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## MEETING MINUTES

### Morgan Junction Park

**January 18, 2024**

Convened 10:00 am

Adjourned 2:50 pm

#### Projects Reviewed

Commission business

Forest Trailhead/Woodland Park Zoo

#### Morgan Junction Park

#### Commissioners Present

Adam Amrhein (9:00 - 10:00 am; 1:00 - 2:00 pm)

Elizabeth Conner

Puja Shaw (9:00 - 10:00 am, 1:00 - 2:40 pm)

Kevin O'Neill

Ben Gist

Phoebe Bogert

Jay Backman

Matt Aalfs (9:00 am - 2:40 pm)

Molly Spetalnick (acting Chair)

#### Commissioners Excused

Jill Crary

#### Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Juliet Acevedo



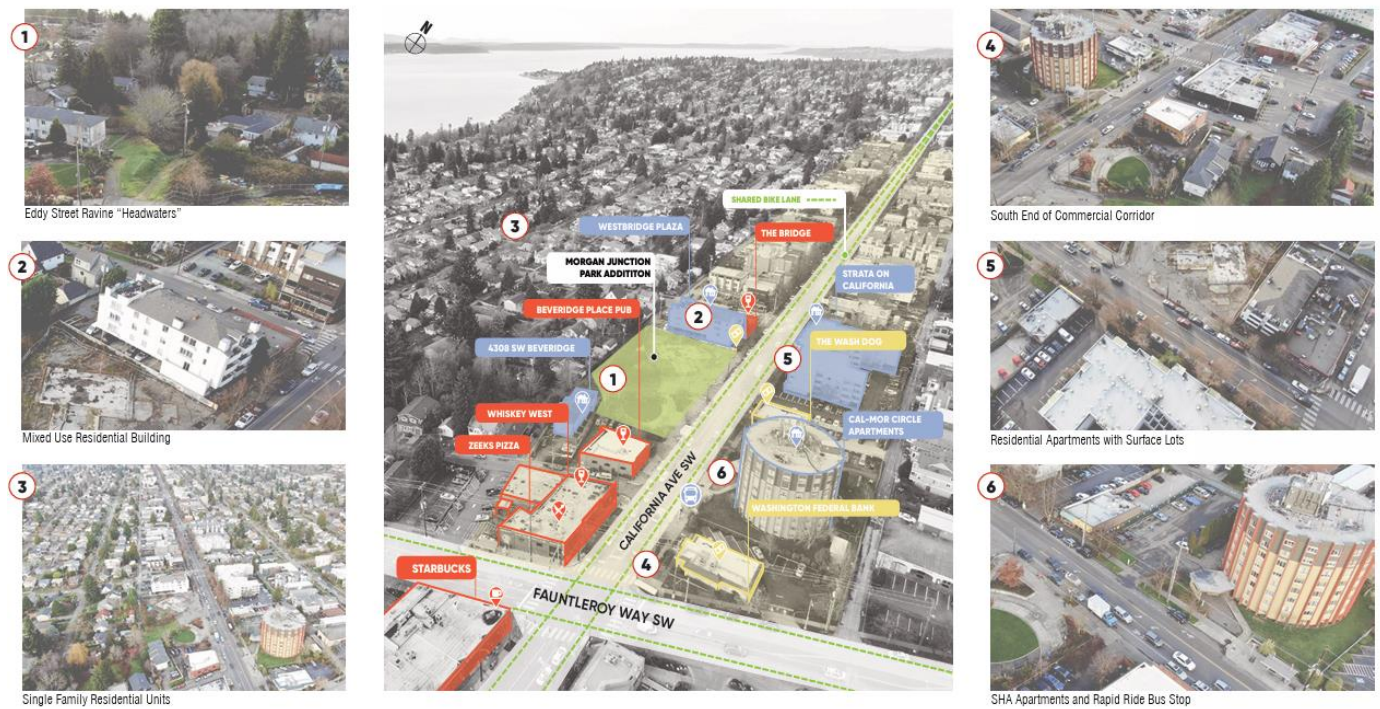
January 18, 2024  
 1:00 pm – 2:50 pm

**Project:** Morgan Junction Park expansion  
**Type:** Capital Improvement  
**Phase:** Schematic review  
**Previous Reviews:** Concept review – August 1, 2019  
**Presenters:** Kelly Goold, Seattle Parks and Recreation; Leslie Batten and Zach Thomas, Board and Vellum  
**Attendees:** Deb Barker, virtual; Michael Bruner, virtual

