

Westlake and Lenora Park

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Osama Quotah, Chair

Shannon Loew, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Grant Hromas

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

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Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Chair
Shannon Loew, Vice Chair
Brodie Bain
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Grant Hromas
Martin Regge
Ellen Sollod
Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Bernie Alonzo

Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) proposes to build a new park on a 9,142-square-foot site at the corner of Westlake Ave and Lenora St in the Denny Triangle neighborhood. The park would include seating, lighting, landscaping, play elements, and places for performances and vendors. \$150,000 of funding for initial design work for the park came from other alley vacations in the neighborhood; Parks expects some additional funding to come from the Seattle Parks District. Parks is also jointly petitioning with GID, a private developer, to vacate the 16-foot-wide alley between Westlake and Lenora. The vacation would increase the park size and allow for a more seamless transition between the park and the adjacent ground-floor retail proposed in the 9th & Lenora development.

Meeting Summary

The Commission approved the concept design of the park with a vote of 9 to 0. This was the Commission's second review of this site but its first review specifically of the park as a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project; on September 18, 2014, the Commission approved the urban design merit of the proposal to vacate the alley between Westlake and Lenora. The Commission anticipates several additional reviews of this site, including the public benefit package for the joint alley vacation petition and the CIP project at the schematic design and design development phases.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

December 4, 2014**9:00 – 10:35 am****Type**

CIP Project

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

Urban Design Merit for related [9th & Lenora](#) alley vacation approved [September 18, 2014](#)

**9th & Lenora /
Westlake & Lenora Project
Team**
Kim Baldwin

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Mark Brands

Site Workshop

Andrea Fitch

Site Workshop

Donald Harris

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Courtney Kaylor

McCullough Hill Leary, PS

John McMillan

KPF Consulting Engineers

Sara Roberts

KPF Consulting Engineers

Attendees**Beverly Barnett**

SDOT

Lyle Bicknell

DPD

Clair Enlow

Daily Journal of Commerce

Gary Johnson

DPD

Terri Simmons

FAS

Lish Whitson

Council Central Staff

Alex Zimerman

StandUP-America

December 4, 2014

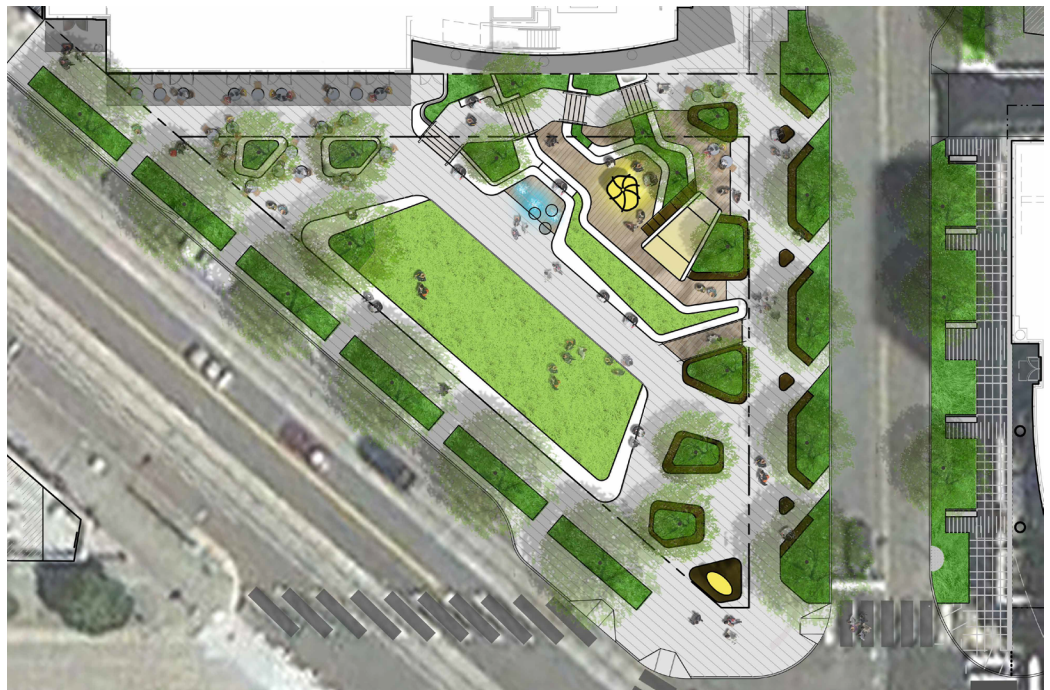
Summary of Presentation

Kim Baldwin summarized Parks' acquisition of this site in 2008 and the design work to date. She described Parks' collaboration with GID on the joint alley vacation petition and specifically noted the ongoing negotiations between Parks and GID regarding GID's intention to use the Parks site for staging of the 9th & Lenora tower development. Ms. Baldwin stated that the team is moving forward only to schematic design at this time but expects additional funding from the recently approved [Seattle Park District](#).

