



Date: October 15, 2009

To: Board of Parks Commissioners

From: David Graves, Senior Planner, Planning and Development Division

Subject: Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool

Requested Board Action

This is a briefing on the Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool project. No action is requested of the Board at this time. The Board of Park Commissioners has not yet been briefed on the project and staff wanted to outline the public outreach to date and provide an update on the schematic design process for the planning, design and construction of a new community center and pool at the Rainier Beach site.

Project Description and Background

The Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool (RBCC), located at the corner of Rainier Avenue South and South Henderson Street, was built in 1972 along with the adjacent Seattle South Shore School. The existing Community Center provides important program spaces for the Rainier Beach community including a multi-purpose room, childcare, a large double gym and a swimming pool.

The Seattle School District and Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) share some spaces in this building through a joint operating agreement between the two agencies. The property line separating the two entities runs down the center of the north/south hallway. The spaces to the east are owned by Parks and include the swimming pool, associated locker rooms, a drop-in day care room and general meeting rooms (for a total of approximately 25,500 square feet). The spaces immediately to the west on School District property include classrooms, restrooms, the gymnasium and locker rooms (approximately 46,000 square feet). These spaces have historically been shared spaces that are programmed by both agencies. Once the new community center is constructed, the School District will continue to use the community center gymnasium under the Parks/School District Joint Use Agreement and Parks may use the school facilities in the evening. The utility service entries and mechanical and electrical systems are located at the north end of the shared spaces on school property.

In July 2007, the Seattle School District began demolition of the school portion of the building to construct a new facility adjacent to the shared spaces. The new school construction began in April 2008 and was completed in August 2009. The South Shore kindergarten thru 8th grade school is an entirely separate facility. As of October 2007, the School District has no longer operated in the shared spaces and made these spaces available to the Park Department.

The remaining structure, owned in part by Parks and in part by the School District, is in need of significant upgrades and the spaces do not function well for use by community center patrons and staff.

Based on a Building Assessment Report prepared by ARC Architects in 2007, it is less expensive and more cost effective to completely demolish the structure and construct a new community center and pool on the existing site. On a parallel track, Parks is negotiating with the Seattle School District to acquire the School District property which lies between Parks' property and the new South Shore School. Design of the new structure is based on this acquisition moving forward and being completed before the project goes out to bid sometime in late 2010. ARC Architects was selected to lead the schematic design process based on their submittal, team of sub-consultants and performance at the interview.

Public Involvement Process

The Rainier Beach Community Center service area is the most ethnically diverse area of the city. The most recent census data is from 2000 and is likely not necessarily reflective of the current mix. The neighborhood is constantly changing and the new Light Rail station will add an additional engine for demographic shift in the neighborhood. There are five predominant ethnic groups in the area: East African, Samoan/Pacific Islander, Filipino, Hispanic and Vietnamese

Due to the broad diversity in the neighborhood, Parks is taking a three pronged approach to engaging the community during the schematic design process for the new Rainier Beach Community Center and Pool. First, Parks will hold a series of three public meetings at the community center. The meetings were/will be held on June 9, September 15 and November 17, 2009. A flyer announcing each of these meetings was translated into six languages, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Somali, Traditional Chinese and Amharic, and mailed to all residents within a half-mile radius of the community center; a total of 7,100 households. A press release was/will be issued and distributed to all of the City's ethnic media. A meeting flyer was also distributed to an e-mail list, posted around the neighborhood at visible locations such as the Rainier Beach Public Library and mailed to 40 community organizations, schools and churches.

Second, Parks convened a Project Advisory Team (PAT) comprised of area residents to both provide input on the schematic design and to assist with public outreach. More specifically, the PAT will evaluate and make recommendations to Seattle Parks and Recreation on the community center and pool design. The PAT will also provide advice and guidance to Parks staff and architects as they move forward on the design, and report back to the community as the design progresses. The first PAT meeting was held on September 8, 2009; PAT members gave invaluable input on the three schematic design options in advance of presenting these to the public on September 15. The second PAT meeting was held on October 20th. Meetings of the PAT are open to the public.

Finally, Parks has also undertaken targeted outreach to specific groups which have traditionally been hard to engage in a typical public process. These meetings involved more focused discussions regarding current and potential future needs, desires and community center and pool. To date we've meet with the following groups and plan on meeting with them at least one more time during the schematic design process:

| Group | Date/Location (1) | Date/Location (2) |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Rainier Beach Youth/Teens | June 26, 2009 - RBCC | TBD |
| Vietnamese Community – Vietnamese Resource Fair | July 17, 2009 – New Holly Neighborhood Campus | TBD |
| Filipino Community - UGNAYAN Meeting | July 27, 2009 – Filipino Community Center | TBD |
| Samoan Community | July 29, 2009 - RBCC | TBD |
| East African community | November 2, 2009 – New Holly | TBD |

Issues

- Overall, the public is generally very supportive of the project. The biggest challenge has been to go beyond the typical three public meeting format and to reach out to those people who don't come to meetings and who would take advantage of the community center and pool.
- Parks has met with several other service providers and organizations such as the Atlantic Street Center, BikeWorks, the Department of Neighborhoods and the Seattle Police Department (SPD). There will not be any dedicated space for other than Parks usage in the new community center due to square footage costs except that a small office will be provided for use by SPD. There may also be a computer terminal available for use by other City staff. Beyond that it is too costly to provide any single use space.

Environmental Sustainability

Consistent with Parks' policy, the new community center will achieve at least a LEED Gold rating. The existing site will be redeveloped and materials from the old community center will be re-used or recycled to the maximum extent possible. The new building will have systems for natural ventilation, heating and cooling, and water re-use to minimize the building's impact on the environment and maximize its efficiency.

Budget

The budget for the project is \$25 million for planning, design and construction of the project. The City is issuing bonds for the cost of the project.

Schedule

Schematic design will be completed by the end of the year. Design development will start as schematic design is ending. The goal is to begin construction in early 2011 and have the new community center and pool open in mid to late 2012.

Additional Information

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