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CAYTON CORNER PARK DESIGN MEMO – DESIGN DEVELOPMENT REVISION

Date: March 2, 2018

To: Friends of Cayton Corner

From: J.A. Brennan Associates

PURPOSE:

This memo summarizes the project history, the existing conditions, interagency coordination, a description of the design, inspiration for art elements, and possible site furniture choices.

VISION:

This project proposes to build a new pocket park located at the SW corner of the intersection of 19th Ave and E Madison St. Located at the dynamic convergence of three distinct neighborhoods, Cayton Corner Park is a nexus of Seattle's Capitol Hill, Central District, and Madison Valley. The design will relate to neighboring community anchors such as the Hearing Speech & Deaf Center while reflecting the unique urban character of the Madison Miller Residential Urban Village. Park amenities will provide a safe and comfortable place for people of all ages and backgrounds to meet, gather, play, and relax in a neighborhood that is rapidly changing and developing.

An essential design goal for the park was to provide appropriate access and space for users who are hard of hearing and visually impaired. When fully constructed, this green oasis will highlight the site's views of the Cascade Mountains and Mount Rainier while making the most of a large maple tree that remains on the site.

PROJECT TRAJECTORY:

This property was acquired by Seattle Parks in 2011 through the Parks and Green Space Levy Fund. Originally a gas station, in 1962 it took on new life as the location of a milk store then fruit stand until 2004 when it became vacant.

The process to transform this space into a park began in 2012 with planning at Seattle Parks. Since 2013 it has continued with the Friends of Cayton Corner (formerly Friends of 19th & Madison) through 3 rounds of Neighborhood Matching Funds funding the design work that has happened. Input from the community, stakeholders, and the City has been collected at every stage of design through a range of avenues: 4 public meetings, 3 Parks Preview meetings, surveys, polls, and many meetings with the Friends of Cayton Corner Group and other stakeholders. While meetings and open houses brought 20-50 people to the site, online surveys peaked at 180 people and an online poll garnered 800 responses.

Schematic design was completed in 2013, Design Development was completed in 2015, and this current round of design is concluding in 2018. Originally this third round of work was intended to carry the design development into 90% construction documents, almost ready for construction. However, changes in circumstances on the project for a variety of reasons provided an opportunity for reevaluation of the design. Coming out of a series of

meetings in 2017 an updated program and budget have informed this design revision which, due to the extent of redesign, is considered to be at a Design Development level.

A phased approach to construction of the park has been determined to be the most feasible path. The project has been allocated into three phases:

- Phase 1: Grass & Grading
 - o Rough regrading of the site to accommodate future sidewalk improvements and provide a blank slate for construction of the park
 - o completed November 2017
- Phase 2: 19th Ave ROW Improvements
 - o In collaboration with SDOT
 - o Realign the sidewalk to protect the existing big leaf maple in the ROW and to create a safe walking surface
 - o Anticipated completion Spring 2018
- Phase 3: Park Construction
 - o Anticipated completion 2020

Concurrent with Cayton Corner's development, a RapidRide line is being designed along E Madison St and will determine the ROW improvements along Cayton Corner Park's northern edge. Phased construction associated with the RapidRide line is anticipated to begin in 2019 per the project website.

EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS INFORMATION:

The park is a 4,500 square foot vacant, triangular lot perched near the crest of a hill with chances to catch glimpses of Mount Rainier and the Cascades on clear days. It is part of the Madison Miller Residential Urban Village, is across the street from the Mount Zion Church, and is adjacent to the Hearing, Speech & Deaf Center (HSDC).

The evolving mural on an existing wall gives insight into the history of the site as well as goings-on in the community. The wall also currently helps deal with the substantial grade change from E Madison St down to 19th Ave. An existing 28" diameter big leaf maple in the 19th Ave ROW provides shade and is a significant contributor to the ambiance of the park. It has however significantly heaved the sidewalk.

DESIGN:

This updated design carves out a pocket of opportunity from the bustling neighborhood around it. The unprogrammed space in the park provides a blank canvas for visitors to use as they want, from open space for informal play, to a place for groups to gather, to a sunny space to read a book.

Entering the site from E Madison St a plaza with benches creates a space to view Mount Rainier or the Cascades on a clear day or to sit out of the flow of movement on the sidewalk. The bench positioned along the west side of the plaza will have a back for accessibility while the two other benches will be backless to preserve views and to provide as flexible arrangement as possible so that people can sit and face someone on the western bench or sit and face the view of Mount Rainer. A staircase brings people down into the main park area.

The main use area is the heart of the site physically and program-wise. It is simple in its arrangement to support a wide range of users and uses. The existing concrete wall along the west edge is painted in a dynamic mural representing the history of the Cayton family and their newspaper. An accessible picnic table and two benches tucked up against the wall provide seating for a flexible number of people in the quietest part of the site furthest from traffic. The flat, central lawn, created by introducing a low retaining wall on the eastern edge, offers an area where kids can stretch their legs or people can lay out a blanket. A second seating area near mid-block access from 19th Ave provides more seating with an accessible picnic table and ringed by seat walls.

