

DISCOVERY PARK MASTER PLAN  
FORT LAWTON PARK PLAN  
From 1992 reprint of 1972 plan

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Prepared by Dan Kiley and Partners  
Planners, architects, Landscape Architects  
Wings Point, Charlotte, Vermont

John Morse, Seattle , Associated Architect  
November 1972

**DAN KILEY AND PARTNERS** PLANNERS – ARCHITECTS – LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
- WINGS POINT – CHARLOTTE, VERMONT 05445 – PHONE 802-425-2141

DANIEL URBAN KILEY  
IAN TYNDALL  
PETER KER WALKER

February, 1972

The Honorable Wes Uhlman  
Mayor's Office  
City of Seattle  
Seattle, Washington

Dear Mr. Mayor:

We are pleased to submit herewith our final report on the Master Plan for Fort Lawton Park. This publication is a policy document, which should be used as a guide for making decisions regarding immediate and long range physical development of the Park.

Traditionally, parks have been designed as additions to the habitation of man, for instance, New York City plus Central Park, Brooklyn plus Prospect Park, London plus Hyde Park, Paris plus the Bois de Boulogne. Our goal is to make this park, Fort Lawton Park, one of the truly great urban parks of the world.

We view the large problem in shaping our urban environment as a need to reintegrate city and park. The park must not be seen as a separate idea in the City, but as part of a system of places where people live, work, play, worship, socialize, shop or just meditate. The park can fulfill certain of these functions better than any other place in the city but must relate to all of the city functions and activities.

The problem of Fort Lawton Park design has been approached by identifying and examining all of the influences on park use and then making an ideal projection of what a park could be. This was examined in detail with all of the agencies and persons concerned with the Park development. Then a realistic design that does not ignore the highest possibilities of the place evolved. The design must not be imposed but rather elicited from the people, the site and the surrounding conditions. To this end, different alternative possibilities for the site were examined in arriving at the ideal projection.

Very generally, the method that was followed was for the design team to examine the site and environs in detail, identify goals, needs, resources and priorities and formulate design alternatives.

Work on the study commenced with an initial site visit by all key members of the design team. Later site visits were made as required. The field office of our local associate and planning liaison, John M. Morse, FAIA, handled coordination.

Frequent contact with local agency representatives, particularly the Mayor's office, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Department of Community Development, has been an essential part of the design process.

Planning does not end with this publication. The plan is intended as a framework which should be maintained, but kept in line with changing conditions, that cannot be foreseen. As future projections become realities assistance will be required in the development and review of detailed design definitives.

The City and the Planners recognize the great value of the new park site and are concerned with preserving the long range benefits of such a large strategically located public open space. The highest order of design talent should be sought to achieve the right kind of uses and physical organization of the park in the subsequent implementation of the plans set forth in this document.

We greatly appreciate and gratefully acknowledge the aid and assistance given us during the course of this study by the various governmental and community organizations involved.

Sincerely yours,

Daniel U. Kiley

### **Park Objective**

The transfer to Seattle of a major portion of the Fort Lawton site challenges this city to create within its borders a public park of unparalleled magnificence.

The site is one of breathtaking majesty. Lying at the northern tip of Seattle's crescent on Elliott Bay and thrusting westward into Puget Sound, this promontory commands dramatic views up and down the Sound and across the water to the snow-covered Olympic Mountains.

The seclusion of the site, the magnificent vistas, the stretches of tidal beaches, the stands of native trees, the meadowlands—all combine to make this site one of surpassing beauty and serenity. As a park site its potential is bounded only by the vision and resolution of those into whose hands it is entrusted.

The master plan, we believe, lays down guidelines which, if followed faithfully, cannot fail to create on this site a park which will be one of the great urban parks of the world—and a joy to this city forever.

### **Park Guiding Principles**

It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a long-range plan, the details of which will be valid for all time. Ideas which appear on paper to be so promising may turn out in practice to be unexciting or impractical or even impossible. The details of our plan will undoubtedly require revision from time to time in order that the overall objectives may continue to be realized. We would hope that those into whose hands this park is entrusted will constantly refer to these principles for guidance in the development of Fort Lawton Park.

### **Primary Function — Central Purpose**

The primary role of this park in the life of the city is dictated by its incomparable site. That role should be to provide an open space of quiet and tranquility for the citizens of this city—a sanctuary where they might escape the turmoil of the city and enjoy the rejuvenation which quiet and solitude and an intimate contact with nature can bring. It should be accepted that this park cannot satisfy all of the recreational needs of all of the citizens of Seattle. It can only complement the other elements in the park system. This park should not be asked to serve too many functions. It will best serve this city if it is permitted to serve one primary function and to serve that function well.

### **Future Structures and Activities**

In the years to come there will be almost irresistible pressure to carve out areas of the park in order to provide sites for various civic structures or space for special activities. There will in the future be structures and activities without number for which, it will be contended, this park can provide an “ideal site” at no cost. The pressures for those sites may constitute the greatest single threat to the park. They must be resisted with resolution. If they are not, the park will be so fragmented that it can no longer serve its central purpose. Only those activities and only those structures should be accepted which are in harmony with the overall theme, character and objective of the park. There must be a deep commitment to the belief that there is no more valuable use of this site than as an open space.

