

City of Seattle

ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF  
SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION

Proposal Name: **Be'er Sheva Park Improvements**

Address of Proposal: **Be'er Sheva Park, 8650 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Seattle WA  
98118**

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Seattle Parks and Recreation is proposing improvements at Be'er Sheva Park in Seattle. Improvements include creating a prominent entry that will draw people into the park, enhancing connectivity through the park with new paths, community amenities, and transforming the shoreline into a neighborhood beach destination. New amenities include seating, barbeques, art, a picnic shelter structure, stage with shelter, beach and habitat restoration with native plantings, a new hand carried boat launch, and site lighting for greater shoreline access and improved habitat to benefit juvenile salmonids. The project includes approximately 3,000 cu.yds. of grading.

**SEPA DETERMINATION: Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)**

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Beer Sheva Park was named for Beer Sheva, Israel, one of Seattle's International Sister Cities. Located on Lake Washington in Southeast Seattle just east of Rainier Beach High School, this lakefront park features a children's play area, picnic tables and restrooms. To the northeast of the park is the Rainier Urban Farm and Wetland, a partnership project initiated by the community and funded in part by the Parks and Green Spaces Levy. To the south is the Atlantic City Boat Ramp, a motorized boat launch owned and operated by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR).

In 2014, Seattle Public Utilities re-established 440 feet of natural stream channel through the park and reconnected Mapes Creek to Lake Washington. Growing salmon need shallow shorelines and small creek mouths for rearing, but many historic creeks have vanished or been directed to drainage pipes. The restored creek mouth is now one of a series of "rest stops" recreated for juvenile Chinook along the Lake Washington shoreline. By replacing the piped creek outlet with a daylighted connection to Lake Washington, the multi-purpose project also reduced stormwater overflows. Other improvements made to this park in one of Seattle's most diverse and historically underserved neighborhoods include adding native plants along the creek, enhancing drainage, and adding new walkways and artwork.

Portions of the site contain identified Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs) as indicated on the City's GIS database: Riparian Corridor associated with Mapes Creek, Wetland associated with wetlands in the park and on the adjacent sites, Liquefaction Prone and

Peat Settlement as the whole areas was lake bottom until the Montlake Cut was constructed and the lake was lowered.

## **PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

The project will add improvements at Be'er Sheva Park to benefit the community and visitors to the park, and at and below the shoreline to benefit juvenile salmon as they out-migrate from the Cedar River system. Improvements to the park's lakeside end of the South Henderson Street corridor include greater shoreline access, walkways, and art installations. Improvements to the shoreline and areas below the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) will improve habitat for fish and wildlife, including listed salmon species. The project will be built in phases as funding and permits becomes available. Elements of the first phase will be the first to be built.

**Upland Phase:** The upland project includes the area above the beach and the beach area above the OHWM. The upland phase project area covers approximately 49,600 SF (1.15 acres). Park improvements include creating a more prominent entry, new seating, barbeques, art, a picnic shelter structure, a stage with shelter, a custom exercise feature, a new pedestrian boat launch, and site lighting. Improvements to the beach above OHWM include removing an existing boulder bulkhead, re-grading the beach to a more natural shoreline condition, installing gravel (Fish Mix), and beach restoration planting.

**Riparian and Aquatic Phase:** This area has been split into four zones with different existing conditions and different restoration proposed. They are: Zone A, Zone B, Zone C, and the Riparian Edge zone. This entire area is approximately 108,140 SF (2.48 acres). The main project elements include providing a substrate more suitable to salmonids, installing log and plant refugia, removing invasive species from the riparian area, and installing native riparian and aquatic plantings.

As indicated in the Checklist, approximately 1,315 cu.yds. of site excavation is proposed in the upland phase, focused in new paving areas, stage and shelter areas, new planting areas, new lawn throughout the site, and the beach. Approximately 653 cu.yds. of fill is proposed for concrete base course, concrete paths and curbs, asphalt paving, and exercise area safety surface, is proposed with an additional 850 cu.yds. topsoil and mulch imported and placed. Approximately 50 CY of gravel (fish mix) is proposed as part of the beach restoration as part of the riparian and aquatic phase. All disturbed areas on the site not receiving new surfaces will be restored with erosion control and hydroseeding or new landscaping consistent. All the applicable BMP's for construction site management will be applied to the areas where the work will take place.

