

Seattle Parks and Recreation
Viewpoint Advisory Team
Meeting minutes

September 12, 2018

Viewpoint Advisory Team
Seattle Parks and Recreation Administration Building
Park Board Room
100 Dexter Ave. N, Seattle
6:00 pm- 8:30 pm

Members:	Present (bold)	<i>Absent (italic)</i>
	Michael Austin	Karen Daubert
	Weston Brinkley	<i>William Lowe</i>
	<i>Suzie Burke (invited)</i>	Joanna Nelson de Flores
	Bruce Carter	Laila Pajimula
	<i>Paul Casey (invited)</i>	<i>Dorian Savon Magee-Petty</i>

Presenters

Note: Due to multiple conflicts, the agenda was modified to accommodate schedules.

6:00 pm Call to order

Christopher Williams, SPR, Interim Superintendent

Began with introductions. Members introduced themselves, stating neighborhood and affiliations, often expressing multiple interests.

Background about the 16 viewpoints that were established back in 1979 was provided. Touched upon the designation process, where the Board of Park Commissioners makes recommendations to Superintendent and then, after approval, designations are filed with City Clerk. With the designation, a commitment is made to maintain that view. SPR hasn't been able to live up to that commitment.

With the level of deferred maintenance and swings in economy, we have neglected viewpoints because of our budget situation. We face \$290M in deferred capital and major maintenance which has forced us to choose priorities: new roof at a community or having staff work on a steep hillside to cut down trees to maintain a view.

Hope is to engage in conversation around priorities and funding to maintain designated views. We are here to focus on these (16) designated views, not informal viewpoints, or areas we manage for views. We are beginning with these 16 and are not making any commitment to maintain these informal views.

Much has changed since these viewpoints were established back in 1979: Environmental Critical Areas (ECAs) ordinance and other restrictions. We have challenge in front of us that we want to discuss, ranging from finance, funding, frequency of maintenance, and best practices. My hope is this results in a cohort of supporters for this effort. We are trying to respond to community about request to maintain view. We need to respond. It's about level setting, understanding our reality. Thank you again.

David Graves, SPR, Planning and Development

This presentation is about context- what a viewpoint is and why it is considered a viewpoint. Materials were distributed that accompany the presentation.

David joined SPR in 2005, and he was tasked to look at the current viewpoints. Up until this point, these parks were designated in a rather loose fashion. There was no policy that guided a process. He spent a significant amount of time looking backwards- creating an inventory of existing viewpoints and assessing how we got here.

The inventory showed that there were a host of spaces, with a variety of names and descriptors, that were managed for views in public right of way. There were viewpoints and they were parks that we have managed in past for views.

Having a better understanding of our existing viewpoints and developing criteria for future designations was initially driven by the recession and budgetary restrictions. The reasoning being if we are going to commit to designating a viewpoint then there are certain expectations that comes with that: the public should be able to go and visit these sites and experience the iconic view.

During the extensive review, questions were asked to help guide the criteria for new viewpoints. Those include:

- What is the view?
- Is it unique or duplicative?
- Is it near an existing viewpoint?
- What are the maintenance requirements?
- Do we control the property? Is it public or private property?

This analysis helped influence the designation policy. On August 4, 2005, a new policy on Viewpoint Designation was developed. No additional viewpoints have been added since this policy was adopted in 2007.

Q&A: Discussion

Q: Why are there SEPA protected view policies?

A: Under SEPA policies, views are protected which enables SDCI to regulate building. They are for zoning purposes and development regulation.

Q: Question about hand outs and how these correlate with the PPT.

A: The hand out labeled "viewpoint final" aligns with the 16 officially designated viewpoints. Appendix B led into viewpoint policy.

Q: Has there been a facility condition survey to better understand the quality and condition of these parks.

Q: Glad to see that ADA is being called out. Has an equity analysis been conducted to identify potential viewpoints that are more accessible to our historically disadvantage communities?

A: There has not been that type of analysis. This work was conducted in 2007 and the focus was on existing viewpoints. The effort around policy was focused on moving forward, establishing criteria if we added more. Is it cost effective for us to manage? Do we own the land? Is it duplicative?

