

West Seattle Junction Park

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Ben de Rubertis Vice Chair

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Commissioners Present

John Savo, Chair
Ben de Rubertis, Vice Chair
Justin Clark
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Mark Johnson
Rick Krochalis

Commissioners Excused

Evan Fowler
Ross Tilghman

Project Description

The project is one of 14 landbanked sites acquired by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) to provide additional open space in urban neighborhoods throughout the city. The .4 acre site, which was purchased by SPR in 2012, is located at the mid-block of 40th Ave SW between SW Edmunds St. and SW Alaska St in the West Seattle Junction Neighborhood. The proposed design includes several play elements, gathering spaces, natural planting areas, seating, lighting, universally accessible pathways. The design includes ROW enhancements along 40th Ave SW that includes unique paving patterns, seating, street trees, and a pet relief zone along the sidewalk and street edge.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commissions (SDC) second review of the West Seattle Junction Park project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the updated concept design for the project. At this meeting, the SDC voted 7-1, to approve the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park project with several recommendations¹.

Recusals and Disclosures

None

¹While the Commission voted to approve concept for this project, the project that was presented to the Commission was more consistent with schematic level work, which resulted in multiple meetings (including one subcommittee session) to address both concept and schematic design concerns raised by the Commission.

July 19, 2018

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews[5/3/18](#)**Presenters**

Marieke Lacasse

GGLO

Tim Slazinik

GGLO

Attendees

Karimah Edwards

SPR

Kelly Goold

SPR



Figure 1: Project site location

Summary of Presentation

Marieke Lacasse and Tim Slazinik, of GGLO, presented the updated concept design for the project. The team provided information on the site location and surrounding neighborhood context (see figure 1). The remaining portion of the presentation focused on the updated design proposal. The updated proposal responded to recommendations made during the previous meeting through the addition of a 3 foot height fence with openings along the west and north edge of the project site, the realignment of the southern pathway to align with the mid-block crossing, and the simplification of programming, materials, and planting palettes.

The updated design reduced the materials and color palette to include one color of concrete on the ground plane and climbing wall and eliminated the north gateway feature. The updated proposal included the simplification of site furnishings throughout the park and the addition of café seating within the park as well as the simplification of the planting plan to include one planting palette used throughout the park design. See figure 2 for more detail.

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

None



Figure 2: Previous site plan (left) & updated site plan (right)

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Context and site integration
- Program and spatial layout
- Materials

Context and site integration

The SDC commended the project team for addressing potential safety issues through the addition of a fence on the west and north edges of the park site. Commissioners also appreciated the location of two openings in the fence to allow users to pass through. The Commission appreciated the use of the “bowl concept” as a design principle to integrate the site design and to frame the edges of the site. The SDC then discussed the design of the central area. Commissioners liked the general location of the gateway feature and agreed that it will serve as a sculptural element for the park, but recommended the project team move it slightly to the southeast to increase its visibility. The SDC is concerned with the boardwalk bisecting the lawn area, which has resulted in the creation of a small, unusable area between the boardwalk and planting area, and recommended the project team reconsider the extension of the boardwalk across the lawn area.

The SDC commended the project team for adjusting the design to accommodate access at the midblock along 40th Ave SW. Commissioners encouraged the project team to coordinate with SDOT to create a midblock crossing. The commission then commented that they appreciated the location of seating adjacent to the café.

Program and spatial layout

The SDC is concerned with the amount of paving proposed, specifically near the northeast corner of the site. Commissioners recommended the project team either reduce the amount of concrete areas and/or demonstrate how these areas can serve as flexible programming space. The commission appreciated the layering of plants, trees, and hardscape materials, which is represented well in the perspective renderings of the park design. Commissioners then commented that they appreciated the transition from a rectilinear design along the street edge to curvilinear and naturalistic design within the interior of the park. The SDC acknowledged the rectilinear form created by the alignment of the boardwalks and recommended the alignment of other hardscape materials, such as seating, run parallel to the alignment of the boardwalks. The SDC then commented on how the edge between the pathway and café seating provides a better connection between the two spaces.

Materials

The SDC acknowledged the potential to tie in different hardscape design and planting elements through the use of the same materials. Commissioners provided examples such as using the same type of wood for both the boardwalk and seating and using the same type of metal for the gateway feature and boardwalk edge. The Commission recommended the project team specify these material types and groupings as a way

to strengthen the cohesiveness of the overall design concept. The Commission then encouraged the project team to provide a planting design for the central area that reflected a local or regional ecology.

The SDC recommended the project team specify material choices for planting and lighting that reflect the public nature of this park. The Commission then recommended the project team use a paving pattern on the concrete that reflects the overall geometry of the park. Commissioners then questioned the use of synthetic turf and encouraged the project team to explore the use of natural materials such as sand in the natural play areas.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the updated concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park project. Overall, the SDC appreciated the response to recommendations made during the previous meeting. Specifically, commissioners appreciated the use of the bowl concept as an organizing principle and design concept, the addition of a fence along the west and north edge of the site, and the updated design feature to support the addition of a midblock crossing. The SDC voted, 7-1, to approve the updated concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park project with the following recommendations:

1. Consider moving the gateway feature slightly to the southeast to increase its significance
2. Consider reducing the amount of concrete areas or demonstrate how these areas can serve as flexible programming space
3. Consider how the organization of park elements along the same rectilinear geometry alignment can make the design more cohesive overall, specifically consider aligning the benches with the geometry of the boardwalk
4. Reconsider terminating the boardwalk at the edge of the lawn area
5. Consider specifying the same material types and groupings for different hardscape design and planting elements as a way to strengthen the cohesiveness of the overall design concept
6. Consider the geometry of the previous paving pattern and how it relates to the overall geometry of the park
7. Ensure material choices such as planting and lighting reflect public nature of the park

The following are statements from commissioners who voted against the concept design for the West Seattle Junction Park:

Ben de Rubertis – The updated concept design does not achieve directives the commission gave during the last meeting. We called for revisiting, with programming in mind, a radical simplification of the materials and material transitions in the park. The updated design feels like the same plan with some of the same elements reconstituted. I worry that it is overdone for the scale that it is occupying.