

West Seattle Junction Park

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Director, OPCD

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Ben de Rubertis Vice Chair

Justin Clark

Evan Fowler

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Laura Haddad

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Commissioners Present

John Savo, Chair (Excused at 2:30)
Ben de Rubertis, Vice Chair
Justin Clark
Evan Fowler
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis

Commissioners Excused

Rachel Gleeson
Brianna Holan
Ross Tilghman

Project Description

The project is one of 14 landbanked sites acquired by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to provide additional open space in urban neighborhoods throughout the city. The .4 acre site, which was purchased by SPR in 2012, is located at the mid-block of 40th Ave SW between SW Edmunds St. and SW Alaska St in the West Seattle Junction Neighborhood. The proposed design includes several play elements, gathering spaces, natural planting areas, seating, lighting, universally accessible pathways. The design includes ROW enhancements along 40th Ave SW that includes unique paving patterns, seating, street trees, and a pet relief zone along the sidewalk and street edge.

Meeting Summary

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the West Seattle Junction Park. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase for the project. At this meeting, the SDC voted, 3-3, to approve the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park. As there was not a majority vote, the result is that the project cannot proceed to schematic design until the applicant addresses the concerns of the commission that resulted in the vote. The SDC will review the concept design phase of the West Seattle Junction Park again at a future date.

Recusals and Disclosures

Laura Haddad disclosed that she has worked with the project consultants on previous projects and that an employee at her firm is also employed by the project consultant.

