

Colman Vista Restoration

Comments submitted via www.colmanparkvista.com

Subject Olmsted Restoration

Message We were pleased to read your postcard and subsequent website regarding Colman Park. We live one house from the park and have always felt the park had been neglected and not kept as planned by the Olmsted plan. It should be a viewpoint of the lake with appropriate vegetation. Any plan not including a view of the lake is not as intended nor fair to the neighborhood or those living across the street from the overgrown park. It is not nor has it been for many years. Please include my comments as input for your planned meeting. Thank you so much for your time and energy.

Sent on: 3 May, 2016

Subject Restore the Vistas

Message As a Mt. Baker resident of approximately 40 years, I strongly support your plans to restore Colman Park to the Olmstead vision. Restoring the vistas will provide the opportunity for many Seattle residents and visitors to enjoy the view across the lake as the Olmsteads intended. Colman Park is the unfortunate victim of Parks Department neglect and, frequently, the product of Parks Department staff putting their priorities and objectives ahead of those of the citizens. I applaud your efforts to restore the park for the enjoyment of all of the people of Seattle.

Sent on: 10 May, 2016

Subject Thank you

Message This is such an informative and inviting website. I look forward to the meeting this evening.

Sent on: 10 May, 2016

Subject Public Input

Message I learned of tonight's meeting and cannot attend. Please add me to the contact list for future meetings. I am very concerned about an effort that abandons forest steward work and develops parks in the interests of adjacent homeowners to improve or protect their personal views. I am a frequent visitor to the park and want to preserve its native habitat and honor the work of forest stewards. Please put me on your list for community input.

Sent on: 11 May, 2016

Subject Wish list for the renovated vista

Message Benches and areas to sit to enjoy the vista. Lighting on the stairs Signage identifying the park on 31st and trail mas Replacement of the safety barrier along 31st

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject Tuesday's Meeting

Message Wonderful exchange of (not always the same) views. Speaking of views, I was particularly struck by the idea of their not only being of value as an aesthetic amenity (for the public in general) but also as a safety factor (for the immediate neighborhood). Again, lots of good ideas floated and a real boost to better understanding the issues presented. Well done!

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject restoration

Message I am in favor of the restoration of Colman Park Vista.

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject Comments From Tuesday's Public Meeting

Message I believe it important to restore the John Olmsted's gateway to Lake Washington through Colman Park, over a 100 years ago he said the Seattle citizens needed places away from "the restraining and confining condition of the town", that need is so much greater now. Colman is consider to be one of the best examples of an Olmsted Park in Seattle, it needs to be restored.

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject Upper Colman Vista Restoration

Message I attended the Friends of Colman Park Mtg on Tues, May 10. I have lived near Colman Park, on 32nd Ave S, for the past 33 years. I am in full support of opening the lake view from 31st Ave S. I favor restoring the Olmsted style of framing the view of the lake and mountains as well as opening the sitelines into the park. Thank you for presenting the ideas and conducting a well organized and respectful mtg. I look forward to the next phase.

Subject Colman Park Vista Restoration Project

Message I am so glad that this issue has come to the forefront. Every time I pass by 31st I think what a shame the trees were allowed to grow wild. I have been in the neighborhood for nearly 50 yrs. and sadly enough saw the decline in care in the past years. Thank you for seeing this Restoration as important.

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject View restoration

Message I want to express my thanks and support to those of you who are working so hard at restoring the Colman Park views. I think it's such a shame that the park's full beauty has not been maintained and the original design has been overgrown and mismanaged. I now live closer to Seward Park, but used to live very close to Colman Park. I always felt it was such a shame (and still do) that the beautiful views were obscured by overgrowth and neglect. What once was a place for neighbors and tourists to enjoy Seattle's beauty became completely obscured and lost. I certainly encourage your efforts to restore the views and hope the city and parks department will move forward in full cooperation with your efforts and vision. Kind regards

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject May 10th Meeting Comments

Message Very well run meeting, very informed and informative presentations. As a member of a neighborhood that has the same tree/vista challenges, I was especially impressed with the thoughtful comments by long-time residents. It may not be possible, but it would be wonderful to have an ADA accessible viewpoint near sidewalk level on 31st for those with mobility problems. Perhaps a small bump-out at an area where cars are not likely to overrun the sidewalk. Also, I hope it will be possible to recruit or incorporate the ideas of the gentleman who is a former park board member to help your efforts. Good luck!

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista Upper Slope Restoration

Message I've lived in the neighborhood for over 4 years and spend a lot of time in Colman Park. I fully support restoring the hillside to the original Olmsted plan, using vistas to incorporate the stunning landscapes of the lake, park, and mountains. The trees, which are mostly shoots and suckers, should be removed and should be replanted with low growing native vegetation to maintain the slope and provide ground cover. Additionally, removal of the overcrowded shoots would provide a more open and welcoming entrance to the park, and provide more safety for users. Thank you

Sent on: 12 May, 2016

Subject Wish list for vista

Message Remove the trees that are blocking the framed vista. (Per Olmsted vision) Especially those that have watersprouts from poor management techniques. Remove the pruned laurel hedge along 31st and replace with low growing shrub (3 foot max)

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Response to Park Dept. about Colman Park Vista

Message I want the upper west side of Colman Park restored to the Olmsteads' vision with low growing plants replacing the shoots and suckers of the maples. This restoration would open the park's west entrances so they are safe. Drivers would have a clear view around the curve on 31st Ave S.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject further comment on Colman Park Vista

