

Myers Way Excess Property Summary

Property Background

- In 2003, the City purchased a larger property than what was needed for the development of the Joint Training Facility (JTF). A portion of the property was planned to be sold to help pay for the land purchase. In 2006, Council directed that the sale of the extra land should help stimulate economic development in the Highpoint neighborhood. An agreement was made to sell the property to Lowes for a retail center, although the transaction was not completed.
- The property is a former gravel mine. It has areas of vegetated steep slopes, wetlands and level developable land. One level area contains subsurface soils with high levels of lead and arsenic contamination, which needs to be cleaned up. The property is zoned Commercial 2-65. This zoning allows uses such as warehouses, wholesale, research and development, and manufacturing.

Financial

The entire property has been appraised at \$14 million dollars. The level developable land represents the majority of this value. Potential sales proceeds will be used to pay the following:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • To pay the outstanding balance on the loan used to purchase the property: | \$1.3 million |
| • To pay interfund loan to assist homelessness: | \$5.0 million |
| • To reimburse the Dept. of Finance and Admin. Services for consultants and holding costs | \$0.5 Million |

Potential Uses Considered

- **Housing:** The Seattle Office of Housing determined that the property is not economically viable for low income housing development due to the lack of utility infrastructure (water lines, sewer lines, etc.) and property development costs.
- **City Department Use:** Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and Seattle Department of Transportation have looked at using the level developable property for maintenance shops. Seattle Parks maintains the nearby Westcrest Park and other hill side green belts, and based on open space needs elsewhere in the City, has not identified this parcel as a priority for an active park.
- **Commercial Development:** The City has been approached by various commercial developers. Development proposals have included a retail big box center, distribution warehouse, a retail shopping center, a recreational facility and a manufacturing company.

Draft Property Recommendations

The draft recommendation includes a balance of planning for future City needs, financial consideration of the outstanding loans on the property and enhancement or preservation of natural spaces:

- ***The property immediately south of the JTF: (9401 Myers Way S):***
This property is proposed to be used for a future expansion of parking and training areas at the JTF. Within 15 years, City will need to relocate city parking uses at the Arrowhead Gardens Apartments. Other training needs, such as driver safety training and trench safety have been identified.
- ***The properties south of Roxbury Street and north of the City Light Right of way: (9501 Myers Way S)***
This property is proposed to be sold at fair market value. It could be sold through a negotiated sale with a developer that supports community needs such as job creation or mixed use activities. The property could be marketed with the use of a real estate broker to facilitate a sale for such purposes while assuring appropriate financial compensation to the City.
- ***The properties south of the Seattle City Light Right of way and east of Myers Way: (9600 and 9701 Myers Way S):***
FAS will identify a purchaser who will preserve and enhance the natural environment of the property and complete a negotiated sale. Examples may include a land trust foundation that would permit public access for recreation and education, an adventure park operator that would preserve trees and allow public access, or a commercial developer that would preserve or enhance the natural areas. If a sale is not completed within two years, then the property is proposed to be transferred to the Seattle Parks Department for green space. Parks would consider what level of public access would be suitable through their own processes and budget.

Draft Public Involvement Plan and Opportunities for Input:

Previous Community Comment and Involvement

- A public notice and additional information about the properties has been posted on the City website for public review and download.
- A public notice and an initial neighborhood mailing of 302 notice soliciting comments on disposition or reuse of the property was sent to residents/owners within 1000-foot radius.
- A second neighborhood notice was sent to residents living within a 1,000-foot radius of the property including all the senior apartments at Arrowhead gardens.

Draft Preliminary Recommendations Report

- The Draft Preliminary Recommendation Report and draft public involvement plans will be sent to parties of record for comment.
- The Draft Preliminary Recommendations Report will be available on the City Real Estate Services website.
- A Notice of Recommendation sign and notice of comment on the proposed public involvement plans will be installed on the property on June 2, 2016.

