

# RIBBON OF PARKS ASSOCIATION

FINAL REPORT AND PROJECT LISTING



Ribbon of Parks Association

Othello Neighborhood

Seattle, WA | June 2010

The Ribbon of Parks Association (ROPA)  
<http://othelloneighborhood.org/othellopark.aspx>  
Seattle, WA  
June 2010

The ROPA Steering Committee includes: Brain Mack, Mona Lee,  
Daphne Schneider, Jenna Walden and Rene' Williams, with Parks' Project Manager Pam Kliment.

Thanks to the following organizations for your support: Othello Neighborhood Associations,  
Othello Park Alliance, New Holly Homeowners Association,  
Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, Seattle City Light, and Seattle Housing Authority.

This document can be found at the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation website.

Prepared by SvR Design Company



# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	2
Project Map . . . . .	5
Wayfinding . . . . .	7
ADA Improvements . . . . .	9
Mascot Banners . . . . .	11
Acquisition of Van Asselt Elementary School Open Space . . . . .	13
<b>Van Asselt Park</b>	
Van Asselt Park: Entry Improvements . . . . .	15
Van Asselt Park: North Slope Drainage, Streetscape and Pathway Improvements*. . . . .	17
City Light Solar Arrays . . . . .	19
Chief Sealth Trail Connections* . . . . .	21
Chief Sealth Trail Viewpoint Benches . . . . .	23
City Light Urban Nursery/Agriculture* . . . . .	25
Complete the Chief Sealth Trail . . . . .	27
Othello Hill Cycle Track/Bike Lane & Streetscape Improvements . . . . .	29
Restore the Urban Forest . . . . .	31
Create Habitat Connection . . . . .	33

## **John C. Little Sr. Park**

John C. Little Sr. Park: Public Art* . . . . .	35
John C. Little Sr. Park: Program Additions . . . . .	37
Walking Path Improvements Through John C. Little Sr. Park . . . . .	39
Retrofit Streets with Natural Drainage* . . . . .	41
Community Garden/ Market Garden Extension . . . . .	43
Restore 38th Avenue South . . . . .	45
Acquire Remnant Safeway Parcel for Mini Park* . . . . .	47
Install Mascot Kiosks . . . . .	49
Acquire Sound Transit Property for Park/Farm . . . . .	51
Improve Barrier at S. Myrtle St. and 42nd Ave.* . . . . .	53
Improve MLK Jr. Way and Renton Ave. Pedestrian Crossings at Webster . . . . .	55
<b>Othello Park</b>	
Othello Park Walking Trail . . . . .	57
Othello Park: Upper Terrace Improvements . . . . .	59
Othello Park: Central Lawn Improvements . . . . .	61
Othello Park: East Boundary Improvements . . . . .	63
45th Ave S Street Improvements . . . . .	65

\* denotes a community priority project



## Introduction

Community members in the Othello neighborhood formed the Ribbon of Parks Association (ROPA) in order to plan for and prioritize neighborhood investments that build connections between three neighborhood parks: Othello Playground, John C. Little Sr. Park and Van Asselt Playground. These three parks are either within or border the Othello Urban Village and forming connections between these parcels is seen as a critical step in assuring that as residential densities increase, the neighborhood maintains its liveability, human scale and cohesion.

During the four month process, the ROPA Steering Committee hosted several community meetings and performed additional, informal outreach to neighbors and businesses. From an initial planning charrette to a preferred planning option, which is described in this document, the community worked together to define and prioritize projects both within the parks and to connect them.

This document presents an overview map of the Othello neighborhood with a variety of identified improvements and then presents a more in-depth discussion of each of those projects in the



subsequent pages. Priority projects are identified by the listing of Community Leads at the bottom of each page; those projects without Community Leads are not currently priority projects. This does not mean that they are not desired, rather that there is not at this time a dedicated community steward to move the project forward.

Opportunities to implement community goals that are not currently identified as priorities should, of course, be harnessed.



If you are interested in taking the lead on any of these projects, please contact either Daphne Schneider at [DaphneSchneider@comcast.net](mailto:DaphneSchneider@comcast.net), Mona Lee at [mona\\_lee@comcast.net](mailto:mona_lee@comcast.net) or Brian Mack at [mack442@juno.com](mailto:mack442@juno.com).

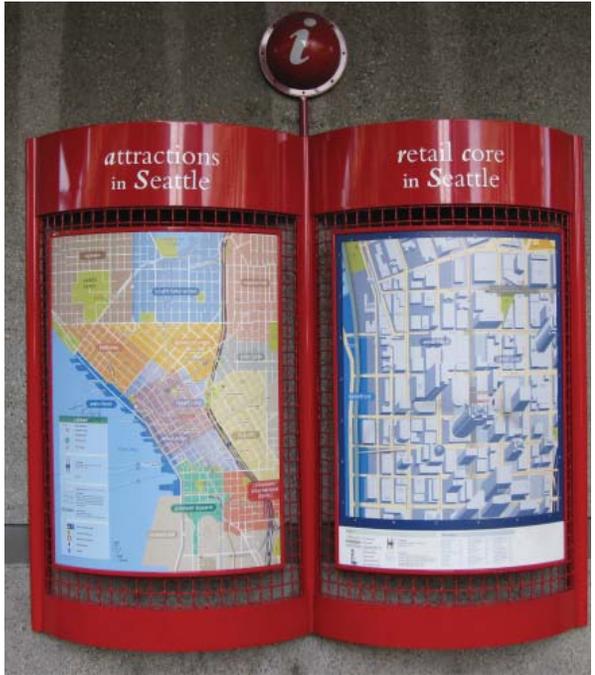
The projects presented in this document will not be completed overnight. Indeed, this planning document represents a beginning, not an end for the next phase of improving the Othello neighborhood. However, it provides a roadmap toward implementing these goals and identifies projects that will represent “early wins” to build momentum for further neighborhood implementation.





**PROJECTS**

- 1** Mascot Banners
- 2** Acquisition of Van Asselt Middle School Open Space
- 3** Chief Sealth Trail Viewpoint Benches
- 4** Chief Sealth Trail Connections
- 5** Chief Sealth Trail Connections
- 6** Othello Hill Cycle Track & Streetscape Improvements
- 7** City Light Solar Arrays
- 8** Complete the Chief Sealth Trail
- 9** City Light Urban Nursery/ Agriculture
- 10** Restore the Urban Forest
- 11** Create Habitat Connection
- 12** Walking Path Improvements Through John C. Little Sr. Park
- 13** Walking Path Improvements Through John C. Little Sr. Park
- 14** Restore 38th Avenue South
- 15** Retrofit Streets With Natural Drainage
- 16** Install Mascot Kiosks
- 17** Acquire Sound Transit Property for Park / Farm
- 18** Acquire Remnant Safeway Parcel for Mini Park
- 19** Community Garden/ Market Garden Extension
- 20** Improve Barrier at S. Myrtle St. and 42nd Ave.
- 21** Improve MLK Jr Way and Renton Ave Pedestrian Crossings at Webster
- 22** Othello Park Walking Trail



# Wayfinding

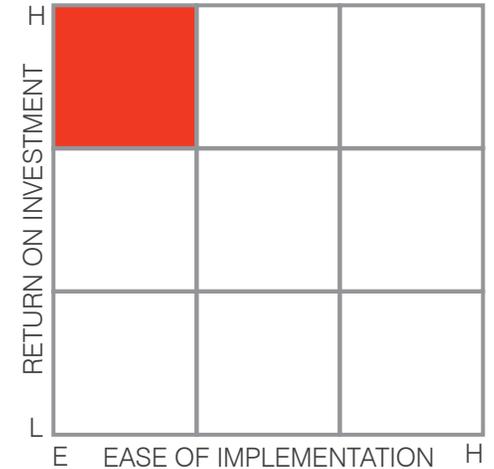
**Description.** Wayfinding is a critical concern for the community, particularly moving east-west. Many residents, for example, did not know where Othello Park was. The community would like to see “off-the-shelf” improvements like the Seattle Department of Transportation’s standard wayfinding signage used in the neighborhood as well as more innovative wayfinding techniques like a painted line or other linear element (like a painted poem or artwork) on the sidewalk to take visitors to the neighborhood to and from some of its best assets.