Message In the restoration to the Olmsteads' plan in Colman Park Vista if the hedge is removed which I don't support, some low barrier including the guard rail needs to remain for the safety of people, especially children, and dogs on the sidewalk. Part of the history of the park along 31st Ave S. was the scenic drive destination; I would like this reinstated. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Replenishing the soul

Message I always plan my routes through and around our beautiful city based on the glorious views I can find along the way. Even though I am a native of the area, I never tire of the sight of the majestic Mt. Rainier. When my children were much younger we specifically drove to school along 31st to drink in the views of sparkling Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountain range. What a treat! Then we would turn west on Jackson and would view the jagged peaks of the Olympic mountain range. How fortunate were we? It was such a refreshing way to start our day. Recently my son was commenting on how he missed that view along 31st and how we would sing "Oh what a beautiful day..." Maybe we are just sentimental goofballs, however, knowing what is behind those trees now zaps a little joy from the day. One of the gifts of Seattle are the many hills which provide us with lovely vistas. It is important to protect those views we all enjoy. Time to replenish the the soul of Colman Park!

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message I was not able to attend the Friends of Colman Park meeting, but would love for the upper portion of the park to be restored to the Olmsted vision, and would love the View restored. I am a long-time resident of Mount Baker and believe restoration to the original vision would enhance everyone's daily life as they pass by. Thank you

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message I attended the meeting Tuesday evening. I have lived in Mt Baker for over 30 years. I completely support Friends of Colman Park Vista and want to see the park recreated. I walk there every day and agree that it is overgrown and dangerous at times. This should be a park that our community can use and be proud of. The Olmsteds created a beautiful plan for our city. This park is part of that plan.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Project support

Message I strongly support this project and hope that the upper slope/portion of the park can be cleaned up and restored to what it was when I was growing up. There were beautiful views of the lake and mountains that are now covered by trees. Additionally, removing trees will help with safety - it will add light/expose the upper slope more making the whole park more user friendly. Thank you.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message To whom it may concern: I have lived 1 block away from Colman Park on 30th since 1997. In that time, the maple has grown to obscure what has been in the past a wonderful vista overlooking one of Seattle's oldest and premier parks. The vista should be maintained and enhanced. Please accept this letter as support for Friends of Colman Park Vista, and the goals of that group. Thanks,

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Restauration

Message Dear Friends of Colman Park Vista. As one of you, I will try to convey my impression. As a design architect for 46 years with a master in Landscape Architecture, I agree with Margy's thoughts and priorities. From what I saw, I would suggest working also with Ariel Valmaggia, a disciple of Eladio Dieste the inventor of an innovation in structural art. This reinforced building system technology can be applied to stabilize the slope while giving a solution to stairs and sculptural ramp down to a low point in the park. I will attach to your e-mail a PDF with examples of Ariel's work. I suspect Alan McWain knows about reinforced tiles works.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message I thought the meeting was well attended. It seems as though most comments were positive with the project moving forward. With Seattle's population exploding, it would be nice to have Colman Park a more useable space, tying 31st Ave. S. to Mount Baker Beach.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message What a great project. This will improve the area for passers-by and park users alike. I hope we can rally support to fund this project!!

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message I attended the meeting on Tuesday on found it very informative. I have lived in the neighborhood 18 Years and used to use the park quite a bit. I have used it less over the years as it has become more overgrown. It has felt less safe to me and it has become less attractive and welcoming. I would love to see the vista restored. When I walk along 31st (as I do quite often) the lake is no longer visible and the growth looks like a forgotten mess. It would be nice to be able to enjoy the view again!

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject planning meeting with consultant

Message I am a volunteer forest steward. Maintaining our beautiful urban parks is important to me. I spend many hours removing non native plants and encouraging native plants to grow and flourish. I support the community effort of returning Colman Park back to the original Olmstead plan of low growing trees and shrubs.

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message I support the Colman Park Vista effort. I have heard from many neighbors who are frustrated and depressed by what has been allowed to happen to this part of Colman. They don't want any more meetings that don't go anywhere. They want action. After nearly a century of this historic park being graced by a spectacular scenic vista, many of them are weary from years of watching that vista slowly vanish. Their disappointment has been deepened by the unnatural character of the trees that have encroached on the slope and by the

unacknowledged issues of racial inequality that saw this area of the park fenced off and untended while lesser parks were maintained at taxpayers' expense. These neighbors have been frustrated by the unconvincing explanations from the Parks Department year after year for why nothing could be done. These explanations were often framed as doubt of a public benefit, concern for conservation, or powerlessness due to park policies, but too often these explanations smacked of political ambivalence, fiscal expedience or racial prejudice.

To be clear:

This project's intent is to restore a public viewpoint cherished and enjoyed by many, not to create private views for private property owners.

This project's intent is to restore vegetation that is unnaturally dense, materially compromised, and ultimately unsustainable due to previous clearcutting and subsequent neglect by the Parks Dept. It is not our intent or desire to clearcut or spoil an untouched natural area.

This project's intent is to restore the historic Olmsted legacy to an area of a park where it was envisioned but has been abandoned. It is not our intent to weaken the Olmsted design characteristics of Colman Park.

I believe the historic vista can be retained by way of slope restoration in concert with historic restoration efforts. This project does not require the Parks Department to address this as a "view" project in order for the vista to be restored.