May 3, 2018

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

None

Presenters

Marieke Lacasse

GGLO

Tim Slazinik

GGLO

Attendees

Karimah Edwards

SPR

Kelly Goold

SPR

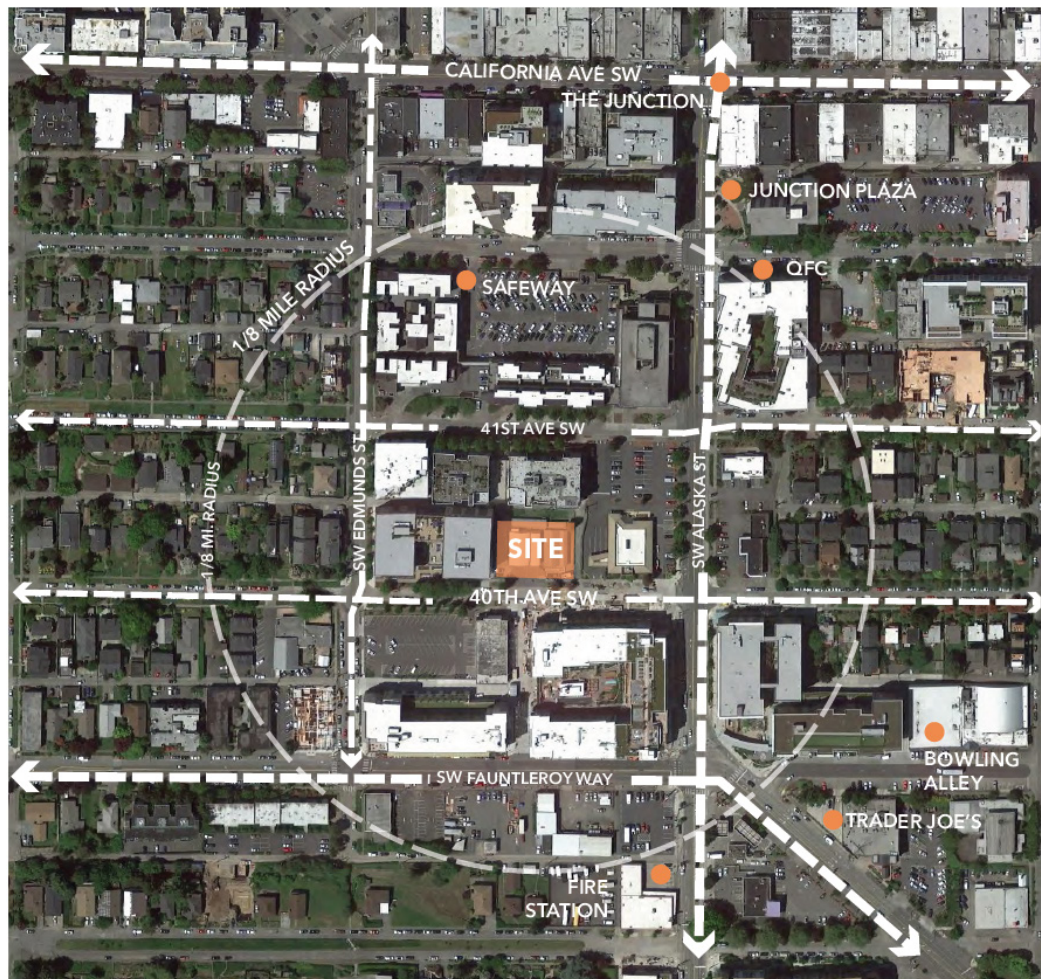


Figure 1: Project site location

Summary of Presentation

Marieke Lacasse and Tim Slazinik of GGLO presented the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park. The presentation team provided an overview of the site context, project schedule, and community outreach efforts (See figure 1). The first public meeting was held in September 2017. The meeting focused on identifying preferred programming elements, which included native planting elements, natural play elements, sustainable streetscape design, space for seasonal programming, and flexible seating. The results from the first public meeting were used to create three design concepts. Each design concept included features that addressed passive recreation opportunities, natural play element, native plantings, and seating (See figure 2).

The second public meeting was held in February 2018. At this meeting, community members voted on their preferred concept design. Community members were also able to vote on which design option they preferred for specific program elements such as planting, seating, and play areas. The results from the second public meeting were used to create the preferred design alternative, which incorporated program and design elements from all three design concepts. The preferred alternative included native planting areas, natural play area, climbing wall, café and bench seating, as well as a central area that included a lawn, boardwalk, native planting area, and gateway feature. (See figure 3).



Figure 2: Proposed design concepts



Figure 3: Preferred design alternative

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Connection and access
- Details, materials, and sustainability
- Programming and equality

Connection and access

The SDC agreed with the presenter’s analysis that there are unique conditions along each edge of the project site. Commissioners are concerned that fundamental design elements related to safety and maintenance

have not been adequately addressed in regard to the park edges that abut the alley. Commissioners strongly recommended the project team address how those two edges will be treated, in part to address potential safety concerns with pedestrian/auto conflicts. Several commissioners also complemented the project team for providing buffer planting on the southern, western, and northern edge of the park and suggested adding a low fence along the perimeter of the park edges adjacent to the alley to address safety concerns. The Commission also recommended re-aligning the southern pathway and gateway features along 40th Ave SW with the proposed midblock crosswalk existing midblock pedestrian pathway that connects across 40th Ave SW to the development to the east. Commissioners then advocated for SDOT to provide the mid-block crosswalk.

Details, materials and Sustainability

The SDC is concerned with the complexity of the design concept as well as the ways which the concept is being implemented. Commissioners commented that the number of proposed materials and programming might overwhelm park users. The SDC recommended the project team simplify the overall design concept, specifically near the central lawn and planting areas. Although they agreed with the choice of materials, commissioners are concerned the variety of materials will result in a design that is not well integrated. To simplify and clarify the concept, the Commission recommended simplifying the planting and hardscape material palettes and overall design to find the central concept or “spirit” of the park. Several commissioners also encouraged the design team to use the curvilinear lines to organize seating around the park.

Program and equity

The SDC commended the project team for their ongoing community outreach efforts. Commissioners stated that this process has broadened the way outreach should be conducted for future SPR projects. The Commission then recommended the project team include identified programming elements that will meet the community's needs without over programming the site. Commissioners then agreed with the location of each programmed element, specifically the play areas, but strongly recommended the design team continue to refine the proposed design for the central lawn and planting area. Commissioners were also concerned with the limited amount and placement of park seating and encouraged the project team to provide an adequate amount of seating throughout the park.

The SDC also commended the project team for the inclusion and location of café seating and a pet relief station. Commissioners then encouraged the project team to better integrate the cafe seating with the southern edge of the park.

SDC staff then reminded the project team that this project is being reviewed later in the design and development process than our handbook directs. Staff then stressed that projects should start the SDC review process much earlier in the design phase, which will allow for better integration of recommendations into the overall concept.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for its presentation of the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park. Overall, the Commission appreciated the significant community outreach efforts, overall location of program elements, and location of the pet relief area. The SDC voted, 3-3, to approve the concept design. Since there was not a majority vote, the project should not proceed to schematic design. The SDC provided the following recommendations for the project team to address, related to the overall concerns about the concept, prior to the next meeting:

1. Address the design of the two park edges along the adjacent Alley
2. Consider re-aligning the southern pathway and gateway features along 40th Ave SW with the midblock pedestrian pathway that crosses 40th Ave SW.
3. Consider simplifying the overall design concept through refining and reducing the plant and hardscape materials palette

The following are statements from commissioners who voted against the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park:

Evan Fowler – The proposed design is too complex and should be simplified.

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Ben de Rubertis – Although the proposed recommendations are well stated and provide the design team with clear guidance, I am concerned that the stated recommendations made will require the design team to fundamentally change their design concept to be a new concept.

Rick Krochalis - I am very concerned with the safety aspects on the park edges fronting the alley. This should be addressed prior to the next review.