



**Seattle
Design
Commission**

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

5 June 2003

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

Donald Royse
Chair

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

High Point Master Plan
Discussion with Mayor Greg Nickels

Convened: 10:30am

Adjourned: 3:30pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair
Laura Ballock
Ralph Cipriani
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
Nic Rossouw
David Spiker
Sharon E. Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Anna O'Connell



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Construction & Land Use

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5 June 2003 Project: **High Point Master Plan**

Phase: Open Space Plan Update

Previous Reviews: 21 November 2002 (Street Vacation), 18 April 2002 (Update), 15 November 2001 (Initial Briefing)

Presenters: Brian Sullivan, Mithun
Gail Staeger, Nakano Associates
Margarett Harrison, Mithun
Peg Staeheli, SvRAttendees: Tammy Frederick, Seattle Dept. of Transportation
Lauren Hirt, Dept. of Design Construction, and Land Use
Michael Jenkins, Dept. of Design Construction, and Land Use
Meghan Montgomery, University of Washington
Heather Nickel, University of Washington
Lisa Nein, University of Washington
John Logan, University of Washington

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00253)

Action: **The Commission thanks the team for coming and would like to make the following comments and recommendations:**

- **The Design Commission commends the team on innovative, exemplary sustainability strategies including the scale of the natural drainage system and the use of deconstruction techniques;**
- **encourages the team to have the goal for deconstruction be 100 percent;**
- **applauds the simple and clear design standards being used for the neighborhood to help ensure the overall quality of the development, no matter who the designer or builder may be for subsequent blocks;**
- **feels that the designers' development of a comprehensive open space plan is fundamentally strong and these recommendations are in the spirit of enhancing what the designers are already trying to achieve;**
- **recommends that the team develop stronger identities for each of the different parks so that each has its own character, takes advantage of its own site conditions, and, in the end, feels like a unique place;**
- **encourages proponents to further explore how residents will use the parks and occupy outdoor spaces, and have more direct intentions for what kind of public and social life will be generated in these space with less focus on the picturesque and pastoral;**
- **feels that the relationship between the neighborhood center and park at the center of the site is critical and looks forward to seeing strong connections between them;**
- **recommends that the detention pond be viewed more as a working landscape and the design be more expressive of the pond's innovation rather than it being a pastoral landscape that looks like a natural pond;**
- **suggest that there be no fence around the pond because if you put a fence around this pond, there might as well be one around Greenlake; and**
- **suggests that proponents consider alleys as part of the open space network and do another layer of exploration into how they work.**

There are several updates on the High Point development since the team's last presentation to the Commission:

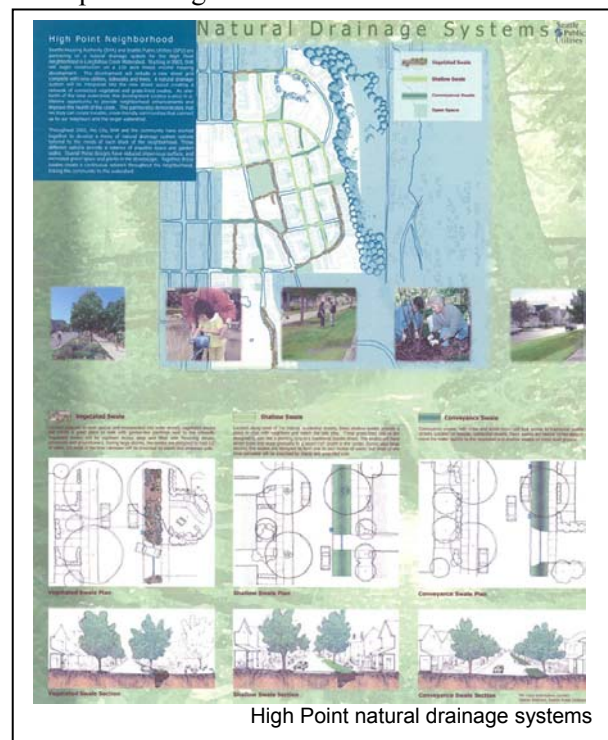
- The schedule has received full Council approval and the vacations and zoning have been cleared for construction.
- Construction has begun on the neighborhood clinic and construction begins on the library this week.
- The senior building across from the park is now going through the review process and will begin construction in December or January.
- Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) put out an RFQ for development of the mixed-use site and will receive responses from developers this month.
- Phase I site construction is beginning; the site has been fenced, abatement will be started soon, and demolition will be started in July.
- Construction of housing will begin next spring or summer.
- A pilot deconstruction project will occur onsite to see how feasible it is and to train people in deconstruction.

Mithun is developing design guidelines for High Point as well as Rainier and Holly Park III. They are creating these for the entire High Point plan as well as developing guidelines for each housing site.

