

# Dr. Jose Rizal Park Redesign



**Seattle**  
Parks & Recreation

# Information

## **GOALS**

Seattle Parks and Recreation is holding a redesign competition for the Dr. Jose Rizal Park in order to partner with a diverse selection of design firms to revamp the green space.

## **CURRENT FEATURES**

Current park features include a covered picnic & events area, a comfort station (restrooms, currently closed and gendered), two park benches, a small play area, a bust of Dr. Jose Rizal, and a gated trail leading to an off-leash area.

## **AUTHORS**

Researched and designed by University of Washington students Crystal Chen, Martina Povolo, Ian Wyborski, and Hannah Whobrey.

**Dr. Jose Rizal Park**  
**1007 12th Ave S**  
**Seattle WA 98144**

# Table of Contents

---

1 Background

---

3-4 Park History

---

5 Who is Dr. Jose Rizal?

---

6 Demographics

---

7-8 Neighborhood Context

---

9-10 Site Context

---

11-12 Workspace



# History

TIME IMMEMORIAL

Prior to settler hill regrades, landscape is vastly different. Evidence suggests Jose Rizal Park area was a viewpoint hill within a tidal flat. Site was regularly surrounded by over a foot of saltwater.



Public works projects occur throughout Seattle to reduce grades.

1910s

1912: Cut between Beacon and First Hills completed. As a result, Beacon Hill is unstable.

1917: Site considered dangerous slide area; condemned for engineering (retaining walls, drains, terracing) by City of Seattle.

- Partially condemned for "park and public use" (engineering originally took precedence)

1919: "Golf Heights Addition" platted out of modern park site

1920s



1922: Park given original name, Wittler Park, after E. F. Wittler, who donated the land.

1928: 12 acres of the parcel donated by City Council for Marine Hospital, shown left (after 1949, Public Health Service Hospital).

1960s

1960: Friends of Rizal established.

1967: Site further separated by I-5/I-90 interchange.

- Creates park's meadow
- Financial compensation from state to City intended for landscaping (as per original engineering designation)



# History

1971: Remaining undeveloped land acquired by Parks Department.

- "Park purpose" from 1917 determined to prevail over engineering
- Viewpoint created via tree thinning
- Parking area constructed along 12th Ave S

1973: Filipino Alumni Association petitions City for a feature named to honor Filipino community.

1974: City agrees to rename park to "Jose Rizal (Dr.) Park" on June 19.

- Park is designed and developed from an essentially abandoned plot. Funding raised by Filipino community.

1970s



1980: Comfort Station completed.

- Contains men's and women's restrooms, mechanical room
- Not ADA compliant
- Construction by Sound General. Architect is Elaine Day LaTourelle, of Elaine Day LaTourelle and Associates firm.

1981: Park is formally dedicated to Jose Rizal on June 7.

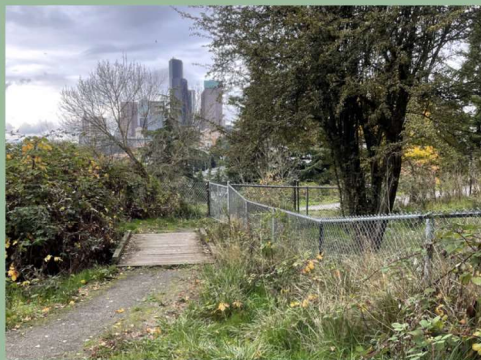
1980s

2017-18: SPR completes assessment of current park conditions.

Found that features are dated, in need of repair, and showing obvious weathering. Some required updates to conform with current standards (eg. ADA). Access is generally poor.



2000s



PRESENT DAY

# Who is Dr. Jose Rizal?



- 1861 - 1896
- Born in Calamba in the Philippines' Laguna Province
- Best known for inspiring the Philippines to seek independence from Spain

1887: Rizal writes his first novel, *Noli me tangere* ("The Social Cancer"), an exposé on Spanish rule in the Philippines

1896: A Filipino nationalist secret society, the Katipunan, revolts against Spain. Rizal is not involved, but the military arrests him. He is convicted of sedition.

