



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

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LPB 177/22

MINUTES

Landmarks Preservation Board Meeting

City Hall

Remote Meeting

Wednesday, May 18, 2022 - 3:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Dean Barnes

Roi Chang

Matt Inpanbutr

Kristen Johnson

Ian Macleod

Lawrence Norman

Marc Schmitt

Staff

Sarah Sodt

Erin Doherty

Melinda Bloom

Absent

Taber Caton

Russell Coney

Lora-Ellen McKinney

Harriet Wasserman

Acting Chair Kristen Johnson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

In-person attendance is currently prohibited per Washington State Governor's Proclamation No. 20-28.5. Meeting participation is limited to access by the WebEx Event link or the telephone call-in line provided on agenda.

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Bonjukian said he attended on behalf of the I5 Steering Committee, a volunteer group advancing the effort for community, environmental benefits. He said the group have been big premium park supporters and stakeholders for many years. He spoke in favor of the local landmark nomination. He said this will bring protections and attention to one of the jewels of the park system. He asked that landmark status allow for the entirety of the planned capital improvements by the Seattle Parks Department (SPAR) to proceed and to allow for future changes as well. He said that future expansions must respect the historic charm and symbolism that Freeway Park offers while having enough flexibility to respond to the recreation demands of the 21st century city. It's important and equitable that to be able to add park acreage in a part of the city that desperately needs it. And for residents that are more diverse in the city as a whole. He thanked the board for their work and said he was happy to answer question if need be.

Riisa Conklin, Executive Director of the Freeway Park Association said they have been partners to the city of Seattle since 1993 to help steward Freeway Park through advocacy, fundraising and activation. She said she had the privilege of reviewing both the National Register and Seattle landmark applications from Chrisanne Beckner, at Historical Research Associates, and very much support the nomination of the park as a local landmark. This park is clearly one of a kind and should be preserved for the work of art that it is. She said that Freeway Park is more than a work of art. It is a public park that serves an increasingly dense population of people from First Hill to downtown. First Hill in particular is one of Seattle's most diverse neighborhoods one with some of the lowest incomes in Seattle and one with a shortage of public space to meet the needs of its growing population. Freeway Park is a critical public resource and must be able to stay nimble enough to respond to communities to changing community needs. Especially after and during a global pandemic, our parks and public spaces are lifelines and we've recognized that our parks in public spaces are lifelines to our communities. The Freeway Park improvement project identified 23 million dollars in needs for the park's landscape to be preserved for its infrastructure to be updated and for much needed amenities, public restrooms, storage, lighting, and wayfinding to be added. This park was not designed to be a page in a coffee table book, it is a dynamic public place. She said she is confident that the landmarks board can vote to include Freeway Park as a local landmark protecting its character-defining features will also allowing for needed design changes in the future that support its role as a critical public asset.

Jeff Murdock from Historic Seattle. I sent written comments, but just wanted to reiterate our support for the nomination of freeway park to be a Seattle landmark. Freeway Park is one of those places that, you know, is there, but don't always necessarily appreciate. Reading the excellent nomination, he was reminded how unique and really audacious the design is. It's an important and outstanding work by Lawrence Halprin; really a transformational landscape experience right in the middle of the city. The park is listed on the National Register, and Historic Seattle feels it's a slam dunk for designation as it meets multiple designations criteria. He thanked SPAR for submitting the nomination and looked forward to the board providing its

preservation expertise for the sensitive rehabilitation of the park to maintain the integrity of help brings original design concepts.

Rainer Metzger, DoCoMoMoWeWa; it stands for the documentation and conservation of the modern movement in western Washington, and he noted support the nomination of Freeway Park for landmark status. This is an iconic Seattle park; it is a first of its kind in the nation as being a piece of infrastructure that bridges over an interstate highway to create public space. It is exquisitely designed Angela Danadjieva Tzvetin and Lawrence Halprin. He noted appreciation for the way the assortment of concrete planter boxes, scoped and shaped space and the naturalistic elements. He said he loves driving underneath the park and then seeing the box garden hanging over. He noted that this project is associated with the history of Seattle's social and political attempts to heal the harm that freeways do. they offer a lot of benefit but they also divide neighborhoods. This park is particularly important for bringing those values back to the city, and it's important that the landmark go forward and protect the park from any sort of future interventions by the state of Washington, which will have to comply with our city landmarks code.

Mr. Norman arrived at 3:38pm.

051822.2

MEETING MINUTES

March 16, 2022

MM/SC/IM/DB 6:0:1 Motion carried. Mr. Schmitt abstained.

