

# Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement

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Mayor

**Samuel Asefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Ben de Rubertis**, Chair

**Brianna Holan**, Vice Chair

**Justin Clark**

**Rikerrious Geter**

**Laura Haddad**

**Mark Johnson**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Amalia Leighton**

**Vinita Sidhu**

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## Commissioners Present

Ben de Rubertis, Chair  
Brianna Holan, Vice Chair  
Justin Clark  
Rikerrious Geter  
Laura Haddad (excused at Noon)  
Mark Johnson  
Rick Krochalis  
Amalia Leighton  
Vinita Sidhu  
Elaine Wine

## Commissioners Excused

## Project Description

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is undertaking a creek habitat restoration project within portions of the Taylor Creek watershed between Lakeridge Park and Lake Washington in S.E. Seattle, near the Renton/Seattle border. 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 that links Lake Ridge park to Lake Washington. 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) second review of the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase for the project. After the presentation and discussion the SDC voted, 10-0, to approve the schematic design with several recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

None

**August 1, 2019**

2:30 - 4:00 pm

**Type**

CIP

**Phase**

Schematic Design

**Previous Reviews**[9/21/17](#)**Presenters**Jason Sharpley  
SPUDanielle Devier  
NDS**Attendees**Jason Huff  
OACRick Johnson  
SPUTarelle Osborn  
Osborn ConsultingDavid Vijarro  
SDOTKatie Wilson  
SPU**Summary of Presentation**

Danielle Devier, of Natural Systems Design, and Jason Sharpley, of SPU, presented the schematic design for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project. The presentation began with background information, historical and site context, and project goals. The project will serve primarily as a habitat restoration for salmon and the natural environment, which includes a series of forests, sloughs, and wetlands, but will also provide a placemaking element that will provide visual and physical access to the restoration areas along Lake Washington.

The updated design proposal addressed opportunities for habitat restoration and salmon spawning and rearing through the use of engineered log jams as well as tall tree canopy and lower lying vegetation. The design also includes urban placemaking elements such as pathways, overlooks, bridge, and beach access. Three overlooks are located throughout the site and are meant to serve as opportunities to view different habitats along the creek, while an additional gathering space will be located on the south side of Rainier Ave S and is meant to facilitate movement between areas north and south of Rainier Ave S.

The updated proposal has relocated the main access point between the downstream overlook and the creekside overlook and beach to the eastside of the downstream overlook. The main access pathway will include a bridge crossing over the creek prior to running along the western edge of the project site. The updated design also integrates art into the site, to include cultural and environmental patterns on the retaining wall below the downstream overlook as well as two sculptural elements that will serve as a gateway. Additional location for art have been identified throughout the project site. See *figures 1 and 2 for more detail*

**Agency Comments**  
**None****Public Comments**  
**None****Summary of Discussion**

The Commission organized its discussion of the pedestrian land bridge around the following issues:

- Circulation, accessibility, and equity
- Art integration and interpretation
- Landscape

*Circulation, accessibility, and equity*

The SDC remains concerned with pedestrian crossing of Rainier Ave S between Lake Ridge Park and the new habitat restoration area. Although the Commission thought the proposed gathering space on the south side of Rainier Ave S would help lead pedestrians to the crosswalk, they are still concerned with the safety of pedestrians crossing the street given the curvature of the roadway and vehicular speed and strongly encouraged the project team to work with SDOT to create as safe of an environment as possible. Commissioners then discussed the proposed design of Rainier Ave S. Several commissioners are concerned with the length of vehicle turn lanes as well as the lack of drop off locations on the north side of the street. The Commission recommended the project team provide more information about the design and allocation of movements on Rainier Ave S as it relates to vehicular turning movements, length of turning lanes, and possibility to add drop off areas to increase safety.