### **Off-Site Approaches**

The approaches to this park should be as beautiful as the park itself. This means that early and effective steps must be taken to beautify the approaches and to protect them against commercial intrusion. As quickly as possible, Gilman Avenue and Government Way should become tree-lined boulevards with underground utilities.

### **Private Vehicles**

There will be great pressures to open up the park to automobiles, motorcycles and motor bikes. One of the greatest values of the park is, however, that it will afford the people a refuge from the noise, air pollution and danger of the automobile. We believe, therefore, that park patrons should not be permitted to drive their private vehicles through the park.

### **Memorials**

There will be great pressures in the future to memorialize individuals and groups of individuals by placing statuary or other memorial structures within the park. Other great urban parks of the world demonstrate the folly of yielding to these pressures. In many of those parks the most attractive spaces have become cluttered with memorial statues. It would be well to establish a firm policy against the placing of such memorials within the park. We would recommend that all memorials be restricted to the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers.

### **South Beach**

Because of the great recreational and educational value of natural, saltwater beaches, we recommend that the south beach be considered inviolable and that it be preserved in its natural state.

### **Structures**

The greatest single attribute of this site is its natural beauty. In the development of this park the most single consideration must therefore be the preservation and enhancement of that beauty. The inclusion of any improvement which detracts from that beauty must be weighed with the greatest of care to make sure that the advantages of that particular improvement clearly outweigh the damage that it does to the beauty of the park. The aim of design for all structures shall be to be compatible with the site and subordinate to the natural environment; any structures that cannot do this or that should be hidden must be screened and buffered so that they will have the least adverse effect upon the natural beauty of the site.

### **Timing of Development**

This park should be developed with deliberation. It is going to be part of this city for a long time to come and need not, therefore, be developed impulsively or precipitously. Its development should be at a pace that will allow the most careful consideration to be given to the long-term significance of each proposed element of the park.

### **Park Acquisition**

The lands which are being transferred by the Federal government to Seattle at the present time will comprise an admirable beginning for a great park. The Federal government is, however, retaining some of the lands which are most

desirable for park purposes. We would urge the citizens of Seattle to continue unabated their efforts to acquire for park purposes all lands not absolutely required by the Federal government. Seattle should not be content until it has acquired the crown of the hill with its commanding and breathtaking vistas. The ultimate objective should be the acquisition of all lands which presently comprise the site of Fort Lawton.

### **Long Range Plan**

The plan is to provide a strong, well-organized and unified major urban regional park--a decisive framework in the tradition of Frederick Law Olmsted's Central Park Plan or L'Enfant's Plan for Washington, D.C. The Long Range Plan is the objective to which the initial phases of development lead and provides the structure on which to build over the years. The proposed development recognizes the unique character and special function of this large public open space on Puget Sound; it also recognizes that Fort Lawton Park is an integral part of the total Seattle Park System by offering recreation activities complementary to other parks and especially suited to this site.

The plan is inspired by the great size and beauty of the site, its comparative isolation, ocean exposure, and dramatic outlooks, its varied topography and geology, and its vast areas of native plants and grasses.

The design of the plan incorporates several fundamental elements: a clear and strong Main Entrance from the city on the east (with a secondary entrance on the south), a Mall of formal landscape and activity, a wild Sea Garden plateau, deep woods along the north and east upper slopes, an overall informal pattern of foot and bicycle paths, historic South Bluffs in a state of constant erosion, and expansive ocean beaches both shallow and sandy and steep and rocky.

The manner of public access to the park and all its areas is most important: private vehicles will be the most usual mode, but public transportation will also be developed. The plan proposes that all vehicles be prohibited from going deep into the park and thus destroying it - they shall be limited to parking areas at the east end of the Mall, connecting with a mini-system forming a loop through the park and down to the shore. Only on weekdays or days of limited park patronage would vehicles other than bicycles be allowed on the one park road running from the Mall to the secondary entrance on the south and to West Point. The pedestrian is king.

Except for the Mall, the only organized activity centers would be the Indian Cultural Center, the Nature Interpretive Area, the Rhododendron Glen, and the southeast Play Area. A Park Maintenance Area would be located near the Main Entrance. Two picnic areas would lie north of the Mall and at the top of the North Bluff.

The prime considerations in this design, therefore, are to combine the rich attributes of the site into a unified whole, balancing and relating its parts and features, so that a continuous evolving experience results, ever-changing and varied as the conditions direct. The site is to be kept as open as possible and to be perceived as a logical and informal succession of spaces, activities, and plant growth without defined boundaries (with the exception of the formally organized Mall). This makes a park that affords rest and relaxation, activities for varied tastes, and educational, cultural or scientific endeavors; it also gives the city dwellers exciting places to come together in, to identify in, where they sit, drink, eat, look and relax in civilized space in Nature.

To achieve these ends, certain prohibitions, corrections, and limitations are proposed.