Future Outreach

- 1) A public meeting will be scheduled for a date in late June 30 2016 at the Joint Training Center, with notice as follows:
 - a. Email notice to those who provided comments by emails.
 - b. Property owners and residents living within a 1,000-foot radius of the property
 - c. Other community groups as suggested through public comment on as suggested by Mayor and City Council.
- 2) The public meeting will provide an opportunity to provide additional written comment and public comments on both the Draft Preliminary Recommendation Report. The public meeting will be moderated by a third party consultant. Multilingual speakers will be present to answer questions and record comments from non-English speaking citizens.
- 3) FAS will keep the names of attendees, and will add them to the party of record list.
- 4) Outreach to Neighborhood Groups and organizations as follows:
 - High Park Action Committee
 - Highland Park Improvement Club
 - Westwood/Roxhill/Arbor Heights Community Council
 - Delridge Neighborhood Development Association (DNDA)
 - Delridge Neighborhoods District Council
 - White Center Development Association
 - Outreach at neighborhood events such as community fairs or business mixers.
 - Arrowhead Gardens Residents
 - Other community groups as suggested through public comment on as suggested by Mayor and City Council

Additional opportunities for community input

- Legislation authorizing sale of the property including the Final Report and Public Involvement Report, to the City Council.
- FAS will continue to collect all comments and or proposals
- At the Council committee meeting to take action on the legislation, FAS will provide an updated summary of all comments received to date.

Contact

Daniel Bretzke, Department of Finance and Administrative Services

Daniel.bretzke@seattle.gov

FAS PUBLIC MEETING ON MYERS PROPERTY — JUNE 30, 2016

PUBLIC DEMANDS REAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On June 15, 2016, the Department of Finance and Administrative Services (“FAS”) published a 33-page Preliminary Recommendation Report on the Myers Way Land and draft Public Involvement Plan.

FAS sent notice of a “Community Meeting” to property owners and residents living within a 1,000 foot radius of the property, and to certain community groups. **The purpose of the meeting was to solicit community input on the preliminary recommendations report and the public involvement plan.** FAS invited a few select individuals to speak: Colin McElroy (Fire Department representative), Alan Robertson (commercial real estate developer), Cass Turnbull (TreePAC, political action committee), Mary Fleck (Seattle Green Spaces Coalition), Marie Pino and Sili Savusa (White Center Community Development Association).



The meeting was publicized as a forum for public input, but only 30 minutes was allocated for public comment.

Hours before the meeting, Department of Neighborhood SW District Coordinator sent an email that a public tour of the land would be given at 5:30 pm.

Opening the meeting, Hilary Hamilton (FAS) described that FAS is *already half-way through the disposition process*. For people who did not know about the FAS’s recommendations for Myers Land, the meeting did not explain much. There were no copies of the preliminary report for people to read and there was no powerpoint by FAS. Notably, there were no officials

present to explain the important connection that the Myers Land has to the watershed and the Duwamish River.

The Public Spoke Out Resoundingly about the Lack of Public Engagement.

About 150 people came to the meeting. Most had missed the opportunity to take a tour, but many people asked to be invited back for a tour. There was not ample time for the all people who wanted to speak, so FAS offered comment cards for written comment.



Many people had not heard about the meeting. Three interpreters (Spanish, Vietnamese and Somali) sat along the sidelines. They did not interpret because **no non-English speakers** needing interpretation were present.

No one from the Greenbridge community was present even though this community of over 2,000 residents is immediately to the west of the Myers land.