Q/Comment: Other characteristics that are important to this discussion are flush toilet. Are these facilities onsite. Ursula Judkins has a Port-o-Potty while other parks have facilities.

Response: Most, if not all, of these parks have no facilities.

Q/Comment: Other uses would be helpful. How many people visit? Do they have weddings, parties scheduled? Surprised to see Ursula Judkins on list. How was it designated? Talk to communities about their preferences and get input.

Q: Regarding the other designations, such as park with overlook, park with view, are these anecdotal?

A: They are anecdotal. On the view analysis hand out, you'll see "viewpoints" and "parks with views". These are not technical terms, but snapshots used as we were getting a handle of our assets and how we used the park.

Comment: This discussion is why 16 parks were chosen. There are lots of categories, so we needed to start somewhere.

Q: How much does it cost to manage 16 viewpoints? Also, curious about the intersection of public property and views. Knows of one instance when we managed for adjacent property owners. Is that still a practice? Are those agreements still in play? Are there still standing obligations to private property?

A: Those are no longer our practices, and we have been very clear in recent years that we do not manage private property. We manage views in public right of way. In past, we have given permits to people to cut trees in park property that ended up being for their view. We are now driven by current forestry best practices. For instance, we used to cut or top trees and now we don't because that can kill or harm trees, often making the slope unstable. There is a host of reasons of why we do not do things as we have in past. That has been jarring for us and public. As far as long-standing agreements, view easement may exist somewhere, but none that we know of.

Q: There is reference about staff making recommendations and conducting an analysis. Were those done for these viewpoints? This type of analysis on 16 would be helpful.

A: That reference is about moving forward, if we added an more viewpoint parks. That passage (analysis) was not applicable because these 16 viewpoints were already in existence. We didn't look back at already established parks. Our focus was looking forward, if we added.

Comment: Bring analysis to the neighborhoods and explain the process and trade-offs. Didn't know Ursula Judkins was the favored viewpoint until received this material.

Response: Yes, there is an educational component needed. These are destinations for city and region.

Jon Jainga, SPR, Natural Resources Unit

We've learned how these 16 Viewpoint Parks came to be. We'll now provide more specifics as we introduce you to our officially designated viewpoints.

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PPT of 16 viewpoints. Map showing location throughout city. Majority westerly corridor.

1. Bagley/Montlake. Bench and view of shrub. Indicator of some work that needs to be done.
Q: Is the view not maintained because of hedge? Or is it also because trees not being pruned?
A: A bit of both
Q: Is this an example of hedge also being a safety barrier?
A: Believe there's a fence behind
2. Banner/Rainbow. Lighter green is part of slope. Darker green is where we mow and blow sidewalk, pick up litter.
Q: Is intent to have a view of Green Lake? Or Olympics?
A: Olympics. Green Lake view partially obstructed by new construction.
3. N Beacon Hill: Not as well known. One bench. No curb cuts. Crew mow. Simple to maintain. West side of fence, Green Seattle Partnership (GSP) restoration sites. No trees obstructing because GSP maintains with volunteers.
Discussion about GSP. In 2005, 2,500 acres were designated for restoration. This is part of East Duwamish Greenbelt. This area being restored with native plants.
Q: Is it being restored for view or restored for GSP site standards?
A: Restored as standard GSP site. Plantings mindful of view. View spot within forest.
Q: So, work is being done because it seems reasonable and it's not policy driven?
A: Work is occurring and so happens to be compatible with view.
Q: How does GSP program work? Familiar with removing invasive and not cutting trees.
A: We have vegetation management plans (VMP) for our ECAs. GSP work not actively removing tree for views, they are strictly restoring green belt and natural area. GSP work is not about maintaining view.
Q: Is it in code to restrict someone from planting a tree in viewpoint?
A: That's why you are here to help with those recommendations.
4. Belvedere. North Admiral in West Seattle. Two-part park. Parking/pull out. Concrete, sidewalk, look to NE downtown. Tour bus stop. Darker green is area to maintain.
Q: Photo is of trees looking out. Are trees on public property?
A: There are some trees on public property. Some on private.
Q: Historically have we maintained by limiting trees?
A: Historically we have done some cutting of the trees.
5. Betty Bowen. West QA, three blocks west of Kerry Park. Cruise ships. Dark green maintained by SPR. Mostly residential down below. Steep slope, greater than 40%. Unique art features.
Q: It would be useful when you approach these to say what specific view maintenance problems exist. Do we have cheap or expensive parks?
A: Our challenge here is the lighter green area is steep slope that's majority of SPR property. A challenge area is how we maintain vegetation on steep slopes.
6. Alki. Richey. Large area that we own, out into tide flats. Natural park, strip of pathway is what is maintained, shrub beds. Good example of lower maintenance needs. No obstruction. Railing, sidewalks, benches, ADA, curb cuts
Q: On matrix, does frequency refer to use?
A: Frequency refers to maintenance.
**** Will edit header on matrix.**
Q: Is view down by water? What is darker green up on hill?
A: Yes, view is by water. Another that's another park property that is not part of viewpoint.
Q: Is this southern look at Olympics?