At this time, this project does not require the Parks Department (via the City Council) to approve a "viewpoint designation" for upper Colman, but it should be noted that Upper Colman was a viewpoint for over a half-century, before the "viewpoint designation" came into use.

As far as specifics goes:

I believe the Big Leaf maple trees on the slope that have sprouted from stumps should all be removed, followed by replanting of the top of the slope with low growing vegetation. The lower part of the slope should be planted with small trees that provide habitat and shade, but are carefully selected species that will never grow up to obstruct the public vista. As others have mentioned I would like to see the hedge removed and replanted with something recommended by a landscape designer. I hope this project results in a long-term Vegetation Management Plan for the entire slope that increases plant diversity, provides habitat, accounts for erosion and slope stability concerns, protects the public vista for future generations, and draws upon the Olmsted's principles and vision.

I ask that the Parks Department take a leadership role in assuring that this project be approved and implemented with deliberate speed. While the past can't be rewritten, the Parks Department can go a long way in improving their standing in the eyes of this community by actively pursuing this project's swift realization.

Sent on: 13 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message This project will improve our entire community.

Sent on: 14 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message It would be a tremendous improvement to our neighborhood to restore the upper slope of Colman Park by adopting and implementing a plan to remove unsightly maple shoots and suckers and replace them with low growing native bushes and shrubs more appropriate to the location. As Doug Bayley (board member of Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks) said at the May 10 community meeting, Colman Park is a "neighborhood gem" and is considered by the landscape architects at the Washington Park Arboretum to be among the best work the Olmsted Brothers did.

Olmsted designs use "borrowed landscapes" to enhance a visitor's experience of a Park by incorporating features beyond its physical boundaries. As Alan McWain mentioned at the May 10 meeting, viewpoints can provide a playful aspect to a landscape design by allowing different areas of the Park to view each other. David Dougherty, another FSOP board member, has advised us about research confirming the importance of views for urban dwellers.

These effects were part of Colman Park's past. If the slope were again opened up, the lower slope could be viewed from the top of the slope, together with the lake and mountains. The top of the slope could be viewed by someone walking up, or by someone who turned around to take in the area he or she had just passed through. Considerable visual interest can be developed by doing nothing more than removing inappropriate plants and replacing them with low-growing native trees and shrubs that allow the Olmsted design to speak to us once again. The Parks Department can implement these positive impacts while retaining a hillside covered with plants. I expect that after the restoration there will be just as many leaves between soil and sky as there are today. They will just be lower to the ground.

Seattle Parks is the custodian of this spectacular legacy. I urge Seattle Parks to begin the process of reclaiming the beauty spot that would re-emerge if the upper slope were restored to the original Olmsted vision.

Sent on: 14 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message We moved to this neighborhood 33 years ago in part because of the gorgeous views that surround the Mt. Baker ridge. Sadly, the upper slope of Colman Park has been neglected and continues to deteriorate. The view from the top of the park is still there – just beyond the mess that currently exists. Through my involvement in this project, I've learned about the Olmsteds and their principles. I've seen how their parks and boulevards have transformed neighborhoods across America. I've also seen what happens to those cities when their well-planned parks were not maintained, but were abused and in some cases (e.g., Buffalo)

destroyed. Neighboring communities suffer, too. I've also learned about what happens to cities and neighborhoods when community members take action to restore their Olmsted Parks to the designers' original vision. They become re-vitalized. A key principle of the Olmsteds is to provide places – particularly for urban dwellers – to pursue happiness. They strove to create and develop places that all people could and would enjoy for recreation and for contemplation and serenity – beautiful places to relax and get away from hectic city life. People are drawn to beautiful places as evidenced by the numbers of people who gather at viewpoints.

Besides restoring the view, we'd also like to restore a sense of safety as visitors walk into the park and to provide an incentive for motorists to slow down when they drive by. I envision a slope with a variety of native plants offering a welcoming and interesting entry into the park. I'd love this project to bring back that gorgeous view from the top of Colman Park and restore the slope with an attractive hillside for all people to enjoy as they walk into or pass by the park.

The Big Leaf Maple trees were not part of the vision of the Olmsteds. I don't believe they would have supported a tree that dominated and crowded the landscape. Their plans were much more interesting. They also foresaw the need to maintain the projects they designed and had concern for disintegration if that didn't happen.

Seattle Parks has played a role in the mess that grows on the upper slope of Colman Park. Perhaps the most disheartening is that neighbors who lived here years ago, many of whom still live here today felt discounted, ignored, and not heard. They strongly believe, and Parks has belatedly acknowledged, that other areas of Seattle receive preferential treatment to this area. Seattle Parks also contributed to the problem by doing only half the job when they agreed to cut the trees years ago. The trees were cut but the stumps were left to grow shoots and suckers. Those shoots and suckers now dominate the slope. Being ignored adds to the frustration. We hope Parks agrees to help restore a piece of a park in the south end of Seattle to capture the beauty that is naturally here and to restore Colman Park as one of the gems of this city.

Sent on: 14 May, 2016

Subject Please restore 31st Ave. Colman Park view

Message Thank you for your proposal to restore the beautiful, natural view at the top of Colman Park. Neighbors and visitors will appreciate the opportunity to see the lake, hills and mountains as they walk, bike or pass by. Sometimes, nature needs a little help to balance growth and access. Please implement this plan as soon as possible. Thank you!