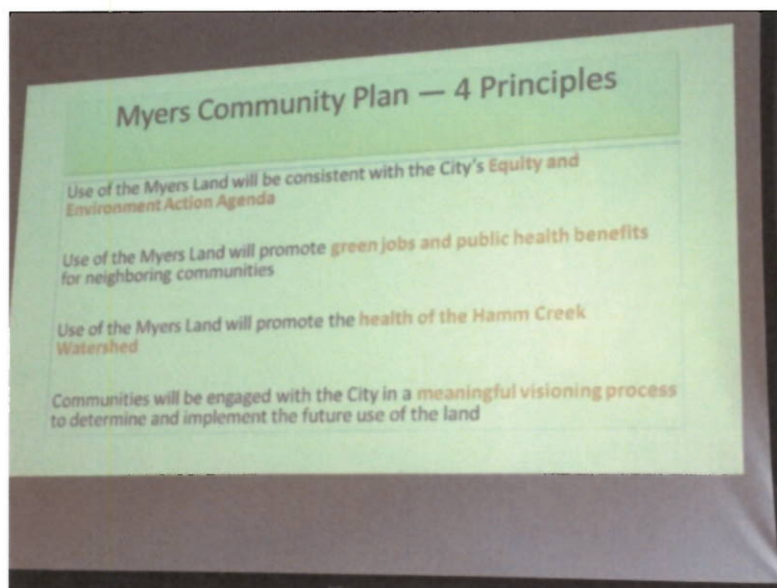
The most repeated comment was the lack of engagement by the City with the many different neighborhoods surrounding the property.

Sili Savusa, Executive Director of **White Center Community Development Association** noted that families of color “being pushed further and further south because of projects like this.” And she says it is a constant struggle about getting community voices involved in projects like this: “More often than not communities of color have been engaged or involved in a conditional way, not in a real meaningful way.” For one, she said, this is Duwamish Tribe land – “how much thought has been given to the needs of the Duwamish Tribe?” She says city government needs to “**let us, help us be part of the solution. ... Unless the community’s voices are involved, it’s meaningless.**” “Ask families what they want,” she said.



Marie Pino also from the White Center Community Development Association spoke out that some voices are missing tonight, and for a variety of reasons, including that news of the prospective sale has not been circulated widely, nor in multiple languages.

Mary Fleck from Seattle Green Spaces Coalition said that the City was not following its own policies, most significantly the **Equity and Environmental Action Agenda**. She presented four demands for future engagement:



Rather than taking the suggested 10 minute break, leaders of several community groups took to the microphone to ask that future outreach include “the neighbors who are next door...Highland Park and unincorporated North Highline.”

Gunner Scott, chair of **Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC)**, **Lora Suggs** from **South Park Neighborhood Association** and **Elizabeth Devine** from **North Highline Unincorporated Area Council** demanded future engagement and that the city will do a better job of community outreach as this process proceeds. HPAC has asked the City to hold off on sale until annexation is done, because new neighborhoods are not included. Ms. Suggs called for community input and equity. Ms. Devine said that her community is working poor and proud middle class who deserve to be listened to.

Other input from public included:

- many attendees were from nearby Top Hat and had not received notices
- why hasn't the City done a cost/benefit analysis of losing green space in the area?
- the land might be useable for an environmentally-friendly cemetery
- what has happened with the City's ecosystem services plan?
- how can the City be trusted to protect the wetlands, given its prior history of destroying the wetlands at this place?
- pollution and water quality are affecting people living here
- how will water and drainage be affected by the expansion of housing atop the bluff?
- why is the City prioritizing industrial development rather than government-developed housing?
- with the climate-change crisis, “Are you guys trying to be innovative?” “Are you looking ahead ... and trying to be a leader in that and look for new innovative ways to address those problems?”
- “How many voices will you need to hear,” asked an Arrowhead resident. “At what point will the voices have an impact?”



Hillary Hamilton responded to public input by saying that “Our goal now is to bring all the different kinds of ideas we heard to the mayor’s staff, and look at possibly revising the recommendations.” She said she would go back to the Mayor’s office to discuss a community engagement process. She mentioned that FAS may hold another large public meeting, that FAS will be meeting with community council groups, and other groups and will meet with other groups if they request. **“It’s ultimately the council who has to make the decision.”** she said.

Forty-Six (46) people completed surveys prepared by Seattle Green Spaces Coalition. 90% opposed selling the Myers Land for commercial warehouses, FAS's recommendation.

