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**January 11, 2017**

**Jesus Aguirre, Superintendent**  
**Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation**  
**100 Dexter Avenue N**  
**Seattle, WA 98109**

**Re: Victor Steinbrueck Park**

The Seattle Design Commission (SDC) supports the proposal by the Seattle Department Parks and Recreation (SPR) for a pedestrian connection between Victor Steinbrueck Park (VSP) and the adjacent PC1-N development, currently under construction by the Pike Place Market Public Development Authority (PPMPDA). Such a connection implements the vision set forth by the City Council in its support of the Central Waterfront Plan. Any connection must include an adequate 'mixing zone' between the VSP and PC1-N site to ease circulation between these two open spaces. We support the initial work undertaken by SPR to provide a connection that preserves the character of VSP while meeting public expectation about future connections to the waterfront. Any such connection must provide all hours (24/7) access between these two spaces, employing concepts of equity in its design and operations.

#### **Legislative History**

Creating connections between VSP and the Central Waterfront investments, through and by the PC1-N site, has been a fundamental project feature since Council's initial support for the Central Waterfront concept designs. In 2011, Council supported a direct connection between VSP and the PC1-N site<sup>1</sup>, a space originally conceived as a "market zone" for Pike Place Market with connections to the Overlook Walk and related waterfront investments (see figures 1 & 2). In March 2013, Council support for this connection was formalized through funding agreements with the PPMPDA including a stairway connection between VSP and a mixed use development at the PC1-N site<sup>2</sup>.