Sent on: 15 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista Restoration

Message I support this restoration project. Much of the natural beauty of our city has been paved or built over, or has been taken over by plants not native to the area. We should do everything in our power to preserve or restore the remaining parks, particularly this one. It will serve as a sanctuary and recreation spot for the families of several Seattle communities. Please join me in supporting this project.

Subject Colman Park Vista Restoration

Message Hello - I strongly support the idea of restoring the Colman Park Vista hillside with lower height plants/trees to open up the view that was originally planned by the Olmsted Brothers. Not only has the current site turned into a place for illegal dumping but the inability to see down has also created a hidden place for people to "hang out" at odd times of the evening. Planting lower growth trees will also open up a beautiful viewpoint for residents and visitors and be in line with the Olmsted restoration that is occurring on the western side of mt. Baker down by Franklin High School. Replacing the current hillside with lower growth trees would remove an illegal dumping area, make the neighborhood safer, and restore a view that was part of the original plan put in place by the Olmsted brothers and the city years ago. Something I strongly support.

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park

Message Please restore Colman Park Vista to the original plan. Parks beautify our City for one and all to enjoy. We have enough high rises and density; let's add more natural beauty. The Colman Park Vista is already there. Just needs to be cleaned up and maintained. Thanks for your attention to this matter.

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject Restore Colman Park Vista

Message Hello, I am a frequent user of the area parks and boulevards, and would like to see Colman Park's vista restored as intended by the Olmsteds. In addition to the vista, the restoration will improve pedestrian use of the dark stairway area at the top of Colman, replacing the gloom with more light. Thank you!

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Update

Message Hello all, thank you for the meeting on Tuesday, May 10th. If it is possible, it would be great if we could obtain the original plans prepared by Olmstead specifically for Colman Park and work to restore the park to Olmstead's original vision -- down to the plants used (even for the top slope in scope for this initial phase). Seems like it would be malpractice to go in a different direction as the Olmstead parks (all of Olmstead Parks in Seattle) should be preserved, maintained and funded by the City/State/National?? registry) as a recognized historic site. Realize that it is not at present, but we should endeavor to work toward making this happen (apart from the initial scoped work perhaps). In the immediate timeframe/scoping of the project, focus might be best spent on resurrecting the original design of the Olmsted Plan for Colman Park (specific to our sloped area). Only updates might be to update lighting, timed sprinklers to ensure safety concerns are properly navigated. Again, thank you for organizing this work. Best regards (Mt Baker Neighbor)

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject Support of Vista Restoration Project

Message Hi, I live in the Mt. Baker neighborhood and love running and walking in Colman Park. I am supportive of this project and feel that it would enhance the park.

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject Support of Vista Restoration

Message I have lived in the neighborhood for over 28 years. I drive daily along 31st Avenue South. I use to so enjoy the lovely view as I passed upper Colman Park. As time passed the upper slope view has disappeared due to neglect, and bad practices. I was so impressed with the turnout for the Public Meeting on May 10th, over 80 people took time out of their evening to attend. Many longtime neighbors spoke about their enjoyment over the years of seeing Mt Rainier, Lake Washington and the Cascades. Others spoke how their park use centered around bringing together families who enjoyed watching Seafair events from the upper west slope. Some residents expressed fear about personal safety when using the stairs, and upper park in general. Drug deals (or what appears to be a drug deal as some one sits on the steps, a car parks across a street, occupant runs down a few stairs, then within a minute or two back to the car a they drive off) illegal dumping of household garbage and landscape trimmings. There is currently cuttings of scotch broom dumped on the sidewalk.... Clearing out the sucker Maples and replanting with low growing native plants such as Vine maples, Indian Plum, Salal and Oregon Grape will not only provide more leaf coverage for the area, but allow "Eyes on the Street" for the safety of children but also adult users that do not feel safe there anymore. Another safety feature of a beautiful view is that it is proven to be a factor in calming traffic (speeding) which has been a constant problem on 31st. I look forward to view corridors to be reestablished. When I cross the I-90 bridge an look to upper Colman park, I am aware of some magnificent trees that can not be seen from the ridge area. One in particular is a beautiful cedar that I can always pick out from the bridge, and I am sure there are other hidden gems. How fortunate we are to have this treasure to be shared by all. Look how many people this has brought together....who would have thought that? I look forward to enjoying the restored view in the future. A couple years from now I hope to be able to sit on a bench to enjoy the fabric of the landscape, with views near and far. Wish list: Maple shoots and suckers removed, replaced with low growing native plants Benches for viewing A map naming the peaks that are visible (and maybe the distance to that peak) Improved visibility for the staircases Douglas Fir, Hemlock and Cedar planted to frame the view As with the view park (Mt Baker Ridge) looking to Elliot Bay and Olympics with Sunset noted by Seasons, Colman Park Vista could have the sunrise noted by the Seasons.

Sent on: 16 May, 2016

Subject In favor

Message I won't be able to make it to the meetings but I am in favor of this! If I can sign a petition or something like that please let me know!