**Project Description:**

The project is one of 14 land banked sites acquired in 2014 by Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR). The project site is in the Morgan Junction neighborhood, approximately one block north of the intersection of California Ave SW and SM Morgan Street. The site is located along a neighborhood commercial corridor that includes mixed-use, commercial, and residential buildings and surface parking lots. A single-family residential area is located immediately west of the project site. The park concept will connect the existing park to the expanded area, to include event spaces, and active and passive recreation facilities. The following images show the site and expansion area in relation to the immediate neighborhood.

**IMMEDIATE CONTEXT**



The park concept reflects initial community outreach conducted in 2018, and as expanded in 2023. The initial project proposals and designs were put on hold in 2020 during the COVID pandemic. In 2023, significant project funding was restored. As a result, project designs were advanced during and after a series of public engagement activities starting in Summer 2023. The current project designs reflect that engagement, as well as refinements made to the design in response to budget considerations and programming alternatives.

### **Meeting Summary**

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the Morgan Junction Park Development. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase for the project. After presentation and discussion, SDC approved the project 8-0, with a condition to return to a subcommittee before the next full Commission meeting. There were also several recommendations.

### **Summary of Presentation**

Zack Thomas and Leslie Batten of Board & Vellum, and Kelly Goold of Seattle Parks and Recreation presented the schematic design for the Morgan Junction Park Development. The presentation began with a brief overview of the project site, neighborhood context, and background information. The project team mentioned that this project will provide additional access to parks in a neighborhood that currently lacks green space.

The existing park is roughly .20 acres in size and includes pathways, seating, open lawn, and vegetation. The proposed park addition is approximately .3 acres in size. The existing and proposed parks are currently separated by unimproved right-of-way along SW Eddy St. The schematic design assumes that the segment of SW Eddy between California Ave SW and an alley west of the project parcel will be improved as part of the park design. To allow the ROW to be used for a recreation purpose, SPR is working with Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) to transfer this segment of SW Eddy from SDOT to SPR through a transfer of jurisdiction ordinance (TJO).

The Commission's first review occurred on August 1, 2019. Following this meeting, project designs were advanced, and the resulting 2019 schematic design proposal was a hybrid of the two preferred concept options presented to the Commission:

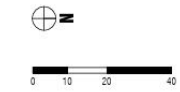


**2019 SCHEMATIC DESIGN SITE PLAN**



**Site Plan Key**

- 1 Modify Existing Planter
- 2 Expand Existing Flat Lawn Space- 4,200 SF
- 3 Relocated Park Signage
- 4 Community Stage
- 5 10' Pedestrian Clear Zone
- 6 6' Landscape/Furniture Zone
- 7 Amenity/Tent Zone
- 8 SDOT Bike Racks
- 9 Pedestrian Lighting
- 10 Bench Seating
- 11 Central Lawn Space - 3,300 SF
- 12 Sentinel Evergreen Tree
- 13 Monument Seat Wall
- 14 16' Event Boulevard
- 15 The Traverse
- 16 Grasspave
- 17 Net Climber on Play Surface
- 18 6' Loop Path - ADA Accessible
- 19 Nature Play
- 20 Connection & Visibility to Alley
- 21 Improved Alley
- 22 SCL SJ-30 Truck Turnaround
- 23 Hilltop Feature
- 24 Iconic View Hill - 2,800 SF
- 25 Low Woodland Plantings
- 26 Spillover Event Staging
- 27 Sun Shelf & View Shed
- 28 Designated Parking Stall for Festival / Maintenance Use



Morgan Junction Park Addition  
Design Commission, Presentation #2  
January 18, 2024

The 2019 schematic design was not advanced due to the COVID pandemic. The project was also put on hold due to a loss of significant funding. In 2023, the project proposal received funding to advance the project designs and additional public engagement. In Summer 2023, a series of in-person and virtual public engagement sessions were held. The design team found that there was significant change in the communities' interest in program elements. The following images document the changes from 2019 to 2023:

**PROGRAMMING GROUPS 2019 | 2023**



**COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE**

The community strongly favored an expanded ability to use the park to stage the MoCA Summer Festival and other similar events. The exact configuration and types of community events is to be determined.