Contact Barbara Gray at the City of Seattle (SDOT) to begin implementation discussions.

**Estimated Costs.** \$10,000-\$200,000

## Entities Involved.

- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (SDPR)
- Seattle City Light
- Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)
- Safeway





# ADA Improvements

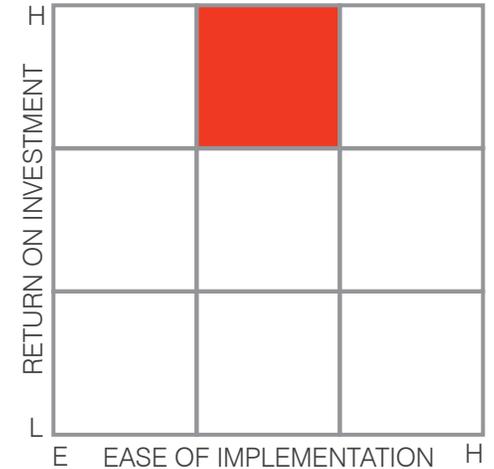
**Description.** Within the entire Othello neighborhood, there are a variety of improvements that appear to be out of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Poor curb transitions, lack of transition zones, poles placed in the walking path and other physical barriers exist to creating a neighborhood that is safe and welcoming for all.

Contact Diana Holloway at the City of Seattle (SDOT) to begin implementation discussions.

**Estimated Costs.** \$30,000-\$300,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- SDPR
- Seattle City Light
- SHA
- Private Developers





# Mascot Banners

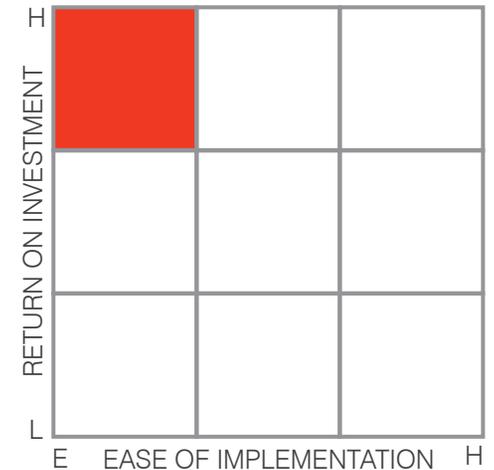
**Description.** Gateway features will welcome visitors and help to define the neighborhood, creating a more tangible concept of destination and community for residents, businesses and visitors alike. The original concept for over-the-road gateways was deemed infeasible by SDOT, in part due to a \$5,000 annual permit. Banners would require a free annual permit.

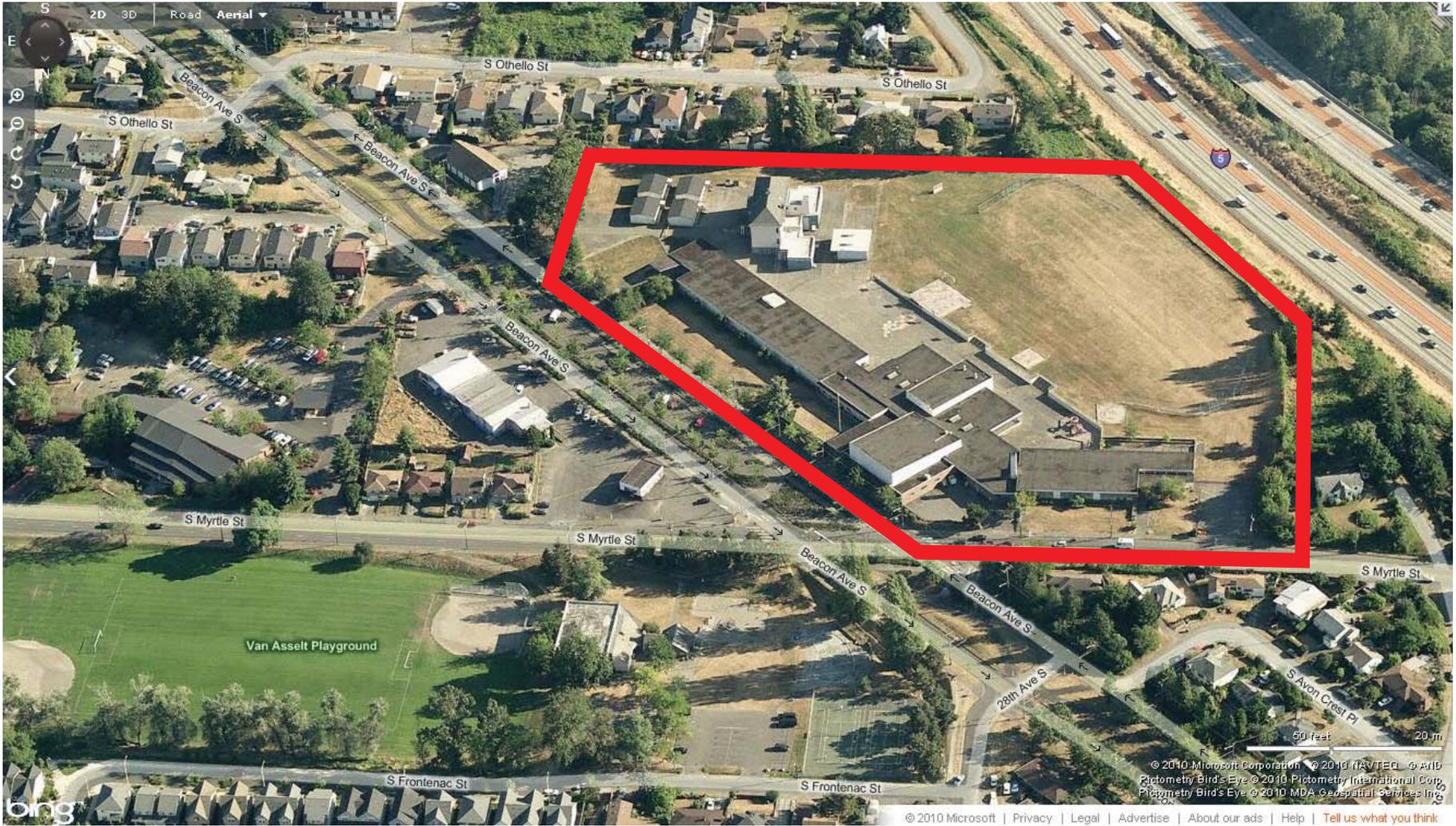
A signature artistic mascot will be part of the banner design. This effort should be combined with the development of mascot kiosks to incorporate a consistent visual language and opportunities to co-locate features. There is a strong desire to have the mascot reflect the rich cultural diversity of the Othello neighborhood.