Sent on: 17 May, 2016

Subject comment regarding the Colman Park Vista project

Message I support the goals of the project, to open up the vista as originally defined by the Olmstead brothers. To me it is not only the focus on community-building or making a public asset appreciable by all. It is also a matter of safety for all who enter or leave the park via the upper stairways. Colman Park is my neighbor. My home on 31st Ave S is located at the top of the north stairway to the park. My neighbor, a public property, has been neglected by the responsible city agency. It should be usable and friendly to the neighborhood and the whole city. The upper slope of the park descends from 31st Ave S, but there is no light pouring down into the park because that slope is overgrown. The wall of maple shoots, branches and foliage hides the beauty of the distant lake and mountains. Volunteers are not allowed by city rules to thin the foliage or even the undergrowth because of the steepness of the slope. The result of the overgrowth and the rules is that the park has become unsafe for its users, who enter a dark tunnel when going down the stairs. Passers-by cannot see activity below, further diminishing personal security for those in the park. I believe that achieving the goals of the Colman Park Vista project will also greatly improve the safety and security of the people using the park.

Sent on: 17 May, 2016

Subject Support for Colman Park Restoration

Message Hello, I'm writing to throw my full support behind restoring Colman Park to its original design under the Olmsted vision. Views from the ridge toward the east are disappearing from development and over vegetation. The overgrown suckers at Colman Park are not reflective of the native firs that covered the area before settling, so there's little argument against protecting it as a natural tract of land. The park is there because of a well thought out design for green space within the city that maximized the views of the beautiful Cascades and shining waters of Lake Washington. We have plenty of green spaces in the area to immerse ourselves under the canopy of green. What we need our views of the sunset coming up over the mountains to remind us where we come from, not just where we are.

Sent on: 17 May, 2016

Subject restoration of colman park vista

Message Hi, I remember when I could drive or walk along 31st Ave S and enjoy the beautiful view. Now all I can see are tall maples. The view is gone and the entrance to the park from 31st is more scary than inviting. It would be lovely to have the park restored to the original Olmsted's original vision with native shrubs, bushes, and low growing trees on the upper slope to maintain the view and create a beautiful entry into the park. Thank you so much for the work that your team is doing to restore the vista.

Sent on: 18 May, 2016

Subject Thoughts

Message Thank you all, for your energy on behalf of this important project. After the 10 May meeting I was troubled by some of the questions from the audience. A point reinforced by a lack of clarity from the presentation team, that is that there is a plan. The focus of this effort is to restore upper Colman Park to the 1910 Olmsted Colman Park plan (to the extent possible). This plan drawing should be front and center in the public meetings. It should be mounted on a board, and prominently displayed during every meeting. The trail, the stairs, the vista, the flora are all evident on this plan drawing. Though 110+ years have passed, this plan is still valid, vibrant, and an attainable goal. Thank you!

Sent on: 26 May, 2016

Subject Friends of Colman Park Vista

Message Dear Committee and Parks Department-- I am writing to let you know of our strong support for the efforts to restore the original Olmsted vision for the 31st Avenue vista to the lake and mountains. We have lived in Mt. Baker since 1974, been active in the community, and have cherished the stewardship and activism of the Mt. Baker Community in preserving all that is good in the neighborhood. Restoring a vista for all (not just for those with properties on the east facing slope) on 31st above Colman Park is "good." We walk or drive this route every day. Over the years we have watched the trees get taller and taller and become a looming, towering presence, denying pedestrians and drivers the uplifting view of the mountains and the lake. It has not always been this way. There was a view, but over the years through budget cuts and policy changes, the trees have been allowed to proliferate. I love the Olmsted term of "borrowed landscape" and realize that we have a duty to capitalize on any natural beauty or vista that we can. We are blessed in our neighborhood to have Colman Park and Mt. Baker Park with active stewardship in restoring paths, trails, and native plants, and creating an inner city woodland path to access to Lake Washington. Let's build on the dedication of the neighborhood to maintain and preserve what is unique and restore the Olmsted vision for all. Thank You!

Sent on: 26 May, 2016

Subject Colman Park Vista

Message As a real estate agent in Mt. Baker for 30+ yrs. & touting all the parks & streets the Olmsted Bros. designed + living on 32nd & College and walking past the west portion of Colman & wishing Lk. Wash. was visible & that it wasn't so overgrown as to feel unsafe to take the path down to the lake, I would be interesting in coming to the meetings & finding out what is planned. Linda Finney contacted me re: the group. I am a walker & use the Dose stairs, another Olmsted project & would like to vary my route & hike thru Colman. The M.B. Overlook is such a success, sometimes there are 30 people taking pics of the sunset over the Sound. Thanks for being instrumental in trying to achieve a goal for all of us!

Sent on: 1 June, 2016

Subject Colman Park

Message Hi, Thank you for your efforts. The two pictures, one when we bought our home (1991) and now, really make the point. Do you have minutes from the first meeting? Thanks again for your energy into this project.