1892: Rizal returns to the Philippines. Forms the Liga Filipina, a nonviolent reformist group in Manila.

1898: Following revolution, Spanish control of the Philippines ends.

1891: Rizal becomes the leader of the Propaganda Movement, and an active contributor to the newspaper *La Solidaridad*.

1892-1896: Rizal is exiled to Dapitan in northwest Mindanao, although his remarks have been nonviolent.

1896: Dr. Jose Rizal is publicly executed by firing squad on December 30. His death generates momentum toward independence against Spanish rule.



# Demographics

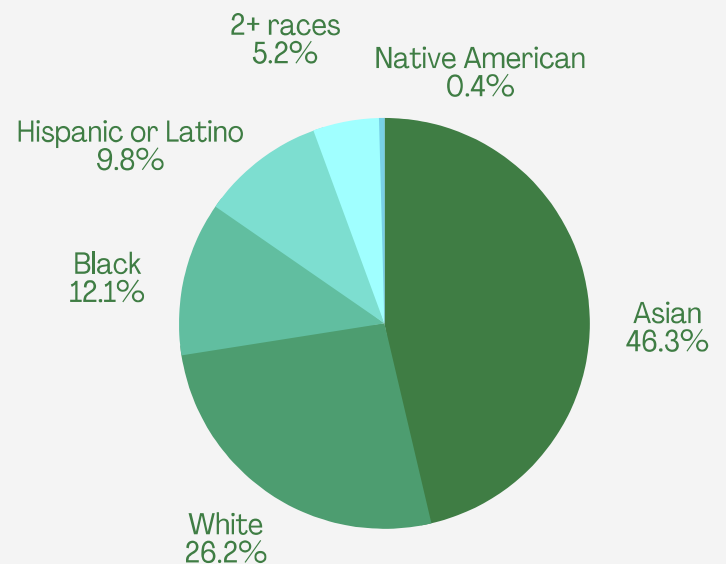
Dr. Jose Rizal Park lies at the intersection of two vibrant Seattle neighborhoods: Beacon Hill and the International District.

## Beacon Hill Demographics

Languages commonly spoken:

- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- Mandarin
- Chinese

23 total languages spoken

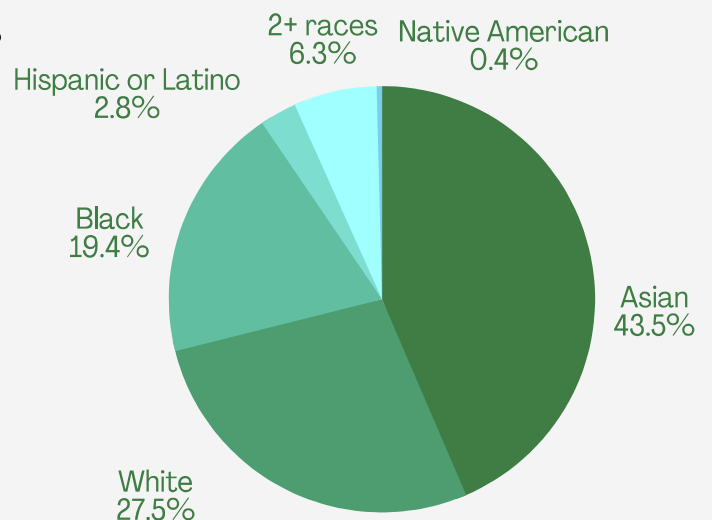


## International District Demographics

Languages commonly spoken:

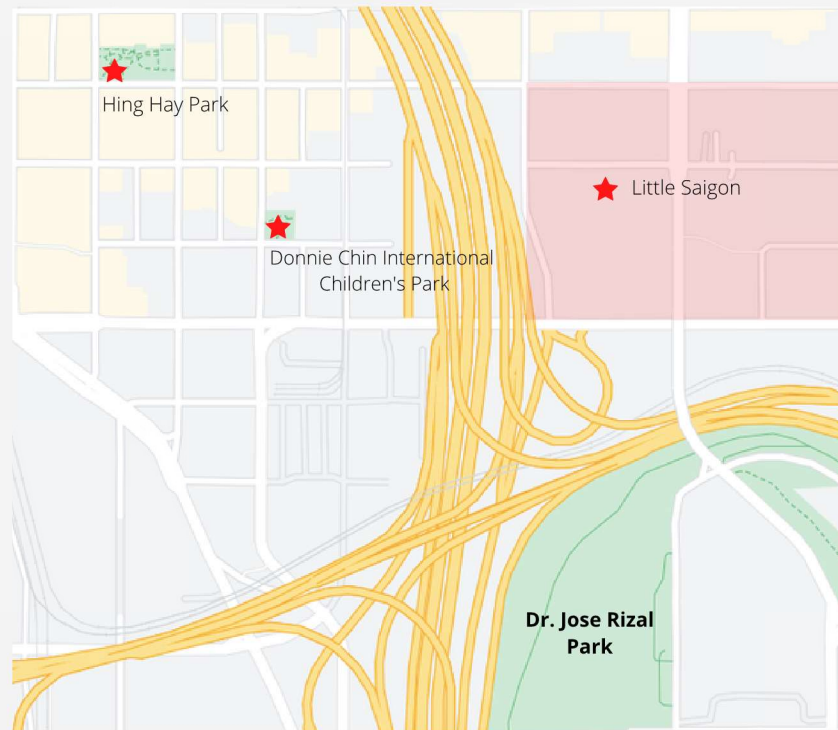
- Mandarin
- Cantonese
- Vietnamese

17 total languages spoken



# Neighborhoods

Dr. Jose Rizal Park is adjacent to the International District, a commercial and cultural hub for the city's Asian American community. Given its proximity to the site, the myriad happenings and community development in International District can extend to the park.



**Hing Hay Park** is a case study of a park that reflects the community it serves. Park goers have expressed satisfaction with the flexible design, culturally relevant aesthetics, and attraction of diverse users. Hing Hay Park integrates both traditional Chinese and urban aesthetics to create a space where people can exercise, meditate, or enjoy take out from the various restaurants nearby.

