



## BALLARD PLAY AREA RENOVATIONS

### Gilman and Webster Play Areas

**Ballard Community Center: 6020 28th Ave NW**  
**Monday, January 25, 2016 6:30- 8:00 p.m.**

#### Meeting Minutes

#### **Presenters:**

Katie Bang (KB)– Capital Project Coordinator, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
R. Frank Robinson (FR)- Landscape Architect, Seattle Parks and Recreation

24 people in attendance (in addition to Park's employees)

The first half hour of the meeting was a public open house to view and discuss the Webster and Gilman Play Areas in terms of accessibility and new play equipment. The public voiced opinions on each of the schemes and wrote down notes on note cards that were posted for viewing.

A letter from a resident child was given to the project manager. It noted that that he/she didn't like it when there was graffiti and he/she liked the rainbow slide, grass, swings, bikes currently for the play area. For the new play area he/she would like to see more picnic benches, and a little kid's playground.

Notes on the postcards included:

#### **Gilman:**

- Option C preferred.  
Currently there are pullup height bars and platforms around 36" height (waist height) in the play area. Besides their use by kids, I use these every time I come to the park to work out. I'd love to see 1-2 pull up bars and some waist high walls and platforms integrated into the final design.
- Large Saucer Swings- More kids can swing . Promotes working together and negotiating.
- Concession stand with a sandbox.
- Features for hide and seek
- Benches to sit
- Hammock to lay down
- Wheels to imagine you are driving.
- I like G2 for the upper body bars. (Malory a little girl attending the meeting)

**Webster:**

- Larger sand play area as it is used a lot.
- Toys that are easy to get on and off of.
- Skateboard stops on benches.
- Twirling Toy.
- Rainbow Colors
- Water Feature
- Rock features to climb and hop on.
- Groundswell intent was to have the park for small children. Keep the park for the young.
- Group teeter totter seem to be really popular with the young and small children.

Following the open house, a formal presentation was given of each play area.

**KB** opened to explain the goal of the meeting, project scope, and funding:

The goal of the meeting was to discuss accessibility to each play area, and the new play equipment. There were 9 options total between the two play areas. The styles varied greatly to test some of the feedback that we heard in the previous meeting at the Ballard Farmers Market.

Funding source is from the Seattle Metropolitan Parks District. This is one of the first projects with this funding.

**FR** began with the presentation noting what we heard from the previous meeting:

Gilman:

- Better/ upgraded equipment
- More walkable surface around the play area
- Nature theme / and Modern theme were both desired strongly
- Climbable equipment trees, rocks,
- Swings

Webster:

- Nature theme
- Pet Pick Up Stations
- Sand Box
- Equipment for bigger and younger children.
- Swings

**FR** presented Gilman first and went over the options which included:

- two traditional northwest tree house themes
  - two more modern open climbable themes
  - **See options on the website.**
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## Public Comment and Responses: (Q=Question, C=Comment, R= Response)

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Q: What is happening to the wading pool?

R: The wading pool at Gilman is not part of this scope as the goal of this project is to bring accessibility to the play area and to upgrade the play equipment. The wading pool is not being used due to water conservation and maintenance costs. This is a city wide issue as several wading pools have been closed and will need to be discussed at a higher planning level.

Q: I would like a group saucer type swing. Is that possible.

R: Yes. If it is voiced as a strong desire from a large group. We hadn't heard a strong desire from the previous meeting at the Ballard Farmer's Market.

C: A tunnel would be nice for the younger children as they like to play hide and seek.

R: This can be accommodated.

Q: I like the ability to have one child play on the field and another play on the play ground as there is a clear site line between. Please maintain clear views when renovating the park.

R: Safety is our utmost concern and we will maintain site lines between the two areas.

Q: I don't see a loop path around the play area. This is great for bikes, for exercise and for circulation. Please consider it and also a marker identifying the distance, 500' for example. That way it serves adults and children.

R: We will try to accommodate a loop path should it fit within budget.

Q: I don't see a chin up bar, or something for upper body strength. This can be incorporated into the equipment and would serve adults as well.

R: A chin up bar seems like a small addition for great benefit. We will incorporate it into the design.

C: My children like the standing spinner toys, especially the ones with the bend.

R: A similar model is shown in the options and can be included. We can look into the bend version as well.

Q: My children like ground level play and the interactive games. Please incorporate this.

R: This is great for young children and also is accessible. We will be sure to include this into the project.

Q: If you had a preference, which would it be?

R: The consensus at the meeting was for Playworld option B or G4 as noted at the meeting. This option was chosen for its abstract twist on the tree house, the incorporation of slides, and the upper body elements. Items that were discussed to be modified included swapping out the spring toy for a vertical spinner, the addition of a chin up bar, adding a ground level panel for games/ interactive play, and considering a loop path around the play area should it fit within the budget.

**FR** then presented the Webster playground. This playground is proposed to keep the slides, and to add a new sand pit in the open lawn area east of the park and the surfacing will be upgraded from sand to wood chips.

The options presented included:

- two traditional northwest tree house theme
- a theme with boulders and ropes
- two ropes and steel open climber theme. **See options on the website.**

### **Public Comment and Responses: (Q=Question, C=Comment, R= Response)**

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C: This park is small which makes it hard to include all play elements. We should look into making this park unique. I have found in Seattle the successful smaller parks have an element that is not found at other parks.

R: There was discussion about this and many agreed, though those that use this as an every day neighborhood park wanted to be sure to have some standard elements such as a slide, a swing, and a tunnel as the park currently has.

C: Once the school district returns the Nordic Heritage Museum back into a school, will the school be redesigned?

R: We have contacted the school district but have not received any comment specifically to this play area. At this time we need to move forward with this funding. There are many elements currently in our parks that do not meet the district standards. A use agreement would need to be negotiated should the district find an interest in using the park for their school

C: Younger kids like to play hide and seek. I think a tunnel needs to be included in the design.

R: We can accommodate that into the new equipment.

C: There was a fire last year in the NE corner of the park where the trees and shrubs are located. Something should be done to deter this in the future.

R: We are not planning on expanding the play area in this zone.

Q: Do you see one of the options being more dated sooner, than maybe another option?

R: We are seeing a trend in Seattle Parks to move to the northwest tree house look and it is quite possible this will be the look of the early 2000's when we look back on it. Option 1 from play world is more abstract and would likely not seem as dated as quickly.

C: Please be sure to have more than one tot swing as there is always a line to use it if there is only one.

R: We can accommodate that into the new equipment. (the existing swing has 4 tot seats)

C: I really like the boulder theme as it is unique to Ballard parks and it suits many ages.

R: We can accommodate that into the new equipment.

**Q:** If you had a preference, which would it be?

**R:** There was much discussion to Webster being a unique park with an element that wasn't found at other parks. It was noted that Ross park had many elements that were shown in the little tykes NRG line of equipment.

There was discussion about the Option 1 from play world being very unique and reminiscent of a Viking ship that tied into the Nordic Heritage museum adjacent. Many felt though that children would get bored with it very quickly and wanted something with more elements.

Many liked the rocks and ropes as shown in Play World option 3 and thought this would be the unique element in a smaller park that was needed, however basic elements such as a slide and swings would need to be included as well. It was discussed to include a platform traditional structure in combination with some of the rocks and ropes elements. There was consensus around this proposal.

**KB** then closed the meeting and discussed the schedule which includes construction in the fall of 2016. She noted that the boards displayed today would be on the website for further comment and that the final design will be on the website and also displayed at the community center toward the end of March.