Sent on: 1 June, 2016

Subject Big leaf maples

Message Historic I believe that big leaf maples were part of a mixed Forrest. Since this was logged off maples became out of balance. We Vote for. Thin out. Trim up. Evaluate The above removes local home owners of self interest and keeps the focus on maintaining the treed slope and enhancing the aesthetic of the view for the community

Message Details:

Subject comments on the inadvisability of the current proposal

Message Colman Park Vista Restoration Thank you for an opportunity to comment on this project, which seems to be quite well-funded, professionally organized and profoundly misguided. The proposal is to cut down a large stand of mature trees at the western edge of Colman Park, adjacent to 31st Avenue South. The initiative is led by a group of homeowners - primarily those with properties on 31st Avenue close to the proposed clear-cut - who have a personal interest in making improvements to the views from their own homes. The arguments in support of the plan have been couched in historical terms, with reference to an implied original intent of the Olmsteds 150 years ago; and also with reference to an assumed general public need for vistas along 31st Avenue. I am concerned that the only "view" that is being promoted is the one from the West, from a busy arterial street with very little pedestrian traffic. No attention is being paid to the view towards the West, from within the park itself. Many people use the east-west paths running the length of the park climbing up from the lake. The City's own websites celebrate the fragrance and the solitude of the western part of Colman Park around the popular P-Patch. Part of the beauty is the sense of tranquility projected by the surrounding mature trees, together with spectacular morning colors as the Eastern sunrise is reflected off the very stand of trees destined to be clear-cut in this current project. From this perspective the current project appears to be severely flawed - by narrowly focusing on the interests of property owners on 31st Avenue to the obvious detriment of citizens actually using Colman Park itself. This paradox seems to be a recapitulation of the earlier 2002 damage to the park caused by prioritization of private interests over public good by Judge Farris. The large stand of trees jeopardized by the view initiative constitutes mature and healthy woodland. The trees provide canopy shade, shelter and sustenance to the slope at the western end of the Colman Park. They provide a habitat for owls, raccoons, and the occasional coyote, eagle and hawk. The woods are traversed by a number of charming trails that provide the illusion of dense woodland in the center of an urban area. The trees provide stability to the sharp slope, they control moisture levels by drawing from deep within the ground, they dampen the street noise from the arterial above and provide a stunning backdrop to the trails and meadows

below. The trees were damaged in less enlightened times, possibly in a misguided attempt, then, to improve homeowners property values on the street above. They have recovered, thankfully, and we surely have learned lessons about the value of tree conservation in the intervening quarter century. I am opposed to the current costly plan to clear-cut a substantial area of the western edge of Colman Park. If it could be demonstrated that there is, in fact, a substantial general desire for a view opportunity (presumably of Mercer Island and the Newcastle housing estates in the near distance and, perhaps, sunrise over the mountains in the far distance) then I propose that a viewing platform (perhaps similar to the existing platform on the opposite side of 31st Avenue overlooking the city) should be constructed on the curve of 31st Avenue where it abuts Colman Park, with an associated - limited - clearing of a corridor of trees to provide a framed site-line. This would preserve the general view looking west from the park, preserve the habitat and the woodland, minimize the risk of destabilizing the steep upper slopes of the park and would, presumably, provide an enhanced public appreciation of the park without the substantial financial costs and probably public outrage associated with the destruction of mature public woodland for the benefit of private property interests.

Sent on: 6 June, 2016

Subject phased plan

Message Please consider a phased plan that might included removing one third of the most damaged and/or invasive trees and then thinning and crown reduction the remaining. Parks has also used something that retards growth on Big Leaf Maples. The idea of framed views, view corridors, views with trees or through trees seems achievable. Opening up the stairways by thinning might be an idea that is easy to sell to Parks and the city. Maybe signage at the bottom of the stairs , that can be seen from the top, would coax traffic down. I was very concerned that there were no conifers in any of the graphics. Surely a re-planting plan will be part of a successful project. Downslope conifers (many were planted in past efforts) add great texture and habitat and grow slowly. Parks is responsible for the hedge removal and maintaining the overgrown path that runs from the bottom of the stairways across the slope. Is there a way to strongly word the community concern that Parks needs to step up and shoulder their responsibility? Will there be a Parks Manager with decision making power at the last meeting? One Hundred neighbors turn out with concerns and Parks is not there to listen? Also ...I am so sorry that the huge crowd of neighbor at the two meetings were never introduced. Who were they and why were they there? What is their connection to the park? I think introductions around are a very valuable tool and hope you have some insight into who and why. Thanks for all your hard work volunteering for your community. Good luck with Proview.....(which I can not believe we pay for/fund/finance and can not attend!) neighbor, voter, volunteer, parks advocate

Sent on: 8 June, 2016

Colman Vista Restoration

Comments emailed to Project Lead via colmanparkvista@gmail.com

MESSAGE:

Hi Margy - thank you very much for spearheading the project. I don't have many ideas around the plan other than the opinion that clearing the overgrowth and restoring the view would be a huge plus for the neighborhood. Please let me know if you need any help with anything.

MESSAGE:

Thank you. I'd love to see that site improved. Not only is the view blocked by rather unsightly trees, but walking around there is dark and wet and unpleasant.

MESSAGE:

I really, really miss that gorgeous view, since I drive down 31st quite often.

That sounds like a worthwhile project. Can you share a photo of the area you are talking about? I've done a lot of dog walking through Colman Park, but I am not clear which area of the park you are referring to.

MESSAGE:

We have lived in the neighborhood for over 25 years and fully support the upper slope restoration of Colman Park. For the past 25 years we have watched the beautiful view of Lake Washington, the Cascades and Mt. Rainier slowly close in – so that now there is literally no view. The Olmsted Brothers said it so well when they originally designed the Seattle Park and Boulevard system: nowhere in the country is there a city where the views of the lakes and mountains are so spectacular (paraphrased). We need to work together to restore these views – and this project is an excellent step in the right direction.

MESSAGE:

Thanks for your note and for your hard work on this. I totally support the plan to restore the lake view from 31st avenue south and to give everyone an opportunity to enjoy this beautiful vista.