In 2023 the community still desired an informal event space and gathering area.



**PLAY / ACTIVE RECREATION**

The community strongly favored elements for active recreation especially play features for children. Elements favored by the community included play equipment integrated with less formal/natural play areas such as topography, boulders, logs, and other landscape elements. An opportunity for a loop path or other route through the park was also identified as a desirable feature.

An all wheels area was strongly favored by the community in 2023.



**FLEX SPACE / PASSIVE REC**

In addition to active recreation, the community also desired a significant part of the park expansion to be supportive of passive unstructured activities such as reclining, picnicking, or other informal, flexible uses (kicking a soccer ball, frisbee, etc.).

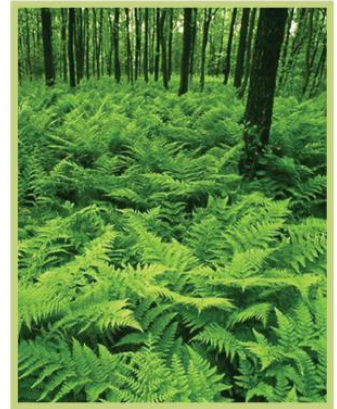
In 2023 the flex space, open lawn was not as favored by the community.



**PLANTING**

Many community members felt that the area is already 'too paved' and that the park should provide much needed open space and planted areas with a mix of sunny and shady spots to hang out. However, they were also interested in planting that was simpler and easy to maintain so that the park would look 'cared for' and support its role as a central community asset.

In 2023 the community expressed less interest in having more planting areas.



Some significant differences between 2019 and 2024 designs include:

- Angular/triangular program areas created, with a corresponding pedestrian system.
- Elimination of a proposed off-leash dog run from option 2.
- Use of a portion of the original park area to create a 'skate dot' at southern edge of park.
- Retention and reorientation of net play area, now a reimagined multi-age play area.
- Designation of an 'informal performance area' in the existing portion of the park, as part of a sloped lawn area located between the skate dot and the hammerhead vehicle turnaround.
- Location of a signature tree at the apex of an angled intersection in the interior of the park.
- Elimination of viewpoint at western portion of site.
- Refinement of proposed alley access and hammerhead.
- Creation of a significant landscape area along the north property line, abutting a neighboring development.



**2023 REVISED – SCHEMATIC DESIGN SITE PLAN**



- 1 Modify Existing Planter
- 2 Sloped Lawn
- 3 Relocated Park Signage
- 4 Informal Performance Area
- 5 Skate Dot (~1,500sf)
- 6 6.5' Landscape/Furniture Zone
- 7 6' Amenity/Tent Zone
- 8 SDOT Bike Racks
- 9 Pedestrian Lighting
- 10 Bench Seating
- 11 Central Lawn Space - 3,300 SF
- 12 Sentinel Evergreen Tree
- 13 Monument Seat Wall
- 14 14' Event Boulevard (Vehicular Paving)
- 15 The Traverse
- 16 Improved Alley & SCL Truck Turnaround
- 17 Multi-Age Play Area
- 18 6' Loop Path - ADA Accessible
- 19 Nature Play
- 20 The Grove
- 21 Low Native Woodland Plantings
- 22 Designated Parking Stall for Festival / Maintenance Use

**Agency Comments**

None

**Public comment:**

Josh Radick and Matt Johnston of the Morgan Junction All-Wheels Association attended the SDC meeting in person. 5 members of the public attended virtually, including Deb Barker and other representatives of the Morgan Junction Community Association. One public comment was submitted via email.

Public comments focused on the role that all wheel/skate advocates have played in the development and refinement of the skate dot and the larger park program, community interest in the role that the park can play for socializing and building community outdoors, as a location for an annual festival, and as a gathering area in disaster incidents. There is overall support for the project design from the Morgan Community Association. A written comment expressed concerns about the proposal for the skate dot and its negative impacts on people walking or resting in the park areas for other planned park uses.