There have been very few changes, if any, to the plan that the Commission approved. There are several roadway/street design issues. Last time the Commission recommended that an easement be put in right-of-way to create a 34th St. connection; the team did this and the easement was approved. In addition, the Commission recommended an easement for Eddy St., but Council did not approve this. They were concerned that the road would be a mismatch between users with cars in the same area where children would be going to the park. Sylvan Way, which will be in place in Phase II, is still being worked through with SDOT. The duplexes have a narrow strip of pavement in between and in front that opens up so that cars can be parked away from the front of the houses. Landscape is being used to break down the scale of the duplexes.

Several sustainability strategies are being used for the housing. Some homes are being deconstructed rather than demolished. The team is using "healthy homes" guidelines, which addresses issues for people with asthma and other respiratory problems. They are looking for additional funds for this project and the goal is to have 50 healthy homes onsite because there is a high percentage of families dealing with these issues in this population. Saving trees is a priority in the project and they are looking at ways to reuse those that must be taken out onsite. The team is looking to use these trees in building the new housing, the community center, the finishing of other buildings. In addition, the project's artist may use some of the trees. There are some invisible sustainable methods that the team is using such as enhancing the soil; installing low-pollen, native, and drought-tolerant plants; and eliminating pesticides and chemical fertilizers.

The High Point project will be the first urban natural drainage system. The planning of this system is



moving into the technical phase and is working well. One key goal is to design one that not only works, but is constructible and affordable. The pond is extremely flexible and is primarily a stormwater pond rather than a water quality pond. Most of the water quality issues are being addressed within the blocks. The types of swales that are being used are brassline, shallow (for water quality), and vegetated. SPU is funding an artist, Bruce Meyers, who has worked on other city projects such as Discovery Park Nature Center. He will work to integrate art throughout the site. The theme will be dealing with water and addressing the neighborhood as the high point of Seattle and as a gathering area. Elements that translate into drainage such as inlets and the corridor to the pond will be the focus of the art. The art plan will be going to the Arts Commission in June or early July.

The park block is from SW Morgan St. and Sylvan Way SW to SW Raymond St. The design team pulled the houses back by SW Raymond St. to open up the street and have green space in front. The team is keeping with the original concepts for development of the open spaces. There will be view points in the park near the pond. There is a hierarchy in the parks with the larger ones being the central community park and the stormwater park and the smaller ones being the three neighborhood parks and a series of pocket parks. The streetscapes connect all of the parks and the landscape architecture team is using unique ground plane plantings to identify the associations. There is also a streetscape hierarchy that is being blended with the existing physical setting. The streets are green to the east, becoming more urban to the west. In the park blocks, the streets have a lot of trees with strong color and a somewhat formal feel. The residential streets have more variety, but there is still a pattern.

The community and stormwater parks are at the schematic level. The community park is the visual and activity heart of the community. Activities in the park will range from special events and large gatherings to everyday use by residents. Water passes through the park; water is expressed in an urban way to the west and becomes more naturalized as it passes through. There is a gathering area with an overlook and terracing that serves as stepped seating. This space also serves as an amphitheater when there is an event. The park will have lighting, through connections, and play features such as spray pools. It will contain features that acknowledge the history and physical nature of the site as a high point. The Pomegranate Center will participate in getting community participation to create some of these features for the site.





The stormwater park has all the technical aspects for stormwater detention, but will be a natural, quiet space. There will be celebration of water, entry nodes, and linkages to the rest of the site. The space will have a half-court basketball court and a children's play area. The water will run through a stream (dry most of the year), vegetated swale, or runnel that connects with the pond. The play area will have primarily natural play features like boulders. There is a 20-foot grade change from the overlook to the pond. The ADA-accessible path around the pond is a half mile long and has series of destination spots for people to pause. A pump and running course of water will be use to aerate the pond. The park will also have a texture garden with boulders and moss, and a sunny lawn area for games and picnics. The pond is fenced, but there is a continuous zone of vegetation for water quality and to separate the water from the park.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know if there are still p-patches here.
 - Proponents stated that there are in the stormwater park and there are also market gardens.
- Likes the pattern of having three different types of spaces and would like to hear more about the unique characteristics of each.
 - Proponents stated that the community commons park will have a lot of activity and active play of all different ages of children. It will have an indoor basketball court in the community center and an outdoor half-court and may have p-patches, trails, benches, and play areas. It is 2.8 acres and also has a small soccer field.
 - Proponents stated that the hierarchy is based on proximity to the houses. The pocket parks will not have any equipment and the neighborhood parks will have activity zones. Each park has a unique setting: the north park is by the pond and connects to Longfellow Creek via the Legacy Trail, and the south park is closer to the homes and more urban. Many of the smaller parks will not be built right away, but they are there in the plans as placeholders and the team will work with the community to build them.
- Would like to know how Pomegranate Center is involved and how the gathering space in the community park relates to the community center.
 - Proponents stated that they are working with Pomegranate now. Pomegranate held a workshop with residents to paint fence pickets for the market gardens. The team is beginning to identify other elements that Pomegranate will be involved with; they will not be working on the design of, but components within the parks.
 - Proponents stated that they do not know enough about the community center to design the space around it yet, but there is a spatial zone where they see things coming together.
- Is concerned with the use of the word "pastoral" to describe some of these landscapes, including the pond. Feels that the pond needs to tell its story, which is of human interventions. Encourages the team

to design pocket parks as social spaces and not parks.