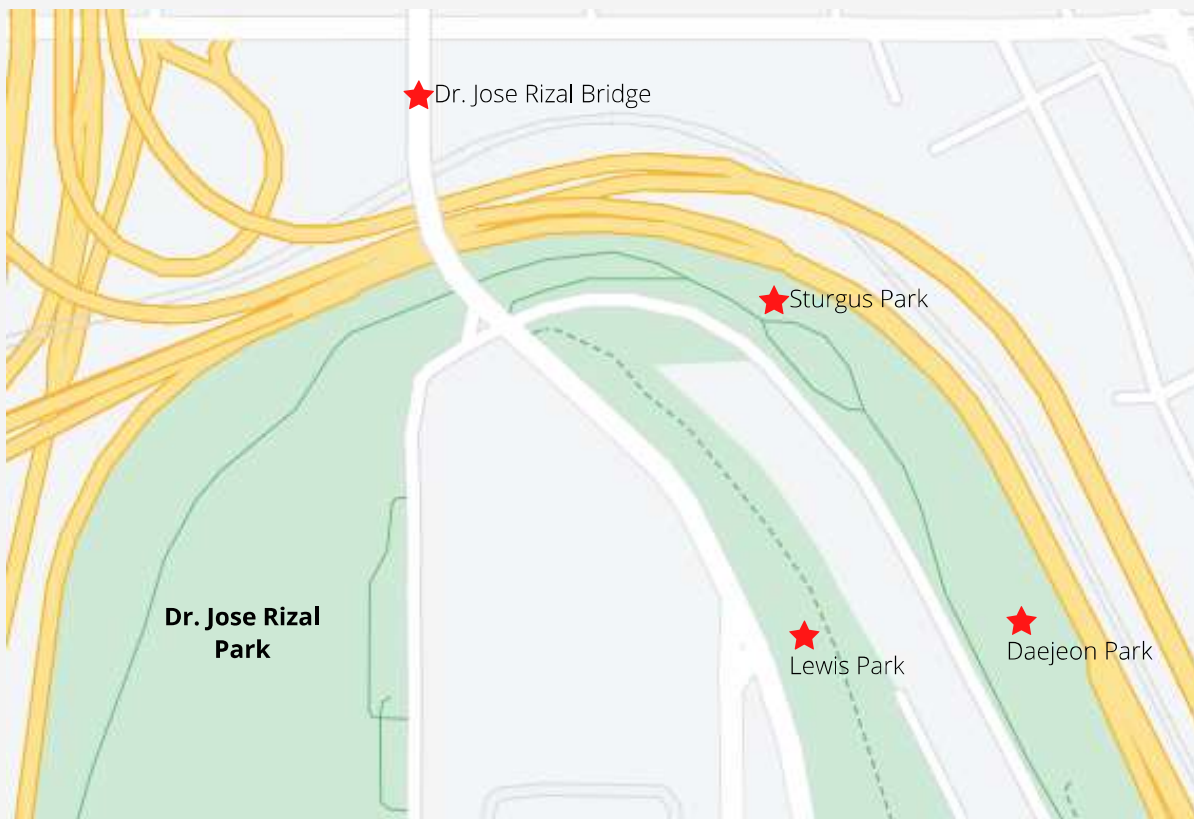
**Donnie Chin International Children's Park** is a case study of a park that commemorates its namesake and his legacy. Donnie Chin was an Asian American activist who pioneered the practice of community-based public safety management. His legacy has been especially important in navigating policing in the wake of the George Floyd protests and increase in anti-Asian hate incidents.

**Little Saigon** is undergoing several development projects to strengthen its economic and social potential. The goals of these projects is to create economic prosperity, improve public safety, and foster neighborhood identity. Some of these projects include the King Street Project, M12 Apartments, and Little Saigon Park Project.



# Neighborhoods

Dr. Jose Rizal Park is located near other urban green spaces in North Beacon Hill. It has the potential to attract foot traffic from both North Beacon Hill and International District. In addition, Dr. Jose Rizal Park could serve as an effective transition point from commercial International District to residential North Beacon Hill.

