

# **Laurelhurst Community Center Expansion Project**

This provides a summary of the public involvement to design Laurelhurst Community Center Expansion project. This document:

- Recounts the steps and participants in the public process
- Summarizes the community concerns that were expressed, the basis for decisions, and an explanation of existing policies and plans
- Describes amendments or changes that resulted from the public process.

## ***Background***

In November 2000, Seattle voters approved a \$198.2 million levy lid lift for Parks and Recreation, including \$2.57 million to expand the Laurelhurst Community Center. The Levy defined the project as “expand and upgrade existing community center facility.”

## ***Public Involvement Steps***

There were many opportunities to be involved in the project. These included:

- Project Advisory Team (PAT) – Parks recruited a PAT comprised of community members and Center staff to provide ongoing review and recommendations during the project. PAT meetings were open to the public.
- Community-wide Public Meetings and Workshops - Parks held three open meetings and workshops where information was shared with the general community.
- Community Questionnaire - The Laurelhurst Community Club helped distribute and questionnaire seeking comments on priorities for the improvements.
- Parks also went to a Laurelhurst Community Club and Laurelhurst Community Center Advisory Council to inform them of the project.

## ***Key Areas of Community Discussion***

Gym

Size of Multipurpose Room

Parking Location

Quality vs. Quantity

**PAT Meeting #1 and #2:** The design consultant solicited PAT input on project goals. PAT interests were identified as:

- Space for classes and programs, and storage is needed.
- The design should reflect the community’s interests.
- It is important to explore options such as: renovating or constructing a new gym building as a separate addition; and building a joined addition.
- Consider the landscaping plan developed a few years ago by the community.

**Community Meeting #1:** The participants considered priorities for improvements.

- In general, attendees favored renovation of the existing community center and expanding program space over creating a new gym.

- Many expressed interest in exploring options and costs of improvements to the existing school gym for future work or an Advisory Council sponsored project.
- The addition that should blend well with the existing architecture and landscape.

### **Design Commission – Review of schematic design options**

**PAT Meeting # 3:** The PAT was asked to provide direction on draft schematic design. The PAT confirmed that they supported addition/renovation the existing community center. The PAT agreed that improving the existing gym should be a separate undertaking.

**Community Meeting #2:** The consultant reviewed schematic options based on Parks community center standards, community input, and PAT direction.

Scheme A: Two-story addition tied to the existing building to create a 2,700-square-foot multipurpose room on the upper floor and two activity rooms and restrooms below.

Scheme B: Two-story addition separated from the main building using a glass spine. It would have multipurpose room on the upper floor and activity rooms, and restrooms below. The existing multipurpose room is used for lobby, an activity room, and office.

- A number of attendees were concerned that the addition should be smaller, in particular the multi-purpose room be smaller than Parks' guidelines and that Parks commit to a high level of finish rather than meeting standards for rooms sizes.
- In contrast to the views expressed at the previous meeting a number of participants stated their interest in dedicating funds to existing gym.
- Concern that parking around existing loop will take up green space.

**PAT Meeting #4:** The PAT provided comments on final schematic design that focused on refinements to Scheme B.

**Landmark Board -** The Landmarks Preservation Board designated the exterior of the community center as a City Landmark. They suggested making the addition look clearly different but complementary to original architecture; creating a grand multipurpose room; and preserving the driveway loop/approach

### **Design Commission – Design Commission review of schematic design.**

**Community Meeting #3 February 2005 – Review final schematic design:** The consultant presented the final schematic design that built on Scheme B. The design provided an additional 4,600 square feet of space – nearly doubling the size. The parking would be in the current location and widening the east side of the loop to accommodate required additional parking.

- A number of attendees were still concerned that the addition should be smaller, in particular the multi-purpose room be smaller than Parks' guidelines and that Parks commit to a high level of finish rather than meeting standards for rooms sizes.

**PAT # 5, 6 and 7 March – September, 2005:** The consultant continued to refine the design to reflect increasing costs for materials. The consultant reviewed iterations of floor plans and renderings of the interiors. Finishes were also discussed. Key changes included:

- The wall separating the fireplace room from the lobby was deleted.
- The multi-purpose room shrank from the 2,500 square feet proposed at the third public meeting to 1,200 square feet, and the proposed small deck was deleted.
- One of the two activity rooms was deleted.

During the final design phase, Parks staff met with the Laurelhurst Advisory Council to discuss the desired improvements to the facility raised in the Community Meetings. Due to the rapid escalation in construction materials costs, the project budget could not accomplish all of the desired improvements to this building. Special thanks go to the Laurelhurst Community Center Advisory Council for donating \$100,000 in additional funding specifically designated to ensure quality furnishings and kitchen equipment in the center which will contribute to the center's success.

**Art Concepts – Susan Zoccola:** Susan described her seed pod/leaf concept as being inspired by the park's natural beauty. This design will reflect the natural setting, rather than copy or compete with it. It will create a "light-feeling" sculpture for this spot. The art will be a tapered pole located in the parking "island," bent over at the top; ideally, it will be a lighted pole. The pods will hang from both sides of the pole.



### ***Final Design***

The final design meets the Levy's intent to expand and upgrade existing community center facility. Although it provides 3,460 square feet new program space, it is considerably smaller than proposed during the public meetings. This was largely due to increasing construction costs. The previously existing 4,600 square feet of the historic facility is entirely remodeled and now meets current seismic, energy and life safety codes.

### ***Construction***

Seattle Parks and Recreation advertised the construction work for public bids. The low bidder was Anthony Construction.

Anthony started construction in April 2006. The project proceeded on schedule into the summer months. At the end of the summer, a concrete drivers strike throughout King County had a negative impact on the construction schedule, as the community center expansion is entirely concrete.



The delay in pouring concrete pushed the actual concrete pouring schedule into the fall. Record rainfall and a once-in-a-century wind storm event have delayed the project again.

The revised completion date is March 2007. Parks and Recreation expects the facility to resume operations near the end of that month.

### ***Grand Opening***

Seattle Parks and Recreation will host a grand opening ceremony and celebration to mark the completion of the project in Spring 2007. Please watch your mailbox and the project website for updates on this event.

<http://www.cityofseattle.net/parks/proparks/projects/laurelhurst.htm>