

**BUILDING A NEW NORTHGATE BRANCH, COMMUNITY CENTER & PARK
DESIGN UPDATE MEETING RECAP
6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, 2004
Olympic View Elementary School, 504 N.E. 95th St.**

Approximately 130 people from the community attended this meeting to discuss the design development for the new Northgate branch library, community center and park, and the ongoing designs for street improvements. Alexandra Harris, capital program director for The Seattle Public Library, and Erin Devoto, Seattle Parks and Recreation planning and development director, started the meeting with welcoming comments and introductions of Greg Maffei, Library Board president and steward for the new Northgate Branch; David Kunselman, Library project manager for the Northgate project; Tim Motzer, Parks project manager for the Northgate project; Teresa Platt, Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) project manager; Jackie Kirm from the Office of Policy and Management; Claudia McCain, Library director of neighborhood libraries; Maureen A. O'Neill, Parks sector manager; Joelle Ligon, Parks public relations specialist; and Andy Bates, Neighborhood Library Services design team liaison for the new branch library. Also attending was David Traylor from the Citizen Implementation Review Panel (CIRP) and members of the Parks Project Advisory Team (PAT).

Harris and Devoto gave a quick recap of the project's history, including the site planning and schematic design processes. Harris explained the project was in its final stages of design, and there was still an opportunity to make modest adjustments, though not large-scale changes as was the case during schematic design. They then turned the meeting over to Teresa Platt and Tony Mazzella from SDOT, who gave a brief overview of progress made on the street improvement project and the Northgate Coordinated Transportation Investment Plan (CTIP), and invited the attendees to visit their stations in the back of the room at the end of the meeting.

Next, Harris briefly discussed the work of the selected artist for the branch library, Dana Lynn Louis, and of the selected artist for the community center, Nikki McClure. She explained that Louis was selected from the Library Art Roster established for the LFA program and administered by the Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs, and described Louis as an experienced public artist working primarily in glass and metal sculpture. Her artwork will be integrated into the book drop locations. Louis' concept for her work is based on the idea of gathering information. Her artwork will be primarily a glass installation and is currently in the final stages of design. Harris described McClure's work, which includes papercuts, books, calendars, lamps, music and gardens. McClure was chosen through a process similar to the Library's process. McClure is working with the Parks PAT to develop artwork that incorporates the themes of community and Thornton Creek. McClure's work, "The Eddy," will be placed near the entrance to the community center. It will include cut metal and inset colored glass and will be attached to a low seating wall just west of the playground and facing the plaza.

Harris turned the meeting over to Bob Hull, principal with The Miller/Hull Partnership, the project architects. Hull asked the members of the design team to stand as he introduced them: Kurt Stolle and Ruth Coates from The Miller/Hull Partnership; Bob Shrosbree and Jack Johnson from Site Workshop, the landscape architects. Hull's presentation included updated images of the site, and focused on the ways the site plan had been revised during the design development

phase incorporating suggestions made by community members during the schematic design community update meeting. The community center was placed at the south end of the site with the play area to the north, and the plan was augmented to maximize the amount of green space. Shrosbree discussed the primary site program elements, including an expanded play area, a larger plaza, and a lawn with 18,000 square feet of grass area. He also described the storm water system and the steep slope on the site, which will be retained and selectively restored. Hull showed the area where the bus stop is planned and highlighted the two primary facades of the branch library, first discussing the one running along Fifth Avenue Northeast. He showed plans and elevations for the branch library, highlighting the various program elements, the decision to move the children's area to the north to allow for a corner window and the decision to create a pedestrian entrance in the northwest corner. Hull next went over the plans and elevations for the community center. He explained how the building will be arranged with activity spaces on the west side where a façade of windows exists. The gymnasium will be located at the east side and a large multi-purpose room will sit near the expanded south entrance.

Harris and Devoto then facilitated a question-and-answer session with the community members:

Q. How many stalls for men and women will there be in the community center restrooms?

A. The primary public restrooms will have four stalls each; there will also be family restrooms and shower rooms in addition to the primary restrooms.

Q. I'm a 50-year resident of the neighborhood and for all the time I've lived here, Northeast 105th Street has been a one-lane street. Are there plans to widen it? I'm also concerned about garbage along Northeast 103rd to 105th Streets. And why are you spending money on new parks instead of taking care of the existing parks?

