

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Bruce A. Harrell**  
Mayor

**Rico Quirindongo**  
Director, OPCD

**Jill Crary**, Chair

**Adam Amrhein**, Vice Chair

**Matt Aalfs**

**Phoebe Bogert**

**Erica Bush**

**Elizabeth Conner**

**Ben Gist**

**Kevin O'Neill**

**Puja Shaw**

**Molly Spetalnick**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Strategic Advisor

**Windy Bandekar**  
Planner

**Juliet Acevedo**  
Administrative Staff

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**June 1, 2023**

Convened 9:00 am

Adjourned 11:10 am

### Projects Reviewed

Forest Trailhead Exhibit, Woodland Park Zoo

### Commissioners Present

Jill Crary, Chair

Matt Aalfs

Elizabeth Conner

Ben Gist

Kevin O'Neill

### Commissioners Excused

Adam Amrhein (recused)

Phoebe Bogert

Erica Bush

Puja Shaw

Molly Spetalnick

### Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Juliet Acevedo



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**June 1, 2023**

**9:00 am - 11:10 am**

**Project:** Forest Trailhead Exhibit, Woodland Park Zoo

**Type:** CIP

**Phase:** Schematic Design

**Previous Reviews:** Concept - May 5, 2022

**Presenters:**

Katie Bang, Woodland Park Zoo

Osama Quotah, LMN

Jennifer DuHamel, LMN

Scott Crawford, LMN

Karimah Edwards, Hummingbird

Lara Rose, Walker Macy

Gregg Leicester, CLR Design

**Attendees:**

Sarah Valentine, Woodland Park Zoo

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**Recusals and Disclosures**

Adam Amrhein was recused as his firm LMN is the design lead.

**Project Description**

Woodland Park Zoo is proposing to redevelop a 1.2-acre site within the Zoo's gated area for a new exhibit - Forest Trailhead. Until 2016, the site was the location of the Zoo's Day and Night Exhibits. The structure housing those exhibits suffered significant fire damage and is no longer operable. The new Forest Trailhead exhibit will expand Woodland Park Zoo's efforts to highlight global conservation.

The site is located just east of the West Entrance and the Penguin Exhibit, along the main loop trail.

**Meeting Summary**

This is the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the Forest Trailhead Exhibit project, previously named the Forest for All project. Concept design was approved May 5, 2022. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase (60% design) for the project. The SDC voted 5-0 to approve the schematic design for the Forest Trailhead Exhibit with several recommendations. The project will be reviewed again and at the design development (90%) phase.

## Summary of Presentation

The Woodland Park Zoo and their project designers presented information about their mission and work for context. They explained the approach to the new Forest Trailhead Exhibit and vision, goals, and principles that were developed for the project with the input of community, caretakers, and the Design Commission.

### Mission of the project

Create a social movement for conservation Reframe the zoo experience around forest conservation. Facilitate empathy building experiences with unique animals that receive extraordinary care.

Flexible, long-term framework.

### Goals of the Project

CARE I feel empathy for the animals, habitats and humans affected by our choices.

INSPIRE Proven solutions give me hope.

EMPOWER My individual and collective actions make a difference.

The principles of the project help make design decisions in alignment with the goals.

The team described the stakeholder and community engagement process and the principles it informed:

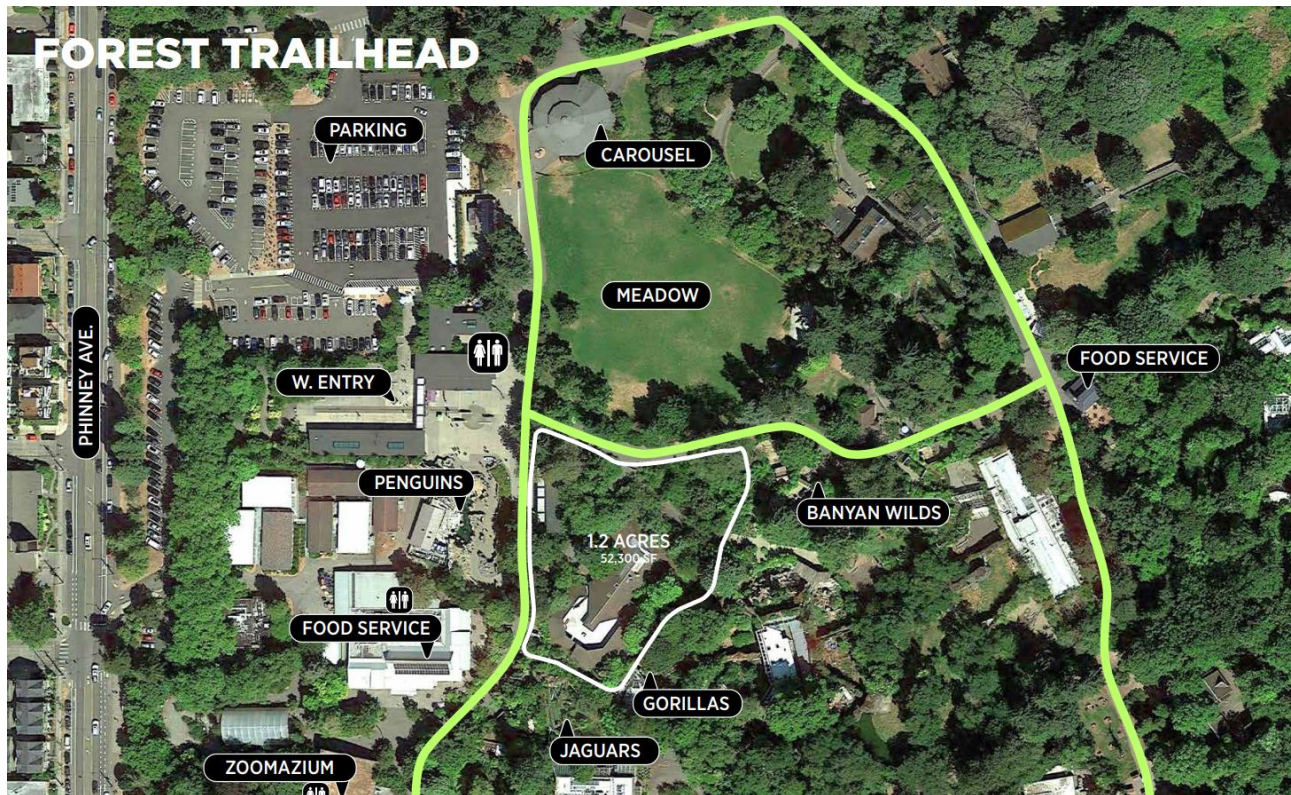
- Share Community Led Conservation Successes
- 3-Dimensional Guest and Animal Movement
- Awe and Wonder