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A: This is just south of lighthouse.

Comment: If you ask West Seattle if this viewpoint is the one you'd like maintained, they might prefer another viewpoint, such as the one north of California.

7. I-90 Overlook: Higher level maintenance. Higher frequency of users. Lots of hedge to trim, keep rails open, shrubs away from sidewalk. Heavy bike usage. Viewpoint area small are large.

Q: Is there a restroom?

A: No, no facility.

8. Hamilton. 3 miles north of Admiral, end of California. By water taxi. Steep slope with existing trees and greenbelt. Heavily used park. Weddings. Tour bus stop. No restroom facility.

Q: What's nature of maintenance? Pretty substantial?

A: Areas that we mow are darker on top half. Lighter green has some restored areas. In 2007, SPR wanted to try to see if restoration practices could help enhance views. Big Leaf maples in green belts are vulnerable during wind storm This is a high-volume area for calls (Maples fall).

Q: What is the scope of what to maintain?

A: Darker is literally area we mow and maintain. Lighter is natural. As far as restoration planting, Phase 1 is removal of invasive plant material (blackberry, ivy rings...non-native). In Phase 2 and 3, we introduce natural shrubs, ground cover and trees. With this slope, wattles for erosion control. Durable. Prevent erosion helps native shrubs root in deeper.

Q: Have we replaced Big Leaf Maples? Have cut them down?

A: No. They are falling.

Q: This is one of two with slide history? When did these take place?

A: Recent. Will try to get dates.

9. Kerry Park. Iconic, High frequency. High usage. Visitors go around rails, grass pathways worn. Slope, erosion. Weddings. Slope maintained by hand. Area top half mowed. Bricks concrete, benches, trash receptacle, ADA curb cuts. Tour buses. Fall protection training. Introducing into practice to stay compliant with labors and Industry and OSHA. In past, stories about hanging out of bucket trucks. 10+ years different practice. New regulations and enforcement. How we operate and how we maintain. New equipment. Right training needed so we are catching up.

Q: Hamilton Admiral steeper?

A: Kerry has gradual but elevated slope.

Q: Is this the steepest maintained area?

A: We'll investigate that.

Q: Is weedeating best practice? Preferred practice?

A: It's probably best solution at this point. Talk with crew chiefs. Would like to get away from weedeating. Option could be play with low growing shrubs. So not as intensive for crews. Injuries. Weeding is best solution right now, though always thinking about better solution.

10. Louisa Boren, N of Capitol Hill. Darker areas we mow. Large area of natural areas.

Q: Because that drops off, there's very little maintenance?

A: There is a steep cliff. Goat trail, one of our heavily encampment site, out of site. Steep ravine. Challenge is large area and steep area. This is going to be one of the most difficult areas to maintain. Drop off is so severe.

Q: How much do you need to maintain? To maintain viewpoint, is it light green? Or just dark green?