Figure 1: Updated design proposal

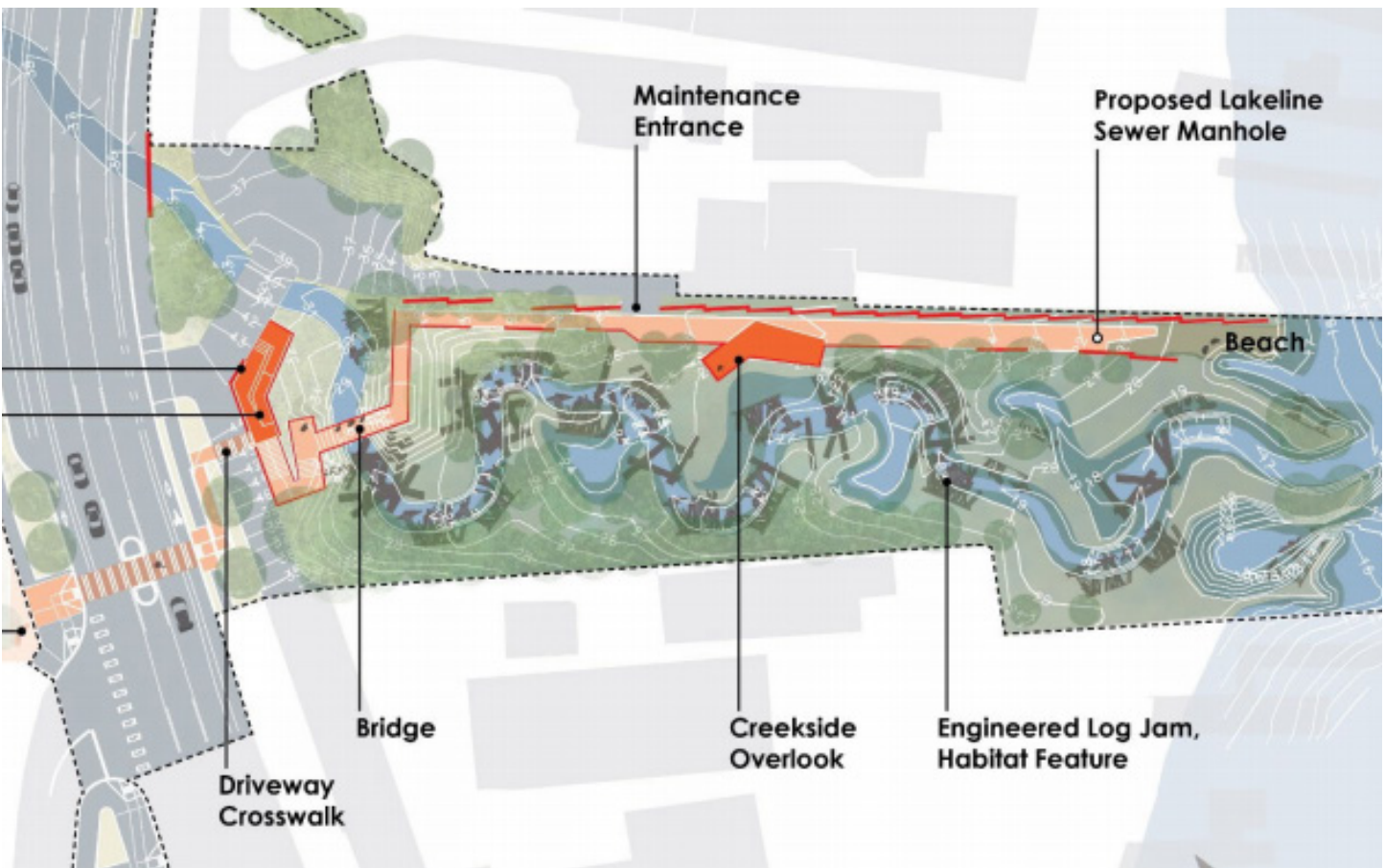


Figure 2: Updated design proposal - North of Rainier Ave

The SDC then discussed circulation within the project site. Commissioners discussed circulation issues that also addressed issues around accessibility and equity. The Commission is concerned with the limited access to the northern portion of the site. Commissioners strongly encouraged the project team to reconsider providing an accessible parking space or ADA drop off point adjacent to the pathway along the northwestern edge of the site, so to not limit accessibility throughout the project site as well as limiting access for education programs such as viewing salmon habitat. The Commission then recommended the project team accommodate education programs in a way that is accessible to all.

The Commission appreciated the location of viewpoints throughout the site but recommended the project team reconsider the size and shape of each viewpoint. Specifically, commissioners recommended increasing the size of the ADA accessible viewpoints to better accommodate large groups for educational programs, while other viewpoints along the watershed could be resized to accommodate smaller groups, if it is not possible to provide ADA access to them. The SDC strongly recommended the project team provide cross sections through the site to better understand access and circulation.

The SDC then commended the design team for their thoughtfulness in considering the design with both the urban and environmental context. The commission recommended the project team continue to balance urban improvements with habitat restoration.

#### *Art integration and interpretation*

The SDC commended the project team's approach to providing art. Commissioners appreciated the artist's approach to overlaying cultural elements with nature. Commissioners encouraged the project team to consider both past and present ecological and cultural elements within the art. The Commission then expressed its concern with the limited detail provided on how the art will be interpreted and integrated within the site. Commissioners perceived there are many different ways to integrate the art and strongly encouraged the project team to focus on integrating art in a few meaningful ways, rather than attaching small pieces of art throughout the site. The SDC then recommended the project provide more detail on art integration and interpretive elements during the next meeting.

#### *Landscape*

SDC noted that the planting palette for the streetscape did not appear to be suited for streetscape conditions, both in terms of species and height for visibility/sight triangles. This would be one location in which native plants are not necessarily the best choice. Plantings proposed for restoration areas appear to be well considered and appropriate.

#### **Action**

The Commission thanked the project team for their presentation of the schematic design for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project. Overall, the Commission appreciated the continued development of the proposed design as well as the thought that went into balancing the design of the built and ecological environments. Commissioners also appreciated the level of detail provided in the presentation. The SDC voted, 10-0, to approve the schematic design phase for the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project with the following recommendations:

1. Provide more information about Rainier Ave S as it relates to vehicular turning movements, length of turning lanes, the possibility to add drop off areas, and other approaches to increase safety for pedestrians.
2. Provide more information on how to accommodate educational programs in a way that is accessible to all
3. Reconsider the size of each viewpoint. Consider increasing the size of viewpoint nearest to Rainier Ave S for larger groups, in particular for those using the site for educational programs.
4. Continue to balance site improvements with habitat restoration in a way that does not impact the restoration goals of this project.
5. Provide cross sections through the site to better illustrate grade changes for accessibility between viewing areas
6. Provide more detail on art integration and interpretive elements