negatively affecting the ecological benefit of the project.
3. Consider providing educational and interpretive elements along the pathway
4. Clarify the design intent of where viewpoints will be located along the pathway and understand how tree placement will affect the overall view
5. Explore the feasibility of purchasing additional land north of the nature area to accommodate an accessible pathway.