



## Meeting Notes: James Court Woonerf Development – Public Involvement Meeting #1

Date: Wednesday, June 29, 2011  
Time: 5:30 PM-7:00 PM  
Location: SU Alumni Building on Corner of Marion and 12th

### 1. Introductions

#### a. Susanne Rockwell– Seattle Parks and Recreation

##### i. Scope

1. The design of the woonerf and its potential for interactions with the adjacent uses, including 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Park.
2. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Park has a community approved design which is not under discussion at this meeting, though integration of the woonerf scheme with the Park is up for discussion

ii. Project Timeline and opportunities for Public Input – this meeting is the last direct community input. After community approval of the design concept, the construction documentation phases and construction of the woonerf and park will be undertaken together to make the remaining design process and construction efficient.

iii. Project Name – the Seattle Parks and Recreation Naming Committee met and determined the name of the park to be Woonerf Park.

1. The community in attendance at the meeting had a strong negative reaction to this name and requested that selecting an alternative name be looked into.

#### b. Design Team

- i. Kris Snider, Jake Woland – Hewitt
- ii. Ellen Sollod – Sollod Studio

### 2. Review of Previous community input and Site Analysis

#### a. R.O.W. parameters to be considered

- i. Width of road vs. pedestrian space – pushing for a narrower road, both to let cars know this will be a different type of space where they need to be more aware of their surroundings and to make more space available for pedestrians and programming.
- ii. Grading, in particular providing an alley-like transition into the woonerf to reinforce cues to drivers that they need to pay attention in this space.
- iii. Fire access will need to be balanced with the other opportunities. Discussions will be undertaken with the Seattle Fire Department to understand what the best balance might be. Garbage truck access was also mentioned as occurring on James Court and will need to be considered in the design.
- iv. Turning James Court into a one-way street headed westbound is an option that will be reviewed with the Seattle Department of Transportation. The design team feels this will stop the use of James Court as a cut-through when traffic backs up at the light at 12<sup>th</sup> and Cherry, while maintaining access for residents and others.

- v. Some on-street parking will be maintained, as requested by the community in the previous meeting
  - b. Adjacent Uses
    - i. Park
    - ii. Student Housing
    - iii. Single Family Homes
    - iv. Union Building
  - c. Full Project Budget - \$500,000
- 3. Introduction of James Court Woonerf Schematic Design and James Court Park integration
  - a. Site envelope
    - i. The site has well-defined edges, former by buildings to the north and south and the ball fields and streets adjacent to the east and west.
    - ii. At a smaller scale, there is a network of existing sidewalks that represent an opportunity to frame the woonerf / park composition. Reuse of this existing fabric provides a logical place to stop the designed interventions of the woonerf / park and provides clear and cost effective site access.
  - b. Storm Water Opportunity
    - i. Knowing that there has been previous flooding at the east end of James Court, this suite of projects represent an opportunity to minimize James Court's contribution to storm water events at this intersection.
    - ii. The Douglas building to the north has a storm water feature that emerges from its courtyard at the edge of the James Court R.O.W. another segment of this system runs along the building , flowing from west to east.
    - iii. The Park was similarly planned to capture and convey storm water. The woonerf represents an opportunity to expand the park storm water system and connect it to a more extensive system running to the east and connecting to an existing drain at 13<sup>th</sup> Ave.
  - c. Activity Gradient
    - i. It is important that the design reflects and reacts to its context. 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a more heavily trafficked street than 13<sup>th</sup>. It also has a greater density of commercial uses and therefore higher pedestrian traffic. The design of the woonerf / park needs to acknowledge these activity levels both programmatically and through design, allowing more low key and quiet use in front of the residential entries east of the Douglas courtyard and promoting more active use west of the courtyard.
  - d. Mixing
    - i. The activities discussed above imply a transition in from east to west of a softer, garden in front of the residential use to a harder plaza space adjacent to 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue. In the north south direction there is a similar need to integrate the park with the woonerf and the vehicular access that comes with it.

- e. Overall goals
  - i. Insert strong landscape forms into the streets to push cars around and make certain they understand they are secondary to bikes and pedestrians in this space.
  - ii. Provide strong edges and a soft, welcoming center.
  - iii. Preserve much of roadbed and reclaim demolished road bed for reuse on site.
  - iv. Implement a green infrastructure system, celebrating the passage of stormwater through the site.
  - v. Safe
  - vi. Welcoming
  - vii. Flexible
  - viii. Responsible
  - ix. Delightful
  - x. Memorable
- f. Design description
  - i. With existing sidewalks as a frame the interior of that frame has been structured to have a cohesive composition. Elliptical volumes of landscape are truncated where they intersect the frame and remain whole when they float within it. These forms reflect the blue pillow from the original Park design and make a strong counterpoint to the paved surfaces of the roadway and the plaza. A community table has also been added within an elliptical space paved in the same material as that covering the pillow.
  - ii. The woonerf is table-topped adjacent to the park plaza, allowing the paving to be brought into the woonerf. The grain of the paving pattern has been reoriented to interact with the east / west flow of water across the site.
  - iii. A spine of pedestrian scale light fixtures runs East / West at the back of the former souther curb of James court. This line provides a grounding continuity through the woonerf, while also designating the southern limit of allowable car traffic at the plaza.
  - iv. Planting beds and in particular trees planted at part of the Douglas project have been retained to a great extent along the northern edge. The volume of planted space has been left larger along the northern edge to leave potential for carving out small gathering spaces, keeping them away from the single family homes.
  - v.

#### 4. Community Discussion of Schematic Design

- a. Generally, feedback was positive and the community appeared to feel that the design team was finding the right balance of soft / hard surfaces and active / passive use.
  - i. Concern about lighting – a community member noted concern about the location of light fixtures relative to the single family homes.
    - 1. The light poles will be selected from city standard fixtures that allow for control of light trespass.
  - ii. Plant palette – a community member asked for a clearer understanding of the plant palette

1. The palette of trees planted at the Douglas is similar to those originally proposed for use in the Park, as such they will remain and be added to where appropriate.
  2. Shrubs, perennials and groundcover will also be similar to those originally discussed for the Park, including plants from the local Pollinator Pathway project and native low-maintenance species.
- iii. Coordination with SDOT
1. It was noted that a few assumptions that are part of this design need final sign-off from SDOT, including turning the street to one way and right turn only, the road car lane width and fire access.

