

Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II

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Mayor

Samuel Asefa
Director, OPCD

Ben de Rubertis, Chair

Brianna Holan, Vice Chair

Justin Clark

Rikerrious Geter

Laura Haddad

Mark Johnson

Rick Krochalis

Amalia Leighton

Vinita Sidhu

Elaine Wine

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Commissioners Present

Ben de Rubertis, Chair
Brianna Holan, Vice Chair
Rikerrious Geter
Laura Haddad
Mark Johnson

Commissioners Excused

Justin Clark
Rick Krochalis
Vinita Sidhu

Non Voting Commissioners Present

Amalia Leighton
Elaine Wine

Project Description

In 2006, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) began planning for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The new 31-acre master planned community will include replacement low-income housing, market-rate housing, two community centers, 2.5 acres of open space, and other neighborhood improvements. More than 12,000 people will live at Yesler Terrace when fully built out.

As part of the redevelopment, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) petitioned to vacate (permanently close) several streets. In the vacation petition, SHA proposed several public benefits, including three pocket parks. The pocket parks are part of the Green Loop, a connected network of public open spaces included in the redevelopment master plan.

From 2009 to 2011, the SDC reviewed the petition to vacate streets in Yesler Terrace. At that time, SHA identified the locations of the pocket parks but not their final configuration, programming, and design. We are reviewing the design of this public benefit.

The street vacation conditions outline key features of the pocket parks: each must be 12,000 square feet, have 70 linear feet of frontage on a public street, and accommodate both active and passive uses. Design elements for this pocket park include active play areas, gathering space, open lawn, and garden area.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase for the project. After the presentation and discussion the SDC voted, 5-0, to approve the schematic design with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

Vinita Sidhu recused herself as her employer, SiteWorkshop, is working on the project.

June 6, 2019

10:30 am - Noon

Type

CIP

Phase

Design Development (90% phase)

Previous Reviews

[9/7/17](#)

Presenters

Brian Bishop
SiteWorkshop

Attendees

Beverly Barnett

SDOT

Biruk Belay

SiteWorkshop

Ryan Moore

SHA

Suzi Morris

Lowe-re

Lily Pan

SiteWorkshop



Figure 1: Project location

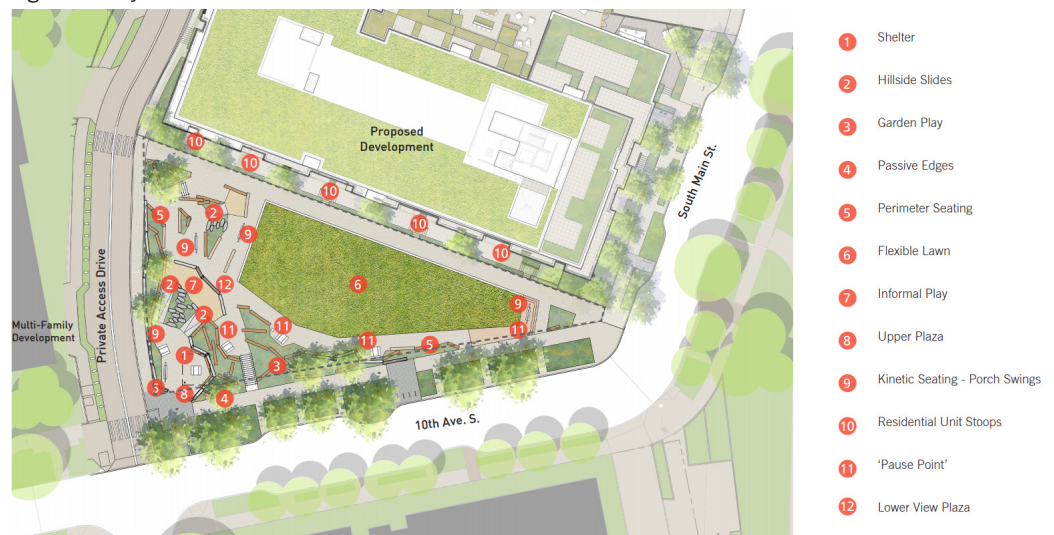


Figure 2: Updated site plan

Summary of Presentation

Brian Bishop, of SiteWorkshop, presented the schematic design for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II project. The presentation began with a brief overview of the project, neighborhood context, and overarching design principles. The project team reminded the commission of park requirements set as part of the street vacation approval for Yesler Terrace redevelopment. *See figure 1.*