**Estimated Costs.** \$20,000

## Entities Involved.

- King County Metro (Metro)
- Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (SDPR)
- Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT)
- Business Associations





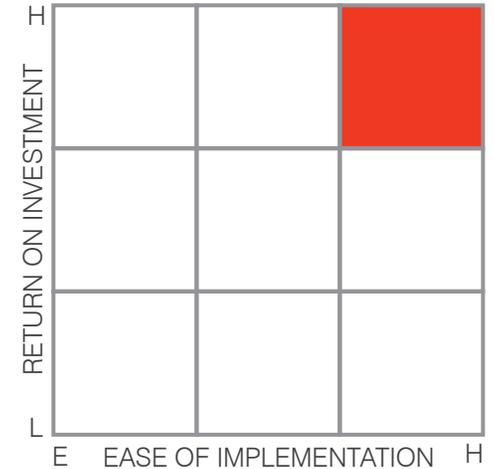
# Acquisition of Van Asselt Middle School Open Space

**Description.** With the closure of Van Asselt Elementary School, the open space behind the school has the potential to be converted to a use other than open space. With tremendous territorial views across the Duwamish River Valley, this parcel's open space should be acquired and protected for future generations.

**Estimated Costs.** Market acquisition value.

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- Seattle School District
- Possible NGO Developer





Welcome

Othello

Beacon Ave S

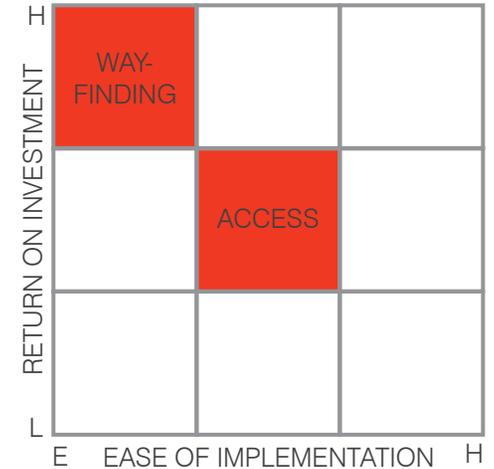
# Van Asselt Park: Entry Improvements

**Description.** From Othello Street to S Frontenac St, the entry to Van Asselt Park—with its wading pool, playground and Community Center—are vastly underplayed from the streetscape. Creating signage, improving ADA access, creating gateways, wayfinding, and possibly adding “supergraphics” to the building itself would all help to make the building more visible from the street and an integral part of the community.

**Estimated Costs.** \$250,000-\$350,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- SDOT
- Metro





# Van Asselt Park: North Slope Drainage, Streetscape and Pathway Improvements

**Description.** Building on work that has already been completed, planting, paving and stairway improvements, a new path, fence and public art elements should be developed and implemented along the north slope of Van Asselt Park. The existing paths, that connect S Frontenac St and 30th Ave S to S Myrtle St and 32nd Ave S, have serious drainage issues that need to be repaired; several people have slipped where water flows over the paths.

SDOT raised significant concerns about the feasibility of installing art in the right-of-way; art elements will need to be coordinated through Jason Huff at the City’s Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs. Lights should be Seattle City Light standard lights.

Along the south edge of Van Asselt Park, a new pathway will complete the loop around the park and/or improved streetscape plantings along Othello Street will help to enclose the park and make it feel more user friendly to all visitors.



**Estimated Costs.** \$250,000-\$370,000

**Entities Involved.**

- SDPR
- SDOT

**Community Leads.** Nancy Wagner and Eunice Beleford



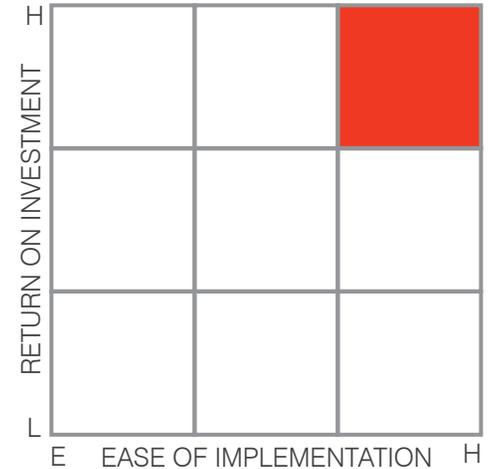
# City Light Solar Arrays

**Description.** Though solar arrays cannot be located on City Light property, there are ample opportunities to install these solar panels in a variety of locations within the neighborhood, including on property controlled by the Department of Parks and Recreation (e.g. Van Asselt Community Center), Seattle Housing Authority (e.g. New Holly Community Center), Sound Transit (e.g. The Othello Light Rail Station) and the New Holly neighborhood.

**Estimated Costs.** \$50,000-\$100,000

## Entities Involved.

- Seattle City Light
- SHA
- SDPR
- SDOT





# Chief Sealth Trail Connections

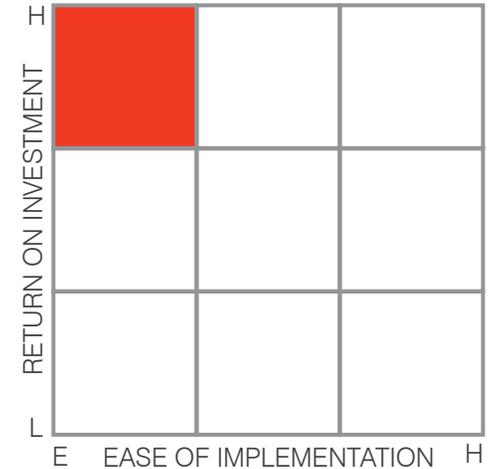
**Description.** There are various east-west connections that should be made from the main Chief Sealth Trail to the adjacent streets and destinations. These paths should be developed to eliminate and replace the muddy “desire paths” that lead to and from the New Holly neighborhood and the New Holly Community Center.

**Estimated Costs.** \$16,000

## Entities Involved.

- New Holly Home Owner’s Association
- Seattle City Light
- SDOT
- Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)

**Community Lead.** Daphne Schneider





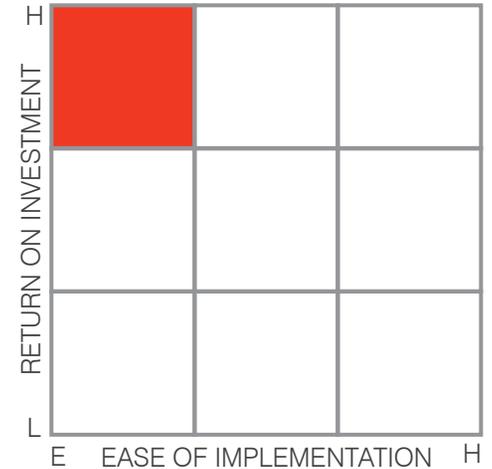
# Chief Sealth Trail Viewpoint Benches

**Description.** The Chief Sealth Trail is viewed not just as a corridor to move through, but also as a place to rest and relax. New, simple seating can be added to the corridor providing small moments to rest and relax. Because of safety concerns, the seating should be sure to be visible from the adjacent streets and not able to be laid upon. A related seating idea could be to use SHA boulders as a reading circle.

**Estimated Costs.** Approximately \$10,000 (\$2,000 per bench); Benches could also be donated

## Entities Involved.

- Seattle City Light
- SDOT
- SHA





# City Light Urban Nursery/Agriculture

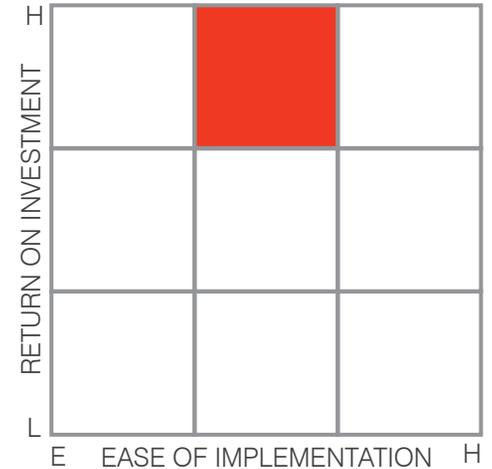
**Description.** One of the more innovative ideas to arise from the planning process was to use the City Light right-of-way as either a home for citywide horticulture or leasable farmland. Building on the Rainier Valley’s past of agricultural production while addressing the needs of today like green jobs and local food security, this urban nursery space could be both plant hub, community center and jobs training ground.