## **ANALYSIS – SEPA**

Initial disclosure of potential impacts from this project was made in the applicant's environmental checklist, dated May 21, 2019/March 1, 2021. The basis for this analysis and decision is formed from information in the checklist, graphics and exhibits attached to it, the lead agency's familiarity with the site and experience with review of similar projects.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 23.05.665) discusses the relationship between the City's code/policies and environmental review. The Overview Policy states, in part, "[w]here City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact; it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation". The Policies also discuss in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts. This may be specified otherwise in the policies for specific elements of the environment found in SMC 25.05.675. In consideration of these policies, a more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts is appropriate.

### **Short Term Impacts**

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during site work; increased traffic from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise and displaced recreational users.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. Erosion will be prevented by implementation of a required Temporary Erosion Control and Sedimentation Plan. Best Management Practices, such as mulching and seeding will be implemented at the site to minimize erosion during construction. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures and life safety issues. The Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city. The Shoreline Master Program regulates development along the City's fresh water and marine shorelines. Compliance with these codes and/or ordinances will lessen the environmental impacts of the proposed project. While there will be a short-term increase in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, overall usage of the park will not change.

The impacts associated with the construction are expected to be minor and of relatively short duration. Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, impacts to existing recreational uses, construction traffic, and construction noise warrant further discussion.

### ***Recreation***

During construction, a portion of the park will be closed to the public. Park users will be directed to the large areas of the park that will remain open during construction. Park users will be notified of planned construction activities impacts in advance so they can plan their visit to the park accordingly. No significant short-term adverse recreation impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

**Construction Traffic**

There are adequate areas on-site for the construction crews and equipment. The site is adjacent to an arterial which provides convenient truck access consistent with the requirements of the Street Use Ordinance. As noted in the checklist, approximately 3,000 cubic yards of material will be imported/exported and excavated/filled and graded over the course of the project. There will be limited construction traffic beyond equipment and construction workers entering and leaving the site such as material deliveries. Traffic associated with the construction is not anticipated to be significant and thus no conditioning is necessary or warranted.

**Noise**

Construction activities will be confined to weekdays. Hours of construction are limited by the Seattle Noise Ordinance, SMC ch. 25.08, to 7:00 a.m. and ten 10:00 p.m. on weekdays (SMC 25.08.425). The reality of the local construction industry is that contractors typically work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the likelihood that any construction activities will occur up to 10 p.m. is slight. The Noise Ordinance also regulates the loudness (dB) of construction activities, measured fifty (50) feet from the subject activity or device. The City has dedicated noise inspectors to monitor construction activities and respond to construction complaints. Compliance with the City’s Noise Ordinance will prevent any significant adverse short-term noise impacts and thus no further conditioning is necessary or warranted.

Compliance with applicable codes, ordinances and regulations will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation.

**Long Term Impacts**

**Recreation**

As noted above, the improvements may be phased as funding becomes available. With each improvement. There will be additional recreational amenities in the park to better serve the community. Once all phases have been completed, opportunities for recreation will have been expanded at Be’er Sheva Park. No significant long-term adverse recreation impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

**Endangered Species/ habitat**

One of the primary purposes of the overall project is to enhance the shoreline of Lake Washington and to provide better juvenile salmonid habitat. Removal of the existing shoreline armoring and re-grading of the beach area will provide a gentler shoreline slope in this area, improve substrate quality, and increase aquatic area. The proposed improvements would enhance wildlife habitat at the site as follows:

- The extent of aquatic area and fine gravel substrate at the site would increase;

- The extent of native vegetation and woody materials at the site would increase;
- Construction will occur within the allowable in-water work window designated for the protection of Chinook salmon and bull trout for Lake Washington.

As such, no significant adverse fish and wildlife habitat related impacts are anticipated and thus no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

### **Traffic & Parking**

No change in the park operation is proposed. No significant adverse traffic and/or parking impacts are anticipated and thus no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

Upon completion of the project, no long term adverse environmental impacts are anticipated and thus no conditioning is necessary or warranted.

### **DECISION**

This decision was made after the responsible official, on behalf of the lead agency, reviewed a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and final decision on application of SEPA's substantive authority and mitigation provisions. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

(X) Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

( ) Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. AN EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

  
David Graves, AICP  
Strategic Advisor, Planning, Development & Facilities Division  
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Date: March 2, 2021