A: Both

Comment: We will add vision cone to show the window of area we should maintain for views.

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11. Mt Baker. More recent viewpoint developed in 2004/2007. Built platform behind sidewalk on 31st. Overlooking deck, which helps with preserving/sustaining view corridor. Trees prune. ADA accessible. Low maintenance. Deck and fencing. No restrooms.
Comment: Designed by UW astronomer. Stones at solstice, sun lines up with fence and walk. Two major work parties a year to maintain.
Q: Was platform funded through City?
A: DON NMF.
Comment: Impressed still have trees with view. Curious about what happens when conifer grows taller. Thought this is a great example of nice view and trees peering around, adding to view. Perhaps we can replicate in other places.
12. West Seattle Rotary Viewpoint: Part of golf course that SPR owns. Darker green area we mow. Elevation slope up/down with viewpoint at plateau.
Q: Have there been conversations with Sound Transit (ST) about alignment with ST3, if that would impact view?
A: Will follow up.
13. Emma Schmitz. Grass and sidewalk. Little slope. Pathway has ramp. Own tide flats. Narrow strip of dark green, mow and maintain. Little or no obstruction.)
Q: is this an ECA? And slope? Does this refer to across the street. Seems odd because Richey is not an ECA.
A: The SDCI map indicates this is an ECA. Area north that slopes, defined as ECA. SDCI identifies as Maybe here mostly grass (not concrete)
14. Sunset Hill/Ballard. Popular park. Heavily used on lawn areas, south end for weddings. Cyclone fence. Consultants will talk more about this park. Geo tech have concerns about erosion. Fine sand, tilt clay. Section may need to move fence to street because section has eroded so much. Good example of challenge on slope- what to do and what not to do. Native shrubs and blackberry. Haircut on tree. Fence jets. Tour buses, rentals. Darker green indicates areas we mow.
Q: Are there houses below?
A: Railroad below (BNSF).
Q: Do we do maintenance on slope?
A: Very little, right along fence.
15. Ursula Judkins. Haven't done much. Blackberries up along fence. Gravel parking lot. Sani-Cam. Larger lawn area. slope area. View 90 and 91. BC:
Comment: Views reduced with the Magnolia Bridge. JJ
16. NW 60th: Mouth. Shilshole Locks. Not much to do. Little lawn area. Newer concrete, bench, marker, trash can. Wooden rail. Small. Newer viewpoint.
Q: Is this near bike path?
A: Yes.

Matrix: Walk through the elements

40% slope is the threshold that is considered steep and cannot physically go to maintain. Need qualified contractor or properly trained/ fall training. Time consuming and intensive.

Most have an Vegetation Management Plan. Most plans are older around 2001-2007. Older view cone corridor, description of what areas to maintain. Drainage/erosion. Iconic: news media/national- Kerry or Dr Jose Rizal. Significant tree any tree over 6" in diameter. Important with city regulations and challenges we face. New tree protection ordinance. CM wants to change language to significant. How

would that impact this effort? Likely we'll add columns: estimate cost to restore, and average annual costs of maintain.

Q: Thank you for tour of sites. Is there a hint of data for next presentation?

A: We are currently gathering information and will add to that based on tonight's conversation. Needed follow-ups, such as Sound Transit 3.

Q: Can you add access to frequent and reliable transit.

A: Yes, we will add that. SDOT's GIS.

Q: Can we learn more about use? Numbers of people visiting?

A: We can look at existing activities- event schedule, data, rental, frequency. Maybe data of trash accumulation and pick. Crew Chiefs best indicator on frequency.

Q: Can we look at some of these with low maintenance, like at beaches. Need to quantify uses because people will pay for that.

A: Beaches have high needs. It's a different type of maintenance.

Comment: maybe we elaborate a bit more on those types of uses.

Kathy Nyland, SPR

My role is of facilitator, the link to making sure you are getting the information and data that you need. We will email the PPT out along with other handouts. Regarding housekeeping items, discussed norms. Group agreed to posted (5) norms. Will post at each meeting. Officially approved.