MESSAGE:

Congratulations on the progress with the vista! I saw your post on NextDoor, and I am happy to share information through our local organizations – Friends of Mount Baker Town Center (sponsored by Seattle Parks Foundation, and supported by FSOP as well), and the new Mount Baker Hub (a new business association).

I was talking with some of my friends at FSOP, and they mentioned there are some difficulties getting approval for the trees to be “adjusted”. I completely support your effort to restore towards the Olmsted vision -- if you need supportive comments, let me know how I can help.

Also – let me know if anyone in your organization would like to learn more and/or get involved in our efforts around the transit center. We are expecting a big event on September in conjunction with the Design Festival 2016, that could involve nearly a million dollars in investment along the traffic corridors next to ArtSpace, and if you want an informational booth on the plaza, we would love to have it.

MESSAGE:

I definitely support the creation of a view overlook on 31st. When involved with the Friends of Colman Park we attempted to push such an idea. There was a plan. The city was resistant. Nanette Martin was involved. Anyway, 31st Ave is a very interesting street as it runs along the ridge offering views both east and west. It also has a beginning and an end. Jackson is the psychological terminus on the North and Franklin High, an architectural gem, at the South. There is a great view potential at Jackson over Frink, the little vest pocket park in our neighborhood business district which looks west, and of course your project overlooking Colman. A potentially nice little string of pedestrian amenities.

I prefer framed views rather than extremely wide angle views necessitating massive clear cutting of vegetation. I agree that the big leaf maples that exist are massive, probably all volunteers, and very fast growing. I am sure there are other more appropriate horticultural and geological choices that are available.

I think that people that live directly across the street from your site may want fewer obstructions which is understandable, though may need tempering in respect to the overall park aesthetic. Trees grow. The folks that built my house on 1968 could originally see Mt Rainier from their kitchen sink. That is long gone except in the winter when the leaves are off the big trees in Colman.. I wouldn't trade the trees for the Mountain, but that is just me. For me the goals of an overlook should include a design that evolves in a way that is natural and hopefully native in feel. It also needs to be maintainable and sustainable. I am amazed at things we planted in Colman years ago that are now established and I think for the most part good neighbors with other plants. As you probably know, the Park Department can be fickle in its application of resources to things like good horticultural stewardship (maintenance).

I believe that there probably is a conversation to be had about creating a pedestrian stopping spot with benches, perhaps a table?, low scale interpretive signage, etc. The counter to these things is that they can inadvertently attract loitering by unwanted individuals, gang types, graffiti, garbage, etc. Garbage bins require emptying and so forth. Such is the world we live in. Personally, now officially a "senior citizen", a simple bench, even without a back would be a welcome point of respite on an afternoon walk. 31st will always have traffic, so I don't see a sitting spot as a lingering point for many folks.

One last thing I would add to the discussion of the view overlook, that I would term a planned "long view", as opposed to more closed in woodsy views down in the park, is that it offers great perspective on our weather fronts, fabulous cloud formations and the three dimensional

nuances of the land forms to the east. Down along the lake you get these exposures, but from a low angle. The elevated view from 31st adds a slightly bigger picture of the ever changing patterns of climate, light, shadow, etc. A worthy addition to the pedestrian experience. Thanks for working to advance something for the community good.

MESSAGE:

Olmsted principles leading to this design (i.e. The importance of vistas for urban residents - essential for mental health etc. A second principle being to "embrace the uniqueness of the space"). In this instance the uniqueness is the opportunity for the view - which gives one a sense of place. Not a unique space to grow conifers or broad leaf maples.

Second point the tall broadleaf maples and conifers block the sun and does not allow low growth shrubs with Multi-layers of leafs to minimize the amount of rain which would penetrate the soils.

I guess the question is would have to some of the opposition is, Why? Why do they want conifers in a historic view corridor? Why do you want Big Leaf Maples which creates too much shade for the type of plants that would create more stability to the slope and cause less water to touch the ground - because they are 1) evergreen and take up water in the winter months, and 2) can be multi-layered to cause a much higher percentage of the moisture to evaporate during the winter.

People living in dense urban areas need a since of place and long range vistas that ease their tension, anxieties, and help with depression. Financially well off individuals can afford house with views and second homes on the island. However the purpose for public view corridors is to assure this is a free commodity for everyone living in the urban area. Olmsteds were of the opinion that the majestic mountains and waters surrounding Seattle some some of the best in the world and should be enjoyed by all. Why do they see no value in allowing views for everyone?

If their concern is climate change. It is beyond credibility that this small patch is going to contribute to the reversal to any measurable extent - particularly if you replant two trees elsewhere for each one removed in this small hillside.

Hello Margie,

Just wanted to share some information I researched after our May meeting.

Not sure if your planning team has this information, [but the links below](#) covering the 2007 effort is pretty comprehensive and encompasses inventory of all the 2007 plantings and new seedlings put in by zone across the entire 24 acres of the park, including what is in scope for your 2016 project focusing on the upper slope. Your design architects should review these materials to know what has been planted. It would be great if we could compare against the original "planting plan" envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers when the park was designed.

I have reached out to MOHAI and UW and they had essentially what you already have featured on your website with the exception of this link: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/history/ColmanPk.pdf>, which is kind of limited in value??

