

# Portage Bay Park

**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**

**Theo Lim**

**John Savo**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Patrick Donohue**  
Interim Project 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/cityplanning

## Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair  
Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair  
Lee Copeland  
Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad  
Theo Lim

## Commissioners Excused

Brodie Bain  
Ben de Rubertis  
Thaddeus Egging  
John Savo

## Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is proposing the development of Portage Bay Park, located along the north shore of Portage Bay in the University District. The 3-acre site, 1.65-acres of which is comprised of dry land, is west of the intersection of NE Boat Street and 15th Ave NE and is adjacent to Sakuma Viewpoint, an open space owned by University of Washington. The site was purchased from the University of Washington as mitigation for impacts from the SR520 expansion project.

The project proposal includes the removal existing structures and include on-site remediation and habitat restoration. The park will also provide recreation opportunities, community gathering space, water access, and shoreline habitat areas.

The design team is currently creating a cleanup plan for the site and as well as several design scenarios for park programming. SPR and the design team will hold four public meetings throughout the design phase of the project. The park will start permitting, bidding, and construction in mid-2017 and is planned to open in late 2018.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) review of the project at schematic (60%) design. At the meeting, the SDC voted 5-1 to approve the Portage Bay schematic design with recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Thaddeus Egging** recused himself because he is an employee of KPFF, the engineering firm working on the project.

August 4, 2016

9:00 - 10:30 am

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design

Previous Reviews

[03/17/16, 10/15/15](#)

Project Team Present

Ann Marie Schneider

Walker Macy

Erik Kantola

Schemata Workshop

Attendees

David Graves

SPR

Mike Mariano

Schemata Workshop



Figure 1: Previous design (top) and current design (bottom) proposals

### Summary of Presentation

Ann Marie Schneider of Walker Macy and Erik Kantola of Schemata Workshop presented the schematic design for Portage Bay Park. Ms. Schneider provide site context followed by a brief overview of the project. Ms. Schneider highlighted design changes to implement the commission's previous recommendations at concept review that included the addition of direct kayak access to the waterfront from Boat Street, maintaining the overwater pier, and providing ADA accessible pathways throughout the site (see figures 1-3). The updated plan also includes a variety of benches, concrete and timber seatwalls, moveable chairs and swings as well as the strategic placement of pole, bollard, and curb lighting throughout the site. The updated plan also includes the planting of 70 trees, stormwater filtration, and the restoration of native plant species and shoreline habitat.

Interpretive elements, located primarily on the eastern portion of the project site, will highlight the native, maritime, and ecological history of the project site. Potential elements will include a landscaped meadow, boardwalk, and series of timber and steel interpretive signs.

The proposal also includes a 70 foot x 20 foot shade pavilion along Boat Street, which has been developed since the previous presentation. The pavilion will serve as



Figure 2: ADA accessibility



Figure 3: Proposed materials

a gateway for the park and will provide a weather protected meeting space for users. The post and beam structure, designed to appear as if it is floating, will be constructed out of steel beams and columns and will include a curvilinear rib pattern constructed out of wood on the underside of the roof. The roof will include glass weather protection as well as a building-integrated photovoltaic cells (BIPV) if budget permits. The pavilion will include all gender restrooms, two swings, and a gathering area. See figure 4 for more detail.

**Agency Comments****None****Public Comments****None****Summary of Discussion**

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Program and site interpretation
- Circulation and access
- Architecture and site furnishings
- Materials, sustainability, maintenance, and landscape