April 6, 2022

MM/SC/IM/DB 4:0:3 Motion carried. Mssrs. Schmitt and Inpanbutr, and Ms. Chang abstained.

051822.3

CONTROLS & INCENTIVES

051822.31

liq'tad / Licton Springs Park

9536 Ashworth Avenue N

Request for extension

Ms. Doherty reported that **liq'tad / Licton Springs Park** has had multiple extensions because of the ongoing negotiation of the agreement. She said there is now a new party to the process. Seattle Public Utilities has below grade utilities that run through the park and will need to participate. She said SPU is in the process of mapping and doing detailed identification of the easements that will occur related to the utilities. She said this is an active conversation, but additional time is needed. She said she reached out to Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPAR) and discussed both 6 or 12 month extensions. She said SPAR didn't indicate a preference for either one so the board can decide what they think is reasonable. She said she wasn't sure they would be done in 6 months. But, if not, another extension can be requested. She said if the board grants a 12-month extension and the agreement is done faster, we come back as soon as it's done.

Ms. Johnson said it sounds a little complicated and 12 months seems reasonable.

Mr. Inpanbutr agreed and said it seems pretty reasonable.

Mr. Macleod said he was OK with that but would like to hear something in the interim on what's going on.

Ms. Doherty said as far as she knows there are no projects or anything planned for the park. If there were, the board would be briefed.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for **líq'təd** / Licton Springs Park, 9536 Ashworth Avenue N for twelve months.

Mr. Barnes dropped off the meeting at 3:48pm.

MM/SC/MI/IM 6:0:0 Motion carried.

Ms. Doherty noted that Mr. Barnes appeared to have lost his connection, but that six board members were in attendance so there was still a quorum.

Mr. Barnes rejoined the meeting at 3:52pm.

051822.32

White Motor Company Building

1021 E. Pine Street

Request for extension

Ms. Sodt explained the request for extensions for the White Motor Company Building and the Kelly Springfield Building and said she thought three-month extensions were what the board has been doing for these buildings. She said discussions are ongoing about drafting some language about a signage plan to try to minimize the amount of board review that's required for signage. She said she will draft some language and send that to the property owner for their review. She said they may have some other things that they want me to try to craft, but signage is what she has been thinking about, in terms of adding some language. She said she was comfortable with another extension as it will provide some time to go back and forth and work on that.

Ms. Johnson asked if the board approved a Certificate of Approval for Kelly-Springfield.

Ms. Sodt said the project that the board reviewed and approved is finished and the building is leased out.

Ms. Johnson asked about a recent review for the White Building

Ms. Sodt said there was an application for a rooftop mechanical penthouse that the board reviewed and approved in the past.

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for the White Motor Company Building, 1021 E. Pine Street for three months.

MM/SC/ROC/DB 7:0:0 Motion carried.

051822.33 Kelly-Springfield Motor Truck Co Building
1525 11th Avenue
Request for extension

Action: I move to defer consideration of Controls and Incentives for the Kelly-Springfield Motor Truck Co Building, 1525 11th Avenue for three months.

MM/SC/ROC/DB 7:0:0 Motion carried.

051822.4 NOMINATION

051822.41 Freeway Park
700 Seneca Street

Chrisanne Becker, senior architectural historian with Historical Research Associates thanked the Seattle landmarks board for hearing the nomination. She represented Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPAR) in nominating Freeway Park as a Seattle city landmark. She presented a photo of a model which was prepared by the designers because it clearly shows Freeway Parks' really unusual relationship to I-5 and noted it bridges the freeway. It's constructed on a lid that knits First Hill to downtown and provides a pedestrian path between the two areas of the city, effectively kind of suturing together the canyon that was opened up by the construction of I-5. It's this feature that makes freeway park really unusual. The park was designed by Lawrence Halprin and associates with Angela Danadjieva Tzvetin (now Angela Danadjieva) as the lead designer. It was a collaborative effort, many public and private entities but was primarily constructed by Peter Kiewit and sons of Omaha and David Mowat and Company of Bellevue.

She said the park was completed in 1976 on the structure of concrete piers and bridges as well as over a multi-story, parking garage under its North end known East Plaza. The park encompasses 5 acres over 3 parcels and is owned in its, in its entirety by Seattle parks and recreation. Also, the park was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 2019. Freeway Park was really designed to provide a landscaped park experience, a top, a structure of concrete and integrated into a highly developed heavily track of traffic section of the central city in a landscape known for high rises and the sounds and smells of freeway traffic, the pace of the bustling economy, this park was to provide an oasis. It is also believed to be the 1st of the nation's first park to be constructed at top a freeway bridge or a lid in a downtown.