From the northeast corner of the site closest to the intersection of E Madison St & 19th Ave a 6 foot wide, 5% sloped path provides an accessible route into the main use area. Within the center of the site the circulation route is flat to accommodate the lawn and plaza spaces. In the southern portion of the site the path is again a 5% slope to meet the existing sidewalk grade. Along the edge of the park with 19th Ave mid-block entrances connect pedestrians with the central park area. Planting softens the impact of the short retaining wall and adds color and texture.

This park will not only serve as an important gathering space for folks who want to stay in the park for a while but also for those who use the park as a faster way to get between 19th Ave and E Madison St. The path system has been designed to provide a variety of experiences to park visitors, but also for those who have a shortcut in mind too. Two narrower and steeper paths provide more direct routes through the site and also bring people through sensory plantings.

The HSDC and Lighthouse for the Blind have been collaborators throughout the process. It has always been a driving principle that the park serve as a comfortable and welcoming space for all. The major spine of movement through the site is designed to be well within the ADA accessibility guidelines. Along the perimeter of the site and where materials change, textured bands of concrete will be installed to provide an indication to those visually impaired of the transition or the branching path. The configuration of seating has been arranged to facilitate eye contact for those who are hearing impaired. For example, where possible benches and seat walls are arranged to create “L”, “C”, or “U” shapes. The picnic tables both have one seat removed for wheelchair access and also the seats are arranged so that people can easily sit across from each other.

Plants not only serve in an important functional role on the site by providing shade and buffering the park from the busy adjacent streets but they are also a chance to create a range of sensory experiences. The concept behind the planting design is to create year-round visual interest and to plant shrubs that also have different scents, sounds, and textures as well. This also ties back to our mission of universally enjoyable design by creating multi-sensory experiences.

By creating a simplified design framework, opportunities to make the park unique arise from the details and integrating art. The retaining and seat walls around the site are functional but they can be transformed to be creative and playful as well. The paving in the three seating areas could be a different material, could have an interesting pattern, or could be a different color. Railings could be designed to have different shapes of posts. There are spaces where an art installation could happen. These are only a start of where art and detailing can be integrated into the site. The opportunity for artists to collaborate on the project has also been discussed and will potentially happen depending on timing and funding. See later in the memo for ideas that have been collected so far.

Stakeholders including Lighthouse for the Blind indicated that lighting the park is important to them for many reasons. Lighting provides the feeling of safety for users but also is a crucial component for those who are visually impaired. What form the lighting takes has not been determined yet but see later in the memo for the range of ideas.

Discovering and celebrating the history of the site and neighborhood has been an inspiring and fundamental component of the process. A kiosk to convey this information to those using the site is anticipated.

ART INSPIRATION:

Many ideas have been discussed for how to bring artistic and playful elements into Cayton Corner. Documented below are some of the ideas that are further along but the list is by no means exhaustive.

Existing Mural:

This mural has already been painted on site by Urban Artworks and is a major visual component of the design. It is included here for reference.



Art Walls:

The concrete walls on site are the bones that shape the spaces but there are also opportunities to treat them creatively.



Accent Paving:

The paving in the plaza seating areas could be decorative to help differentiate space and to provide visual interest. Options range between stamped concrete, different jointing, pavers, and many other options.



SITE FURNITURE:

Choosing cohesive, sturdy site furniture will further shape the character of this park. Materials will be long-lasting and low-maintenance. Many site furniture companies have similar products but a sampling have been selected for reference below.

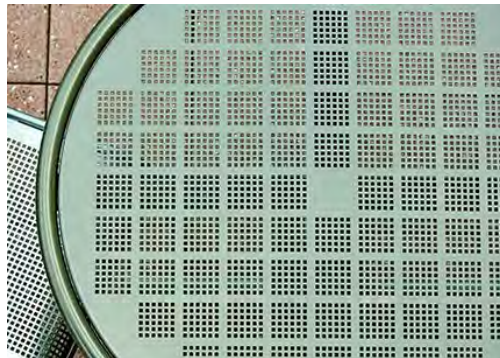
Benches:

The majority of benches will have backs for comfort and accessibility but two benches will not have backs to provide maximum flexibility and to not obstruct views. Both metal and wood options are still in play.



Tables:

The two picnic tables are configured for wheelchair access on one side. A game table would also be installed in one or both tables.



Bike Rack:

City of Seattle standard U-rack.

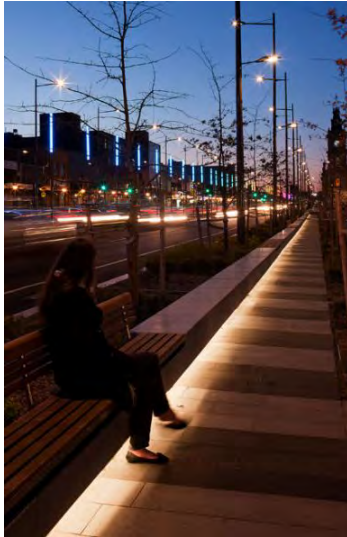


LIGHTING:

Lighting design is just beginning. The two primary ideas currently are depicted below.

Integrated Lighting:

With so many walls on site lighting could be integrated into them to cast a glow and create washes of light not just overhead lights. This creates a softer effect than just overhead lighting. However, all of the traditional lighting infrastructure is needed.



Solar:

Solar fixtures would save the expense and of additional power drops, trenching, and transformers. However

the
choice



in fixtures is more limited.