

Meeting Notes

Lakeridge Playground Improvements - Meeting #1

March 6, 2019

6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Rainier Beach Community Center, 8825 Rainier Ave S, Seattle

Attendees: Approximately 17 participants

Project Team	Libby Hudson, Planner; Shwu-jen Hwang, Sr. Landscape Architect; and Garrett Farrell, Project Coordinator
Project	Lakeridge Playground Improvements: seattle.gov/parks/about-us/current-projects/lakeridge-playground-improvements
Budget & Schedule	Budget: \$1.899 M for planning, design and construction Schedule: Planning & Design: 2019 Construction: 2020

Open House 6:30 – 7:00

Four groups participated in the open house.

- A community group, **Rainier Beach Link to Lakes** - Patrice Thomas and Monika Mathews were available to speak to the proposed long-range open space plan from the Rainier Beach Station to Lake Washington, in which a series of open improvement are planned, including the first link at Be'er Sheva Park. This proposed project is in the final stages of design and their group is soon to be launching a capital funding campaign. To learn more about this project, please go to their web page: m.facebook.com/link2beach/
- Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) **Community Engagement Ambassadors** assisted in the public outreach for the community survey and meeting. They provided direct contact to the community, focusing on outreach to non-English speakers, to raise awareness of the project, assist in answering questions and to promote the online survey. To learn more about this program, please see page 12 of the Seattle Park and Recreation Departments 2017 Report: <http://parkways.seattle.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2017-SPD-AR-F2HR.pdf>
- **Seattle Public Utilities (SPU)** – Jason Sharpley and Katie McVicker were on hand to provide information on the Taylor Creek Culvert Replacement project, which is directly adjacent to the Lakeridge Playfield, and will include a sediment pond, habitat enhancements and other creek improvements along with replacement of the culvert under Rainier Avenue S. and street and intersection improvements on Rainier Ave S. Once the SPU project is completed, the portion between Rainier Ave S and Lake Washington will be transferred to Seattle Parks (SPR). To learn more about this project, please go to their website: <http://www.seattle.gov/util/EnvironmentConservation/Projects/index.htm>
- Seattle Parks and Recreation – **Lakeridge Playground Improvement Project** – Shwu-jen Hwang, Sr. Landscape Architect & Garrett Farrell, Project Coordinator, provided information on the park improvement project and answered questions about the project.

Project Presentation

- The park located at the southern end of the city on Rainier Ave S near Lake Washington, is in great need of some attention. The playground and ballfield are old, courts are impacted by hillside soil slumping and park does not meet current accessibility standards. SPR has pulled together multiple projects, some scheduled 5 years in the future, so that the park could be updated in a more comprehensive fashion and to reduce the construction impact on the neighborhood given the adjacent Seattle Public Utility project, which will also have construction impacts. SPR is coordinating with SPU on both the design connections and construction schedule.
- The project has a budget of \$1.899 and include a specific scope. The project scope includes improving the playfield, play area, courts, pedestrian access, and retaining wall study,. We are also coordinating with SPU on their adjacent project, looking at opportunities. Other opportunities will be discussed tonight that are not within the specific scope but are potential design elements depending on budget. These will generally be referred to as “potential” components or elements.
- Project overview of the project elements (See presentation slide 1):
 - Study the hillside and understand the soil and drainage of the site
 - Improve playfield drainage, install new irrigation
 - Resurface the courts, reconfigure based on geotechnical study – don’t put public dollars toward elements that will be impacted by the slope conditions
 - Update the play area with new play equipment, address drainage issues
 - Provide one accessible parking space and accessible pedestrian access that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to comfort station (restroom), play area, courts and playfield
 - The comfort station itself is not part of the overall project
- Online survey is being used to gather community input on the project. We are also using Community Engagement Ambassadors to assist us in community outreach. As of the morning (March 6, 2019), we have received 337 responses. The information has been used by our SPR landscape architect to understand how community desires and inform the design. See “What We’ve Heard from You” (presentation slide 2 & 3).
- Shwu-jen Hwang presented the site analysis and challenges and opportunities (see presentation slide 4 & 5) and described how the online survey results were used to develop the concept design.
- The concept proposal includes:
 - Improving the overall pedestrian circulation
 - Providing ADA routes from the parking to the comfort station, play area, courts and playfield
 - Potentially connecting to the SPU natural area on the west side of the playfield
 - Potentially adding a new pedestrian entrance at this northwest corner of the site
 - Potentially adding a loop trail around the playfield – utilizing the service drive located along the western edge of the park – which could be used for walking, jogging, kids biking, dog walking activities.
 - Potentially adding a new picnic area along the ADA route from the parking to the comfort station
 - Creating a new plaza area for seating and gathering, centrally located between the play area, comfort station, courts and playfield – by moving courts west
 - Provide picnic tables and BBQ
 - Replace existing drinking fountain
 - Modifying Courts
 - Remove deteriorated existing timber retaining wall, restore to original natural slope at the southwest corner, reduce court size, improve drainage.