**Estimated Costs.** \$10,000-\$50,000 startup, plus ongoing operating costs

## Entities Involved.

- Seattle City Light
- Department of Neighborhoods
- SDOT
- South Seattle Community College

**Community Leads.** Jenna Walden and Daphne Schneider





# Complete the Chief Sealth Trail

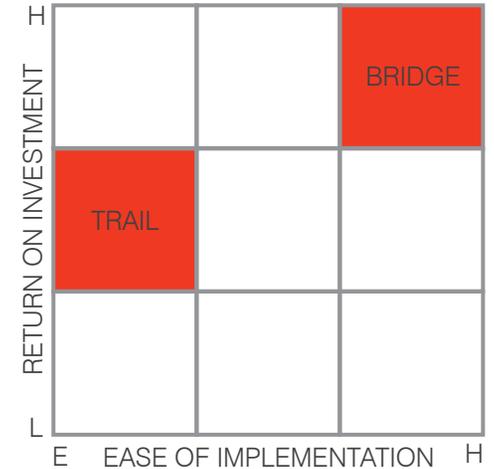
**Description.** From S Othello Street to Webster Street, there is a missing link in the Chief Sealth Trail. There is a strong desire to complete this link so that there is a continuous shared-use facility from Renton to Beacon Hill. A bridge would avoid crossing the arterial and assist with avoiding the wetland, though this is not a community priority.

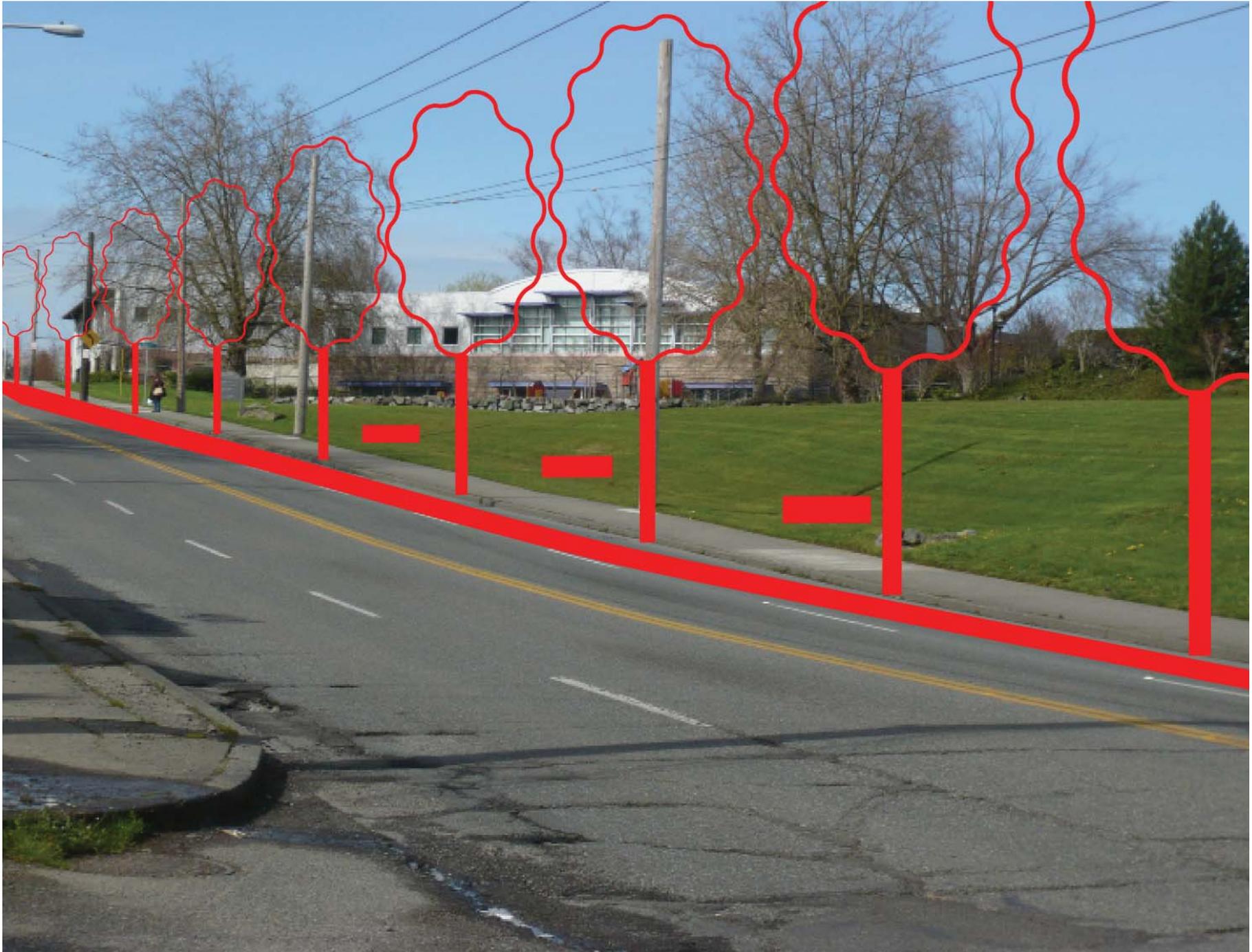
An at grade option would require permitting, but the actual trail construction would be relatively easy. This connection is shown on the City’s Bicycle Master Plan.

**Estimated Costs.** \$800,000-\$1.2 million (less for trail only)

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- Seattle City Light
- Metro





# Othello Hill Cycle Track/Bike Lane & Streetscape Improvements

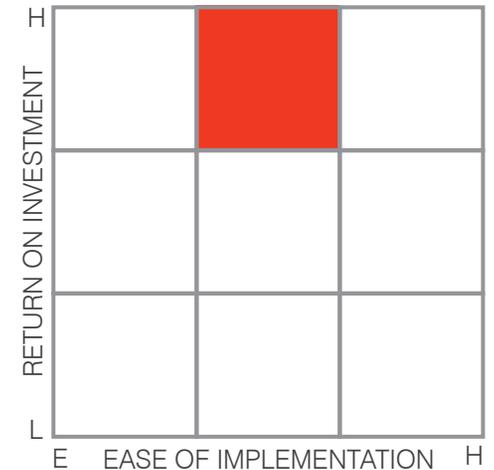
**Description.** Identified as a bike lane in the Bicycle Master Plan, the climb from the Rainier Valley onto Beacon Hill along South Myrtle Place/ Othello Street could be better facilitated via a separated bike lane or cycle track. Benches can be placed adjacent to the cycle track to provide places for the elderly to rest; benches may need to be located on SHA property.

Metro and the City of Seattle had agreed to install lighting improvements along Myrtle/Othello. The community should ask Metro either on their own or via SDOT to ask Metro to review that agreement and ensure that the current improvements are reflective of that agreement. If they aren't, Metro should take steps to make them compatible.

