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APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

September 18, 2008

Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 3:14 pm

Projects Reviewed

DPD Planning Division Update
Madison Valley Storm Water Improvements
Center for Wooden Boats – SLU Park
DPD Green Building Team
Pike Pine Transit Access Improvements

Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Tasha Atchison
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Mary Johnston
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato
Darby Watson

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Shannon Glass

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



September 18, 2008	Project:	Madison Valley Surface Water Improvements
	Phase:	Concept Design
	Last Reviewed:	
	Presenters:	Rick Ballard, RH2 Engineers Brent Middleswart, SPU Peter Nelson, Karen Kiest Landscape Architects
	Attendees:	Celia Kennedy, SPU Christine Herrington, Karen Kiest Landscape Architects

Time: 1 hour

(169/RS0607)

ACTION

The Commission thanks the team for their presentation, is excited to see a necessity turned into an amenity, and unanimously approves of concept design with the following comments and recommendations:

- Commends the general direction, and thinks the overall intent is very good.
- Thanks SPU for treating this engineering project as a neighborhood feature.
- Identifies that both concepts have two nodes, and recommends careful consideration about how they're connected.
- The proposed integrated amphitheater seems like a viable feature to add, making the north location, due to sun exposure, the best spot for it.
- The inspiration images are focused on a singular gesture, which the concepts did not support; consider making features stronger, whether more formal or informal.
- Recommends the use of art work for its potential role to make connections between the two areas, the site and the drainage system as a whole.
- Recommends considering the management entity as a very important decision maker in the development of concepts and site design.
- While the center is inviting, many people will experience this space from its edges. The sidewalks should be treated with as much care as the center. The neighbors may not consider the sidewalk as a great amenity, but they will as it's developed.
- The water draining cage is an amazing engineering structure that should be celebrated. This could be a great aesthetic and functionality design feature.

Recusals: Commissioner Kiest recused herself from the presentation.

Presentation

Project Overview/Context/Background

Recent storms in August 2004 and December 2006 initiated action to find the most viable economical solution for the community and the City. Recently, City Council adopted a preferred option the Northwest Diversion Route and Washington Park Diversion or Detention.

Hydraulic and physical computer modeling has been conducted, to provide decision making tools for a solution to the problem. An existing interim detention area was built in the summer of 2006, and the proposed action expands it. The other elements of the project are a pipe diversion, which intercepts and routes to another detention in Lake Washington. An MOA is being developed with the Parks Department.

The project is proposed in two phases. The first phase is scheduled for construction summer 2009, and the second one in 2010-2011. The second phase is being treated as a separate project.

The landscape concepts were shared with the public last night. The Design Commission's comments will be shared with the public, and there will be several public workshops through a Public Information Plan.

Hydraulics and Drainage System Challenges

This 700 acre basin drains to a location at 30th and John, where the separate storm water pipes are injected into the combined sewer pipe, which then drains through the Arboretum.

The improvement proposes diverting the storm water to a storage facility at the park, as well as a storage facility at 30th and John. The storm water diverted from the northwest area is diverted to a facility at John and 27th. The Phase Two plan will pick up the water at John and 27th, and divert it across Madison and into Washington Park.

Phase One involves the expansion of the existing facility at 30th and John. It will take up an entire block. The combined sewer line does not have enough capacity to drain this basin during very large storm events. It has to be controlled and stored in a facility. The interim facility was designed to handle a portion of that water.

A large diameter underground pipe near 30th and John Stores about 400,000 gallons of water. A valving system stops the storm water from entering the combined sewer line. When the combined sewer is full, it will back up into an underground detention system. Additional back up enters an above ground detention facility. The water is detained for a very short period of time, and will only fill during 100 year storm events.

LANDSCAPE

Site Analysis

It's important that the sides of the site remain at 4:1 or 3:1 slopes. It's challenging to overlay the design on that constraint, but unique opportunities have been found. It is a half block site, surrounded by residential houses. The northern half of site is a basin with lawn and 4:1 and 3:1 slopes. There is a concrete circuit around the existing park, and the neighbors prefer to keep that walkability.