Seattle Green Spaces Coalition
info@seattlegreenspacescoalition.org
www.facebook.com/seattlegreenspacescoalition
www.seattlegreenspacescoalition.org

Contact: Mary Fleck, Co-Chair, maryfleckws@gmail.com
Elaine Ike, Co-Chair, elaineike@hotmail.com



Mayor Edward B. Murray
Seattle City Council
600 4th Ave, Seattle, WA
Seattle, WA 98104

Daniel Bretzke, Department of Finance and Administrative Services
City of Seattle – FAS
P.O. Box 94689
Seattle, Washington, 98124-4689

June 22, 2016

RE: Myers Way Parcels PMA #4539-4542

Mayor Murray, Seattle City Council and Mr. Daniel Bretzke,

This letter serves as the official comment from Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC) regarding the vacant City of Seattle property located at 9401, 9501, 9600 and 9701 Myers Way, known as the Myers Way Parcel. The Highland Park Action Committee's (HPAC) purpose is for preserving and improving the neighborhood in accordance with the wishes of the community. HPAC serves and represents approximately 7,000 residents.¹

As you know, these 33 acres contain wetlands, wildlife habitat, and open space connected to the Hamm Creek watershed and the Duwamish River. In addition, there are several racial and socio-economically diverse neighborhoods surrounding and connected to this area, many of which are unincorporated areas of King County.

Highland Park and South Park are the closest Seattle neighborhoods bordering the Myers Way Parcel, but for the neighborhoods of North Highline, including White Center, Boulevard Park and Top Hat – the Myers Way Parcel is at the center, connecting these communities to each other. Yet, these communities have no representation or say in what happens to this area at this time. At the same time, there are ongoing discussions about annexation of these unincorporated communities into the City of Seattle, with a determination possibly as early as November 2017.

There is a significant clean-up underway for the Duwamish River, which could be the heart of this part of West Seattle, if the clean-up efforts continue and there is no additional negative environmental impact of the river, the creeks and wetlands that feed into the river.

Therefore, we are strongly urging Mayor Murray, Seattle City Council, and Department of Finance and Administrative Services to 1) **Hold off on any further plans to develop and/or sell any or all parts of Myers Way Parcels PMA #4539-4542** until there is final determination of annexation of North Highline into the City of Seattle and if North Highline is annexed that those community members are given the same opportunity to provide input into the final recommendations; 2) Until an outside agency with experience, knowledge, and connection with

¹ Highland Park neighborhood in Seattle, Washington (WA), 98106, 98108 detailed profile <http://www.city-data.com/neighborhood/Highland-Park-Seattle-WA.html>



the clean-up of the Duwamish River has **evaluated the environmental impact of the each of the "Range of Options,"** as outlined on page 6 of the Preliminary Recommendation Report On Reuse and Disposal of the Seattle Department of Finance and Administrative Services PMA 4601 JTF Expansion Property PMA 4540-Undeveloped lot at 9501 Myers Way S. PMA 4541-Undeveloped lot at 9701 Myers Way S. PMA 4542-Undeveloped lot at 9600 Myers Way S. PMA 4601 JTF Expansion property from June 15, 2016, has been fully explored and vetted that there will be no additional negative environmental impact on the Duwamish River, the clean-up efforts or in any violation of the Clean Water Act.

If you have any questions, please contact me at hpacchair@gmail.com.

Thank you,

Gunner Scott
Chair, Highland Park Action Committee (HPAC)

cc: King County Councilmember, Joe McDermott; Highland Park Improvement Club (HPIC); South Park Neighborhood Association (SPNA); Westwood/Roxhill/Arbor Heights Community Council; Delridge Neighborhood Development Association (DNDA); Delridge Neighborhoods District Council; North Highline Unincorporated Area Council; White Center Development Association; Duwamish Tribe; TreePAC; Seattle Green Spaces Coalition; West Seattle Blog; White Center Now Blog; and West Seattle Herald



June 21, 2016

Finance & Administrative Services Department

Re: Response to June 15, 2016, FAS Preliminary Recommendation Report on Myers Parcels

Dear Mr. Bretzke;

Your report raises serious concerns for our organizations. We ask that you stop the Myers Parcels sale process, and engage the South Park and White Center communities in envisioning the best use of this public land for their public benefit. This civic outreach aligns with Mayor Murray's Equity and Environmental Action Agenda. The communities of color, immigrants, the elderly, low income and others in these areas live uphill from the Duwamish River, one of America's worst Superfund sites. They also suffer elevated levels of illness, as they breathe the worst quality air in Seattle.