**Estimated Costs.** \$15,000-\$25,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- SHA
- Metro
- Seattle City Light





# Restore the Urban Forest

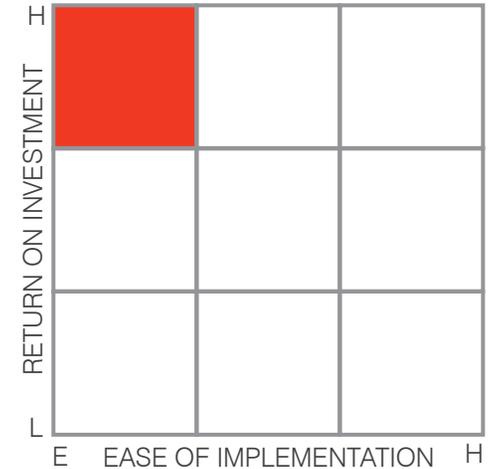
**Description.** The greenbelts that run along the steep edges of Beacon Hill, falling off into the Rainier Valley, are beset with the same issues that so many of Seattle’s urban forests are falling prey to: deciduous trees have largely displaced native conifers, the forest floor is overrun with invasives like hollies and blackberries, and trees are being suffocated and toppled due to the grave impacts of English ivy. Restoring and stewarding these forests so that they are able to prosper in the future will ensure that we keep the green in the Emerald City.

This project could be completed through the Green Seattle Partnership and/or by VEST.

**Estimated Costs.** \$5,000 plus volunteer hours

## Entities Involved.

- SHA
- Private Property Owners
- SDPR
- Cascade Land Conservancy





# Create Habitat Connection

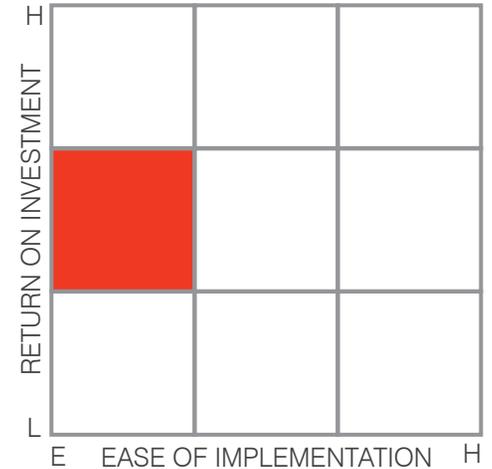
**Description.** The patches of forests adjacent to New Holly Phase II and New Holly Phase III are the back bone for wildlife habitat in the Othello neighborhood, however—just like people—animals need corridors to connect between their homes. Providing a low, native planting scheme going north-south through John C. Little Sr. Park will help connect these parcels, particularly for the terrestrial animals that migrate between the forest patches.

This project could be completed through the Green Seattle Partnership and/or by VEST.

**Estimated Costs.** \$10,000

## Entities Involved.

- Parks
- SHA
- EarthCorps





# John C. Little Sr. Park: Public Art

**Description.** Where the axis of S. Myrtle Street terminates in John C. Little Sr. Park, create an iconic public art work—potentially themed along the lines of the community mascot—to draw people from the light rail station into the neighborhood and provide wayfinding assistance. Initial mascot ideas included a phoenix (shown on page 38) or a Japanese castle. Artwork should reflect the diversity of the community, such as the Japanese Castle Stonework at the Othello Light Rail Station.

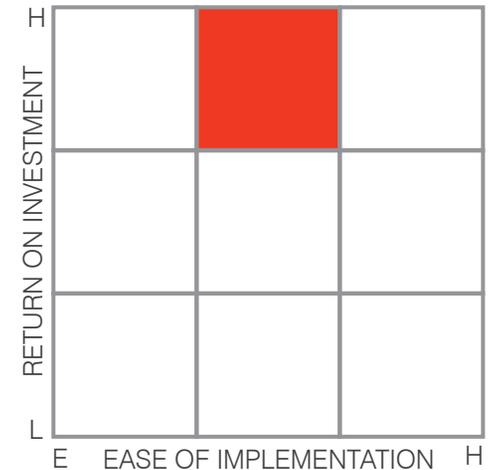
For any artwork in parks, the community will need to coordinate closely with Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.

**Estimated Costs.** \$30,000-\$50,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- 4Culture
- Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs

**Community Lead.** Tracey Lester





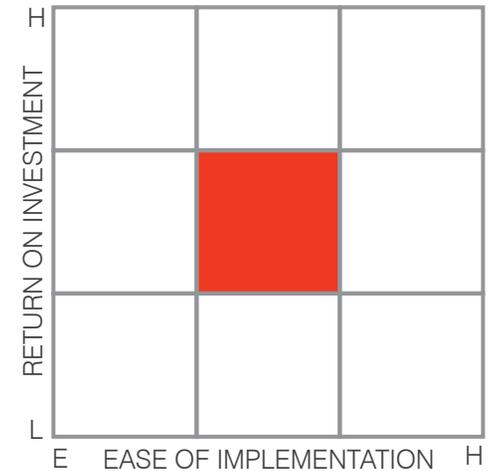
# John C. Little Sr. Park: Program Additions

**Description.** The community expressed the desire to add several program elements to an existing un-programmed space at John C. Little Sr. Park including tennis courts, a dog walk and/or a skate spot. These added program elements not only address the community's desires, but also provide more activity and eyes on the park, which will only enhance its safety in the long-run.

**Estimated Costs.** \$20,000-\$400,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR





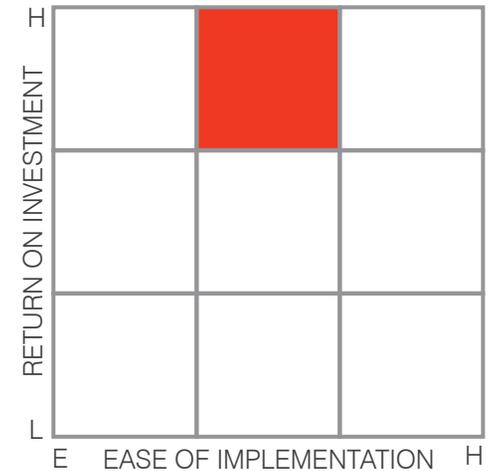
# Walking Path Improvements Through John C. Little Sr. Park