She noted how the park fits into downtown's landscape of concrete in steel and that it would not be easy to construct a park of this size in any urban downtown. This

one was made possible when city leaders realized they could acquire land from the adjoining odd lots of property left over from freeway construction and knit them together in the airspace above the freeway. It took the work of federal state and local agencies as well, as private developers to both acquire this land and to approve a plan for construction. And to create the infrastructure below the landscape to support it. Freeway Park includes three distinct areas they've sometimes been referred to as outdoor rooms. The Great Box Garden is a series of enormous planter boxes that sort of march from Seneca street down into the freeway corridor itself, and it wraps views of the park into the freeway experience for drivers. Central Plaza takes up most of a city block and includes some of the park's most striking features, including its waterfalls. On the West, it bumps up against the Park Place Building and on the East, it is linked to a bridge over the freeway to East Plaza.

Ms. Beckner said the East Plaza includes the parks only comfort station original to the plan in 1976 as well as the 8th Avenue overpass, which connects the park to the Washington State Convention Center grounds. It's important to note that freeway park is bordered on all sides by additional development, as any park plopped into a city center would be, but that bordering development is not included in this nomination, which is limited to the park itself, it's original footprint. Excluded from the nomination are Naramore Fountain, Park Place Plaza, I5 freeway, Freeway Park Garage, Pigott Memorial Corridor, and Washington State Convention Center grounds.

She said that although Freeway Park is only 46 years old. Its history is mixed up with numerous events and trends beginning with the development of Seattle's robust park system. In 1892 Park Superintendent E. O. Schwagerl promoted a citywide and city-owned park system, connecting proposed parks with bicycle and pedestrian paths throughout Seattle. In 1902 James D. Blackwell of Seattle Electric Company reached out to the Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, to design a system that could grow with Seattle. In 1903 John Charles Olmsted and Percy Jones visited Seattle and drafted the first plan for a citywide park system, as they did for cities including Spokane, Portland, and others. In 1909 after the City quietly acquired lands recommended for acquisition, Seattle Parks released the Olmsted plan to the public as part of the Park Commission's 1909 annual report. Subsequent Olmsted reports promoted playgrounds, ballfields, and large undeveloped parks, expanding the system as Seattle annexed additional land.

Ms. Beckner said Seattle reached out to the Olmsted brothers landscape architects of Massachusetts and the brothers had by that time inherited the firm, from their father, popularly considered the father of landscape architecture in the U. S. John Charles and Percy Jones visited Seattle in 1902 and in 1903 they produced the Olmsted brothers' park plan for Seattle, which would guide the acquisition and design of Seattle parks and boulevards throughout the entirety of the twentieth century. Seattle quietly began to acquire the lands that were recommended for parks and then they released the Olmsted plan to the public as part of their 1909 annual report. The city would then retain this relationship with the Olmsted firm deep into the 1940s when Frederick Dawson helped complete the design for

Washington Arboretum. By the 1950s cars had become a nationwide obsession and urban renewal programs were underway as well targeting neighborhoods with historic building stock, long histories and cohesive residential communities of color, also threatening to eliminate well-loved destinations like Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square.

In Seattle the freeway and the urban renewal movements progressed simultaneously. City planners were looking for a new freeway route and they settled on a 1951 design that carved a canyon two to three blocks wide through what the Seattle Times described as small houses, apartment buildings, light industrial areas and the small businesses accessed by steep stairways following a natural Valley. In 1956, the federal aid highway act, provided funding for up to 90% of an interstate system and the original toll road route morphed into the future. In Seattle, the plan to plow freeway through the city triggered protests, residents, warned of potential landslides of increased traffic and isolation for First Hill, which would be cut off from downtown. In 1961 with protests growing renowned, local architect Paul Thiry joined the First Hill Improvement Club in calling for park lids over portions of the freeway for aesthetic reasons and to further economic development. This appears to be the first time anyone proposed lidding the freeway with a public park. The debate ensued, but no final plan emerged. And meanwhile the construction of I5 just kept moving forward.

She said eventually, approximately 10% of landowners refused to sell their property to the state highway department for market rate, triggering condemnation proceedings. And with the help of condemnation, the state of part of the 4,500 parcels needed for I5. It was events like this, that helped contribute support to initiatives like the National Historic Preservation act, which passed in 1966, 3 years before the backbone of the West coast was completed between Mexico and Canada.