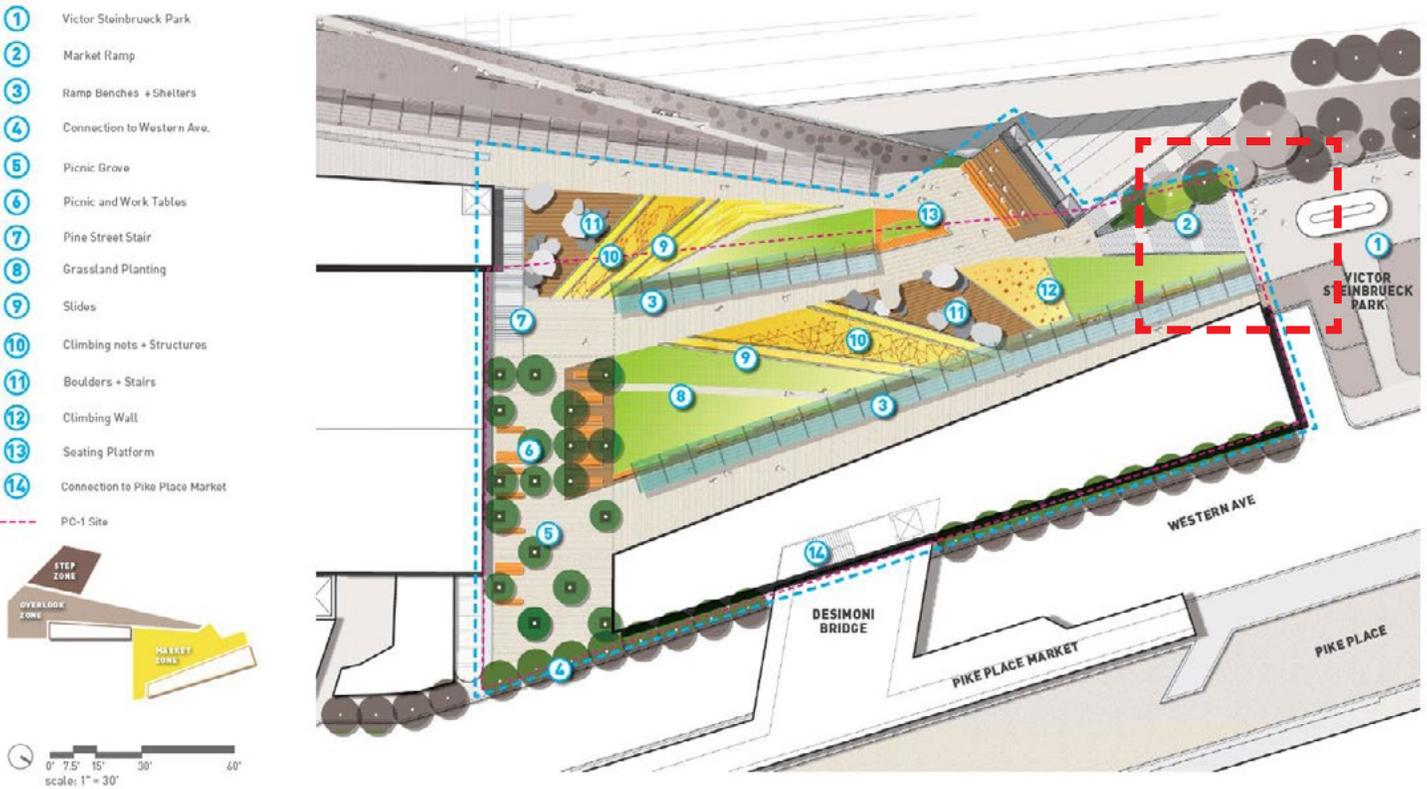
#### **Commission review**

In most cases the SDC evaluates all aspects of City funded projects like VSP and PC1-N. However, since these projects are in the Pike Place Market Historic District, the SDC has confined their role to evaluating the relationship of these projects to the Central Waterfront. This narrower role helps to resolve potential conflicts between the SDC's advisory role and the regulatory authority given to historic districts. In the case of the PC1-N site, the Council specifically asked the SDC to evaluate how public space investments for the PC1-N site would link to VSP and Pike Place Market.

The SDC was briefed on April 21, 2016 about the status of the proposed connection between VSP and the PC1-N site. As part of the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces levy,

<sup>1</sup>Resolution 31399

<sup>2</sup>Ordinance 124122



The Market Zone

Figure 1: 2012 Concept plan (above) and rendering (below) with connection from the PC1-N site to VSP

VSP was funded for a variety of improvements to site lighting, furniture, improved circulation, etc. Since then, SPR has determined that the watertight membrane separating the park from the parking garage below needs to be replaced. The replacement plus needed upgrades to VSP drainage systems will cause the park surface to rise up to 1 foot from its current elevation. This has caused challenges to creating a direct connection to PC1-N as construction of that structure is underway.

At this meeting, the SDC endorsed connecting VSP and the PC1-N site and recommended that SPR continue to explore options that balanced the desire to connect to PC1-N with the need to retain the design integrity of the southwest portion of the park. The SDC was particularly concerned about the impact the new connection would have on the existing space, which is currently not a pass-through corridor, but a well-defined 'living room', used by the public as a whole, but in particular by members of the Native American/First Nation communities. While this portion of the VSP was not specifically designed for Native American/First Nation populations, its success as a gathering spot has been cemented as part of the ongoing history of the VSP. A copy of those meeting minutes are attached.