The project team explained how they responded to the concerns and recommendations raised by commissioners at their last SDC meeting. The updated design (*See figure 2*) eliminated the southern shade structure and stairway near the intersection of 10th Ave S and S Main St, increased the size of the lawn, and provided a larger buffer between the park and the adjacent residential entrances. The updated proposal also includes a larger shade structure near the northwest corner of the park along 10th Ave S, integrated play equipment, open lawn, swings, seating, and ADA accessible pathways. The team also provided an updated materials and plant palette for the park proposal.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, SDOT, provided a summary of previous planning and policy work for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment. Ms. Barnett reminded everyone that this project serves as one public benefit element for several street vacation petitions and that the purpose of this meeting was to review the final design ensure that it met conditions set during the street vacation process. Ms. Barnett then stated that the proposed design had evolved well.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Design refinements
- Relationship to theme for Yesler Terrace Development
- Site furnishings, lighting, materials, and other final details
- Accessibility
- Art and sustainability

Design refinements

The SDC commended the project team for the updated design proposal. Commissioners stated that the current proposal significantly improves the previous design and thought it would have a positive impact on the neighborhood. Commissioners appreciated the amount and location of programming throughout the park. While the Commission agreed the project team needs to continue to address refinements to the southern edge of the park, they see improvement to the overall park design.

The Commission encouraged the project team to provide a greater amount of shade throughout the site whether through the increase in size of the pavilion and its roofline or additional shade trees. The Commission also encouraged the project team to use the proposed swing as an anchor point for the south end of the park and suggested possibly adding an additional swing and canopy to the structure. The SDC then commended the project team for combining and leveling the open lawn. Commissioners also appreciated the visual separation between the park and adjacent stoops.

Relationship to theme for Yesler Terrace Development

The SDC agreed the proposed design works well with the overall concept of other areas within the Yesler Terrace Development. Commissioners commented that this design complemented the larger open space concept without replicating the other parks within Yesler Terrace.

Site furnishings, lighting, materials, and other final details

The SDC approved of the materials and furnishing proposed for the park. Commissioners commented that the proposed materiality will require a lot of attention to detail and that they are excited to see the final results. Commissioners reminded the project team to ensure that quality materials are specified and well maintained over time to increase the longevity and functionality of the space.

Commissioners then discussed the location and design of lighting within the park. While the Commission appreciated the project team wanting to limit lighting to the area along 10th Ave S, they recommended the project team consider the integration of more lighting options, specifically along the ADA pathway and within other vertical structures to create a sense of hierarchy throughout the space. The SDC then encouraged the project team to consider the addition of railings along 10th Ave S for accessibility. The commission also encouraged the project team to specify lighting and other furnishings that are within the same design family.

The Commission then recommended the project team consider reorienting and increasing the size of the proposed pavilion structure at the NW corner of the park, to better integrate it within the surrounding landscape and to provide an area for larger gatherings. Commissioners also questioned the size and location of the proposed bioretention area for safety reasons. Specifically, commissioners thought that given the small size of the proposed bioretention area it would have to be deep in order to fully function. If the stormwater

facility becomes deeper, it could impact safety and overall circulation at the south end of the park. As a result, commissioners want to ensure the bioretention will function as intended if it is to be included in the final design.

The SDC also encouraged the project team to provide more traditional or formal seating opportunities so not to rely on logs and gabion walls as the primary seating for the park. Commissioners recommended including additional seating in the parking strip along 10th Ave S, perpendicular to the street, to provide an overlook into the park as well as a space for conversation.

Accessibility

The SDC repeated its suggestion to increase the amount of traditional seating. Commissioners recommended the project team providing seating with seat backs and also encouraged the project team increase the amount of seating along 10th Ave S to provide areas of respite.

The Commission then repeated its recommendation to consider providing lighting along the ADA pathway.

Art and sustainability

The SDC agreed that the project team should think about how to incorporate art into the site design. The commission recommended the project team consider incorporating art near the southern edge of the park. Several commissioners agreed this could help in providing a stopping point along the southern edge for people to gather prior to crossing the street.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the schematic design phase for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development. Overall the commission appreciated the evolution of the design, the balance of programs, and the overall flexibility of the open space. The SDC voted, 5-0, to approve the schematic design phase for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development with the following recommendations:

1. Consider incorporating art near the southern corner of the park at 10th Ave S and S Main St
2. Ensure the proposed bioretention area is safe and functional
3. Consider increasing the size and reorientation of the existing shade structure
4. Consider the integration of more lighting options to create a sense of hierarchy throughout the space
5. Consider the integration of lighting along the ADA pathway
6. Consider providing seating options with back support
7. Consider additional seating in the parking strip along 10th Ave S, perpendicular to the street, to provide an overlook into the park as well as a space for conversation.
8. Consider use and functionality of wall condition between lawn and walkway located in front of adjacent development