- Meetings will begin and end on time.
- Listen to each other. Don't interrupt.
- Make sure everyone has had a chance to speak.
- Be respectful to one another.
- Arrive prepared and pay attention.

Logistics: Aiming to send out agenda a week in advance and homework. There will be instances when it's last minute, we will print out. Assume you have material but if there's a request to print, let me know. If you need anything, feel free to contact me.

No public comment this evening.

KN continued: Brief overview of the Sept 26 meeting. Multiple presentations with lots of info that is technical in nature. Items range from:

- Maintenance. Current operations and what that entails.
- Priorities. Planned and routine maintenance versus emergency. Storms of the century are occurring annually- what is the impact? It's a matter of needs that we want vs. needs of the day.
- Trees/arborists. What the job is, and the risks involved. Role of tree- general and in relation to views. Tension what we look at and what a tree does to ensure stability of view.
- SDCI- our partners and how we interact. Define ECAs.
- Consultants: technical assessment, soil conditions, recommendations, gaps and shortfalls and possible approached.
- Here we are- what we want to do and how we want to proceed.

Q: What about other high usage sites- Magnuson and Discovery park? They have different view but high in usage. Where do they fit in with maintenance?

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A: Great question. This exercise focuses on the 16 viewpoint parks. We needed a starting place Keep that thought in parking lot/radar and when we proceed with options, recommendations and possible future conversations. Tell story of where dollars are- telling that story/narrative. Educational component critical.

Q: Is money coming from parks district.

A: That is up for discussion.

Discussion: We'll look at sites and challenges. Going back to charter, a key objective is to make recommendation to Superintendent that could include funding package. Right now, we use existing General Fund dollars. Our needs are above and beyond what we have which is one of the reasons why we have not maintained these sites well. In addition to our regular routine maintenance, we are responsible for clean-up of encampments. Plus, we have changing regulations around ECAs, requiring more resources to secure slopes. We have storms to factor, and climate change. We need to address all these issues and come up with game plan. Plus, we have demand: demand is a factor. All of these are important.

Comment: We were sent the scope, and goals. Helpful to post these along with norms. Knowing where we are headed would be helpful KN.

Response: Yes, we'll post. To reiterate the important of what was stated, and we will touch upon at our next meeting- capacity. Capacity covers the routine. But there is demand. And response. And the list goes on. These crews do everything and, if this is our priority, we need to figure out what we need. How can these all be routine.

Q: A lot of resource have been redirected to emergencies, i.e. homelessness. How do we deal with that? Other work that was left undone.

Q: Excited to be part of this but also worried about appointees and quorum,

A: 11 candidates were identified and eight confirmed. To help usher in success, communication will be constant, bringing group along. There is a reason why you were appointed, a reason why you are here. Didn't just fill seats but are meeting needs. Multiple hats. Multiple perspectives. Right people around table.

Check Out

Q: What do you need for this be a success?

- Everything comes via email, so we can consult others. Have information accessible and broad as possible. Big players like sports and dogs.
Response: This conversation is a starting point. Be in phases. Lots of constituency groups as part of the dialogue. You will help shape, identify path and continue conversation and course correct.
- Being comfortable having uncomfortable conversations, if that happens, particularly around racial equity and social justice around access to our parks.
- Balance between information and discussion time. Assume front loading and hopefully not just talking at last meeting.
Response: This is why we hope to provide agendas in advance. Co-design and responsive.
- Ability to mental break/refocus. Breaks in agenda.
- Clear goals and keeping focused. Ensuring there is shared understanding. To make the decisions that we need to.
- Still thinking about end product. Is it document? Funding strategies? Best management practices? Can we replace maples? Helpful to figure out level of information. Outline or template to fill in the blanks. Or is this listening, and we put together a report.

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- Response: We can create template, fill in/starting point. This is everything- collecting thoughts, ideas, priorities, emerging issues, and clarity will likely occur as we continue the process.

Lastly, this is a safe place to bring dinner and eat during the meeting!

Approved 9.26.18