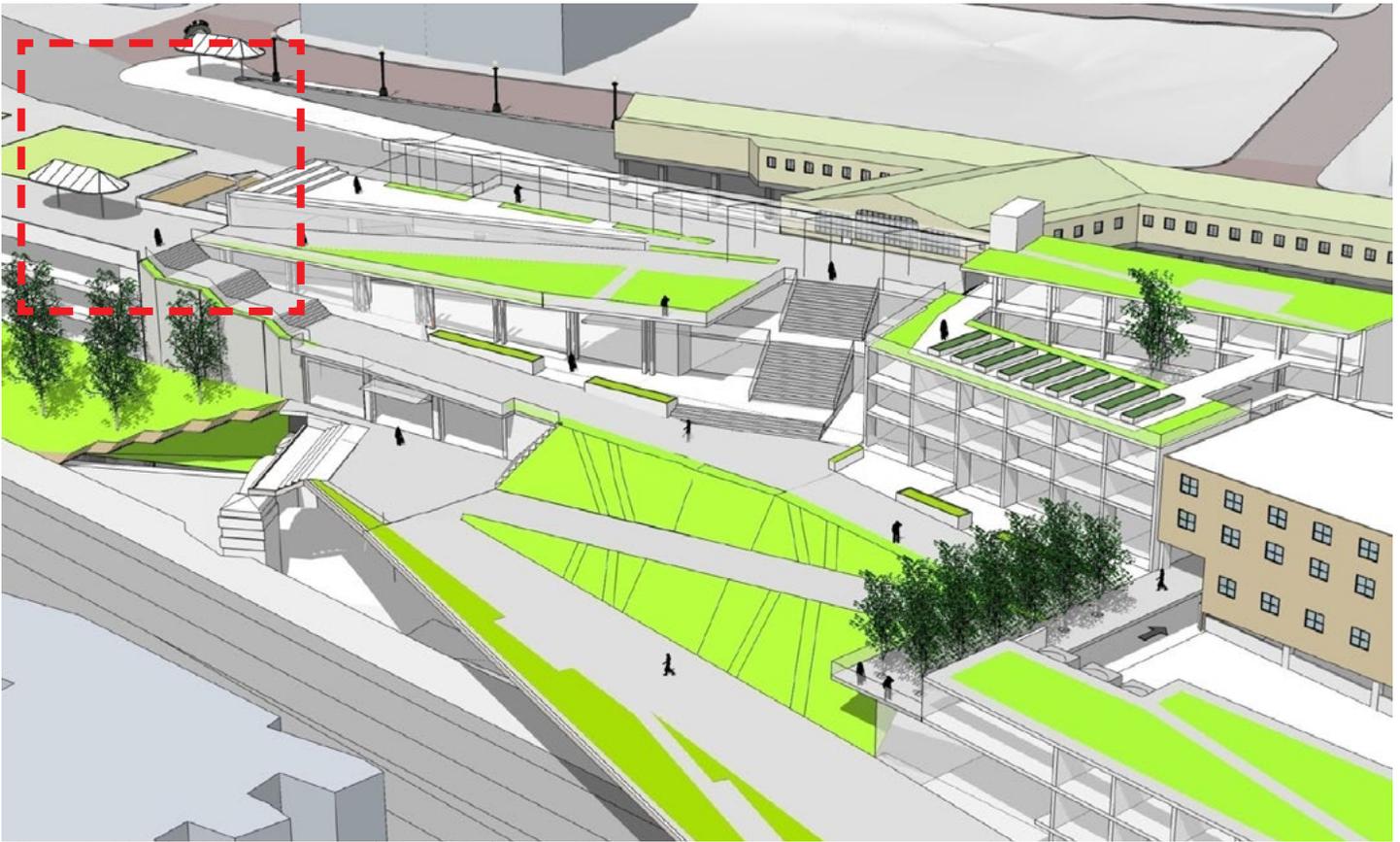


Figure 2: March 2013 Concept rendering - Ordinance 124122

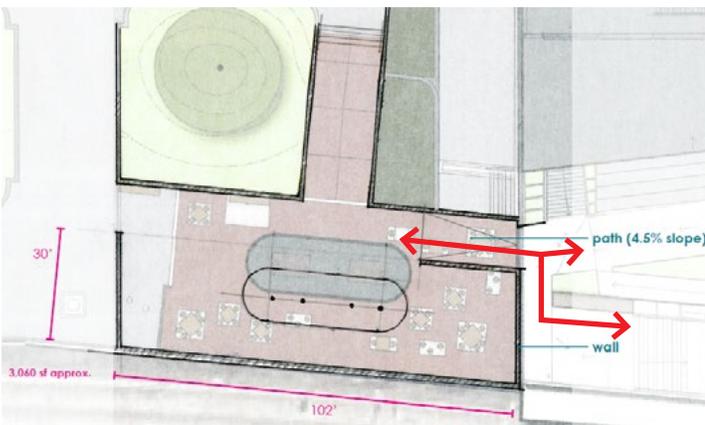


Figure 3: Connectivity study - Option 1

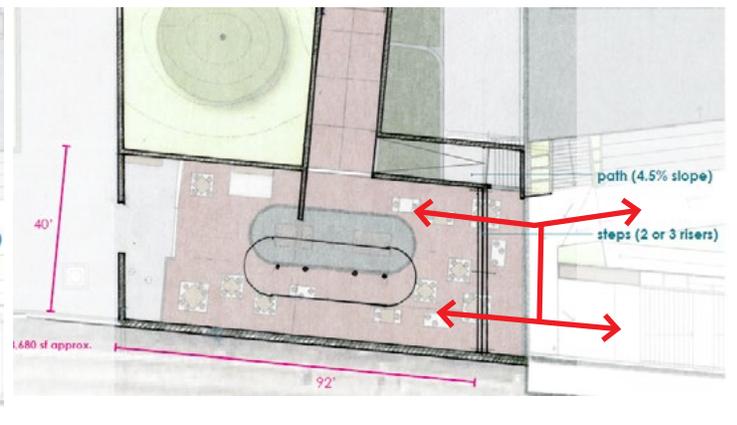


Figure 4: Connectivity study - Option 2

Last month, the SDC adopted a policy on equity in the design of public space. That policy requests that City departments expand their notion of engagement and represent that engagement in the way physical space is created. The SDC is very encouraged by SPR's commitment to engaging all members of the community, most recently how SPR has engaged with leadership in the Native America/First Nation communities.

**The future**

Moving forward the SDC encourages SPR to continue engaging the community on options to make a connection to PC1-N, one that strikes a balance between the unique character of the park and its role in making connections to the Central waterfront for all people – residents and visitors. Initial concept designs show encouraging progress, providing a restrained approach with retention of key features of the 'living room'. The proposals also show an important 'mixing zone' between PC1-N and VSP that provides sufficient room for pedestrians at this important intersection. (see figures 3 & 4)

The SDC is concerned about proposals that would include a locked gate between the VSP and the PC1-N site. A locked

gate or similar approach that limits connections between VSP and the PC1-N site is at odds with the vision of a public walkway to connect the Central Waterfront to Pike Place Market and the VSP. The SDC is sensitive to the challenges posed by creating a public walkway (the overlook walk) passing in front of mixed use development (PC1-N), connecting to VSP, all of which occurs outside of the city's street grid. We understand that the Pike Place PDA and the Office of the Waterfront have ongoing concerns about safety and security along this portion of the PC1-N site and support a gate between VSP and PC1-N. If a gate that limits access is a solution that the public supports, it should be seen as a short-term solution only. The long-term solution should be 24/7 access between these two public spaces. All public investments for the Central Waterfront, regardless of ownership, should be equally available for public access. We urge Office of the Waterfront, SPR and PMPDA to develop an agreement to balance the need for a 24/7 connection with current SPR limitations on all-hours access in City parks.