A. We can't spend any of the library money on park maintenance. The Community Center Levy Program (CCLP) is part of the levy passed in 1999 – the park is paid through the 2000 Pro Parks Levy. There is money set aside for maintenance and operations of the park. Northeast 105th Street is being addressed as part of the SDOT street improvement plan. We heard from the community that you wanted to keep this street as it is. The plan is to widen Northeast 105th Street near Fifth Avenue Northeast by 12 feet of pavement along the last 50 feet on the north side. The widened area will increase visibility as cars enter the intersection of Northeast 105th Street and Fifth Avenue Northeast.

Q. What will be done to preserve the nature of Northeast 105th Street? Will there be a crosswalk? Will it be dedicated but not marked?

A. Our interest was in not developing a full street width, but providing access for pedestrians while maintaining the existing vehicle lane. There is not a crosswalk planned for Northeast 105th Street. Further north there is a fully developed crossing.

Q. Can you clarify where the bus stops are?

A. We are currently reviewing two possible options and looking at the benefits and drawbacks of each, one in the triangular planted area south of the branch library and one just north of the project's driveway. We're considering issues of pedestrian connections, pedestrian safety and traffic operations for each location.

Q. What kind of selective clearing will be done on the south slope? Will you be planting conifers? I'd also like a better understanding why you chose to use metal siding on the buildings; we don't want another Target. Will it be corrugated like Target?

A. Work on the south slope will be done on the advice of an arborist. We will be removing old, damaged trees as well as any dead wood. The area is primarily poplars and big leaf maples. Conifers may be used in supplemental planting. In regard to metal siding, the material relates to the exposed steel structure of the buildings. As seen from Fifth Avenue Northeast, the metal siding will occur in small areas. The buildings won't look like Target. We haven't selected the style of metal yet for the siding.

Q. Could you clarify the plan for landscaping on the east side of the property, at the steep slope?

A. These steep slopes and existing vegetation extend right up to the edge of the property. There are a lot of existing trees in there, and we will be restoring the edge with appropriate planting where needed. We are trying to leave it alone wherever possible, to avoid disturbing the steeply sloped areas.

Q. Will the north end of the childcare center have windows and light?

A. It has a 9-foot-high window to the north, and a lot of windows facing west. There will be plenty of light.

Q. Are you going to put in drought-resistant trees and bushes and how tall will they be? I'm concerned about the possibility of trees getting knocked down in a storm. Will you be using native plants?

A. The plant palette will be native and native-like, drought-tolerant, urban plants. Regarding the size of the trees, we will be scaling them appropriately, with nice big street trees along Fifth Avenue Northeast and scaled-down plant material as the plants move into the site. We will try and gauge the types of plants for the environment and conditions to avoid storm hazards. Parks is considering all these factors in the selection process.

Q. There is currently English ivy on the site; will it be removed?

A. Restoration will likely include removal of ivy in areas impacted by construction.

Q. If I'm leaving the Northgate Mall parking lot at the Bon, will I be able to drive straight across into the community center parking lot?

A. Yes. The mall driveway will be realigned so the community center and branch library access will align directly across the street.

In addition, community members made the following comments:

- ★ Congratulations on the work you've done. Couldn't have imagined it would come out as well as it has. Very pleased with the design.
- ★ The new design, which opens up the library, is excellent.
- ★ Concern with respect to the neighbors to the east; the wall of the gym, as it is currently situated, blocks access to sunshine. Would prefer to see the gym rotated 90 degrees.

- * The south side entrance to the community center should be the main entrance. Bring the patio around to the south side, if possible.

Greg Maffei discussed next steps for the project, saying that construction is expected to begin in late summer or early fall, with completion expected sometime in the fourth quarter of 2005. Plans will be available on the Library's Web site at www.spl.org and will also be available for viewing at the Northgate Temporary Service Site. He thanked everyone for coming and invited attendees to send comments to Library staff or e-mail the capital program office at capital.program@spl.org, and said that all comments will be shared with the design team. People can also contact Library project manager David Kunselman at 386-4096 or by e-mail at david.kunselman@spl.org, or Parks project manager Tim Motzer at 684-7060 or by e-mail at tim.motzer@seattle.gov. He invited the attendees to circulate around the room and talk to Library, Parks, SDOT, Office of Policy and Management staff, members of the design team and the artists. The meeting ended at 9 p.m.