Secondary principles in support of the primary principles are:

- Participatory Experiences
- Showcase Exceptional Animal Care
- Deepen Relationships to Forests
- Demonstrate Impacts of Forests on Climate Change

The experiential strategies are:

1. 3-dimensional guest and animal movement
2. Weave thru the trees
3. Choose your own adventure
4. Roof as Canopy
5. Plaza at center



After the May 2022 Concept Design review, the team firmly defined the program and allocated spaces for it. The large, vaguely defined roofed expanse that the team showed the commission at the May 2022 Concept design review was developed into the Conservation Pavilion and elevated walkways. While the schematic design provides more definition between zones and program areas, it continues to provide an immersive experience that blurs the lines between visitors, animals, and caretakers, something the commission had applauded.

The team presented the PNW Forest Zone and Cloud Forest Zone and the forest canopy and forest floor paths that run through and connect them. They presented the Conservation Pavilion, which contains a forest habitat gallery and conservation gallery and internal plaza space. The forest zones include a New Zealand beech forest and aviary for Kea birds. A series of net chutes provide circulation through the Cloud Forest for Tree Kangaroos and Red Pandas.

#### **Agency comments**

None

#### **Public Comments**

None

#### **Summary of Discussion**

The Commissioners organized their discussion with these topics:

- A. The design overall and its ability to achieve the goals of the project
- B. The landscape zones - PNW forest and browse garden; Cloud Forest (Tree kangas & Red Pandas; Alpine Forest (Keas)
- C. Trails and circulation - Canopy Walk, Forest Floor Path
- D. Pavilion - Habitat gallery, conservation gallery, Plaza (formerly called Exchange)
- E. Equity
- F. Sustainability

Overall, the commissioners reacted positively to the design and the refinements that had been made since the last review. They discussed the qualities of the spaces and the experience of moving through them in the various ways it will be possible. They were glad to see that visitors had the option to circle back to the Pavilion building if the weather got bad or they wanted to spend more time at the in-door exhibits. They mentioned the link between animal and human welfare, and the meaning that can be found in the statement, "Seattle is a deforested rainforest."

Commissioners were pleased at the extensive work with BIPOC communities. They would like to see the team expand their engagement with Indigenous communities. The Commission also was interested in how long-term and ongoing engagement will shape the project.

Commissioners considered the accessibility of the new exhibit for people with physical limitations. They were glad to see that the primary route is accessible. Some concern was expressed about the secondary paths through the facility and the extent to which the designs need further refinement.

Sustainability was identified as an area with potential for improvement. Work to provide better transit connectivity was lauded for its contribution to lowering CO2 emissions, but commissioners saw LEED Gold as a relatively low target for the project.

### **Action**

The SDC thanked the team for their presentation of the Schematic Design (60%) for the Forests Trailhead Experience at Woodland Park Zoo. They thanked the team for refining the program as recommended at the last review. The SDC appreciated that the exhibit has one clear, primary circulation route and that it provides a three-dimensional experience for visitors. Commissioners applauded blurring the lines between visitor and animal areas. Having a model available helped commissioners considerably to understand the complex topography and layering of the circulation and programming.

The SDC voted 5 to 0 to approve the Schematic (60%) Design of the Forest Trailhead Experience with the following recommendations for further development of the design:

1. Increase the sustainability of the project. Continue to search for opportunities for cost-effective measures to achieve this.
2. Solicit and consider how to integrate the input of local Indigenous leaders in the project, perhaps around forest stewardship.
3. Continue to refine the design so that it offers a premium, universally accessible experience.
4. Plan to survey BIPOC users throughout design and construction. Also monitor whether interpretation and opportunities for hands-on-activities are resonating with users.

The SDC anticipates reviewing the project again at the Design Development (90%) phase.