The SDC supports the SPR in their ongoing effort to create a design that preserves the success that VSP already achieves as a park, fulfills the promise of a fully public connection from the VSP to the Central waterfront, and addresses the needs of current and future users.

Sincerely,

Michael Jenkins  
Director, Seattle Design Commission

CC: Mayor Edward B Murray  
Seattle City Council  
Heather McAuliffe, Coordinator, Pike Place Market Historic Commission  
Ben Franz-Knight, PMPDA  
Marshall Foster, Director, Office of the Waterfront

# Steinbrueck Park

**Edward B. Murray**

Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**

Interim Director, OPCD

**Shannon Loew**, Chair

**Ross Tilghman**, Vice Chair

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

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**Commissioners Present**

Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Theo Lim

John Savo

**Commissioners Excused**

Shannon Loew, Chair

Laura Haddad

**Project Description**

In 2012, the City Council adopted Resolution 31399 in support of the redevelopment of the Seattle Waterfront, as part of removal of WSDOT's Highway 99 Viaduct. As part of the Council's resolution, the SDC will evaluate how Steinbrueck Park will connect with the adjacent Market Entrance and Overlook Walk.

Concurrent with this work, Seattle Parks and Recreation included proposed updates to Victor Steinbrueck Park, which were identified in the 2008 Parks and Green Spaces Levy. Because Steinbrueck Park is located within the Pike Place Market's historic district, the SDC does not review the updates proposed to the park. Park updates are subject to the Pike Place Market's historic commission, who will approve the updates through the issuance of a Certificate of Approval. The SDC review will focus on the role of connecting to the proposed Overlook Walk and related Seattle Waterfront improvements.

**Meeting Summary**

On April 21, 2016, The SDC was briefed on options to establish a connection from Steinbrueck Park to the Overlook Walk. At this meeting, The SDC endorsed to idea of providing a connection, while preserving the design intent of Steinbrueck Park

**Recusals and Disclosures**

There were no recusals or disclosures.