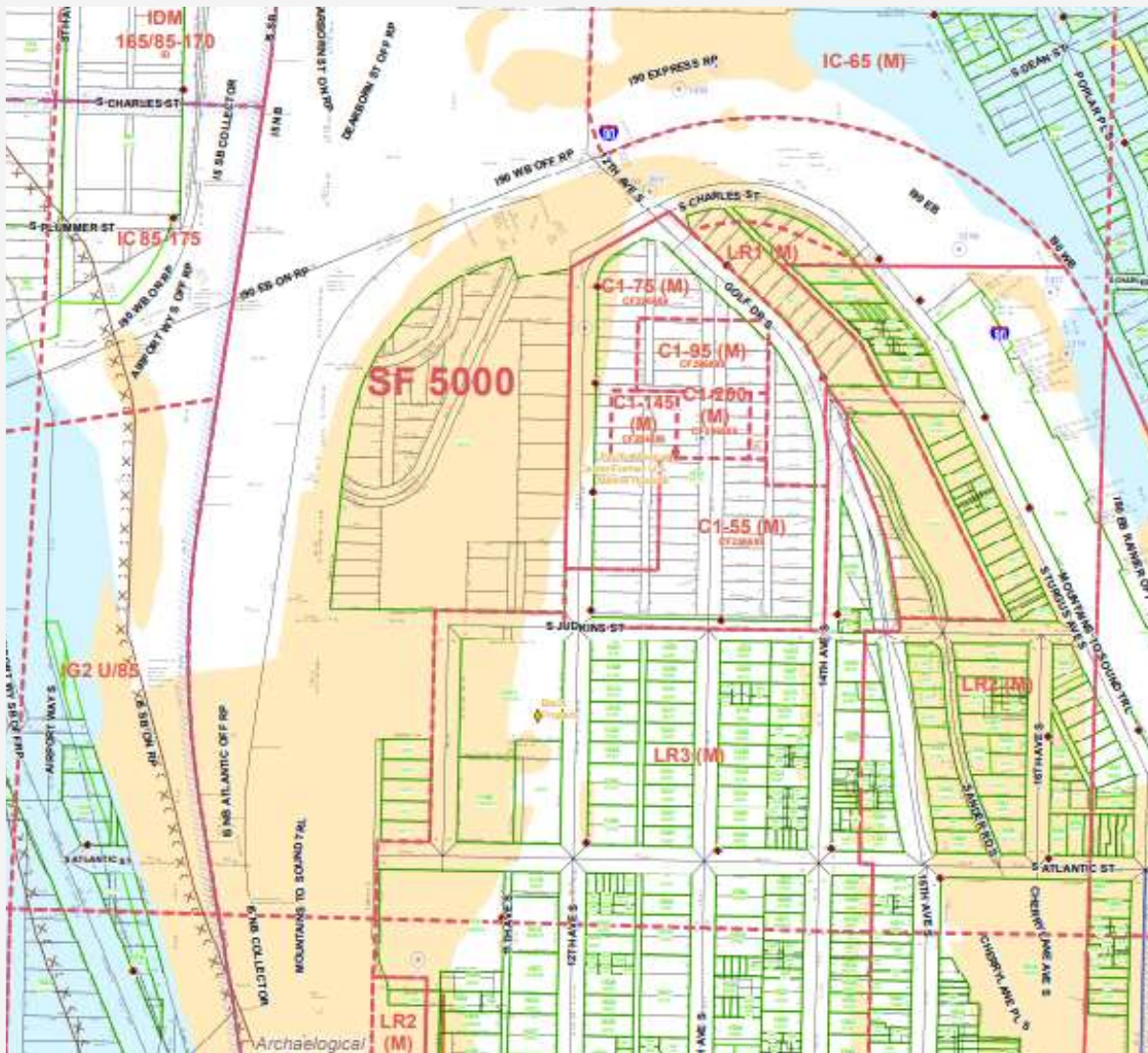


**Dr. Jose Rizal Bridge** directly leads visitors to the park, connecting Little Saigon and the rest of International District to the North Beacon Hill neighborhood. The steel bridge was built in 1911, and has undergone many upgrades in order to accommodate traffic. Recently, the City reduced travel lanes from four to two and designated bike lanes as a part of the 12th Ave Vision Zero project.

Adjacent green spaces include **Lewis Park**, **Sturgus Park**, and **Daejeon Park**. Daejeon Park features a Korean-style pagoda in honor of Seattle's sister city in Korea. Both Sturgus Park and Lewis Park are primarily natural spaces on hillsides that offer panoramic views of the city.

# Site Context

The site is a total of four acres. Existing features include a picnic pavilion and off-leash area. However, initial plans for the park included formal gardens, an outdoor theater, a community center, museum, library, recreation space, and play fields. These were abandoned due to the instability of the site, although the surrounding community still enthusiastically supports any potential workarounds. The park is noted for its excellent views of downtown Seattle. The areas around the park are mostly zoned as commercial and multi-family.





# Site Context

City-wide regrades, including the Dearborn cut, during the twentieth century have contributed to the steep hill gradients upon which the park is built. The Eastern and Southern slopes are designated by the City as greenbelts.



Jose Rizal Park, like many other Seattle parks, is home to a plethora of native flora. Here one can find indigenous snow berries, Oregon grape, western red cedar, vine maples, and Douglas firs. Unfortunately, there is also an extensive presence of invasive blackberry and English ivy plants, which outcompete local plants and contribute to poor ecosystem health.







# Workspace