Ms. Baldwin also summarized the team's public engagement and the racial and social guidance that has informed their outreach. The team has conducted two open houses at the site. With workers, residents, and places such as the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library nearby, Ms. Baldwin stated that the team anticipates and is planning for a diverse range of park users.

Mark Brands showed images of the site context and identified nearby private and public open spaces, both existing and future. He also identified relevant designated Green Streets, which new development in the Denny Triangle is helping to implement. An aerial view of the site showed the relationship of the park to the adjacent GID development and identified the alley that Parks and GID are petitioning to vacate.

In a series of charts, Mr. Brands shared the feedback the team received at two open houses. In response to four early design concepts, the public particularly supported a flat, usable lawn space along Westlake. Mr. Brands stated that art, play, and events are some of the elements the team hopes will identify this park.



Site plan for Westlake & Lenora Park

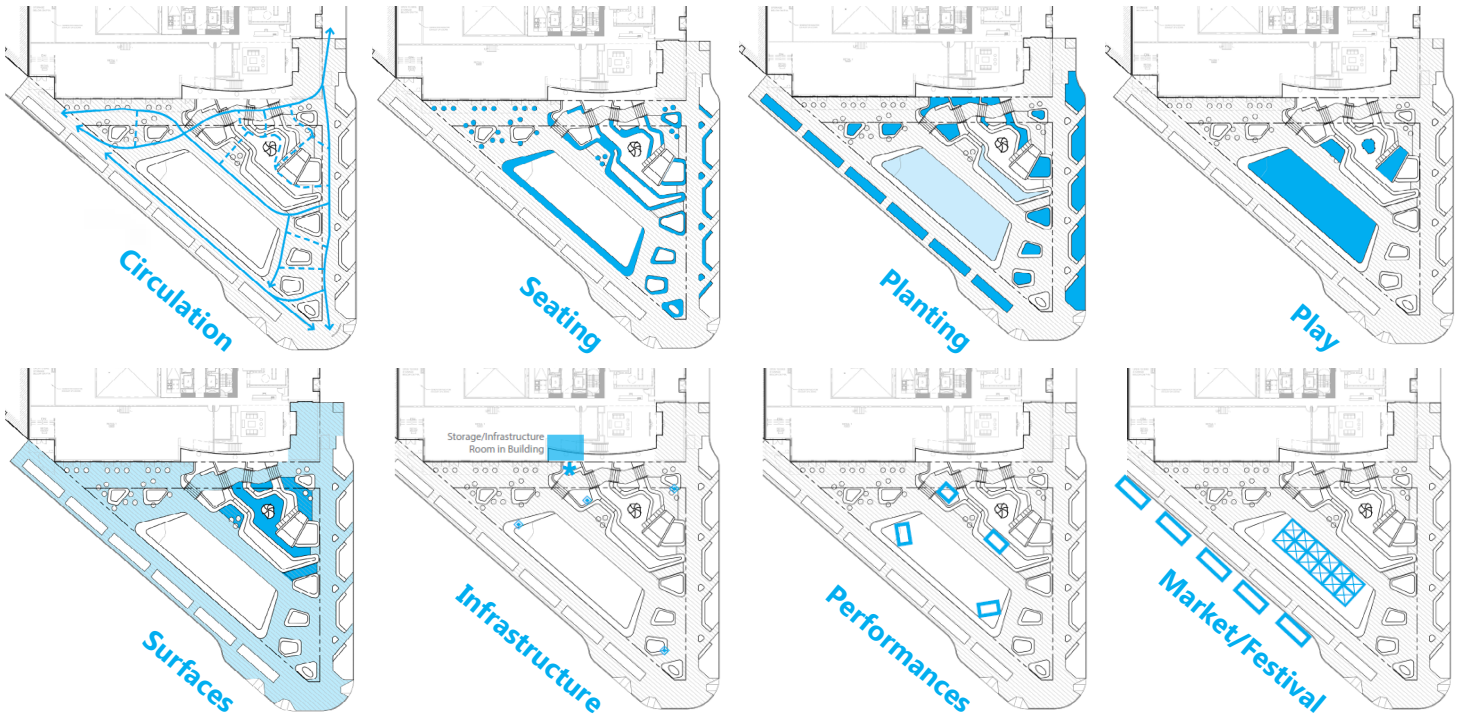
Mr. Brands then showed the above plan of the proposed park design. He noted the roughly 10-foot grade change between Westlake and Lenora and identified several of the park elements, which include:

- Seating
- Hardscape plazas
- Water feature and play element

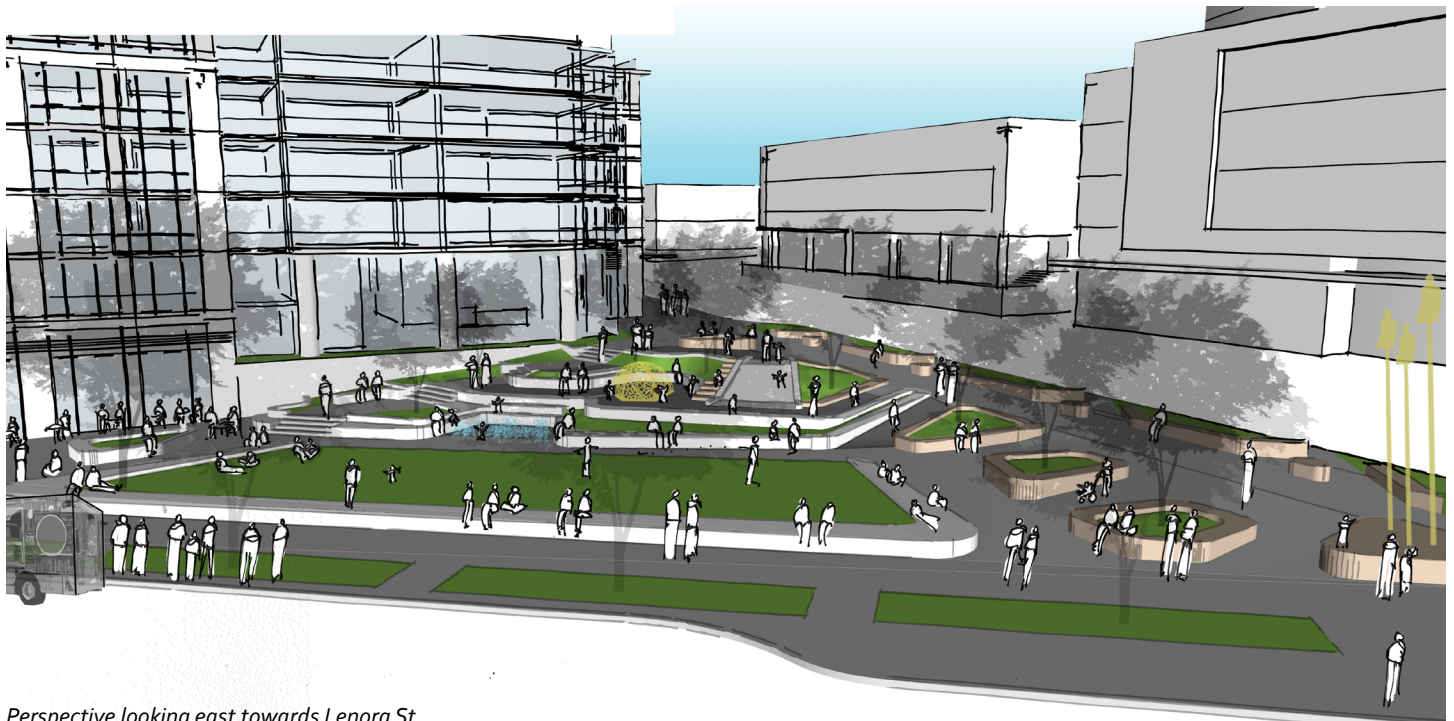
- Raised lawn
- Artwork
- Hillclimb

A new signalized crossing is planned as part of the Amazon's nearby Block 20 development that would provide a direct connection from the Westlake and Lenora corner to 8th Ave and Lenora St.