More than half the residents here do not speak or read English; for some, it's a second language. Yet the City's Finance & Administrative Services (FAS) Department issued its formal Notice of Excess Property (Jan. 15, 2016), and its Preliminary Recommendations for Myers Parcels (June 15, 2016) only in English, and to a limited area in the extensive communities that will be affected by the proposed Myers sale. To do effective community outreach, FAS must inform the non-English speaking majority of residents, by offering notices in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali. So far, FAS has effectively disenfranchised huge swaths of the local population.

The 33 acres of Myers Parcels is the largest tract of undeveloped land that the City of Seattle owns. It holds origins of Hamm Creek, and a second creek – parts of the most fragile link in Chinook Salmon Recovery, and within the Duwamish River Superfund area. Its forested and wetland areas provide habitat, green buffer, and ecosystem service benefits for the White Center, Highland Park, South Park, Roxbury, Delridge and Georgetown communities, and for the City of Seattle. The Myers Parcels forest helps clean the area's air and reduce atmospheric carbon. It is also historically significant to the Duwamish Tribe.

FAS recommends using the area south of the Joint Training Facility for an expanded parking lot and a commercial warehouse operation, and retaining the wetlands and critical slope above SR 509 that can't be developed. This FAS top-down recommendation runs contrary to Mayor Murray's Equity and Environmental Action Agenda, which calls for grassroots, community-driven planning. Rather than rush into a sale, the city should fully engage the local communities in a visioning process that considers their best interests.

Page 3 of the FAS Preliminary Recommendation Report portrays the West Duwamish Greenbelt as usable park space. This is misleading. The Greenbelt is filled with large trees and thick

undergrowth, lacks trails, and is unusable for public recreation. The entrance for Westcrest Park is not within walking distance for community residents near Myers.

Residents of South Park, eastern White Center, and Arrowhead Gardens need accessible green space, improved air and water quality, access to product and service providers and/or existing retail cores, and green jobs. Instead, the city plans to reduce green space and walkability, and degrade air and water quality with parking lots, warehouses, and truck operations. It will not improve accessibility to what residents need, and offers no assurances that proposed commercial operations will produce green jobs for underemployed local residents.

In a recent survey by the White Center Community Development Association (WCCDA), White Center residents expressed concern about access to employment, despite living nearby the South Park, Georgetown, SoDo industrial areas. There are ways to combine economic opportunity and environmental sustainability, and support a green economy for Seattle's future. Adding warehousing and trucking operations neither provides this, nor addresses residents' concerns.

There is a wide range of "greener" options for Myers Parcels – an organic farming cooperative with a mission to support small local produce stands and ethnic grocery stores; a manufacturing facility for clean tech products or compostable goods; an environmental education center an ADA-accessible park for Arrowhead Gardens; and more possibilities.

This FAS plan also does not keep the Myers watershed healthy, or help to restore the Duwamish River and promote salmon habitat. It makes no sense to degrade a watershed that feeds the Duwamish River, when we're spending millions of taxpayer dollars to clean that river up. The FAS Dept. has also ignored our "Save Myers Parcels" petition, which has garnered more than 1100 signatures and nearly 500 comments, and support from a growing number of individuals and community associations.

We call on the City to stop this sale, withdraw the FAS recommendation, and fully engage local communities in determining the future of this site. A new assessment of current and future Myers ecosystem value and benefits must also be done, as the current study has expired. We urge the city to retain and develop Myers Parcels as usable public space to benefit all of our communities.

Sincerely,



Tony Vo,
Director, White Center Promise, White Center Community Development Association



Elaine Ike
Co-Chair, Seattle Green Spaces Coalition

cc:

Councilmember Lisa Herbold
Councilmember Bruce Harrell
Full Media Distribution

White Center Community Development Association
605 SW 108th Street, Seattle, WA 98146 Tel (206) 694 1082 Fax (206) 658 8344 wccda.org