1. No other roads shall be developed other than the one road from the Main Entrance to the Mall to south entry and to West Point, and this shall be only for limited use of visitors' private vehicles on days when the park has few visitors. Parking shall be near the park entrances. All other present roads shall be either obliterated or narrowed and changed to pedestrian or bicycle paths.
2. No Metro plant development shall take place on the south shores, the present sludge lagoon shall be removed as soon as possible, and any acceptable future Metro plant expansion shall be limited to the north side of the present treatment plant. A solid visual screen of evergreens shall be planted around the Metro plant to screen any view of the plant from the beaches. From a design standpoint, all Metro developments must be considered as a part of the park.
3. Another visual buffer of evergreens (to protect both the neighbors and the park) shall be installed on all the perimeter land boundaries of the park.
4. The South Bluffs shall be untouched with trails or developments, for they are dangerous to traverse and are of supreme interest to the geologist.
5. Many of the present buildings shall be removed because they are inappropriate to the park.
6. The general objective of plant and tree development shall be to support and reinforce native and indigenous growth; arboretum-type developments of non-native specimens shall not be encouraged.

In more detail, then, what do the various features of the plan look like?

The park visitor will come from the city on a noble, direct and landscaped approach - Gilman Avenue West - and will cross the Kiwanis Ravine on a bridge and then enter the park on the axis of the Mall. He can loop the parking lots inside the entrance and leave his car there. Grade differences and surrounding hedges and trees will screen the cars from view and the parking lots will be interspersed with separating gardens of flowers, azaleas, and rhododendrons. (From here a park service drive will continue along the north

side of the Mall, south on the western ridge and branch to the south park entrance and to the Metro plant.)

The Mall will begin at the west end of the parking and continue on the existing broad level shelf to the western ridge. The first approach through a grove of trees will go by a central water element to the Orientation Center, which in turn will overlook a reflecting pool with more landscaped courts beyond. The Mall thus becomes a string of tree shaded courts for promenading, sitting, people-watching, and quiet games like lawn bowling or croquet. Walks will line the edge and subdivide the Mall, with trails leading -out on either side to the other park areas. At the West End an amphitheater built against the ridge will terminate the Mall. This Mall is therefore the only formalized area in the park and is the structure to which the entrance and the rest of the dispersed park is linked.

On the side trails from the Mall, visitors will walk to the Indian Cultural Center, Nature Interpretive Area , Rhododendron Glen, and the family picnic spots. These features are like beads on a chain of Mall and Parking.

The Indian Center, located northwest of the Mall, looks out over the Sound and to the Olympic Mountains. This site with its spectacular view is readily accessible to visitors, yet can be developed with a privacy and character of its own.

The Rhododendron Glen and Nature Interpretive Area are purposely set in a gently sloping, wind-protected, wooded hillside where natural growths of mixed evergreen and deciduous trees abound. Springs and streams appear at certain times of year, and small clearings bring light to the foliage floor.

Picnic areas north of the Mall have a richness of berry bushes and even a freshwater pool. An intimate weather-protected area accessible to young families or the elderly, this slope is well over the hill from the stormy south winds and is quite open to the sun and the sky.

Further travel by foot, bicycle, or mini-bus utilizes paths laid out on the old road alignments. These bring one to the higher, more open and panoramic views to west and south, through a natural landscape of deciduous trees. First, another picnic ground on an open slope looking west to the Olympics through a row of large maples on the bluff's edge; next, the former Parade Grounds for kite flying or just strolling. And beyond this, the bird-watching meadows of long grass leading to the dramatic outlook to city and Elliott Bay from the top of the South Bluffs.

The Sea Garden will be the name of the area just west of the meadows where additional plantings of heath, heather, broom, bearberry, and Oregon Grape



would cover the natural mounds. Tree plantings of cryptomeria and yellow cedar would enclose small areas and present a contrasting vertical scale.

Before leaving the uplands one could visit another newly created open space over the ridge in the southeast corner of the park. Here will be a Play Area for the larger games of tennis, softball or baseball, together with perhaps some children's playlots. This is well separated from neighboring park areas and lies well above the streets surrounding the park. An adjacent parking lot, off the Government Way entrance, will enable visitors to use this Play Area without going through the rest of the park.

Bluffs on both north and south will be undisturbed and only to the north will a few zigzag trails be developed - maybe on elevated boardwalks to preserve the terrain down to the shoreland below. The sloughing South Bluffs will be separated from the meadows by a low rail fence.

Beaches will be open for public walking for their entire length. The South Beach is broad and spacious at low tide and its charm and mystery come from its isolation and its great expanse at low tide, backed by the high ancient bluffs, and then the surprise that from here the ferry boats and downtown Seattle are so near and beyond them Mount Rainier rises out of the distant industrial valley all snowy and clean.

West Point is the most isolated and lonely part of this shore. The North Beach is filled and walled at the Metro plant and is rough, rocky, narrow and steep beyond. It is planned that no dock or earthwork shall be found on the South Beach or the point, and that any future public facility would be on the north, if at all.

As a long-range solution the Park Maintenance Area will be developed on the periphery of the park.

All of the elements of the plan form a balanced, carefully interrelated whole inspired by the shape and nature of the ground itself and its relation to the surrounding sea and community. This is a Nature Park requiring sensitive development and use.