The southern end is being looked at as an area of opportunity for regrading and land forms. Visual access to site from all sides is being considered for safety reasons – and the community has expressed concern to avoid hiding places. There are some existing trees; a grove of aspens will be retained. The neighbors have taken ownership of a grove of plum trees; although they must be removed for grading, referencing them in the design is being considered.

Inspirations and Precedents

- Land forms for shaping and visual interest, such as Earthworks Park and Maya Lin work.
- Texture in planting and materials, to create diversity in visual experience.
- Paths through the site, either hard lines or meandering, naturalistic ones. It is challenging to create ADA route through the site, so different ways to cross through and experience the bottom of the basin are being explored.
- Overlooks for looking into the site.
- Bridges for crossing into and over the site, and creating verticality.

Plants

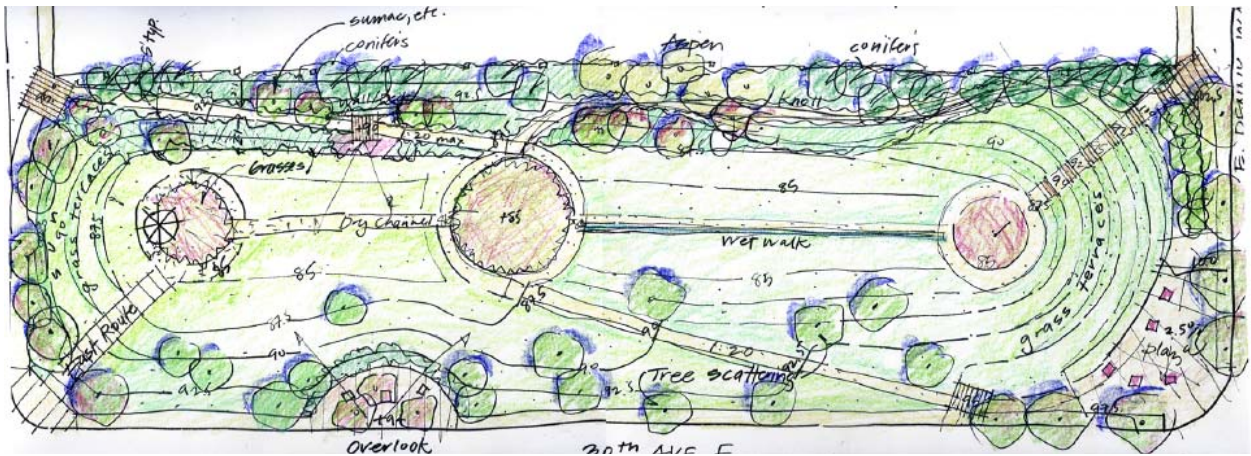
- Lawn, for ease of maintenance, and ornamental grasses to create verticality and visual interest.
- Scattered trees throughout site to create the sense of a real place.
- Wetland plants
- A Green Edge to create a small scale, layered buffer for the neighbors desire to use largely natives for both maintenance and ecological reasons; but not natives exclusively
- Ornamental plantings, possibly as a more formalized concept with straighter edges, and referencing the plum orchard.

Concepts

Both have the same elements, but are basically rendered the same way; one is more formal, the other is more naturalistic.