A series of diagrams showed how the park supports a variety of potential functions and elements:



Mr. Brands stated that the team hopes to bring an artist onboard in the next phase of design. Ms. Baldwin stated that the team hopes the park will receive Percent for Art funding. Lastly, Mr. Brands showed several perspectives of the proposed park design. The full presentation is available on the [Design Commission website](#).



Perspective looking east towards Lenora St

Agency Comments

Lyle Bicknell stated that the proposed design is exactly what DPD intended for this area and a very appropriate response. He recommended strongly against the right-turn lane from Lenora to Westlake.

Terry Simmons cautioned that, due to the grade changes at the site, accessibility at the park will likely hinge on integration of the park design with the right-of-way design.

Public Comments

none

Summary of Discussion

The Commission was largely positive about the direction of the park design. Much of the discussion focused on the edges of the project. On Lenora St, the Commissioners were supportive of the “living room” spaces created with the irregular seat walls. There was some skepticism about the connections between the sidewalk to the street that would allow pedestrians to cross Lenora, and the Commission recommended that the team consider whether and where to include those. A more continuous edge might create opportunities to manage and express stormwater given the grade along Lenora St.

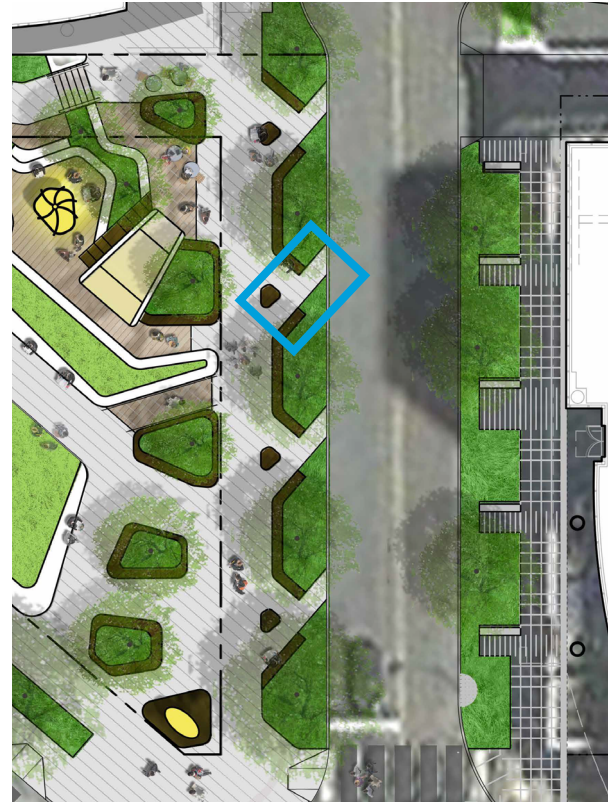
On Westlake, the Commissioners had a range of reactions and suggestions. There was concern about how food truck queuing would occur relative to the planted areas along the street edge. The Commissioners noted that food trucks have a range of queuing procedures and requirements that this edge, if successful, would have to be flexible to accommodate. But they also advised against designing specifically for food trucks as a use given their impermanence. While some Commissioners suggested that the Westlake edge could include some of the “living room” moments proposed on Lenora, most agreed that the continuous seat wall was a strong component of the design. The Commissioners also urged the team to entire Westlake corridor as they develop the streetscape design and identified the Westlake and Lenora corner as an interesting opportunity given its prominence and the confluence of three crosswalks there.

The Commission also treated the northwest boundary of the site as an edge between the public park and private development. Recognizing that property line issues are still under negotiation as part of the joint vacation petition process, the Commission discussed:

1. whether the stair takes a meandering or more direct path,
2. opportunities to increase the raised lawn area, and
3. whether the retail seating and planters could use a different language that the “organic” seating areas along Lenora in order to encourage pedestrians to meander through the entire site.

The Commission did not arrive at strong recommendations on these items but encouraged the project team to consider the particular context of each edge of the park and unify some of the competing languages present in the concept design.

Lastly, the Commission supported the play structure as an artful element in the design and recommended that the artist be



The Commissioners discussed the “living room” spaces along Lenora St and the connections outlined above.