Any proposed future expansion of the Metro Treatment plant facilities must be evaluated with particular reference to compatibility with the Fort Lawton Park Plan. Public access to and use of the shorelands must be maintained. Adequate provision should be made for screen planting of the plant. Every effort should be made to ensure that the plant would be a positive, integrated park feature.

## **Phase I Plan**

Phase I will provide a dramatic and usable beginning for most of the Long Range Plan - the Mall and parking, picnic areas, paths, and trails, Sea Garden and meadows, beaches, and some of the interpretive and orientation centers. Early full development of the Long Range Plan is restricted by available funds and by the fact that 390 acres is the first acquisition while the Army retains the large central uplands and the Army Reserve retains many acres in the northeast section straddling the Main Entrance of the long-range plan. The fortunate fact is that the first lands in park acquisition are contiguous (except for the southeast Play Area) and sweep all the way around the beaches and bluffs and the adjacent uplands, so that the park outlook and orientation is outward to the expansive Sound and mountains and the retained areas lie behind.

Those areas presently not in park ownership do create unavoidable limitations on the Phase I plan, for the park entrances are awkward and circulation within the park is circuitous. For example, the main vehicular entrance will be shared with the military and will lead from Government Way through the East Gate to the parking and Mall via a long road.

The secondary south entrance (initially for pedestrians only) will be off West Emerson Street. There will be no vehicular connection within the park between north and south areas without passing through the military reserve.

The spirit and broad recreational opportunities of the Long Range Plan get a fine start in Phase I. One overriding purpose of this initial development is to plan, plant, and build from the outset for eventual growth into a total Fort Lawton Park, so that each step leads inevitably to completion of the plan for all the Fort.

To fit the city's financing program for this park, work will be done successively from demolition and road and utility remodeling to path and trail building, landscape restoration, mall grading and improvement, perimeter screen plantings, orientation and interpretive area developments, and so on. This much will take a matter of a few years. The mini-transportation system will come as the park gains in patronage.

The same "prohibitions, corrections, and limitations" of development and operation will apply to the Phase I plan as to the Long Range Plan.

## **Off-site Potentials**

Complete success of the Long Range Plan will require some attention by Metro and some city and state agencies to their traffic patterns, transportation policies, building developments, park systems, shorelands regulations, community planning – all as they border on or serve the Fort Lawton Park. A brief description of some of these problems and their relative importance follows.

The proposed Main Entrance to the park is at Government Way in Phase I, shifted to the North at West Lawton Street in the Long Range Plan. Either entrance demands a broad, attractive approach through the city streets. On Government Way there is still the potential to remove overhead wires, discourage large commercial uses and signs, plant street trees, straighten the alignment where possible, and minimize the number of secondary street accesses to this heavily traveled road. At West Lawton Street and east over the ravine to Gilman Avenue the ultimate required right-of-way should be kept in mind and property acquired so that this best approach route will be ready and possible when the time comes. Meanwhile, Gilman Avenue should be improved for traffic handling and appearance (again more trees), for it serves either entrance route.

The Kiwanis Ravine should be a link in a continuous pedestrian parkway from Government Way down to the locks and on along the canal to Gas Plant Park and beyond. The Government Way park entrance will be the parkway's west terminus and will continue as a pedestrian park entrance in the long-range plan.

The city bicycle routes already come to both the east and south park entrances, but it will also be necessary for public transportation to serve into the park. One idea was to create a mode-transfer station in Interbay with mini-transportation running from there into the park.

There appears little danger that Magnolia would ever encourage high density or incompatible building uses in the section of the community near the park, but we should remember that the park is essentially quiet and low-key and bordering neighborhoods should be the same. A related item: one reason for locating the Main Entrance on the east with close access to Gilman Avenue was that the openness and single-sided development of the avenue is more appropriate for volumes of traffic and the pressures would be off any upgrading and widening of Magnolia Boulevard which runs through quiet neighborhoods for much of its length.

The city and the State both have heavy responsibilities to protect the park plan and objective in any shoreline development policies. Basically, the plan calls for holding the line so that here in the park, at least, people may enjoy as much as possible ocean beaches in a natural state. This also includes continuing pollution control.

Metro's great opportunity and responsibility at West Point is to keep the environment clean and at the same time to subdue the plant's visual image to the overriding importance of the park image. This subordination may be accomplished by landscape screening. A contraction of Metro's fenced area would facilitate comfortable public use of the surrounding shorelands and beaches. Service traffic to and from the plant could be a distraction and real

“pollution” if generated through the park or across the beaches. For all these reasons, any plant expansion here may be difficult to justify to the public and the Park Department.

## **Appendix A**

### **History and Opportunity**

These two words are a capsule description of the Fort Lawton promontory, for out of its past has emerged today’s great opportunity.

The establishment of the Navy Yard in Bremerton in 1891 seems to have been the event that led directly to the creation of Fort Lawton. The undefended Navy Yard focused the attention of the military upon the need for fortifications in Puget Sound and in time led to the establishment of Forts Casey, Flagler, Ward, Worden and Lawton.

In his annual report of August 1894, Brigadier General E. S. Otis, Commander of the Army’s Department of the Columbia, recommended that a fort be established on Magnolia Bluff.