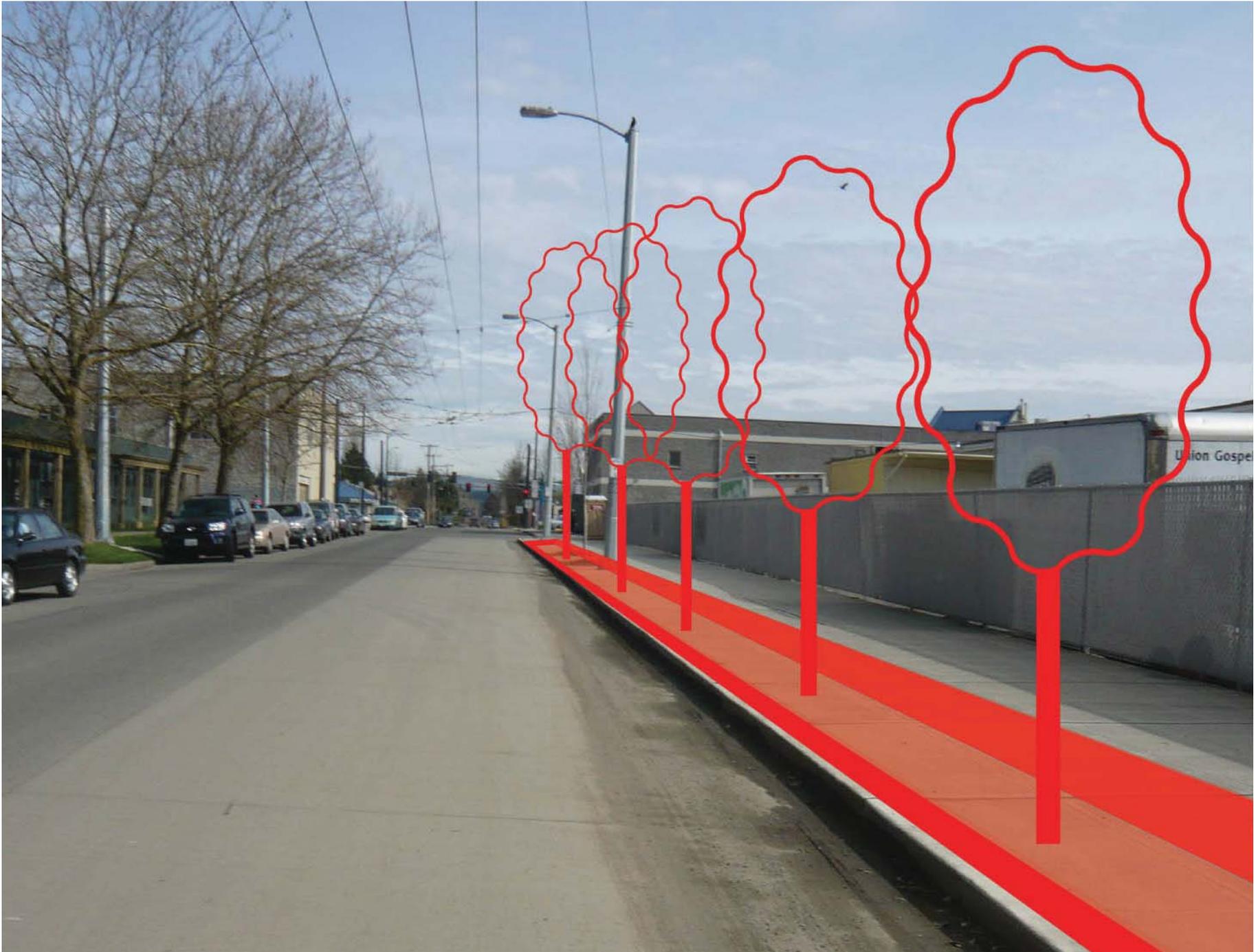
**Description.** John C. Little Sr. Park already has an extensive trail system, it simply needs an additional level of cogency and consistency to make it truly serve the needs of its users. Adding lights, wayfinding and creating a spur path leading toward the Chief Sealth Trail will greatly enhance the usability of the park.

**Estimated Costs.** \$10,000-\$50,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR





# Retrofit Streets with Natural Drainage

**Description.** A number of streets in the area should have natural drainage retrofits to showcase low impact development principles like rain gardens, bioswales and stormwater planters. Additionally, these elements should be incorporated to the maximum extent feasible in all future development projects in the neighborhood so that development mimics, as closely as possible, the natural hydrologic cycle.

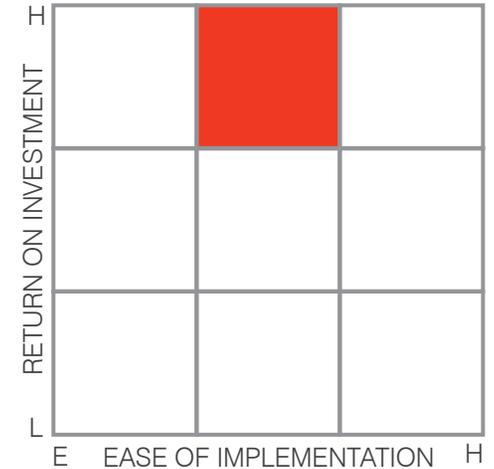
If locations for 40-50 trees can be found in the neighborhood, SDOT (contact Joshua Erickson at SDOT) may be able to provide the trees. Removal of concrete would not be covered by SDOT.

**Estimated Costs.** \$23,000-\$150,000 per block face.

## Entities Involved.

- SPU
- SDOT
- Metro

**Community Leads.** Nancy Wagner and Eunice Beleford





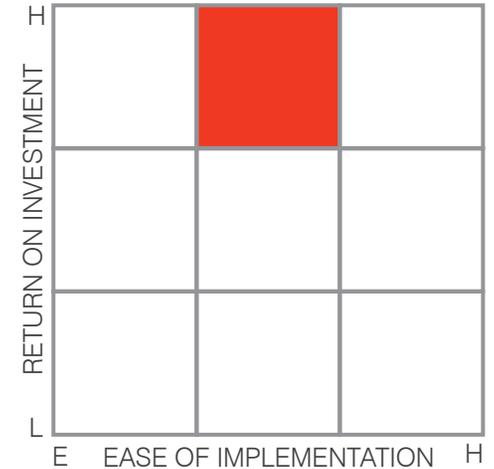
# Community Garden/Market Garden Extension

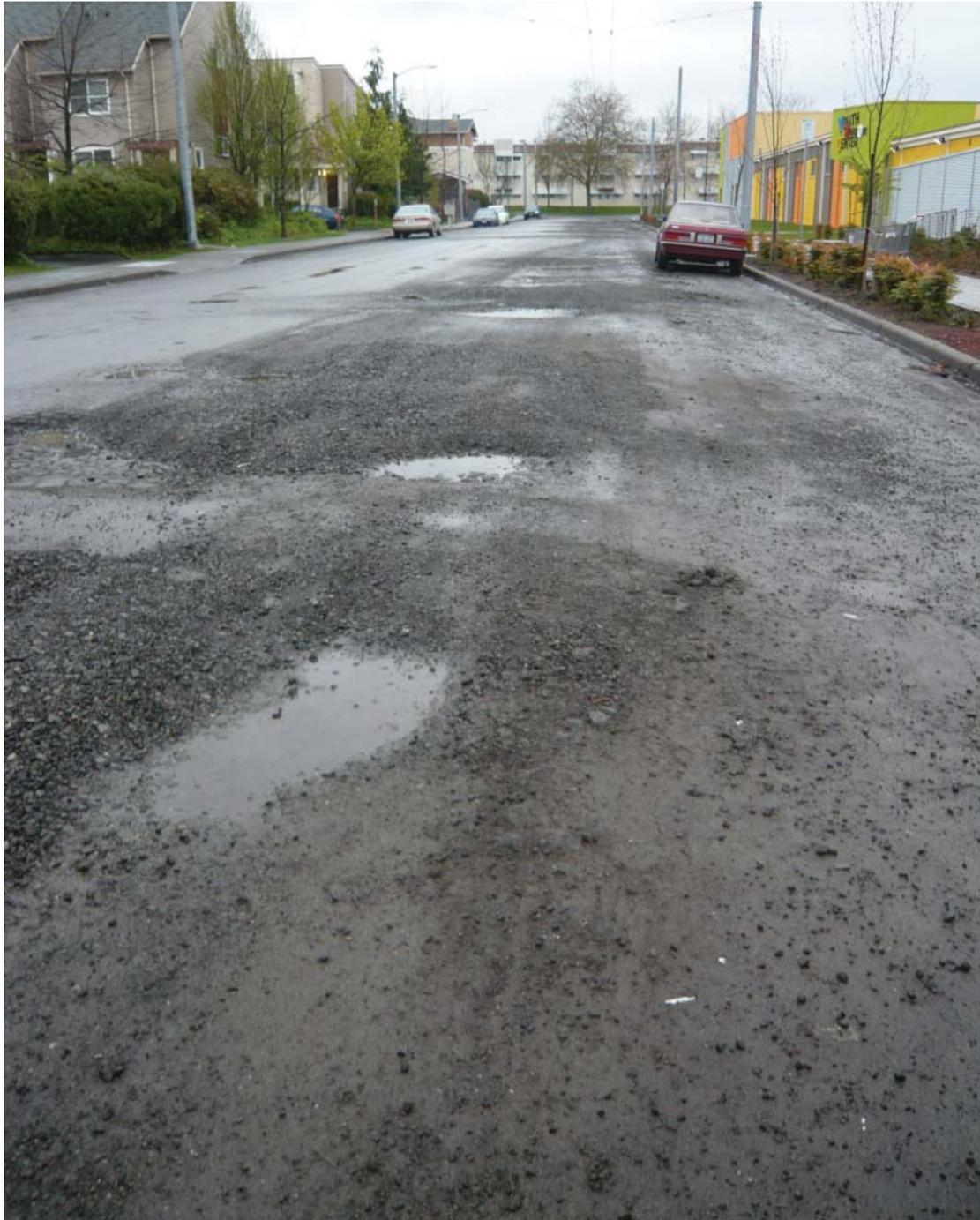
**Description.** A longtime community desire has been to extend the market garden from Othello Place toward the Safeway properties to the north. Making the connection between production and consumption explicit, this improvement would also provide a community heart. This project could be leveraged with future development opportunities at the corner of MLK Jr. Way S and S Othello St.