**April 21, 2016****9:00 - 10:30 am****Type**

CIP

**Phase**

Briefing

**Previous Reviews**

None

**Project Team Present****Chris Jones**

Walker Macy

**Lara Rose**

Walker Macy

**Attendees****Marshall Foster**

Office of the Waterfront

**David Graves**

SPR

**Gary Johnson**

OPCD

**Heather McAuliffe**Pike Place Market Historical  
Commission**Stephen Pearce**

Office of the Waterfront

**Victoria Schoenburg**

SPR

**Peter Steinbrueck**

Steinbrueck Urban Strategies

*Figure 1: Project site location**Figure 2: Adjacent Central Waterfront Connection***Summary of Presentation**

Chris Jones and Lara Rose, of Walker Macy, presented the project proposal. The presentation was organized into the following categories: history of the park redevelopment, outreach, original park design, membrane failure, city connections, and connectivity to the waterfront project. Although the SDC's purview includes only the connection between the park and the adjacent waterfront project (see figures 1 & 2), the design team felt it necessary to provide information regarding the history and redesign of Steinbrueck Park.

The proposed design update will not make any major changes to the current design and circulation of Steinbrueck Park. The design is intended to build upon the current programming, improve outdoor rooms, and update seating and lighting elements to

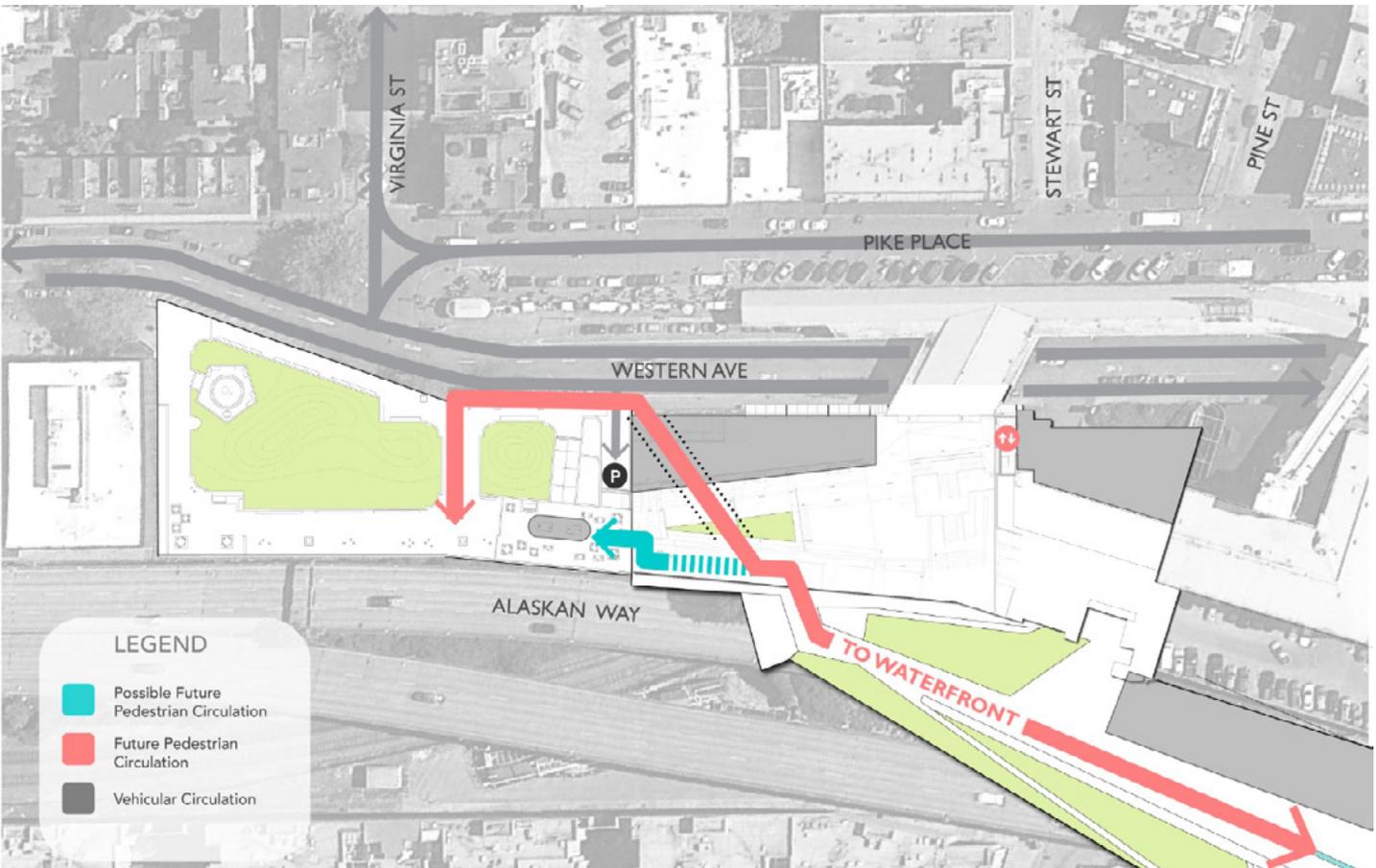
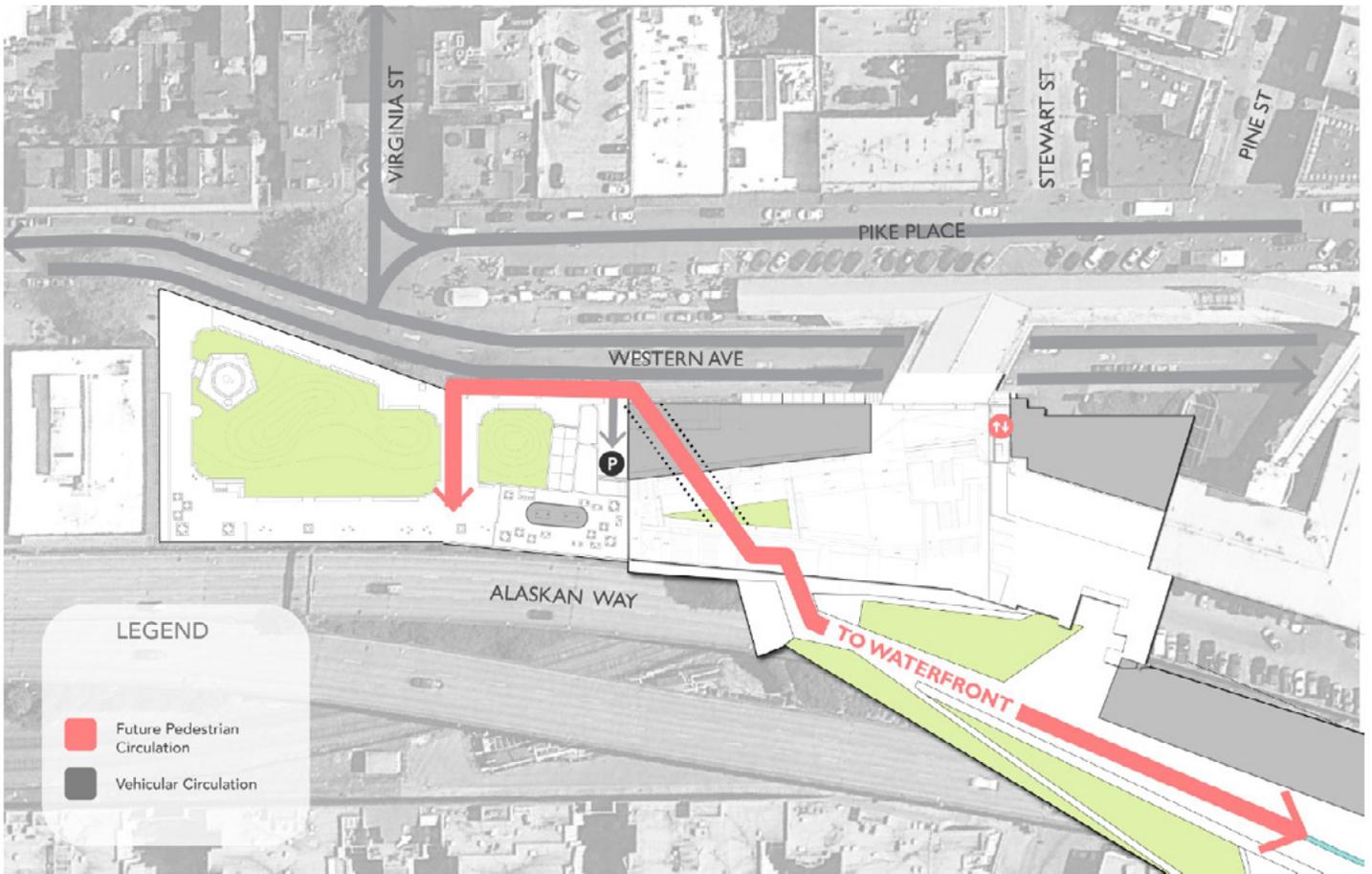