Upon the publication of that report the president of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, E. O. Graves, wrote to General Otis to encourage the establishment of a post on Magnolia Bluff. In his reply General Otis suggested that the city would be acting in its own best interest if it were to donate a site for the proposed fort.

Acting upon this suggestion, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce appointed an Army Post Committee (Appendix B) to pursue the matter. The importance of the project may be inferred from the fact that one of the seven members of that committee was Judge Thomas Burks, one of the eminent men in Seattle’s history.

The committee drafted a bill, which was introduced in Congress by Senator Watson Squire, authorizing the Secretary of War to establish a fort at Magnolia Bluff provided that a site of not less than 400 acres was conveyed without cost to the United States.

Not to be outdone, Tacoma induced its congressman to introduce a bill authorizing the Secretary of War to locate the proposed post near Tacoma provided that a site of not less than 640 acres was donated to the Army. The Tacoma Chamber of Commerce then undertook to promote the selection of Tacoma’s Point Defiance as the site for the proposed Fort.

Rather than designating the exact location of the fort, Congress authorized the Secretary of War to establish a military post at such point on Puget Sound as his judgment best subserved the public interest. The bill carried the important condition “that 640 acres of land suitable for the purpose shall be donated free

of cost to the United States or such greater quantity of land as in the opinion of the Secretary of War shall be necessary for that purpose.”

On March 2, 1896 the Secretary of War announced his selection of the Magnolia Bluff site provided that 703.21 acres of selected lands were conveyed without cost to the United States.

In anticipation of this decision, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce had begun in earnest to raise funds in order to assemble the required acreage. By September of 1896 the Chamber was able to announce that it had received sufficient donations in cash and land to provide the site required by the Army.

All kinds of difficulties were encountered by the Chamber in its efforts to assemble the required acreage. Some of the land was owned by absentee owners; some was owned by minors; and some was in the possession of squatters. 640 acres of school lands were purchased by the committee and exchanged for lands within the boundaries of the site required by the Army.

In October of 1897 President Graves of the Chamber of Commerce announced that 641.37 acres of upland, 336.68 acres of tidelands and 12.15 acres of roadway had been assembled for conveyance to the Army. By February of 1898, title to all of the lands had been deeded to the United States.

Though not contemplated at the time, that gift was the first - and indispensable - step on the long journey toward the creation of a great public park on the Fort Lawton site.

In 1900 the newly established post was named Fort Lawton after Major General Henry W. Lawton, who was killed in the Philippines in 1899.

The high hopes of Seattle that the post at Magnolia Bluff would become a major military installation were never realized. Coastal defense batteries were never installed, and in a relatively few years the civic leaders of Seattle had become disenchanted by the Army's failure to develop the post. Rather than having a significant concentration of military personnel to bolster the local economy, the citizens found only a handful of men occupying the magnificent Magnolia Bluff site.

Shortly before World War I, the Army established a military base in Pierce County. That base in time became the vast Fort Lewis complex. Commenting upon the establishment of that new Army post, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer stated in an editorial on January 17, 1917: "Seattle gave to the government the ground forming the Fort Lawton reservation - a commanding and beautiful site on Magnolia Bluff. With the abolition of the post this reservation should revert to the municipality and be preserved for all time as a public park. It is now practically connected with the city's boulevard system, only a link in the

highway to be completed. Seattle with wise foresight, has provided parks and playgrounds but has none too many. As the city grows, and it is now growing rapidly, more will be needed. Fort Lawton, in military use, has afforded vast recreation grounds and given pleasure to countless thousands. Its beauty should never be spoiled by subdivision for private uses.”

“No doubt Uncle Sam, if properly approached, will prove as generous as the original donor and will readily assent to the conversion of the reservation into a park; and now is the time to take steps toward securing the necessary action by Congress.”

The next day the Post-Intelligencer printed the comments of various Seattle leaders upon that editorial. Those comments are most interesting because they were made by men who had been active in the assembling of the Fort Lawton lands for donation to the Army. Judge Thomas Burke, who had been a leading figure in that effort, said: “The Post-Intelligencer editorial suggestion that if Fort Lawton is to be abandoned as a military post it should revert to the city is timely. It would certainly make an ideal park site for Seattle.”

Mayor Hiram Gill said: “The site would make the finest of the city’s parks and I am heartily in favor of the action suggested in the morning’s editorial.”

George B. Lampe, a member of the Seattle Board, was quoted as saying: “I feel it is time the land reverted to Seattle so that the city would proceed to establish a park there that would prove to be a source of attraction for the city. As a site for a park I know of none so ideal nor of one that would prove a bigger asset for Seattle. The Seattle Park Board has gone on record for a number of years in favor of the reversion of this land to the city and making it a park as outlined by the Post-Intelligencer.”

The high hopes that Seattle then nourished for the early conversion of Fort Lawton into a city park came to naught, however, and the Army continued to retain Fort Lawton as a relatively obscure military post. Seattle’s golden opportunity to re-acquire the Fort Lawton site came in the mid-1930’s. Warren G. Magnuson, then a newly elected Congressman, was approached by the Army to see if Seattle was interested in acquiring the whole site for \$1.00. Magnuson transmitted the offer to the city, but incredibly, the city declined the offer. In those times of economic hardship, city officials feared that the expense of maintaining the area as a park would be a financial burden too great for the city to bear.