- Encourages the landscape architects to shift gears and feels that there is so much in the site and it is a vibrant place that they are tiptoeing around. Would like to see them be explicit about their designs and be deliberate, bold, and aggressive to force something exciting to happen. Is unsure of the pastoral, too, and of having a strong social program in a pastoral setting. Feels that if there is a fence, it should not be visible.
- Would like to the Commission to endorse the idea of deconstruction versus demolition and would like the goal to be deconstruction in the first phase, as well. Encourages the team to make sure there is a connection of the stormwater from the community park to the pond; does not see swale currently shown as conveyance swale. Feels that if there are unused open spaces, they could be made into patches. Does not like the idea of having a fence and believes that if you have put a fence around this pond, then there needs to be one around Greenlake, too.
- Encourages proponents to consider alleys another part of the open space and to use them to their fullest social possibilities. Feels that how the houses are laid out will determine the safety of the alleys.
- Would like to know if the alleys are mapped as right-of-way.
 - Proponents stated that they are and they are part of the network of streets and open spaces.
- Suggests the design teams think of all of the pocket parks as very different places with different issues. Encourages the team to think more abstractly about all of these spaces and consider other language modes. As an example, suggests proponents look to Martha Schwartz's project in Japan.
- Is concerned about the re-creation of nature around the pond. Believes this is a working landscape and it should be shown as such. Longfellow Creek is the true natural drainage of the site.

5 June 2003 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

- A. TIMESHEETS
- B. MINUTES FROM 15 MAY 2003—APPROVED
- C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS BRIEFINGS—CUBELL AND GASSMAN

STAFF UPDATE—INTERN ANNA O’CONNELL PRESENTED HER MASTERS THESIS TO THE DESIGN COMMISSION.

ACTION: THE DESIGN COMMISSION CONGRATULATES THIS FINE WORK AND PUSHING THE STANDARDS OF SUSTAINABILITY TO APPLY TO OPEN SPACES AND LANDSCAPES.

- THE DESIGN COMMISSION ENCOURAGES AND SUPPORTS THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPT. TO CONSIDER PILOTING THIS SET OF SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT STANDARDS; AND
- RECOMMENDS APPROVAL.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- D. AFTERNOON BRIEFINGS—RAHAIM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- E. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS RECEPTION— JUNE 9, 5–7 PM, BENEROYA HALL
- F. CENTRAL WATERFRONT FORUM—JUNE 26, 6–9 PM AND JUNE 28, 8:30–12:30PM, BELL HARBOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER
- G. ARCADE OPEN HOUSE—JUNE 5, 5:30–7:30PM, 100 WATT, 2101 9TH STREET

5 June 2003 Project: Discussion with Mayor Greg Nickels

Attendees: Diane Sugimura, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use
Alan Justad, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use
Kristin Jackson, North Beacon Hill resident
Kelly M. Ogilvie, Mayor Nickel's Office

Time: 0.75 hours

Summary: The Commission discussed their work of the last year and upcoming projects with Mayor Greg Nickels. They feel that the Libraries for All Levy has been very successful and the ProParks Levy has had mixed success. The Commission finds two projects, High Point redevelopment and the Joint Training Facility, are particularly remarkable in their strong design teams and design principles, application of sustainability techniques, collaboration among city agencies, and meeting of social and economic needs. They are enthusiastic about the potential of the Waterfront Forum, the Blue Ring, and the South Lake Union area. The Commission feels that, with transportation being a primary issue, it is critical to have urban design considerations integrated early in transportation projects.

Recently, the Commission has toured several projects that are in the construction phase, such as City Hall and Central Library, and felt that these buildings and their own design review process were successful. Overall, the Commission feels that the Libraries levy has been very successful, whereas the ProParks levy has had mixed success. The Commission is excited about the potential in the new Fire Safety Levy and invited the Mayor to attend their biannual awards for exemplary projects. The Mayor feels that the neighborhood fire stations help define and identify neighborhoods. The High Point project has an important integration that the Commission would like to see more of: using strong design principles, meeting social and economic needs, and applying sustainability techniques. The Joint Training Facility has also captured the Commission's attention with its early collaboration among various agencies, an exemplary design team, and overall project sustainability.

The Commission is enthusiastic about the visioning potential of the upcoming Waterfront Forum. Mayor Nickels feels that it will be an important legacy to reconnect Seattle and the region with its waterfront. The Blue Ring will encourage pedestrian/open space connections in the city, especially in the Center City neighborhoods and along the waterfront. The South Lake Union area also has potential for public realm improvements with the proposed connections across Aurora. Transportation is a primary issue with several large transportation projects coming to the fore. Transportation has important urban design and overall quality of life implications and the Commission would like urban design considerations to be integrated at projects' inception as it was done with the Viaduct.

Finally, the Mayor noted that he will be attending the national Mayors' conference and the big issues will be homeland security, the economy, and housing. In addition, the Mayor will be leading the Transportation Committee.