In in this tumultuous time, there were a lot of creative ideas emerging in Seattle in 1962. Seattle hosted its 2nd world's fair. The Century 21 Exposition brought big name designers into close contact while numerous architects, including the fair's principal architect Paul Thiry and the space needle's designer, John Graham contributed to the fair's design. It was San Francisco based landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, who helped prepare the master landscape plan. The fair was a huge success and civic leaders like local attorney James Ellis were inspired. He called together a citizens group of 200, broke them up into seven subcommittees and through the fall of 1966, they established lists of the region's greatest needs: mass transit, waterfront, access, improved housing, the preservation of undeveloped land and park improvements. These initiatives became known as Forward Thrust, an array of bond issues to be paid off with property taxes.

She said in 1967 an anonymous donor who turned out to be Floyd Naramore of NBBJ offered to install a new fountain at the corner of 6th Avenue in Seneca street, adjacent to today's box garden. The fountain, which was sculpted by George Tsutakawa, became an anchor for a small park plaza, and soon planned for an adjacent park began to take shape. In 1968, the first of the Forward Thrust bonds

came up for a vote. Among the winners were fire protection, improvements, roads, youth services, the Kingdome, which has since been demolished, and parks, which received 118 million dollars in bonds - 130 new parks, 16 new swimming pools, the Seattle aquarium, Discovery Park and Gasworks Park and Freeway Park were among the forward thrust improvements.

She said in 1968 SPAR revisited Paul Thiry's idea of a lid over a park commissioner had recently read Lawrence's 1966 book *Freeways*, which is all potential and design opportunities around these ribbons of concrete. The idea of a new park type began to emerge, and it was envisioned next to Naramore fountain. However, private developers were also interested in this land and Richard Henry was prepared to build his high-rise office tower at the corner of 6th Avenue and University Street. Seattle chose to acquire the leftover land around the freeway, and the air rights above it and to work with Henry to orient his building over its own underground parking garage so that the park freeway part could be built into and enhance this location and work together with the plaza he was building to the South.

Ms. Beckner said Halpin was chosen to design this innovative freeway living park in 1970, and he, in turn chose Angela Danadjieva from San Francisco to come up with a way to create a sheltered oasis above a city and in the middle of an urban landscape. She not only collaborated on Seattle Century 21 Exposition as well as the UW Masterplan, but also designing the open space sequence in Portland, 8 blocks of parks classes and water features. The development culminated in the massive Ira Keller Fountain also designed by Angela Danadjieva of its event, which was designed to reference a Sierra mountains watershed. Monumental, battered blocks rose from a large pool of water, concrete slabs cantilevered over the pool and allowed visitors decline around these forms a massive waterfall cascaded over the blocks inviting interaction in play.

Ms. Beckner said these are some of the features we would see again in freeway park. Other examples of how things work include Ghirardelli Square on the waterfront in San Francisco. We're helping designed a public space around 19th century buildings, including the gear daily chocolate factory. That project began in 1964. Also, he designed Olympia's water garden, constructed above a parking garage on the Capitol campus in Olympia.

She said once Halprin's team was chosen, they had to tackle this very difficult site. Parts of the proposed park were supposed to be located on top of a concrete bridge, but had to support full grown trees, which Amanda had to support tons and tons of soil. The landscape was lifted into the air space where it would be subject to traffic exhaust, and excessive winds and inadequate protection from any kind of weather it had to function over the long term, which meant that the designers had to sink these massive tree wells into the concrete to allow for tree roots to expand. And they had to establish a water system that could let water flow through the parks water features, hydrate the plants and manage off all while being constructed above a freeway. In March 1972 the plan for the garage was approved with tree pockets, sunk low into the garage's roof. The structural load on the top of the part

of the garage where the park is that structural load on the top will be equal to the combined load on all the rest of the levels. That's how much weight it had to carry.

She said work then progressing four basic phases of construction. First, the easy part of Central Park much of which was on existing land. Second, the Great Box Garden south of Seneca street with its planter boxes, a freeway level. Third, the massive bridge to carry the park over I5 and to support the park landscape. For the city's East Plaza garage and East Plaza above it, Peter Kiewit and Sons of Omaha constructed the great box garden and later the city's new garage. David Mowat a company of Bellevue constructed the bridge over I5.

She said the team led a total of 23 girders sum up to 133 feet long and weighing up to 80 tons during 1 week in December. It was then chosen perhaps not surprisingly to complete other sections of the park. The central and east phases of Freeway Park, constructing a complex system of waterproofing, drainage, irrigation systems, paving everything required to keep a living landscape alive on a bit of concrete. In July 1976 as part of the nation's Centennial, Freeway Park held an opening ceremony. The design would go on to win numerous awards, including from the Washington cast concrete industry, designed an environment magazine, the association of landscape contractors, and the American Society of landscape architects.