Figure 3: Proposed waterfront connection without connection to park (above) and with connection to park (below)

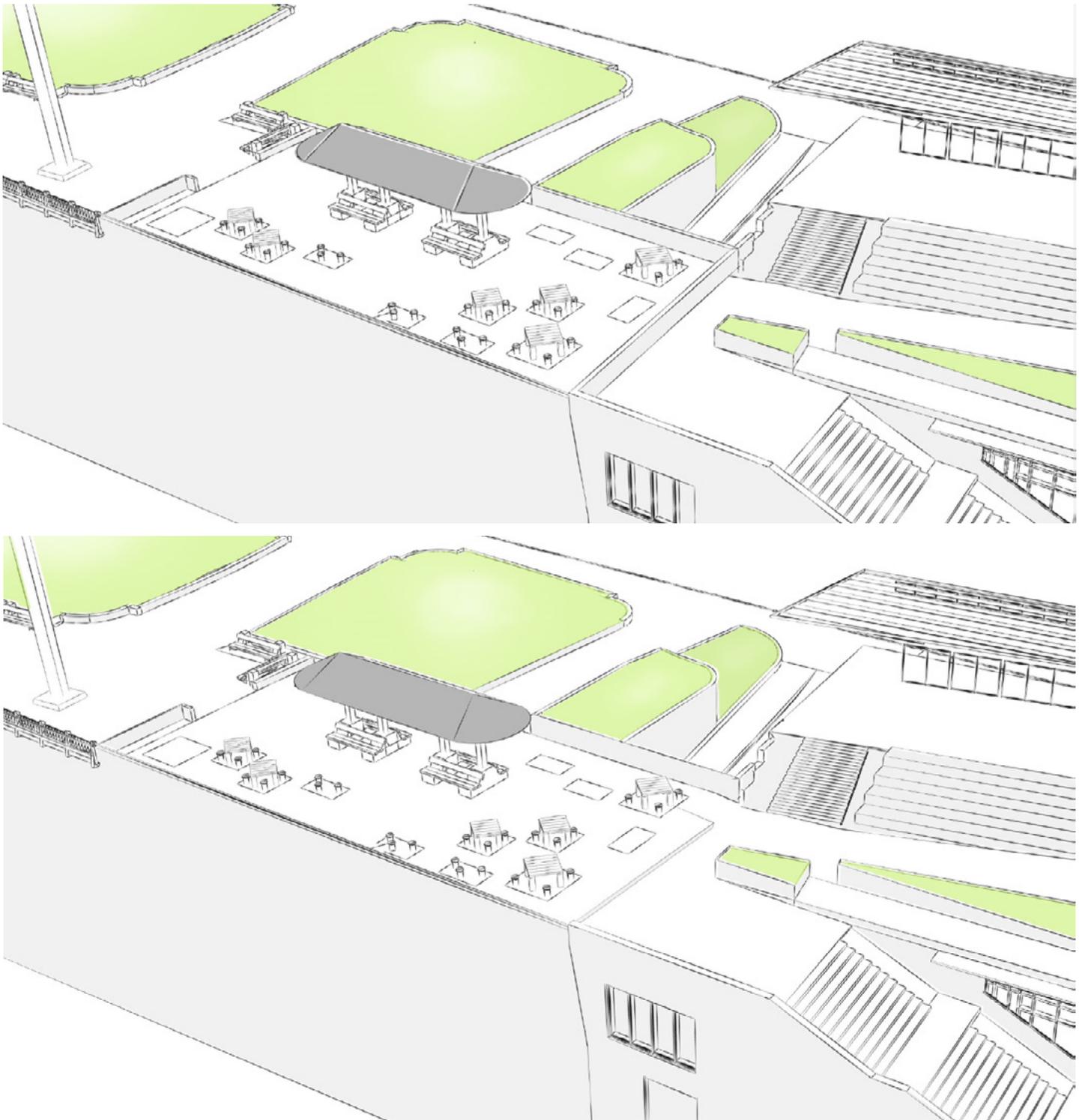


Figure 4: Proposed connection without connection to park (above) and with connection to park (below)