**Estimated Costs.** Market value plus \$40,000 in improvements.

## Entities Involved.

- Private developer
- SHA Market Garden Program
- Department of Neighborhoods





# Restore 38th Avenue South

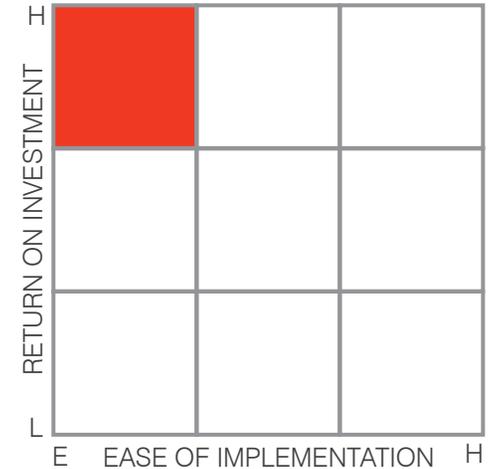
**Description.** 38th Avenue South is a significant community concern. With the routing of busses along the street, the integrity of the pavement has seriously deteriorated with significant potholes and mud puddles along the street. This street should be repaved as soon as possible to repair the damage that has been done.

This project is in the city’s capital improvement projects list for 2011. Jessica Murphy is the project manager.

**Estimated Costs.** \$600,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)
- Metro





# Acquire Remnant Safeway Parcel for Mini Park

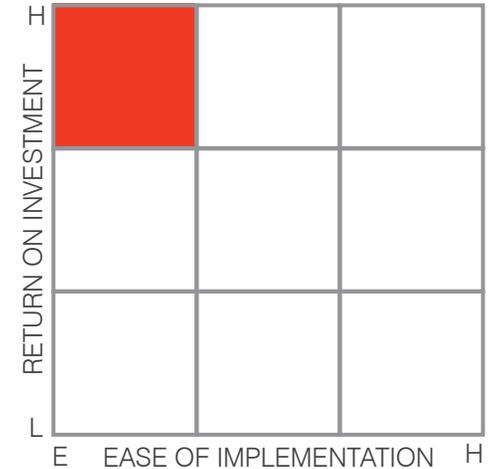
**Description.** Adjacent to the Safeway store is a patch of asphalt paving that is under-utilized and which could be transformed into a mini-park. Initial discussions with Safeway have been positive and momentum is building for a transformation of this space.

**Estimated Costs.** \$10,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- SDPR

**Community Lead.** Jenna Walden and Katie Pencke





# Install Mascot Kiosks

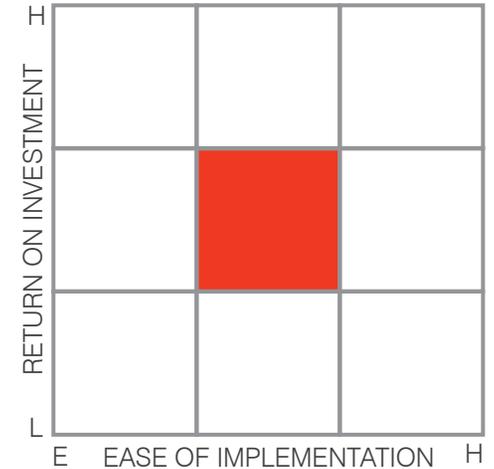
**Description.** As part of an overall branding effort for the neighborhood, themed iconography, or mascots, should be a recurring visual motif. These could take the form of public art, community bulletin boards/kiosks and wayfinding elements. The mascots could also be part of an overall “neighborhood pride” effort, perhaps through screen printing of tee-shirts. The design should reflect the diversity of the community, such as the Japanese Castle Stonework at the Othello Light Rail Station.

Coordinate with the Mascot Banners. Kiosks will need insurance, a one-time permit approval, and approval by the Design Commission.

**Estimated Costs.** \$15,000 Design, \$10,000 each

## Entities Involved.

- 4Culture
- Seattle Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
- SDOT





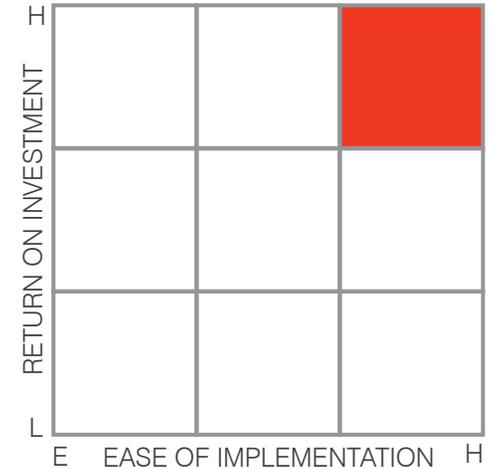
# Acquire Sound Transit Property for Park/Farm

**Description.** There are several small parcels of property that were acquired for building the Sound Transit Link Light Rail. These properties should be acquired to create either smaller parks or urban farms to support local food resilience.

**Estimated Costs.** Market value for land acquisition.

## Entities Involved.

- Sound Transit
- Department of Neighborhoods
- SDPR





# Improve Barrier at S. Myrtle St. and 42nd Ave.

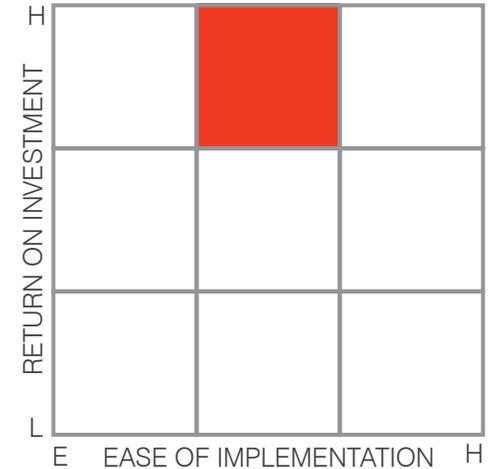
**Description.** This intersection is a unique configuration within the neighborhood. The community supports the current configuration, which does not allow for automobile through traffic, but would like to have pedestrian accessibility improved. The current design is not ADA compliant and needs general upgrades.