**Commissioners' questions:**

Following the presentation and public comment, Commissioners asked questions related to the advancement of project designs, as reflected in the 2023 schematic design. Questions related to the following categories:

### Role of public engagement in shaping project features

- Demographic and other data on who showed up as part of public engagement
- Role of public engagement in desire for more active uses

### Improvements related to public realm (streets, alley, and turnaround)

- Role and function of alley and who it is serving
- Who maintains alley post-construction
- Right of way improvements along California Ave SW, including curb management strategies including drop off areas and parking

### Internal pedestrian movement

- Role of path between climbing structure and alley area and ravine area
- Rationale for diagonal/boomerang walkway layout and orientation
- Can internal boomerang paved area be used for vehicular access, allowing more uses for alley/turnaround area
- ADA relationship on internal pathways between skate dot and boomerang walkway

### Characteristics of open spaces

- Need for hierarchy of plazas/gathering spaces
- Thoughts on the nature and function of each of the curvilinear open space areas and their relationship to the overall program areas
- Optimal sizes for performance, community gatherings, and disaster/emergency response space and facilities.
- Orientation of the informal performance area to the public realm, including the internal circulation areas
- Characteristics and location of permanent or flexible seating areas
- Opportunities for intermittent and temporary park uses within turnaround/alley area
- Frequency of use or informal area

### Sustainability/environmental considerations

- Surface/stormwater strategies, natural infiltration, and its role in sustainability
- Strategy for reducing use of carbon, using biochar, as part of sustainability strategy
- Strategies for site irrigation
- Grade changes/separation between alley/turnaround and park

### Integration among project elements

- Opportunities to better integrate skate dot into larger park program
- Opportunities to soften the edges between the turnaround/alley and park spaces
- Proposed changes to existing program areas on southern edge of park abutting Beveridge Pub property

### Additional comments/questions

- Timing of artist role and their inclusion into the project, if feasible, due to absence of 1% for Art funds
- Location of bike parking within park, as well as within right of way
- Use of utilities within parking area, including electrical and water service, to support events, daily use, and disaster/emergency response.
- How project design supports safe and secure use, including CPTED strategies

### **Commissioner comments and deliberation:**

Following commissioner questions and public comment, the Commission provided the following comments, focused on the following areas:

- How project has advanced from August 2019 meeting
- Design details of major project elements, including grass areas, skate dot, climbing structure
- Mobility/access to and through park for all modes of travel
- Alley/hammerhead characteristics
- Community engagement and how it has shaped project
- Efforts to advance sustainability
- Activities and programming

Commissioner comments:

- Develop a stronger hierarchy of program spaces through refinement of spaces and clear role of pedestrian paths
- Look for inclusion of more formalized plaza areas, given the scale of the park and its relationship to abutting residential areas
- Green spaces are all a relatively equal in size. Develop a strategy for green spaces, currently relatively equal in size, to clarify their priority, and distinct roles within overall design
- Activate under-used alley for more uses
- Consider the inclusion of structure(s) for programming or other community events and uses
- Investigate uses of natural features/drainage in smaller lawn area, as well as in program areas
- Clarify how green spaces will be used
- Clarify location of bike facilities within park
- Develop specific plans or programs for each space
- Use continuing public engagement to help define and refine spaces
- Contact OAC to determine whether funding to involve an artist is available, or consider how project design can include aesthetic features that are appropriate to support design and programming

Action:

The Commission voted 7-0 to approve the project, with the condition that the project return to a subcommittee to evaluate the following recommended actions. The subcommittee will occur prior to any final commission review.

Recommendations:

1. Develop a hierarchy among each of the program spaces (multi-age play area, informal performance area, grass areas, to provide greater visual and programmatic distinctions among these spaces. As part



of this work, continue public engagement that includes the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. Include demographic data of public outreach and activities in future presentations.

2. Look for ways to activate the alley and turnaround area that include a dog area and expansion of all-wheels/skate program. Does, or will the alley connect to other locations?
3. To enhance safety in and around the park, enhance sightlines to, from, and through the alley. Consider how trees and vegetation support or detract from this goal.
4. Include active play or other active program uses in the lawn areas, in addition to what is provided at the climbing structure.
5. Investigate programming areas for food consumption.
6. Investigate ways to provide overhead weather protection in public gathering areas.
7. Consider noise and activity concerns expressed by adjacent neighbors.
8. Advance plans for right of way improvements along California Ave SW that include curbside management strategies
- 9.