Even as the Army was fully occupying the land, this extraordinary site of sweeping views and priceless open space was coveted by many people - residential developers, educational institutions, and other agencies of government. There were many, though, who clung to the vision that the Fort

Lawton site should in time become a great public park on the order of Vancouver's Stanley Park or San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

In 1964 Seattle was stirred by an announcement of the Secretary of Defense that 85% of the Fort Lawton site was going to be declared surplus. The reaction of the community was immediate and almost unanimous: the surplus acreage must be acquired for public park purposes. There was, however, an awesome barrier to that acquisition - under applicable Federal laws the city would have to pay the Federal government 50% of the fair market value of the lands acquired for park purposes. Even the most conservative estimates of that value were astronomical.

As the initial effort to enable the city to surmount that cost hurdle, Congressman Brock Adams introduced a bill in Congress in 1965 which provided for the transfer of the surplus acreage at Fort Lawton to the City of Seattle at no cost. The rationale for this bill was that since the site had been donated by the city it should be returned to the city when no longer required by the Federal government.

While the officials and citizens of the city were exploring every possible means of acquiring any lands that might be declared surplus - and at the same time providing some \$3,000,000 in Forward Thrust funds for acquisition and development of any lands that became available - the city suddenly found its vision of a great public park threatened by the plans of the Department of Defense to construct an Anti-Ballistic Missile base on the Fort Lawton site. Such an installation would have left little land available for park purposes.

The threatened loss of the site at first evoked a cry of protest from only a relatively few individuals. In time however, that faint cry of protest became a roar of outrage from the community. Led by Citizens for Fort Lawton Park, a coalition of civic and conservation organizations, the community was able to enlist the Congressional delegation - Senators Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson, Congressmen Brock Adams, Lloyd Meeds and Thomas Pelly - in the fight. Throughout 1968, however, the decision was in the balance. Despite the dispatch of hundreds of letters and petitions to Washington it appeared that the ABM base was almost certain to be built. Finally, and only through the personal intercession of Senator Jackson with the Secretary of Defense, the proposed ABM base was blocked. The Secretary of Defense announced in December of 1968 that plans for the base at Fort Lawton were being abandoned.

The fight that was waged so successfully against the ABM base preserved the site intact for acquisition, but the monumental problem of cost still remained.

To attack that problem, Senator Jackson introduced a bill in the Senate in March, 1969 to enable cities to acquire surplus Federal lands at no cost for

park and recreational purposes. At the time he introduced the bill, he stated: "Today, there are over 30 million acres of land presently held in fee ownership and used by the Department of Defense alone. Periodically, portions of this property are declared surplus. Many of these surplus military installations are located in or near major metropolitan areas and afford a great opportunity for urban park and recreational complexes. Surplus property held by other departments of the Federal Government afford similar opportunities."

He went on to state: "I became aware of the urgent need for legislation on this subject when it became apparent that Fort Lawton - a military installation of over 1,100 acres in the city of Seattle - would soon be declared surplus to Federal needs. Acquisition of this area by the city for park and recreation purposes is in the national interest. The problem Seattle and many other units of local government face, however, is that paying 50% of fair-market value may be financially impossible."

Hearings on the bill were held in May, 1969. At the hearings Senator Magnuson, Congressman Adams, and Congressman Pelly made strong statements in support of the bill. The Congressional delegation from no other state gave the bill so strong support.

Under Senator Jackson's guidance his bill passed the Senate unanimously in June, 1969.

In the early days of 1970 the community was dismayed by an announcement that the Navy wanted to acquire 110 acres and the Coast Guard 44 acres of any lands declared excess to the needs of the Army. Senator Jackson again came to the rescue, however and was able to persuade the Department of Defense that those requests should be withdrawn.

In 1970 a number of bills were introduced in the House which had the same objective as the Jackson bill, which had already been passed by the Senate. Hearings on those bills were held in April, 1970, and the House Interior Committee recommended for passage a bill which had been introduced by Congressman Wayne Aspinall, Chairman of the House Interior Committee, in February, 1970. That bill was passed by the House in August, 1970.

During the time that the measure was in the House, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, the Junior League, the Sierra Club, and other local organizations, having national membership, exerted great efforts to enlist the support of their affiliates in other cities in applying pressure upon their own Congressmen.

The House version was quickly adopted by the Senate, and the measure was signed into law by President Richard M. Nixon in October of 1970.



The new law removed the almost insuperable financial barrier to the acquisition of the Fort Lawton site for park and recreational purposes.

In the meantime, however, the park concept had come under attack from an entirely unexpected quarter. In early 1970 a group of Native Americans, organized as United Indians of All Tribes, asserted a claim to all of the lands which might be declared surplus. Through months of patient negotiations Mayor Uhlman and his staff were able to negotiate an agreement by the terms of which the city would, after acquiring the site, lease a designated tract of seventeen acres to the United Indians of All Tribes for an Indian Cultural Center. That agreement removed the last major obstacle to the acquisition of the surplus land at Fort Lawton for park purposes.