She noted how the 8th Avenue overpass interacts with the bridge that walks over to central plaza and to the box garden further south. On the Southwest end is the Great Box Garden, and it's constructed of those board form planter boxes, and the oddly shaped block between the I5 corridor and 6th Avenue. This is one of the details that makes Freeway Park so unique - the enormous amount of concrete used to create varied forms in various profiles, light and shadow and to give the park its dynamic shapes, its varied heights, its character. Exit 165 brings freeway traffic from the South into downtown bisecting the garden one can also see in these plans the way the boxes marched down to the freeway corridor bringing drivers into the experience of Freeway Park. Even though the freeway was in a sense the problem, and in a sense the park was the solution, Halprin did not want to ignore the experience of drivers from the park. He wanted to provide drivers with an experience of the park and the Great Box Garden does that by putting plantings on the same level with traffic.

Ms. Beckner provided a photo of the Great Box Garden in 1976 right when it was opened, before the ivy began cascading down over the edges. She noted the irregularity and the height, the L-shaped and rectangular forms the Great Box Garden includes character defining features, like concrete pathways and planter boxes with those board formed finishes. These are generally 15 to 30 feet wide, and they have variation of a concrete color in the aggregate.

She said the Central Plaza includes many of the park's character-defining features, including three of the five original light standards, 100-foot tall light standards designed to drop a diffuse dabbled light through the trees at night. She noted some curvilinear lines along edges and also dense dark foliage designed to further insulate

the part from city traffic. The plaza also includes two of the most stunning features in Freeway Park, the cascades and the canyon waterfalls to water features, and incorporates a concrete monolith plate, steppingstones, block seating areas and all of it produced in this board formed concrete to mimic naturalistic mountain-like features including a waterfall with a whopping 90-foot drop. When running water crashes over boulders and blocks and plates people have endless opportunities to climb through under and over these forms. She provided a quick elevation drawing from inside the canyon showing the variety of forms the stairs and the modeling and the blocks, and they all have their feet sort of tucked into the shallow pool at the bottom. It's a little bit hard to see, but sort of the shallow pool of water allows for circulation and brings these water features alive.

She noted the Central Plaza's hard scape, the staircase and planter boxes along the edges, the regular concrete paths with dense plantings that again continue to screen the park from traffic for pedestrians separating them from the city. And the noise, and the smells, one can see the enormous space taken up by the canyon, which is that central structure, and the cascades, smaller and visible from the Park Place Building to the West. The East Plaza has a footprint that matches the garage that's right below it and it has more of a curving sort of a gentle escape along with planted edges that again provide a wind break and also a screen from the surrounding city, sort of keeping views insular and allowing people to relax in this sort of more gentle, less angular sort of landscape. She noted the original light poles designed for that subtle moonlight glow and said they had to be augmented eventually because the park was dark enough to start attracting some criminal activity. But the effect was always meant to be peaceful and subtle.

She noted the sections of Freeway Park and how they interact with surrounding features. The park retains its original footprint it just has been blurred a little bit due to additional construction.

She provided photos of the Great Box Garden showing how it interacts with the freeway below and how the boxes handle changes and elevation sort of stepping up to the sidewalk in places. And how the paths are not straight but were like steppingstones as if one is moving through a natural landscape.

The Central Plaza has more of the hardscaped plaza available in the middle for events and again that steppingstone structure in paths. So that nothing is completely straight and rigid that beautiful board formed concrete. That has the lights in the shadows made from these projecting and receiving boards that were used in the forms. And it has the look of as if it were kind of made like stone. This is a cascade with its naturalistic forms in the various sizes and shapes room for interaction and noted the canyon in the background. She said it is one of the two main water features in the central plaza. She noted a closeup of the canyon from the interior with narrow and wide paths for climbing the vertical and horizontal striations in the concrete use of water to mask the sounds of the freeway and forms reminiscent of mountain or stone out crossings. She provided a photo of the canyon from its first year and noted that the trees had yet to fill in, but the waterfalls were robust and the structure invited interaction, play, physical movement.

Ms. Beckner said the East Plaza is under the 8th Avenue overpass. It also includes water features, but they're smaller and gentler. It also includes the park's one comfort station which is square constructed of the same board form concrete and built kind of gently into this broader landscape of lawns and paths. She noted its character that rough board form concrete that comes up over and over again, the open sun dabbled plazas both in the East and the central plaza those dense edges that provide a screen from the surrounding city and those steppingstone paths that are really playful and provide multiple ways of moving through this landscape the use of water and the interaction with the freeway below along with those tall light standards.