**Estimated Costs.** \$20,000 - \$50,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT

**Community Lead.** Tracy Lester and ONA





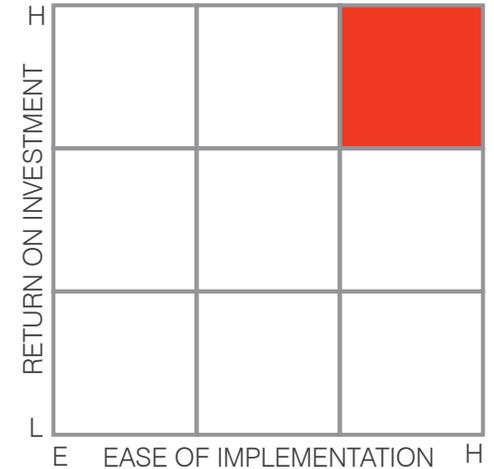
# Improve MLK Jr. Way and Renton Ave. Pedestrian Crossings at Webster

**Description.** The pedestrian crossing Othello Place to arrive at Othello Park is exceptionally long and convoluted. Young people from the neighborhood can often be seen jaywalking across the track here, rather than waiting multiple light cycles to cross. Explore ways to make this pedestrian crossing more friendly including installing a crosswalk on the north side of Webster Street and making the turn from Renton Ave onto Martin Luther King Jr. Way a “right on red.”

**Estimated Costs.** \$175,000 Design, Modeling, Permitting and Construction.

## Entities Involved.

- SDOT
- Sound Transit
- Metro
- SPU





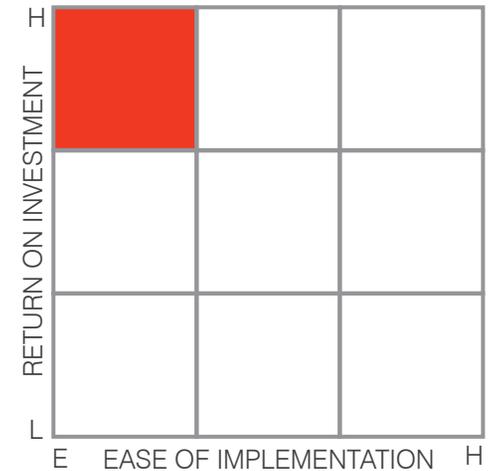
# Othello Park Walking Trail

**Description.** The pathways in Othello Park have not been replaced since they were built almost three and a half decades ago. They should be repaired and/or replaced and enhanced with additional lighting, wayfinding and exercise features, all of which will also bring a more diverse constituency to the park.

**Estimated Costs.** \$100,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- OPA





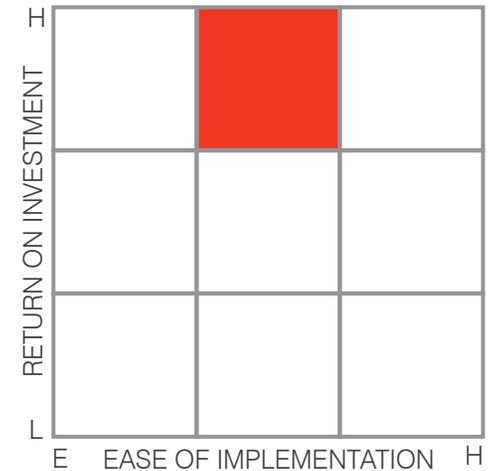
# Othello Park: Upper Terrace Improvements

**Description.** Adjacent to the new Othello Partners development, the upper terrace of Othello Park has the potential to be a great community asset with improvements including a spray ground, a forest-themed playground, bocce ball courts and other improvements in the area.

**Estimated Costs.** \$250,000-\$500,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- OPA





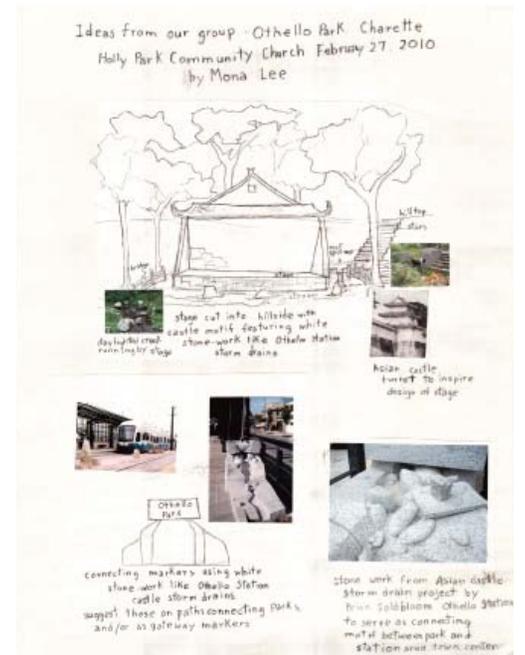
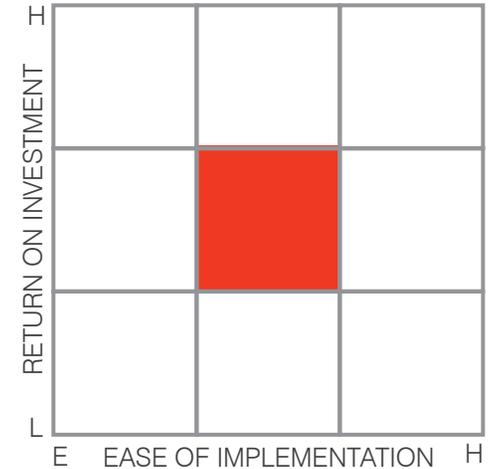
# Othello Park: Central Lawn and Drainage Improvements

**Description.** The Central Lawn at Othello Park is one of the Park’s best loved assets and underutilized resources. The lawn occupies a space that was once home to a small stream that eventually went into Lake Washington and, given that underlying geology, it is often wet and muddy. Drainage improvements like a bioswale and/or raingarden could bring back an echo of that old stream, improve the lawn’s drainage and create a buffer between the hill and the lawn. Along with the reinvigorated “stream,” a new stage could be discretely tucked into the toe of the hillside to provide a community performance space with seating on the lawn or through a series of terraces.

**Estimated Costs.** \$300,000-\$500,000.

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- SPU
- OPA



Pavilion Proposal by Mona Lee



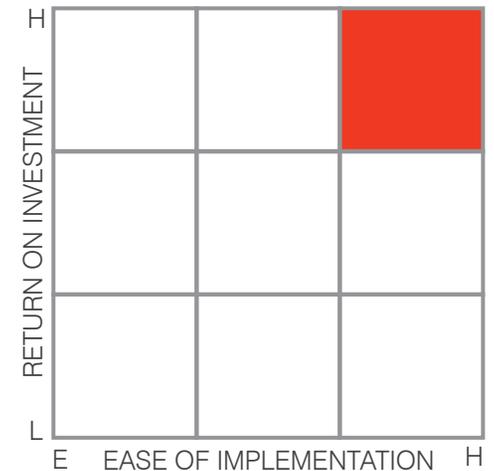
# Othello Park: East Boundary Improvements

**Description.** This project would include improving sightlines into the park through grading as well as revising/relocating several existing program elements along the edge of the park including relocating the existing restroom facility, adding volleyball courts and a P-patch or dog park.

**Estimated Costs.** \$400,000-\$600,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- OPA





# 45th Ave S Street Improvements

**Description.** 45th Avenue S ends prior to intersecting with S Webster Street. While this creates a quiet street edge it also allows for an easy route to flee for those engaged in illicit activities. A careful redesign of this street end that provides clear sightlines and possibly a mountable curb for police to drive through would be a welcome safety improvement. Screening planting should be reviewed with security priorities.

SDOT noted that this would be an excellent candidate for a Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) grant application.

**Estimated Costs.** \$75,000-\$200,000

## Entities Involved.

- SDPR
- SDOT
- SPU
- Seattle City Light
- OPA

