

Westlake & Lenora Park

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Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad

Non-voting Commissioners Present

Evan Fowler

Commissioners Excused

Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis

Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) 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 will include seating, lighting, open lawn, interactive play elements, and an area for vendors. Funding for the park is provided by the Seattle Parks District and GID. \$150,000 of additional funding for initial design work for the park came from other alley vacations in the neighborhood; SPR has received additional funding from the Seattle Parks District. SPR 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

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the Westlake & Lenora Park. Prior to this meeting, the SDC reviewed and approved the concept design in 2014. The purpose of this meeting was to review the design development phase of the Westlake & Lenora Park development. After the presentation, questions, and deliberation, the SDC voted, 6-1, to approve the design development phase of the Westlake & Lenora Park development with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures

September 07, 2017

3:00 - 4:30 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Design Development

Previous Reviews

[12/04/14](#), [09/18/14](#)

Presenters

Brian Bishop

Siteworkshop

Mark Brands

Siteworkshop

Kelly Goold

Seattle Parks and Recreation

Attendees

Lloyd Douglas

Community member

Patti Wilma

Seattle Planning Commission

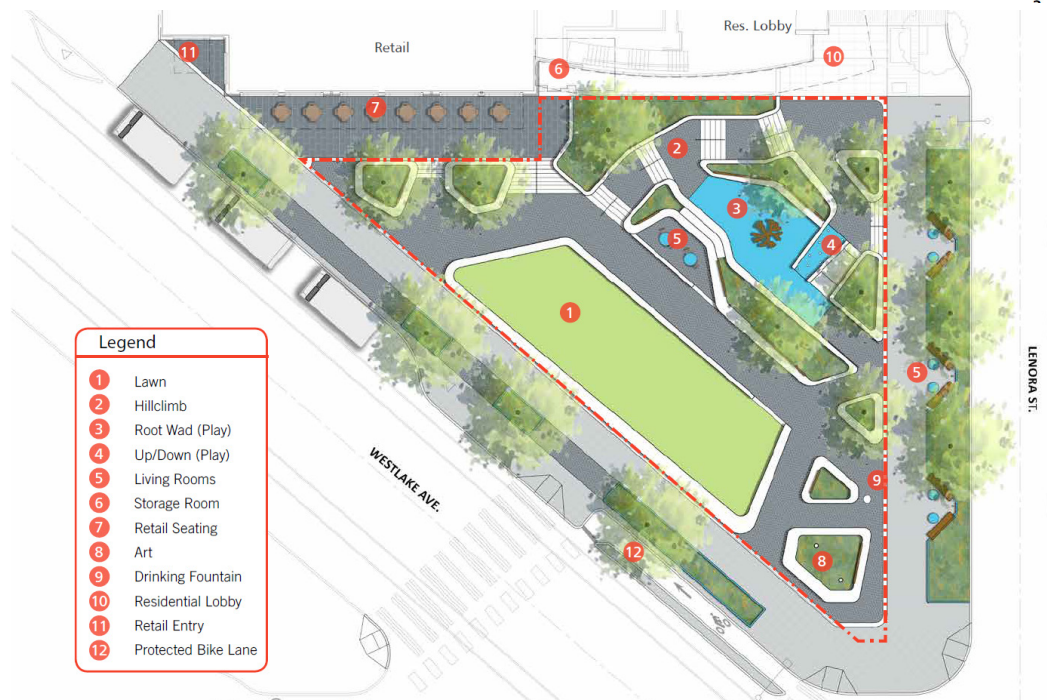


Figure 1: Project site location (top) updated design proposal (bottom)

Summary of Presentation

Mark Brands, of Siteworkshop, presented the design development phase of the Westlake & Lenora Park. Mark Brands provided background and site context for the proposed park. The project site was purchased in 2008 with the intent to vacate the adjacent alley between Westlake Ave and Lenora St (see figure 1). The project proposal was last reviewed by the SDC in 2014 and has received several design updates since then. The updated park design includes a lawn area, active play elements, hillclimb, and elevated concrete planters with seating throughout the park. The proposed lawn area is enclosed by low lying concrete retaining wall and will be accessible along the southeastern edge. The sustainability strategy will address on site stormwater through the use of permeable unit pavers and rain gardens.