current standards. The design also includes plans to replace a watertight membrane, which separates the park from a parking garage located below. The current membrane has failed and must be replaced with a new 30-year membrane and drainage system. As a result, the ground level of the park will be elevated 8-12 inches from its current location.

Steinbrueck Park is connected to Pike Place Market along Western Ave and Pike St. Proposed designs include providing connectivity between Steinbrueck Park and the Waterfront along Western Ave. In its current state, Western Ave includes steep, narrow sidewalks that have fallen into disrepair. The updated design also considers a safer, more direct and accessible connection between Steinbrueck Park, Marketfront and onto the Waterfront. If no connection occurs, the proposed design will include a low-lying wall that will separate Steinbrueck Park from the Marketfront and Waterfront projects. See figures 3 and 4 for more detail.

## Agency Comments

**David Graves**, of SPR, mentioned that although the department knew the membrane was not in great shape, its replacement was not a part of the original project scope. Mr. Graves stated that the western half of the park will need to be deconstructed in order to replace the failed membrane, which will cost \$3-\$5 million in addition to the \$1.6 million from the levy for park updates. Mr. Graves also mentioned that Steinbrueck Park appears to function as the urban trail head that will bring pedestrians down to the waterfront.

**Marshall Foster**, Director of the Waterfront, stated that the Waterfront team wants to create a city-scaled connection between the core, which consists of Steinbrueck Park and Pike Place Market, and the Waterfront. The design of PC1 was created with a connection to Steinbrueck Park in mind. Mr. Foster mentioned that the scale of public life and how pedestrians connect here is something to think about beyond the boundary lines on that drawing. He then asked the question as to what scale should those involved with the project need to look at in order to make these places successful?

**Heather McAuliffe**, Pike Place Market Historical Commission, stated the Market Historic Commission is concerned with preserving the historic design of the park as well as preserving gathering space that Natives use every day of the year. She mentioned that this specific area of the park is not intended to be a connection area, but rather a living room for activity. Ms. McAuliffe further mentioned that the Committee does not disagree that there should be a connection to the park. Rather, the Commission feels a connection point should be located further east, outside of the living room.

**Victoria Schoenburg**, of SPR, stated that the department has struggled with Steinbrueck park for a number of reasons. Ms. S mentioned that the expertise for using this place as a flexible space is very difficult because it is such a rigid space. She further stated that people tend to get clogged in areas and they tend to stay instead of circulating and that because of this, it makes it hard for the park to have good circulation. Ms. Shoenburg supports the idea of providing better connection throughout the park.

## Public Comments

None

## Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Access
- Cultural history
- RSJI implication

### *Access*

The SDC supports a direct connection between Steinbrueck Park and the Marketfront. To accomplish this, the SDC recommended that the design team continue exploring ways to provide a direct connection without altering the historic aspect of the southwestern edge of the park.

### *Cultural History*

The Commission acknowledges the historic nature of Steinbrueck Park, but also understands the park's commitment to serving present and future populations, which may necessitate changes in programming and circulation. The SDC encouraged the design team to fully assess the character of the park and who it is serving before deciding which elements and programs are worth restoring and which should be altered and updated.

### *RSJI Implications*

The Commission appreciated public outreach efforts as conducted by the project team. Commissioners encouraged the team to continue collaborating with user groups and community members in creating a space that is open and inviting to everyone.

## Action

At this meeting, The SDC endorsed the idea of providing a connection between Steinbrueck Park and the adjacent Marketfront and Overlook Walk projects. The Commission recommended the project team provide a connectivity point while preserving the original design intent of the park. The SDC also endorsed the idea of continuing outreach with community members and user groups.