The last restoration project for Colman Park was attempted in 2007; **Nanette Martin** was the Community Organizer who headed up the upward slope portion of the park (facing 31st avenue). Here is a link to the 2007 report:

2007 Planning Effort to Restore Colman Park:

http://www.wnps.org/restoration/documents/CP/CP_Proj_Notes/CP_a1_1.pdf (summary)

http://www.wnps.org/restoration/documents/CP/CP_Stewardship.pdf (full report)

Neither MOHAI or UW had the original *planting plan* used in the execution of the Olmsted Colman Park design when it was originally developed in the early 1900's by the Olmstead brothers. I have reached out to the National Association of Olmstead Parks Archives in Brookline, MA in an attempt to retrieve the original *Planting Plan* for Colman Park.

While I realize that the scope of the 2016 work effort is tightly focused on the upper slope with limited matching funding (\$25k), to maintain the integrity of the Olmsted Park design, improvement efforts and maintenance plans would ideally be considered as a contiguous managed effort across an entire park envisioned by Olmsted. Further, the Olmsted Park System (comprised of several parks) in Seattle, WA is pretty special and unique to our City and probably should be maintained / protected as a historic district/zone designation by the City/State/Nationally. This is a longer process to make these designations happen and might be driven as a separate work effort, although would force the envisioning of planning effort, park maintenance and in garnering financial support in a more holistic way (across an entire park, across all the Olmsted Parks in Seattle). My thinking is that if we navigate an improvement/maintenance/funding effort in maintaining the Olmsted Park(s) throughout the City, we have a better opportunity to maintain the integrity of the original design envisioned by Olmsted. From what I can understand in my research, maintenance of the Olmsted parks in Seattle has slowly eroded from the original design/vision over the years, with the exception of Volunteer Park. It would be nice to incrementally restore the Olmsted Parks (starting with Colman??) to their original design, perhaps making slight modifications to tweak/address security concerns as noted by neighbors.

National Association of Olmsted Parks (reached out to obtain original Planting Plan - for Colman Park)

www.olmsted.org

Olmsted Archives Contact Information

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site
99 Warren Street
Brookline, Massachusetts 02445

phone: [\(617\) 566-1689](tel:6175661689)

fax: [\(617\) 232-3964](tel:6172323964)

e-mail: Olmsted_Archives@nps.gov This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it

web: www.nps.gov/frla

MESSAGE:

thanks for all you leadership!

Sorry I will be unable to attend meeting #2.

I vote yes, none the less!

I vote for the most comprehensive plan.

Raising money can be a challenge,

But once we get going, a few thousand dollars more is not such a big deal...

so we might as well have the best plan.

In the end, I'll go with the group!

DW

MESSAGE:

6/8/16

Dear friends of the Vista & Parks,

I attended last night's meeting and was disappointed at the presentation, especially after the clarity of vision that seemed to come from the first meeting. There were several things that seemed to have been agreed on then that probably should have been reviewed at this one so that there was adequate time to discuss options without the distraction of those raising off-point questions. For example, there was no mention of the overwhelming majority opinion that the view should be restored for everyone in the community, including those who walk or drive by. And there was no mention of the social equity issue that decades of neglect by the parks department has caused. I left this meeting feeling confused by the information that had been shared and unsure of what I had "voted" for.

This morning I walked through the upper park on the smallest trail just to check my memory about what is there and to try & visualize what I saw on the boards.

These are my observations:

1). Instead of presenting options with different accessories, it might have been more helpful to present...

a) different planting styles to obtain the restoration objectives, for example, wild or natural, groomed formal, a mix.

b) options in the accessories as well - Olmsted style stone, modern, traditional. Those options were all jumbled on the boards.

c) Same with pathway styles - formal, informal, both?

Personally, my votes go to traditional (Central Park style) stone amenities along 31st with a bench at a slight bump-out for accessibility, a natural feeling upper pathway (slight widening, bark chips only, low-growing native forest plants) moving gradually to more formal paths and sustainable plantings down-slope.

2). It seems that there's a difference of opinion between those who've lived in the neighborhood all their lives, who remember the scenic drive and the views, and those who may still have lived here decades but don't want to see any trees removed. I believe there's a way to satisfy both. When you walk along 31st it's clear, looking through the maples, that there is a view of the lake almost from stairwell to stairwell. The slope is so steep that you can see the lake even over the tops of the willows that grow near the P- patches.

3). At the meeting there was talk of view corridors. The specimen trees that are on the slope or just below it (I believe there's a Redwood or a Sequoia, some ornamentals near the center on 31st, a maple and three firs on the private property on the north edge of the park) - those trees could easily be seen around or through and there would still be a view for everyone else who lives near or passes by.

4). It would also be possible to preserve the woodsy, canopied feeling of the pathways with careful selection of low-growing trees or tall shrubs on the upper side. Kousa dogwood, for example, could be planted on the immediate west (upper) side of the upper path without blocking views from 31st.

5). It is clear that the maples, while pleasant to walk under, are unhealthy and the slope - even with the maples there - is eroding in spots from lack of ground cover. Replacing the stump/suckers above the upper path with natural vegetation such as salal, huckleberry, ferns - dogwood and vine maples at the path edge and down into area 2(?), would keep the woodsy feeling, require little to no maintenance once established, and retain the slope.

For the record, I live in a view neighborhood where I'm the person trying to protect the foliage. Restoring the Olmsted vision for upper Colman park seems like a solution that could make everyone happy, and is long overdue. Please share my views with the consultants. And thanks, for all your work on behalf of the Mt. Baker community.