The site was transferred to the City of Seattle by the Federal government on September 1, 1972, in a ceremony in which Tricia Nixon Cox, daughter of the President, made the formal transfer of 391 acres to Mayor Wes Uhlman.

Prior to that transfer the Federal government had made transfers under the new law of over 20,000 acres, valued at \$98,200,000 to a great number of other local governmental units. All of those other transfers stemmed directly from the great community effort made by Seattle to acquire Fort Lawton as a park site. Countless communities will in the future benefit from the legislation which made possible Seattle's acquisition of Fort Lawton.

#### **Appendix B**

##### **SEATTLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

(Appointed November 20, 1894)

John Leary, Chairman; Judge Thomas Burke; S.L. Crawford; J.W. Clise; G. Davies; Thomas Prosch; Tracy Robertson

#### **Appendix C**

##### **CITIZEN'S FOR FORT LAWTON PARK**

(Organized June, 1968)

Donald Voorhees: Chairman

Allied Arts of Seattle: Jerry E. Thonn

American Institute of Architects, Seattle Chapter: Wendell H. Lovett, Frederick Mann, Clayton Young

Associated Clubs of the North End: John Kriete, Mrs. James Robertson

Choose an Effective City Council: Camden Hall, John W. Hemplemann, Peter LeSourd

Citizens Planning Council, Robert H. Eyre

Federation of American Scientists: Dr. Phil Ekstrom, Dr. Greg Dash, Dr. Edward Stern

Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, Brock Evans

Issak Walton League: Webb Trimble, Edward Dunn

Junior League of Seattle: Mrs. H. M. Beatty, Jr., Mrs. Henry Steinhardt, Mrs. F. Bartow Fite, III  
League of American Wheelman, Harry L. Coe  
League of Women Voters of Seattle: Mrs. John T. Colman, Mrs. John M. Darrah, Mrs. Richard M Emerson, Mrs. Ludwig Lobe  
Magnolia Community Club, Robert Kildall  
National Parks Association, John Osseward  
Seattle Audubon Society: Mrs. Neil Haig, Mrs. George Mack  
Seattle Garden Club, Mrs. John F. Ballinger  
Seattle Junior Chamber of Commerce: Steve Hill, Douglas A. Raff, Leon Zornes  
Seattle-King County Board of Realtors: Erling O. Reed, Sam Hess  
Seattle Board of Park Commissioners, J. Vernon Williams  
Seattle Planning & Redevelopment Council: Ed Emerick, Archie Katz, John Robins  
Seattle Rhododendron Society, Dr. Edward Simons  
The Mountaineers: John M Davis, Jesse Epstein, Max Hollenbeck, Donna Osseward  
The Sierra Club, Puget Sound Group, Mike Ruby  
The Wilderness Society, John Osseward  
Washington Alpine Club; Ed Bauch, Les Kramer  
Washington Roadside Council, Calhoun Dickinson

#### **Appendix D**

##### **SEATTLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, FORT LAWTON PARK TASK FORCE**

(Appointed May, 1969)

Kenneth B. Colman, Chairman; Robert A. Banks, Thomas E. Bolger, Kenneth R. Fisher, Henry L Kotkins, H.W. McCurdy, J.B. McClintock, Martin J. O'Rorke, T. Evans Wyckoff

#### **Appendix E**

##### **FORT LAWTON CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

(Appointed May, 1970 by Mayor Wes Uhlman)

Donald Voorhees, Chairman, Mrs. Geo. W. Butterfield, Mrs. Robert Callies, Winifred S. Coleman, Kenneth B. Colman, George E. Cooley; Lee Copeland, Dr. Lauren Donaldson, Carey Donworth, Leo Fleury, Lady Willie Forbus, Gary D. Gayton, Archie Katz, Robert Kildall, Betty Kroll, Harry Lee, Robert Lupson, Anne Mack, James McCurdy, Dr. Dixie Lee Ray, Mrs. Robert C. Ridder, Howard Ross, Robert G. Sotnik, Helene Steinhardt, Bernice Stern, Mrs. Edward G. Veasey

#### **Appendix F**

##### **GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED DURING PARK PLANNING**

Wes Ulman, Mayor of Seattle

Board of Commissioners, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation

Seattle Design Commission

Liem Tuai, City Council Parks and Public Grounds Committee  
James Braman, Director, Seattle Department of Community Development  
John Spaeth, Director of Planning, City of Seattle  
Robert Hintz, Asst. Director of Planning, City of Seattle  
Department of Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle  
Engineering Department, City of Seattle  
Art Yoshioka, Director of Planning, Port of Seattle  
Charles V. Gibbs, Executive Director, Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle  
Charles J. Henry, Director, Operations, Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle  
Puget Sound Governmental Conference  
Fred Overly, U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation  
Colonel Palos, Commanding Officer, Fort Lawton  
Fort Lawton Citizens' Advisory Committee  
Magnolia Community Club  
Lawton Wood Community Club

Representatives of:

League of Women Voters of Seattle  
Washington Roadside Council  
Allied Arts  
Citizens Planning Council  
American Institute of Architects  
American Institute of Planners  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
Washington Society of Landscape Architects  
Consulting Engineers Council  
American Institute of Interior Designers  
Audubon Society  
Seattle Rhododendron Society  
Seattle Dahlia Society  
Seattle Mountaineers  
Washington Environmental Council  
Sierra Club  
Nature Conservancy  
North Cascades Conservation Council  
G. M. Gillett, Planning Committee of MAP  
Mrs. Anne Mack, Audubon Society  
Ed Dunn, Seattle Rhododendron Society  
R. E. Dodson, Seattle Dahlia Society  
John Putman, Seattle Public Schools  
Charles Draper, Golf Advisory Council  
Bernie Whitebear, United Indians of All Tribes  
Blair Paul, United Indians of All Tribes  
Bob Hively, Street Car Buff

David M. Checkley, American Kiteflyers Association  
Harry Coe, Vice President, League of American Wheelmen for the Northwest

## **Appendix G**

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

#### Soil

This area has been classified as Kitsap Silt Loam which is a gravelly-clay loam underlaid with stratified layers of sand, clay and gravel.

#### Topography

The Fort Lawton site is basically a promontory forming the southern headland of Shilshole Bay. The bluffs along the western perimeter extend from high tide to the uplands at a height of 250 feet to the southerly exposure, decreasing to 150 feet on the Shilshole Bay side. The apex of the headland slopes more gradually from the 250 elevation to the West Point sand spit.

The upper plateau continues to rise another 100 feet to a summit elevation of 360 feet. The southerly half of the site is relatively gently rolling while the northerly half is more undulating with numerous ravines tributary to the long narrow valley that terminates at the rifle range.

#### Vegetation

Excluding street tree plantings and ornamental landscaping around the buildings, roughly one-third of the entire site remains uncleared and predominates in a natural stand of second growth Douglas fir with an intermixing of western red cedar, Oregon maple, green ash, alder, madrona and Pacific dogwood.

The southwestern quadrant is relatively open grassland with the exception of the wooded section along the bluff. Isolated native trees remain as free standing specimens which have been supplemented with ornamental street trees consisting of Lombardy and boleana poplar, sycamore, Oregon and Montpelier maple, honey locust, American elm, white birch and mountain ash. Evergreen plantings include western red cedar, Douglas fir, deodora cedar, Lawson cypress, Austrian and black pine.

The cleared but unmaintained lowlands in the northwest quadrant have revegetated to native undergrowth consisting of alder, Scotch broom, willow, blackberry, elderberry, salmon berry, wild cherry, briar rose and bracken fern.

The resultant overall vegetative cover gives a very park-like setting exemplifying an arboretum of mature native trees of varied species, as well as imported ornamental trees and shrubs in a wide range of varieties and sizes.

#### View

The spectacular view of Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains from the westerly slope of this promontory is unsurpassed. From almost any point along the westerly perimeter of the uplands an unobstructed 180 degree view over Puget Sound can be gained. The views from the northerly half of the property are more restricted due to the existing tree cover and because of an adjoining residential development, Lawton Wood, intervening between the view to the north over Shilshole Bay.

The Fort Lawton site has many advantageous utilities already built in, namely, roadways, water, sewer, storm drainage, electrical, heating and telephone, briefly described as follows:

#### Roadways

The reservation is well saturated with a system of roadways which follow a meandering pattern suiting the contour. Most of the roads are asphalt paved and include storm drainage.

#### Water

The Fort installation is presently supplied with City of Seattle water from four meters, two 8 inch, one 10 inch, and one 12 inch. These service connections are all in the southwest quadrant which comprises the majority of the buildings served.

#### Sewer

The sanitary sewer system is contributory to the Metro Sewer System of the City of Seattle which has a 144 inch trunk sewer going under the northerly side of the property. The lateral sewer mains servicing the Fort include one 18 inch, one 12 inch and several 9 inch laterals.

#### Electrical

The primary electrical service is from Seattle City Light with a 16,000 volt connection on the southerly property line which services a substation centrally located to the main building group.

In addition there is a 3,000 volt emergency service at the east gate and numerous standby generators ranging from four 1000 KW, one 75 KW, and one 60 KW to one 35 KW generator.

#### Heating

Two of the building groups are heated from central boiler plants. Twenty-four buildings are heated with an underground steam system and one 7,000 gal. tank. The hospital group in the southeast quadrant is heated with an overhead steam system from an oil-fired boiler plant having one 25,000 gal. oil storage tank and one 350 gal. Diesel storage tank. Of the buildings not on a central

system, 23 are heated with individual boilers, 20 are heated with space oil heaters, and 41 are heated with individual hot-air systems.

#### Waterfront

It will be noted that the West Point sand spit is already occupied by the U.S. Coast Guard Lighthouse tract and by the Metro Sewage Treatment Plant. Metro has under ownership and long-term lease a total of 79.28 acres. Furthermore, there are Metro easements for a water line and water storage tank from West Emerson Street to the Metro plant across the Fort Lawton area, and for road access from West Emerson Street to the plant.

The shoreward side of the treatment plant site is retained with a rock rip - rap wall to an elevation 10.5 feet above mean sea level. The treatment plant facilities are surrounded with a 7 ft. high chain link fence.