

# Smith Cove Park

**Jenny A. Durkan**  
Mayor

**Samuel Asefa**  
Director, OPCD

**John Savo**, Chair

**Ben de Rubertis** Vice Chair

**Justin Clark**

**Rikerrious Geter**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Brianna Holan**

**Mark Johnson**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Ross Tilghman**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Aaron Hursey**  
Planner

**Matthew Allen**  
Administrative Staff

**Office of Planning and  
Community Development  
Seattle City Hall**  
600 4th Avenue, 5th Floor  
Seattle, WA 98124

**TEL** 206-684-0435  
**FAX** 206-233-2784  
seattle.gov/designcommission

## Commissioners Present

John Savo, Chair  
Rachel Gleeson  
Mark Johnson  
Rick Krochalis  
Ross Tilghman

## Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis, Vice Chair  
Rikerrious Geter  
Justin Clark  
Laura Haddad  
Brianna Holan

## Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is proposing to develop Smith Cove Park, located along Elliott Bay between Magnolia Hill and 23rd Ave. W, and south of the Magnolia Bridge. The site, acquired by SPR through the Pro Parks Levy, was initially developed as an open play field. The current proposal expands the park from 4.9 acres to 10 acres, through the acquisition and development of a parcel between 23rd Ave. W and Pier 91, and will include space for active and passive recreation as well as access to the shoreline. A King County combined sewer overflow (CSO) facility is located on the eastern portion of the site, which is fenced off from the park.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) fourth review of the Smith Cove Park project. During today's meeting, the SDC reviewed the design development phase of the project. The SDC voted, 4-1, to approve the design development phase with several conditions and recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Rikerrious Geter** recused himself as his employer, GGN, is the consultant for this project

**Ross Tilghman** Disclosed that he is working with Seattle Parks on a project unrelated to the Smith Cove Park Project

**October 4, 2018**

10:30 am - Noon

**Type**

CIP

**Phase**

Design Development

**Previous Reviews**

[2/1/18](#), [1/19/17](#), [10/1/15](#)

**Presenters**

Shannon Nichol  
GGN

David Graves  
SPR

**Attendees**

Bessy Barahona  
GGN

David Budnick  
UW Student

Jean Ni  
GGN

Tess Schiavone  
GGN

Katherine Liss  
GGN

Daniel Strauss  
Council Staff

**Summary of Presentation**

Shannon Nichol of GGN, and David Graves of Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR), presented an updated schematic design of the Smith Cove Park project. After a brief description of the site and surrounding context the project team presented the current design proposal for the park. The design team discussed reorienting the site geometry diagonally to counter the rigid divisions and hard edges set by 23rd Avenue West. The design team expressed interest in using grade changes to take advantage of waterfront views and create visual interest. Multiple pedestrian pathways have been proposed adjacent to 23rd Avenue West to increase safety for park users. However, traffic-calming features will not be introduced until the next phase, in collaboration with SDOT.

While the proposal includes an overall park design, referred to as the park vision, it will be constructed in two phases. Phase I includes the development



Figure 1: Updated proposed vision plan



Figure 2: Updated proposed phase I plan

of the parcel west of 23rd Ave W. Phase II includes program elements east of 23rd Ave W and will be reviewed by the Commission at a later time. The updated Phase I designs include more greenery and texture throughout the park, including native trees, reclaimed logs, and a bioretention area between the off-leash area and West Marina Place. The off-leash area was moved back from West Marina Place and decreased in size from 0.5 acre to 0.45 acre, to include a more passive, relevant band of plantings to emulate a tidal zone and conceal fencing. The larger play field required a larger bioretention pond, which serves as a stormwater facility for the park. The volleyball court was eliminated from phase one of the design. *See figures 1 & 2 for more detail.*

David Graves then provided a brief update on phasing and grants for the park. The project team explained that they are looking for additional grants for phase II as well as city funding during the next allotment period.