Ms. Beckner said Freeway Park was completed in 1976 but Angela Danadjieva was asked to design two additional landscapes, Piggot Memorial Corridor that climbs up to First Hill and an extension of the grounds. New construction within the actual park has been minimal, in the 1990s a small shed was tucked under one edge of the overpass around the same time. Small additions began appearing round planters with flowers, pedestrian scale, lighting kiosks, for way finding, the occasional garbage can or movable furniture in the plaza that has already been added over the years. Also in 2007, when the park was roughly 30 years old SPAR took another look at the planting plan and revised it.

She said that the trees did exceptionally well on top of a parking garage but that they had grown so unruly in some locations that they've shaded huge sections of the park below particularly those lawns and plazas that were meant to be enjoyed. These larger trees sort of killed off or discouraged eye level planting and ground level grasses so SPAR chose to thin or replace some of the overgrown trees and move towards species that were smaller at maturity to eliminate that same issue in the future. They opened up some of those sunny lawns again, so they have their original character. They eliminated some blind spots to avoid any additional criminal activity, and they removed plants that had been added, but were not consistent with the original design. Landscapes and plants are living things they are never the same year after year. There have been natural changes in plantings as well and that has just been part of the maintenance of the park.

Ms. Beckner said she wanted to provide a sense of how Freeway Park fits into Seattle's listed parks. There's not really another park like Freeway Park anywhere while earlier construction projects had built apartments, and even government buildings over freeways like, the Bridge Apartments in New York and the Fall River Government Center in Fall River, Massachusetts, Halprin is believed to be the first to have lidded a freeway with a public park in a downtown. Halprin claimed that the design for Freeway Park was an innovation inspired by an earlier freeway project from across the country. The Brooklyn Heights Promenade constructed in 1952 cantilevers over a section of multi-lane freeway where it runs along the banks of the East River. While the Promenade is not actually a fully lidded freeway, it did provide the inspiration to show other designers what can be done.

Seattle has listed five of its parks as landmarks: Dakota Place, Kinneer Park, lic'ted (Licton) Springs Park, Volunteer Park, another older and very grand park that was partially redesigned by the Olmsteds, and the park most like Freeway Park, Gasworks Park known nationwide for its design by Richard Haag who took a former industrial site and transformed it into a one-of-a-kind recreational opportunity in 1973. The reason that Gasworks Park and Freeway Park are somewhat related is they were really responding to changing environments and cities, and they were showing what was possible what new things were possible in the existing landscape. She said it's really easy to see how freeway park achieved its goals and noted Freeway Park was designed to incorporate some of Halprin's most innovative and enduring ideas. It separated pedestrians from motor vehicles allowing them to move freely without interacting with the freeway. It condensed development using air rights. It masks the audio and visual effects of the freeway while knitting together the community separated by it and it drew people through a choreographed experience, relying on paths, planting water features to inspire emotions and aesthetic experience. Most importantly, the part provided a space for events, interactions between people, and people in landscape choreographed, like dance or spontaneous like wading into the water. And lighting this formerly underused place.

Ms. Beckner said Freeway Park may be one of a kind, but it has inspired numerous other freeway lidding projects, including Seattle's over 520. It also inspired cities like Phoenix, Boston, Dallas, St Louis, Atlanta, Chicago, Los Angeles. She said there are many quotes about Freeway Park and quoted her favorite: "Freeway Park appears as a carefully choreographed performance space, a jungle of concrete, vegetation and waterfalls to be encountered and traversed by people in movement". Halprin was a huge fan of movement, of exercise of interaction with the natural world and he managed to create a space like that in the central city.

Mr. Macleod asked what has been modified and changed over the years? Was there anything in the original plan that was left unbuilt or didn't really come to fruition.

Ms. Beckner said she had not seen that there were plans that did not get constructed. She said the plans fit pretty well what we're seeing in real life. Because of the size of the team that there must have been variations made, when they got to trying to build the waterfall or when they got to trying to figure out what the plant palette should be. But I don't know of any actual construction that they were planning that did not take place.

Ms. Chang appreciated the thorough presentation and noted she enjoyed the pictures that kind of reiterated the different spaces. She wondered about accessibility and asked if elevators had been explored or studied.

Ms. Beckner said the park is accessible from certain roadways but a lot of it is at elevation. She wasn't sure if there are plans or have been plans to make that more accessible. With the construction of the grounds of the Washington State Convention Center, and the Piggot Memorial Corridor, there are more ramps that sort of zigzag up and down elevations and more access points into Freeway Park.

David Graves, SPAR said sections of the park are accessible, and noted the Box Gardens aren't accessible. He said that the Seneca Plaza is accessible; there are certain challenges and there's, there's some cross slopes and the upper lawns can be a challenge to get to from an accessibility standpoint. He said SPAR got 10 million dollars as part of the convention center expansion to make improvements to Freeway Park. Um, and so we're kind of working through the design of those things. He said accessibility is always a concern of SPAR and always at these older facilities it's an issue. He said SPAR will do what it can to make the park as accessible as possible without changing the historic character and the intention of the park as well.