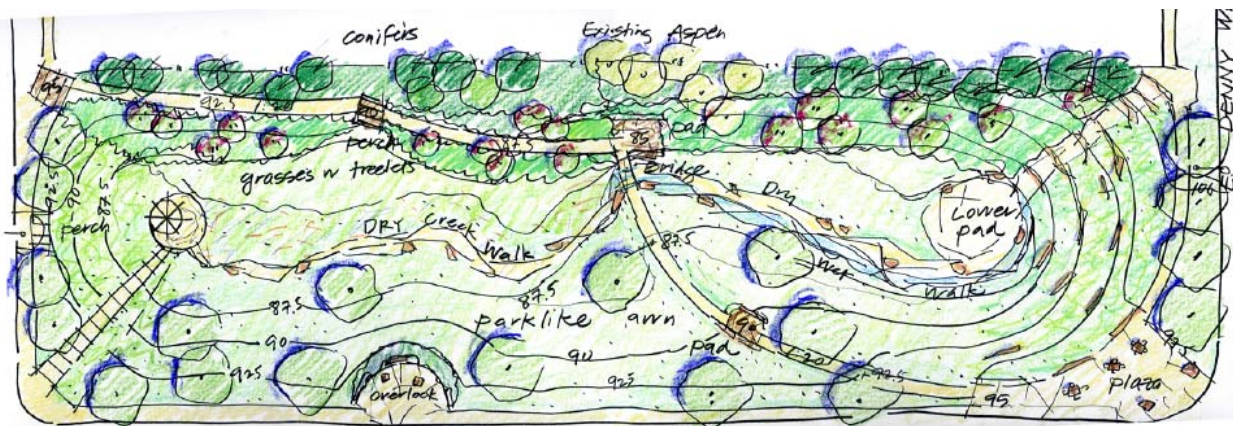
Concept A

- More formal and linear; creating a long, linear look of a canal along the basin's bottom; possibly mixing wetland planting at one end, shifting to a drier channel at the other for variety.
- A circular area, such as a Jens Jensen Council Circle for gathering, or a center of plants to walk around.
- Takes advantage of sloped end of site, as an opportunity to use like an amphitheater, gathering area, or informal performance space.
- Pushes out sidewalk, for seating or picnic tables.
- Allows quick access through the space via a simple stairway.
- An ADA route, with stopping points for reflection and interpretive elements.
- Retains the existing maintenance route as an access point.



Concept B

- A more "Northwest" approach, incorporating more stone
- Uses boulders for seating.
- Features a dry creek, incorporating an adventure or exploration trail.



Commissioners' Comments/Questions

It's common for these types of ponds to have fencing. Are there fence plans here?

The community strongly opposes a fence, and the 3:1 slope eliminates the need for fencing.

Are problem areas like this one occurring in other parts of the city?

There are pockets, but this is a large impact area.

If the 100 year storm is happening every two to four years, are the facilities being changed to respond to that?

Part of the modeling work and historical data recognizes that the two most recent events have been exceptional. It's hard to forecast future events, but historical evidence can be addressed.

The City's design standard is 25 years.

Could you summarize the public comments from last night's meeting?

The public sees the site as flat and expressed desire for a basketball court and children's play structure. It was explained how the slopes constrained those uses. They want a child-friendly area, which needs to be pursued.

What would make it more kid-friendly?

Creating undulations in the lawn, allowing for "nebulous" areas.

Will the series of rock formations diminish the drainage capacity in any way?

No, but the cut and fill should be maintained.

What are the site's dimensions?

About 300 feet wide, half a city block.

When there's an event, how is the water discharged?

Part of the water comes through a ten feet diameter pipe. More water flows from the surface, especially from Denny and 30th. This pond reportedly filled in 15 minutes. At full capacity there pond is 11 feet deep.

What happens with the trash that flows with storm water?

It's cleaned up afterwards. There is very little silt and sediment.

A flexible choice of materials is being considered. There is 50 feet of underlying peat, so settling is anticipated.

What's the project budget?

Phase One is about \$1.4 to \$1.5 million. The whole project is \$23 to \$24 million.

What is the history of the area?

It was probably a marsh or small pond, connected to the arboretum via a ravine. There is a lot of history on the area. A couple of houses were built here in 1909. It's always had a drainage problem, at the bottom of a steep valley with a 10% slope.

Is there an art component?

Yes, it will be on a separate track, but an artist has not been selected yet.

What is the schedule?

Our goal is to complete pond excavation including landscaping next summer. If the community process to reach agreement on the amenities and landscape treatments becomes delayed, SPU plans to complete the pond excavation next summer as scheduled for the flood protection benefit. The landscaping work would follow as soon as possible, but may be done in 2010.

SPU manages other open space areas, which is an entity that knows how to deal with people using space.

The parks department oversees the maintenance in this area. There is discussion about whether Parks or SPU is more suitable for maintenance.

The erratic rock or land forms could be an amenity for kids, without a formal play structure.

Use a strong focus on a singular idea.

The large cage where the water flows is an engineering focal point. The idea of water flowing out could be pushed, and expressing it through the design is an educational opportunity.

The plans should look larger, showing context and other pieces of the open space system. It will help the community understand that it's part of something bigger.

Encourage the informal structure, which may be more inviting.

Encourage making drawings more understandable to the public, with sections.