

Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II

Edward B. Murray
Mayor

Sam Assefa
Director, OPCD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Laura Haddad

Jescelle Major

John Savo

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Aaron Hursey
Planner

Juliet Acevedo
Administrative Staff

**Office of Planning and
Community Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883
seattle.gov/dpd

Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Thaddeus Egging
Rachel Gleeson
Laura Haddad

Non-voting Commissioners Present

Evan Fowler

Commissioners Excused

Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis

Project Description

In 2006, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) began planning for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace. The new 31-acre master planned community will include replacement low-income housing, market-rate housing, two community centers, 2.5 acres of open space, and other neighborhood improvements. More than 12,000 people will live at Yesler Terrace when fully built out.

As part of the redevelopment, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) petitioned to vacate (permanently close) several streets. In the vacation petition, SHA proposed several public benefits, including three pocket parks. The pocket parks are part of the Green Loop, a connected network of public open spaces included in the redevelopment master plan.

From 2009 to 2011, we reviewed the petition to vacate streets in Yesler Terrace. At that time, SHA identified the locations of the pocket parks but not their precise configuration, programming, and design. We are reviewing the design of this public benefit.

The street vacation conditions outline key features of the pocket parks: each must be 12,000 square feet, have 70 linear feet of frontage on a public street, and accommodate both active and passive uses. Design elements for this pocket park include active play areas, gathering space, open lawn, and garden area

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) first review of the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase of the project. After the presentation, questions, and deliberation, the SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design phase of the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development with several recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures

September 07, 2017

1:30 - 3:00 pm

Type

Vacation

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

None

Presenters

Brian Bishop

Siteworkshop

Mark Brands

Siteworkshop

Attendees

Joy Abbott

Lowe-Re

Ed Baird

Lowe-Re

Jack McCullough

McCullough Hill Leary, PS

Ryan Moore

Seattle Housing Authority

Suzi Morris

Lowe-Re

Colin Skone

Lowe-Re

Summary of Presentation

Brian Bishop, of SiteWorkshop, presented the concept design for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park development. The project team provided a brief presentation overview, including site context, project budget, and continued work with SHA and the Yesler Terrace community members. The proposed park development is located in the southeast area of the Yesler Terrace Community and is a part of a greater community open space plan that includes Yesler Terrace Park, the green loop, 10th Ave Hillclimb, and two future pocket parks. See figure 1 for more detail.

The park proposal is required to meet several conditions as set by SHA, city departments, and street vacation requirements approved by City Council. Conditions include a minimum park size of 12,000 square feet (SF), providing spaces for active and passive activities, play areas, street furniture, and pedestrian lighting as well as the requirement to develop the park prior to issuing a Certificate of Occupancy for the development on the same block.

The proposed park has been reoriented from the location identified in the City Council approved street vacation. It has been shifted south to the southwest of the development block to capitalize on natural light and views, maximize street frontage



Figure 1: Yesler Terrace Open Space Plan (above) Proposed reorientation (below)



Figure 2: Proposed park design and programming elements

along 10th Ave S, activate residential units, minimize onsite elevation change, and to provide better connectivity to surrounding open space (see figure 1). Proposed programming for the park include active and passive recreation opportunities, shelter areas, freeform play areas, lawn, garden play areas, and seating. The park will be designed to include universal accessibility, views, and play opportunities throughout. The proposed pathways within the park will blend in with the public right-of-way (ROW) along 10th Ave S. See figure 2 for more detail.

Agency Comments

Ryan Moore, SHA, stated that SHA expressed support for the revised configuration of the park due to the improved access, connection, and visibility that it will provide. They noted that the existing configuration was not based on parcel level analysis and that it was always anticipated that the configuration could be revised as a result of detailed study once future development was underway and infrastructure completed.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Discussion

The SDC organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Contextual integration
- Programming
- Design concept components & layout
- Sustainability & materials

Contextual integration (orientation, wayfinding, views, access)

The SDC strongly endorsed the reorientation of the park development. Commissioners agreed the reoriented park along 10th Ave S is much better than the previously proposed configuration as it will allow for a greater amount of daylight exposure and better connections with surrounding public spaces. The commission commented that any future development proposals for the block north of the park site will affect the park. Although not a part of this review, commissioners encouraged SHA to provide greenspace at the southwest corner of the development block north of the park site.

Commissioners then discussed issues around circulation and accessibility. The Commission is concerned with the proposed stairway along the central pathway near the south edge of the park. Commissioners recommended the project team remove the stairway so the pathway is accessible for all users. The SDC also recommended the design

team include wayfinding elements to orient users and to further include the park within the overall circulation within the Yesler Terrace development.

While the commission appreciated the direct access to the park from residential units to the east, they strongly recommended the design team include a buffer area between the park and the adjacent residential entrances. Commissioners discussed several potential design solutions, but agreed to not provide a specific solution to the project team. Commissioners then recommended the project team include detailed sections of the park for the next meeting.

Programming

The SDC appreciated the overall programming plan for the park. The Commission commented that neither pavilion integrates well with the design proposal. Commissioners agreed the design of the southern corner of the park was weakened by the proposed pavilion and recommended it be removed. The Commission also recommended the project team better integrate the proposed pavilion at the northwest corner with the overall park design. Several commissioners recommended moving the pavilion from the street edge into the garden play area.

The SDC then recommended the project team consider increasing the size of the open lawn, which will allow for greater flexibility and use.

Design concept components and layout

The SDC thought it was appropriate to include logs as a play element, and saw potential to link that element with the history of the site.

Sustainability and materials

The SDC appreciated the project teams approach to sustainability and supported the use of reclaimed materials for project elements. To the extent possible, the Commission encouraged the project team to use permeable paving throughout the project site. Commissioners then discussed the potential to provide community planting areas, with raised planting beds, in the landscaped buffer between 10th Ave and the park.

The Commission stressed the importance of using all vertical elements (pavilion, swing, etc.) to create a cohesive experience for park users. Commissioners also recommended the project team better integrate vertical elements with the surrounding landscape and programming design. The SDC then expressed concern with the lack of concept level lighting plan, landscape plan, and plant and materials palette.

The SDC requested more information on how the design proposal was influenced by previous community outreach.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of the concept design phase for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development. The Commission appreciated the reconfiguration of park shape and orientation along 10th Ave S, overall programming, and approach to sustainability. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design phase for the Yesler Terrace Pocket Park II development with the following recommendations:

1. Consider including wayfinding elements to orient users and to further include the park within the overall circulation within the Yesler Terrace development.
2. Consider incorporating interpretive elements related to the history of the area
3. Carefully explore options to remove the stairway along the central pathway
4. Consider creating a buffer between the park and the adjacent residential entrances
5. Give more attention to design of the southern point of the park
6. Consider removing the pavilion at the south point of the park
7. Increase the size of the central lawn
8. Better integrate vertical elements with each other and with the experience of the surrounding garden areas
9. Consider the use of materials native to the northwest region
10. Provide a landscape plan, planting palette, and materials palette
11. Provide a lighting plan
12. Provide information on how the design proposal responds to the community outreach that was done for the Yesler Terrace Park and Yesler Terrace Redevelopment overall
13. Provide detailed sections through the park