Mr. Barnes asked what is included in nomination.

Ms. Beckner said referring to the park, it's really hard to visualize because there's so many pieces to this. So, for instance, in the National Register nomination, the garage under East Plaza is actually part of that nomination. In this case where we're only nominating the park landscape on top of those structures so we're not including the bridge or the freeway or the garage in this case. Basically the concrete structures are not landscape, but the land with the landscaping, the ground covering etcetera. Including all of the concrete within the park like the canyon and the cascades, all of the planter boxes, those concrete elements are part of the park design. It's more the section that lifts the heart off the freeway level.

Mr. Graves said the individual plants are not included, just because of the way we have to manage the landscape.

Mr. Norman asked what is the overall safety level been of the park? The planters are cool but there are a lot of places where people can hide around corners.

Mr. Graves said there's a perception that the park isn't safe and there are homeless folks currently living in the park. He said there is a lot of overgrown vegetation, and the park isn't very legible from a wayfinding standpoint. There are these really super cool 100-foot-tall lights most of which don't work anymore. He said SPAR will work on the lighting and pruning vegetation so that the park is more visible. He said SPAR would manage the landscape a little bit better. So that, that people do have that sense of openness, and you can see around the corner and you understand where you are and you don't feel like you're, you're trapped in a space. He noted Ms. Beckner's comments that the landscaping just took off more than it was anticipated. He said a bunch of trees were removed in 2007, and they could have removed more. He said they are thinking about how to open up the park in a way that's respectful and preserves that that kind of wooded landscape character but give folks a sense of security. The more people that are in the park, and the more positive uses are in the park, the safer people are going to feel. Making sure people feel safe and secure using our parks is definitely a concern of ours as definitely in front of mind, as we're thinking about.

Mr. Macleod said it was a wonderful presentation, wonderful nomination report and said he had no idea that it was actually called the Great Box Garden because that's not too far off from what he has called it. He supported nominating this as a landmark and preliminarily supported C, D and E as suggested on a staff report. He said the park is a really special piece of urban landscape. He said a lot of people think of Westlake Park - about 20 years newer as anchoring the center of Seattle, but he has always felt like this is really the heart. He said we are lucky to have such a large and expansive Lawrence Halprin project here. He said he recently visited the Portland park sequence but it was closed for renovations. He is glad he can always stop by Freeway Park to experience it. He said it is a fantastic and varied landscape and is one of the better examples of Brutalism. He said it is really a groundbreaking design for the concept of a lidded park over a freeway. He said he can't believe this isn't a landmark already. He said he could go on and on about how special the place is. He supported nomination.

Mr. Barnes said he agreed with Mr. Macleod about the architectural piece of it. He said in terms of having a park like this in the downtown core areas so unique and special, he was fortunate to be able to work not too far from it. He said it was nice to be able to go to a nice quiet place out of the office and be able to be, even though you're in the city, you feel like you're somewhat isolated. He supported nomination.

Mr. Schmitt supported nomination and noted as a new person to the city driving through downtown and seeing the ivy tumbling down and being intrigued. It makes you want to pull off and take the exit and explore what's around there. He noted the way it feels so secluded, but you are exactly in the middle of the city and also over the noisiest part of the city.

Ms. Chang said she echoed the sentiments of the other board members. She said the approach from either north or south is always really breathtaking and makes it particularly unique. She said she hopes to explore the park a little bit more if this moves forward for designation. She said she is curious about how it was built, as a structural engineer, how it was attached to the walls on either side and some of it's connected to some of the building garage roofs. She wondered about which elements should be included in nomination. She wondered how this would remain if the private buildings and even if I5 expands or changes. I'm looking forward to further discussion with the board members on the criteria of what to designate specifically.

Mr. Inpanbutr supported nomination and said it seems like a slam dunk given the national recognition and it's also so much easier when you have preservation groups that are supporting it as well as community groups that are thinking about its place in history, when it was originally constructed, where it is in the city today, and how it can continue to be involved as the city grows around it. There was disagreement about it being the first of its kind that there might be some other national examples prior to the lid so he was interested in hearing a little bit more about that, and kind of just understanding its place in history a little bit better, but full support for nomination from me.

Mr. Macleod said since the light towers were mentioned a few times he remembered a time many years ago when they were functioning. Light is one of those things that is so important to architecture and to landscapes that doesn't get talked about. He said he would be excited if those were to get back to a fully functioning capacity because that along with the waterfall on the western side is such an important component of the site. It's very interesting to understand how it integrates with the convention center site and that really does not detract from the landscape at all.

