

Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) hosted a public meeting on February 16, 2012 at the Rainier Beach Library (9125 Rainier Ave. S.) from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Prior to the start of the meeting, attendees could review general project information and maps of the project area. The meeting began at 6:10 pm.

Angie Thomson (facilitator) welcomed attendees to the meeting and reviewed the agenda. She noted that the purpose of the meeting is to introduce the project to the public and discuss preliminary ideas for the site. She emphasized that this opportunity for feedback is at a very early stage in the project and will help determine what type of design SPU should consider. There will be many more opportunities for public comment throughout the project design.

Angie introduced staff who would be providing additional information at the meeting:

- Julie Crittenden, SPU project manager
- Katherine Lynch, SPU watershed biologist
- Mark Soloman, Crime Prevention Coordinator for the Seattle Police Department
- David Graves, Senior Planner with Seattle Parks and Recreation

Julie Crittenden provided an overview of the project, including the issues, challenges and opportunities in the area. She reviewed the elements of the proposed plan and noted some of the concerns that have been heard to date from the community. She said she would especially like to hear more about concerns regarding traffic on the private drive, undesirable activities on the new city property, pedestrian crossing on Rainier, and pedestrian safety on 68th. Julie concluded her presentation with a timeline for the project. She asked attendees whether they would be interested in attending a Taylor Creek "Summit" and/or an open house in the summer on the project site. There was general interest from attendees in both of these events.

Angie opened the discussion by asking for concerns regarding undesirable activities on the new city property. Comments and questions covered a range of topics, and are grouped below according to subject. Answers to questions by city staff are noted in italics.

Public access to city property *(Initial responses given by City staff at the meeting are noted in italics)*

Can the city restrict public access to the property? *It is hard for the city to own property and now allow public access.*

What if all the property owners on the lane do not want public access to the city property? *That discussion would be elevated to the Mayor and City Council.*

Would it be possible to **not** place a sign on the new property that identifies it as public property? *It may be possible.*

Drive through access to the property should be limited, and there should be no parking. Traffic on the drive and parking is already a problem for residents. *There is currently no plan for parking at the site.*

How will the city prevent vehicle access as people attempt to unload, turn around, or park along the private drive? Neighborhood kids will be at risk with the increased traffic. Currently people already stop in the area to look at the large white posted sign.

With the proximity of the site to Lakeridge Park, activities at the park will move across the street to the city property. This is especially true given the water access, which also adds concern about public safety (for example, kids swimming without supervision). This property is isolated and secluded, and will encourage undesirable activities.

Neighbors won't use this property because they already have access to the water. It will only attract people from outside the neighborhood. *This new property may not bring people in to the neighborhood. Big groups of people usually use Lakeridge Park and will likely stay there – large open areas and parking/restrooms. With good design we can minimize the potential for undesirable activities on the property near the lake.*

Will the neighborhood have to have patrols to ensure the park is safe?

There is a potential for educational opportunities with public access to this property.

Public access to the property could be detrimental to the habitat and the endangered species this site is designed to protect.

Property ownership

The city should widen the creek on this property for the benefit of salmon, but should make the property private or otherwise restrict access.

Could this become a property owned by the Audubon or some other such group that would restrict access to the site? Could the property be turned over to a conservancy group?

The city should sell the property or deed it to the adjacent neighbors.

Design

How can this be designed so it keeps out undesirable activities? Undesirable activities mentioned at the meeting include loud music, drinking, fireworks on 4th of July, dumping/littering, drug use and drug-related garbage, sexual activity, property damage, camping, unsupervised swimming, and trespassing. *Our first step is to understand your concerns, and then we will work with Seattle Police Department to identify design approaches that discourage undesirable activities. We will also continue talking with the community during the project design.*

A fence on the property would restrict public access and protect the species and habitat.

Lighting will be important. The lack of lighting will result in dumping and other illicit activities.

The plantings around the widened creek channel – will this obstruct views for the private property owners?

There are ways to design the project so it meets the goals of the city and still restricts access.

Lakeridge Park

Fireworks are a problem at Lakeridge Park, and many nearby property owners have seen damage to their homes as a result.

Homeless people live in Lakeridge Park and this problem could spread to the new property.

Daylighting the creek in Lakeridge Park could have impacts to the use of the baseball field.

Pedestrian safety

The Rainier Avenue crossing is very unsafe.

Approximately six to eight people per hour walk their dogs along 68th, which has no sidewalks. This area is dangerous.

Other

Are there any illegal activities taking place on the other parcel owned by the City (S of Rainier Ave)?
There is some illegal dumping.

Is there a potential for a property tax reduction for nearby property owners until the project is complete?

Where is the funding for this project coming from? Could it be used to improved facilities at Lakeridge Park? *Funding comes from SPU and is specifically designated for streams and drainage project. It cannot be used for parks improvements.*

How is this project consistent with our small neighborhood? *This is a unique project and unique situation for SPU, given the way the property came in to ownership and the opportunities it presents for habitat restoration.*

This property is a historic mill site.

How will construction of the project limit/restrict access to the private drive and along 68th Ave S?

The entrance to the drive is already challenging for cars and risk could be greater with more pedestrians in the area trying to access the creek site.

Is it possible to re-do/widen the drive entrance from Rainier Ave S?