### Agency Comments

None

### Public Comments

None

### Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Landscape framework for phase I design
- Program priorities for phase I design
- Sustainability
- Phase II design

#### *Landscape framework for phase I*

The SDC expressed their disappointment in the overall program prioritization during phase I, which has had an effect on the overall landscape framework. Commissioners appreciated the revised trail system proposal as well as the placement of the picnic perch and bioretention area.

The SDC then stated its disappointment that the proposed design would not address shoreline restoration or traffic calming along 23rd Ave W during phase I. The commission strongly recommended the project team prioritize the shoreline during phase II. Commissioners also encouraged the project team address ways to integrate and soften the 23rd Ave W through the park during phase II above just providing crosswalks. The SDC also recommended the team coordinate with SDOT to provide traffic calming and other temporary interventions within the right-of-way along 23rd Ave W until phase II is implemented.

Several Commissioners mentioned again the idea of delaying the off-leash programming until phase II in order to create a larger area for passive recreation opportunities, while others thought it would be best to construct the off-leash area in phase I rather than reshuffling programmed space to construct it in phase II. Commissioners are concerned the flexible lawn adjacent to the sports fields will be overly used by organized sports teams, rather than serving as a public space for people to gather. The commission recommended the project team think about the programmatic development of the flexible lawn as a way to encourage public use.

Commissioners appreciated the inclusion of the picnic perch area to help break up an otherwise flat site. The commission then stated the importance of providing section views to reinforce the overall program and landscape design. Commissioners also appreciated the overall plant palette, specifically the addition of Big Leaf Maples along the pathway near western edge of the site.

#### *Program priorities for phase I*

The SDC reiterated its concern with the program prioritization during phase I of project. The commissioners were disappointed that programs critical to providing the overall vision of the park were not being implemented until phase II of the project.

#### *Sustainability*

The SDC commended the project team for the design, location, and plant materials related to the proposed

bioretention system. Commissioners agreed it appeared to be well integrated within the project site. The commissioners also commended the project team for their approach to draining water beneath the sports fields as well as their using natural turf on the sports fields.

### *Phase II design*

The SDC reiterated the need to prioritize shoreline and public access to the water during phase II of the design. The Commission strongly encouraged this to be explicitly called out in phase II plans. Commissioners agreed that all other program elements for phase II be viewed in a design scheme that prioritizes providing an accessible and occupiable shoreline.

The Commission acknowledged the site and funding constraints and how it has negatively affecting the park design. Commissioners were discouraged with the way the overall scheme prioritized programming given the parks role as a regional facility. The Commission also was disappointed by the budget constraints that have plagued the project. Commissioners strongly encouraged SPR to rethinking their approach for allocating funding to specific projects. The Commission recommended SPR first recognize the potential value, project size, site location, and environmental implications of a project prior to allocating a budget, to better meet needs for proposed projects. The SDC expressed their disappointment and stated that this is a recurring problem with SPR projects.

The SDC also recognized the physical constraint that the location of 23rd Ave W had on the overall design. Commissioners expressed their disappointment in the lack of participation from SDOT to help solve this issue.

### **Action**

The Commission thanked the project team for its presentation on the design development phase for the Smith Cove Park project. Overall, the commission appreciated the effort and thinking that went into the proposed park design, given the issues with site layout, funding, and phasing. The SDC voted, 4-1, to approve the design development (90% design) phase of the Smith Cove Park Project with the following condition:

1. Prior to the issuance of a master use permit, return for a subcommittee to review specific details related to the 90% design proposal.

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Consider coordinating with SDOT to provide traffic calming and other temporary interventions within the right-of-way along 23rd Ave W for phase I of the project design
2. Continue programmatic development in flexible space between the sports fields and park edge
3. Strongly consider prioritizing the shoreline during phase II of the park design

The following are statements from commissioners who voted against the design development phase for the Smith Cove Park project:

**John Savo-** The project priorities are backwards, which is still a large issue for me. It is very disappointing that the shoreline has yet to be addressed and that there is no guarantee it will be addressed in the future.