The discussion addressed the stair, the northern edge of the site, and the retail seating areas.

brought into the design process as soon as possible. The Commissioners saw great opportunity for integrated artwork at this site and, at the next review, hopes to see detail on the play structure design, how it will work for all ages, and how it enhances the experience of the place. The Commissioners appreciated the water feature but, given its cost and small size, encouraged the team to think carefully about its design so it truly enhances the park.



The Commissioners were enthusiastic about the "artful" play structure and hope to see more detail at the schematic design phase.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team for the presentation of the concept design of Westlake & Lenora Park. The Commission is excited to review the first of 14 landmark park sites that will be developed with funding from the Seattle Parks District.

Overall the Commission appreciates that the project team:

- Has conducted substantial public outreach and used it to inform the park design
- Is carefully considering the surrounding urban context, particularly given the quantity redevelopment occurring nearby

While Parks is jointly applying with GID to vacate the alley between Westlake Ave and Lenora St, today's review covered only the park development as a CIP project. The Commission approved the urban design merit of the proposed alley vacation on September 18, 2014, and will review public benefit later this month.

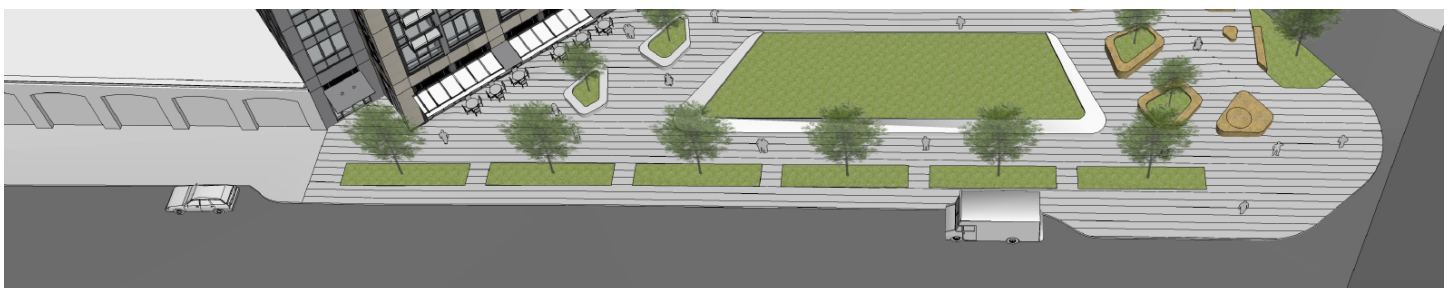
With a **vote of 9 to 0**, the Design Commission approved the concept design of Westlake & Lenora Park with the following recommendations:

Art

- We appreciate that the play element is more than merely a traditional play structure, engages children and adults alike, and is an artful element that contributes positively to the park even when not in use.
- Given the important urban location of this park, we highly recommend that the City provide One Percent for Art funding. We encourage the design team to work with the Office of Arts and Culture to bring an artist on board as soon as possible. Integrated artwork is a critical part of the design solution for the park.

Edges

- Consult with Jennifer Wieland and SDOT for early guidance on the Street Improvement Permit (SIP) process in order to understand the relevant standards that may inform the design of the Westlake streetscape.



The Commission recommended that the team consider the entire Westlake corridor as they design this edge of the park.

- Continue to refine how each edge of the site responds to its particular context and supports the overall concept and program for the park.
- As you study the Westlake streetscape further, consider the broader context of uses and designs along the Westlake corridor and how this project can reflect, inform, and support it.
- Further develop the exciting concept of “living rooms” on the Lenora streetscape. Consider modifying or reducing the “relief” connections between the sidewalk and Lenora St in order to enhance the social aspect of this edge.
- Carefully consider the relationship of the stair to the public space along Westlake, the play area, and the adjacent private development. Endeavor to apply as deliberate approach to this north edge as the Lenora streetscape.

Lighting

- Consider opportunities for both ground-plane and pedestrian-scale lighting.
- Ensure lighting is appropriate for all seasons and uses, including nighttime activities.

Sustainability

- Seek opportunities to integrate and express stormwater management in the park design, especially given the site topography.

The Commission will review the proposed public benefit package for the joint vacation petition from Parks and GID on December 18 and anticipates reviewing the park as a CIP project at the schematic design and design development phases.



The Commission is also reviewing the proposed alley vacation between the Parks site (right) and a development at 9th & Lenora by GID (left).