The proposal also provides design elements within the rights-of-way (ROW) along Westlake Ave and Lenora St. The ROW along Westlake Ave will include a landscape buffer with street trees and low-lying fencing to protect the planting areas. The ROW along Westlake Ave near the intersection with Lenora St. will include a protected bicycle lane and bicycle crossing that is perpendicular to the street car line. The ROW



Figure 2: Proposed artwork design

along Lenora St will include a series of small street rooms with seating as well as a landscape buffer with street trees and low-lying fencing to protect the planting areas. See *figure 1* for more detail.

The project team has engaged with artist Janet Zweig, to provide artwork near the Westlake Ave and Lenora St intersection. The artwork will include two elevated analog signs. The proposed artwork was inspired by vertical elements and analog signage that was historically present both onsite and throughout the surrounding area. The signs will potentially project words highlighting pieces of literature. see *figure 2* for more detail.

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Program & functionality
- Circulation & wayfinding
- Placemaking
- Edge conditions
- Materials & Sustainability
- Art integration

Program and functionality

Although the SDC supported the overall programming for the proposed park, a few commissioners were concerned with the lack of integration between two programming elements, seating and recreation space. Commissioners recommended the design team simplify programming as well as to create a park center. The Commission complemented the design team for the complex design of the play area, which contrasts with the open lawn, but agreed there should be better interaction between the two areas.

The SDC was also concerned with the proposed wall on the interior side of the lawn, separating the lawn from the adjacent interior pathway. Commissioners recommended eliminating the wall to create a continuous open edge along

the pathway. The commission discussed sloping the lawn towards the interior pathway as a potential solution for eliminating the need for the interior wall.

The commission was concerned with the lack of a designated area for dogs. Commissioners worried that without a designated area, dogs will utilize several areas throughout the park. The Commission recommended the design team designate an area for dogs.

Circulation and wayfinding

The SDC supported the proposed park circulation. Commissioners agreed the project team had addressed many potential circulation issues.

Placemaking

The SDC discussed the potential opportunity for placemaking near a park center. Commissioners then agreed the tree root play element has the potential to serve as a landmark within the park. The SDC then discussed narrowing the interior pathway to increase the width of the open lawn.

Edge conditions

The SDC commended the design team for their attention in addressing edge conditions. Specifically, commissioners liked how the design team addressed the transition from adjacent retail areas to the park. The commission also supported the proposed living room areas along Lenora St. Commissioners appreciated the use of color on park elements, but questioned if the landscape fencing along the Westlake Ave and Lenora St rights-of-way (ROW) was the appropriate element to highlight.

Materials and sustainability

The SDC disagreed on the proposed concrete color. Several commissioners were concerned the concrete would easily stain and recommended using a darker shade. Other commissioners suggested the proposed concrete color increased the visual quality of the material and thought stains and markups were indicators of a well-used space. The Commission recommended the project team be more attentive to the contrast between proposed hardscape materials.

The SDC then supported the proposed storm water sustainability plan.

Art integration

The SDC agreed the proposed artwork is not well integrated with the park design. The commission suggested the design team incorporate themes from the artwork into the landscape design. Commissioners also suggested highlighting themes through the use of specific colors in the planting palette.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for the presentation of the design development phase of the Westlake & Lenora Park development. Overall, the Commission appreciated the overall high quality of materials and proposed programming and attention to edge conditions. The SDC voted, 6-1, to approve the design development phase of the Westlake & Lenora Park development with the following recommendations:

1. Consider simplification of the design and unification of the two disconnected halves of the park.
2. Consider eliminating the proposed wall on the interior of the lawn, opening the lawn to the adjacent interior walkway
3. Designate a location in one of the tree pits within the ROW for dogs
4. Reduce the amount of contrast between the hardscape materials throughout the site

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

Rachel Gleeson- The proposed program elements are not working together to achieve the intended concept.