Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop
Fact Sheet

SEATTLE PARKS FOUNDATION

Background

In 1990 the first Bands of Green Report was prepared by the Cedar River Group at the request of the Seattle Parks & Recreation Superintendent. This report was inspired in part by the 1903 Olmsted Plan for an emerald necklace of parks, boulevards and trails throughout the City of Seattle. In 2006, the Seattle Parks Foundation commissioned the Cedar River Group to update the original Bands of Green Report. The updated report was prepared with extensive input from a variety of sources, including Seattle Parks & Recreation, Seattle Department of Transportation, Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, Seattle Department of Planning and Development and the many neighborhood plans coordinated by the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. The report was produced through the financial support of the Seattle Parks Foundation and the Seattle Department of Transportation.

In February 2007, the Parks Foundation published the new Bands of Green, a plan for the continuing development of trails, boulevards and linear parks in Seattle. One of the ideas to come out of this updated report was the concept for a loop around Lake Union to connect Lake Union and Gas Works Parks, and the many pocket parks, street ends and waterways that ring the lake.

Vision

Lake Union remains disconnected as a resource, both for the communities that surround it and the general public. The City and the Seattle Parks Foundation have a vision to create a multi-use loop around Lake Union that reconnects the lake to the surrounding communities and beyond. That vision is a loop that invites community use and enjoyment of Lake Union; a loop that connects people to open space – connecting us to new and existing lakefront parks, celebrating the lake's historic working waterfront, and revealing the unique character and quality of the lake itself and the surrounding neighborhoods.

At the geographic and historic heart of Seattle, the Cheshiahud Loop will enhance the vitality and livability of neighborhoods surrounding the lake, the City, and the Seattle region. The loop is walkable and rideable today but it is disjointed and can be hard to follow. It is comprised of segments of the Burke Gilman Trail, Westlake Avenue and Fairview Avenues North and East, and trails within Gas Works and Lake Union Park. The loop will create safe and attractive access to the lake for all Seattlites - connecting Gas Works and Lake Union Parks, linking more than 35 pocket parks, street ends and waterways that ring the lake, and improving access from adjacent neighborhoods, downtown, and the University of Washington.

By connecting existing parks and improving access to the lake, this loop will create a continuous network of open spaces that are ideal for a range of active and passive recreation, from boating, bicycling and walking, to family picnics and quiet contemplation. This loop will celebrate the rich and varied history of Lake Union and its ties to Seattle's maritime and industrial past, present and future.

To further this concept of a loop around Lake Union, City staff and representatives from the Parks Foundation met with many of the constituent groups around the lake including businesses, the Floating Homes Association, community councils including Eastlake, the North District Council and SLUFAN,

nonprofit organizations, and municipal organizations during the fall and winter of 2007. Based on the overwhelming support for the project, money was added to the 2008 CIP budget to begin defining and improving the loop.

Loop Name

The new six-mile loop around Lake Union is named "Cheshiahud Lake Union Loop" in honor of a Duwamish chief who led a village located on Lake Union. Mayor Greg Nickels chose the name from suggestions submitted by the public in a naming contest.

Activities in 2008

The City is taking a four pronged approach to making the loop a reality. First, the loop corridor was determined based on existing identified routes in the City Bicycle Map, which includes pedestrian routes where bicycles are allowed, and using public rights of way. The Westlake Avenue, Burke-Gilman and Fairview Avenue corridors are all identified routes on the City's map. Second, wayfinding signage is being installed throughout the corridor to identify not only the loop itself but also parks, waterways and street ends around the lake. Third, spot improvements and two larger construction projects at the approaches to the Fremont and University Bridges are being undertaken. Finally, master planning for the loop has begun. The final master plan will highlight the challenges and potential solutions for areas around the lake where obvious trail connections do not exist and it will clarify the final route layout. Specific projects include:

- Move curb stops and signs along the Westlake sidewalk to effectively widen the corridor.
- Design and install wayfinding signage around the loop.
- Create a map for the loop.
- Design and install wayfinding kiosks at several key points around the loop.
- Improve the connection to the south end of the Fremont Bridge.
- Create a connection from the Burke-Gilman Trail to Peace Park and the University Bridge.
- Prepare a Master Plan to guide future development and/or improvement projects.
- Undertake a variety of clean-up and planting projects around the lake.

Public Input

We encourage public participation at all of the three open houses, including the next one on Thursday, December 11, 2008 from 5 – 7:30 p.m. at the Lake Union Armory, and via written or e-mail comments.

More Information

David Graves, AICP
Senior Planner, Major Projects & Planning
Seattle Parks & Recreation
(206) 684-7048
david.graves@seattle.gov