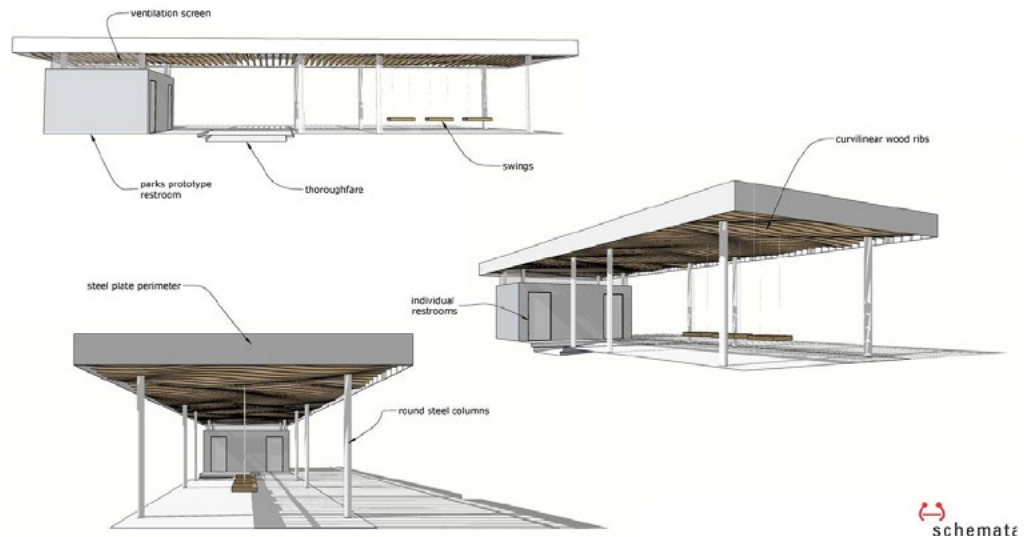


Figure 4: Proposed shade pavilion

*Program and site interpretation*

The SDC agreed that the variety and scale of programming along the shoreline edge is working well and positively defines the space. Commissioners are concerned with the lack of definition along Boat Street and encouraged the project team to design along the street edge so that it differentiates the space from the surrounding campus.

While the Commission appreciates the proposed interpretive element, they recommended the design team incorporate interpretive elements throughout the project site. The Commission also recommended the project team further develop the portage trail and its reconnection to the waterfront so that it acts more strongly to interpret the historic trail that that brings authentic meaning to the site.

*Circulation and access*

The SDC commended the project team for providing ADA accessible pathways throughout the site, direct water access and a slide for kayaks, connection to Sakuma Park, and a mid-block crossing along Boat Street. The Commission encouraged the design team to continue to understand how pathways within the project site will connect and fit in within the larger context of the waterfront and UW campus planning.

*Architecture and site furnishings*

Overall, the SDC provided positive feedback regarding the covered pavilion. Specifically, Commissioners appreciated the detailed ribs as it related to a portion of the site and its maritime history. The Commission had some disagreement on how the orientation of the rib detailing would work best visually - whether the slats would be better oriented so the wave effect is visible from the street or so the waves are only seen as a second read from within the pavilion - as well as how the ribs will create or affect shading. There was discussion and some disagreement about the proposed color and width of the structures' fascia. Commissioners recommended the design team provide alternative renderings of the pavilion in order to build their case as to why this is the best detailing for this specific element. The SDC encouraged the design team to continue exploring the programming underneath the pavilion, including how the inclusion of attached swings will affect use and circulation in contrast with the inclusion of moveable tables and chairs. Commissioners thought that the pier was working very nicely. There was concern that the quantity and type of seating might not be adequate, especially along ADA routes through the park.

*Materials, sustainability, maintenance, landscape*

The SDC appreciated the detailed list of materials as well as the project team's commitment to sustainability through the re-use of materials onsite, habitat restoration, and use of native plants. While the general plant types were appreciated, the Commission was not able to discuss the landscape in detail due to the lack of a detailed plant palette. Commissioners recommended the project team return to the next SDC meeting with a detailed planting plan that includes elevations and cross sections that illustrate specifics about plantings in sloped areas. Commissioners also encouraged the project team to provide topographic sections and/or a grading plan to explain the grade separation between the street and waterfront.

**Action**

The SDC thanked the project team for presenting the schematic design for Portage Bay Park Project and resolving previous concerns about access and circulation. The SDC voted to approve, 5 to 1, the schematic design for Portage Bay Park with the following recommendations:

1. Further define programming along the street edge and understand the parks connection with the surrounding context
2. Consider incorporating interpretive elements throughout the project site, including a portage trail or in water features
3. Consider providing additional seating underneath the pavilion and throughout the park
4. Develop the pavilion roof so that it achieves a strong aesthetic presence from multiple points of view, adequate shade cover, efficiency of costs, and ease of maintenance.
5. Continue to study how the wood detailing under the pavilion's roof can be viewed from different locations to maximize it's intended effect.
6. Develop a grading plan and topographic sections to better understand the relationship between Boat Street and the waterfront.
7. Study the proposed location of swings in the pavilion

The following are comments from commissioners who voted against the project:

**Rachel Gleeson** – I think there is a lack of information regarding the site topography, street edge design and programming that made it difficult to fully appreciate what the design team presented.