Mr. Norman said he had the most lukewarm support for this. He said he definitely wants the park preserved but that he is not attached to those structures inside of it so much. He wished it was a little bit more open.

Ms. Johnson supported nomination and considering that it's already on the National Register it's pretty easy as Jeff and Matt mentioned. She said she has mainly experienced this park from either above in the dentist office or below driving along I5 and that she hasn't spent that much time walking around in it. She said it is remarkable to drive underneath it and see as has been mentioned, all the vegetations spilling down. She said when she first moved to Seattle, she thought it seemed so Seattle, evergreen park in the midst of the center of the city. She said particularly when leaving the city and coming back she is of amazed just how nice Seattle parks are here, and that they're often in the nicest parts of the city with the nicest views. And while this maybe is not quite that, it's that really we have such unique parks here and this is definitely one of them. It's like Mr. Norman mentioned, she wished we could just landmark the idea of a park going over the highway more than the specifics of it. She said if it comes that it needs to be adjusted for accessibility or anything that would seem reasonable. But it really is unusual and a special part of the city. She said she was happy to have the chance to be part of the nomination.

Ms. Sodt explained with the Staff Report she was trying to describe the park as the park-owned site that Halprin's firm designed, not the other ancillary or privately owned sites that might be connected or adjacent to it. She said it is the Seattle Parks Department-owned portion of Freeway Park. She said she wanted to be very clear that it was all the elements of the series of park sites, those built features, the landscape, the hardscape and other park elements, such as the lighting and just so that, all of that was included and that the board understood that that's what they were including. She clarified that this matches up with the red line around the original Freeway Park Design and site that is Parks-owned property. She said that anything that's outside of that red line that's in the site plan within the nomination would not be included.

Mr. Graves asked if the interior of the existing comfort station could be excluded and noted it was one of those pieces that was excluded from the National Register nomination. The building itself was but the interior was not.

Ms. Sodt said that's a good point and she wasn't intending for the interior of that the comfort station to be included. She said if the board is comfortable with it, they could specifically exclude the interior of the existing comfort station.

Mr. Graves asked the intent when landscape is stated Halprin's overall intent, not specific plants or plant species?

Ms. Sodt said that it's both the living design as well as the hardscape design and we can get clarity over what the Board controls within the Controls and Incentives agreement. She said it can be made really clear.

Ms. Johnson said assuming this goes to a next meeting at the nomination, what is included can be pared down. Nothing can be added back in, but it can be narrowed down specifically at designation.

Mr. Macleod asked if anyone wanted the comfort station specifically excluded in the nomination.

Mr. Barnes said to include it maybe to just discuss a little bit more and get more details on what that means.

Ms. Chang concurred and said that keeping it a little bit more broad is good especially since some board members are missing.

Ms. Johnson said she doubted the interior would be included at designation but that at this point, broader is better and the board can discuss more next time.

Action: I move that the Board approve the nomination of Freeway Park at 700 Seneca Street for consideration as a Seattle Landmark; noting the legal description in the Nomination Form; that the features and characteristics proposed for preservation include: All of the park sites, inclusive of built features, landscape, hardscape and other park elements; excluding Park Place Plaza; that the public meeting for Board consideration of designation be scheduled for July 6, 2022; that this action conforms to the known comprehensive and development plans of the City of Seattle.

MM/SC/IM/MI 7:0:0 Motion carried.

Ms. Sodt said she would work to provide more images of the comfort station and any other information board members might want.

Ms. Sodt said she and Ms. Doherty were testing the hybrid meeting format and are working out the challenges. She said emails were sent out regarding board member preference for virtual or in-person meetings. She said to meet the Open Public Meetings Act there is a requirement for an in-person location option. She said the sound is better if the board members and participants participate virtually. She said microphones would be added to the conference room to help with audio.

Ms. Doherty noted technical issues and she is working with IT to resolve them. She explained the room set up and was not sure how audio would work with a room full of people. She suggested board members stay remote until the system issues are resolved and then reassess. She said when they are back in person, board members may benefit from bringing in a tablet or laptop due to the size of the presentation monitor/screen.

Ms. Sodt said there are some technical resources in the department, and it may be possible to provide Chromebooks etc. in a portable hybrid meeting toolkit.

Mr. Macleod said the room has a reverberation effect. He supported virtual meetings but would love to come back in person. He appreciated move to personal devices and having more technology available would be beneficial.

Mmes. Sodt and Doherty appreciated board member patience as they navigate the new hybrid meeting experience.