- Repurpose the courts to serve highly desirable full basketball court, but also futsal and volleyball- as a multi-use court
 - Provide two dedicated pickleball/badminton courts. The remaining surface would potentially be dedicated to paving games like hopscotch or other desirable paved-surface games
 - Improve fencing divisions as needed between these courts. Lower north fencing to make the space more inviting.
- Improving Playfield
 - Improve the drainage system, irrigation system, and renovate the natural turf surfacing. Sand will be imported to amend existing silty soil.
 - Very popular with the community. Mostly used by the community for unscheduled play, along with field activities. In the past has been used for Little League.
 - Potentially replace the backstops with the J-style backstops
 - Potentially move fencing out toward Rainier Ave S to provide for potential loop pathway
- Renovating Play area
 - Remove existing wall to provide ADA to the play area
 - Provide two play structures for ages 2-5 & 5-12 with the younger play area close to the seating plaza for adult supervision
 - Locate swings at the eastern end of the play area, away from traffic and other activities
 - Potential play area safety surfacing: playground grass, pour-in-place rubberized surfacing, and engineered wood fiber
 - Play Area Themes and potential equipment
 - Nature inspired theme (Trees, Forest, Lake, Creek, Salmon, Canyon....) and water related theme were most popular based on the survey.
 - Popular play elements included slides, swings and climbing. Users desire diverse play activities - including upper body (monkey bars), balancing, bridge, musical elements (which may be an issue with neighbors – needs further exploration). Whirl is a good cooperative play element.
 - The combination of decking and climbing Play structures type is preferred over deck play structure or stand-alone climbing net.
- Enhancing Landscape around entrance and frontage.
- Potentially providing adult fitness area near plaza, play area, and court area.
 - Provide exercise opportunities for adults (age 13 and up) and seniors including core, upper body, arms, legs, chest, twist, etc.
 - Two different styles: individual separate items or composite style.
- Potentially incorporating art into the overall design as possible based on budget (highly desired by community)
 - Potential ideas: art cutouts featuring exercise figures along the frontage fencing; focal point on the hill top with great view to Lake Washington.
 - Natural theme of the play area to reflect the natural setting.
 - Diver community and natural setting are two community characteristics most mentioned in online survey.

Comments and Questions

- Will this design be senior friendly?
SPR Response: The pedestrian routes will need to meet the ADA standards, which are senior friendly
- Will BBQ grills be provided?
SPR Response: Yes. There will be couple picnic tables in the proposed plaza and more at the proposed area along the ADA pathway to the restroom. The proximity area is already used by the summer lunch program. BBQs can be provided in these areas – as budget allows
- Do people need to rent the BBQs to use them
SPR Response: No. These would be first-come first-serve as is the case in all our parks
- Will the new field be for baseball?
SPR Response: The field could potentially be used for Little League, but does not meet the outfield standard for a full-baseball field
- Will the infield be sand?
SPR Response: The field will remain natural turf and the infield will likely be composed of a sand-like material that is used at the infield of park ballfields
- Drainage seems like the biggest issue at the field
SPR Response: Yes. That is the primary component of the playfield improvement – fixing the drainage. This is related to the drainage of the entire site. Once that is understood, we can hopefully provide a system that will improve the field condition and open it up to play earlier in the season. Right now, depending on the summer, the field is wet into late July. We may also be amending the soil to help with the drainage.
- Can there be other field uses such as soccer?
SPR Response: U8 soccer can be played there – The concept shows two U8 soccer fields
- Safely getting to the existing parking is an issue - getting in and out of this parking area is tricky due to the configuration of the intersection at Rainier Ave & Cornell. Can that be addressed?
SPU Response: As part of the Taylor Creek Culvert Project, SPU is working with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) on street and intersection improvements there. This transportation project will provide a new pedestrian crossing (with pedestrian refuges), raised curbing to narrow down the road surface and straighten or T-off the intersection of Cornell Ave. This narrowing effect will slow traffic and guide vehicles into the road, helping to prevent the vehicles from cutting that corner when turning right turn off Rainier Ave to Cornell. These improvements will impact the informal gravel parking at the park. SDOT is considering whether flashing lights at the new pedestrian crossing are warranted. Whether this is approved or not is determined by a committee, and based on the traffic volumes, but at the minimum, the site will be brought to the attention of the Bike-Ped Planning Group, which will follow the safety issues.

- Like the concept loop & connecting to the adjacent areas, like the trails in Dead Horse Canyon; Could that “social” trail to Dead Horse Canyon be improved?

SPR Response: This is not in the current scope, something to be considered in future trail connection project

- Like the Plaza
- Like the adult fitness
- Like the full-size basketball court

- Can hoops be adjustable in height for kids?

SPR Response: Yes. There is a possibility that a lower level practice hoop or adjustable basketball hoop could be provided at the side of the court for younger kids use. Multi-goals are provided with multi-use courts that include futsal – we can look at that, but this limits the height, not adjustable.

- Could the paving game area include a lower level hoop?

SPR Response: that is a possibility too, but we don’t want to put too much money into that areas of the court that may be impacted by the on-going hillside issues.

Play Area

- Like the adult fitness
- We don’t use the park now; our son trips on the uneven pavement just walking up to the play area – Good to see this being improved.

Art Potential

- Would love to be involved in selecting the art that goes into the park.

SPR Response: This project is a Major Maintenance project and does not include 1% for art. There is a high desire to include art and we will look at opportunities, but this will be budget dependent.

- There are serious lighting concerns at this park. Will lighting be included?

SPR Response: The scope does not include lighting. We are looking at what upgrades to lighting around the comfort station might be possible, but sometimes illumination can actually increase safety issues. We also will need to consider the electricity capacity there. Electricity would need significant upgrade – there is a small electric service. We would not be providing ballfield lighting for this park.

- Appreciate that this project is taking a more comprehensive view/role – coordinating between three departments. We see you as the “city”

Next Steps

The online survey will remain open for another week – until March 15. Meeting summary notes and the slide presentation from this meeting will be provided on the project page in a few weeks.

The Preferred Design, including different options for play equipment design, will be presented at the next meeting. This community meeting will be at the park, in early June. It is currently scheduled for a Wednesday evening (June 5), but it has been suggested that the meeting be on a Saturday instead. Asking for a show of hands, the people attending also recommended a Saturday.

SPR will consider what dates and get the word out if we change the next meeting to a Saturday.