

**APPROVED  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**Greg Nickels**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Director, DPD

**Raymond Gastil**  
Planning Director, DPD

**Mary Johnston**  
Chair

**Andrew Barash**

**Julie Bassuk**

**Graham Black**

**Brendan Connolly**

**Lauren Hauck**

**John Hoffman**

**Julie Parrett**

**Dennis Ryan**

**Norie Sato**

**Guillermo Romano**  
Executive Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Tom Iurino**  
Senior Staff

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**September 17, 2009**

Convened 9:30 am  
Adjourned 4:00 pm

**Projects Reviewed**

South Lake Union Urban Design Framework  
Lake Union Park Street Vacation  
Shared Streets  
Rainier Beach Community Center  
Councilmember Jan Drago

**Commissioners**

Mary Johnston, Chair  
Andrew Barash  
Julie Bassuk  
Brendan Connolly  
Lauren Hauck  
John Hoffman  
Julie Parrett  
Dennis Ryan  
Norie Sato

**Excused Commissioners**

Graham Black

**Staff Present**

Guillermo Romano  
Valerie Kinast  
Tom Iurino



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<b>September 17, 2009 Project:</b>	<b>Rainier Beach Community Center</b>
<b>Phase:</b>	Concept Design
<b>Last Reviewed:</b>	N/A
<b>Presenters:</b>	David Graves, Department of Parks and Recreation Stan Lokting, ARC Architects Dave Rutherford, ARC Architects
<b>Attendees:</b>	David Sauvion, Rainier Beach Public Advisory Team (PAT) Emily Wheeler, ARC Jason Huff, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs Michael Shiosaki, Department of Parks and Recreation Paul Curtis, ARC

**Time:** 1 hour 30 minutes

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## **ACTION**

The Design Commission thanks David Graves of the Department of Parks and Recreation, Stan Lokting of ARC Architects, and Dave Rutherford of ARC Architects for their presentation of the design of the Rainier Beach Community Center. The design is currently between the conceptual and schematic phases of development. The Design Commission unanimously approves the conceptual design of the project with the following recommendations:

- Consider what the larger concept or bigger ideas is that will underlie the design. This could be related to culture, a heart, identity, a story of water etc.
- Keep in mind the minimum 50 year lifespan that this building will serve the public when designing and orienting the building and site. Be guided not just by the current context, but also by what the neighborhood could become. One aspect of this might be to consider if there may be a shift toward less use of cars, and if so, if Henderson might become the more logical “front door” or access point to the site. The project should aspire to be an example of excellent, community-oriented design for the immediate context and larger neighborhood.
- Pay special attention to the indoor-outdoor flow of space. Consider how the outdoor spaces are functioning and how they relate to the interior building layout and programming. At the daycare for example, outdoor space could be a dynamic extension of the interior space. The size and scale of the south patio should be evaluated to ensure the area is sufficiently scaled to become a usable, dynamic area that enhances/interacts with interior spaces.
- Consider how urban the project wants to be and let this guide the massing, and programming of the building and open space.
- Reevaluate the central corridor as a space unto itself.
- Involve the artist in the design work as soon as possible and not when much of the design is determined.

- Also involve the landscape architect as soon as possible. This is essential in achieving a meaningful relationship between indoor and outdoor space.
- Consider the feasibility of accessing the multi-use space from the south.
- Evaluate the relationship of the community center and the neighboring school as they share a wall. Explore whether the tensions or connection should be built upon with the design.
- Consider a wider east-west building footprint to maximize solar access. Also consider transparency along Rainier.

## Presentation

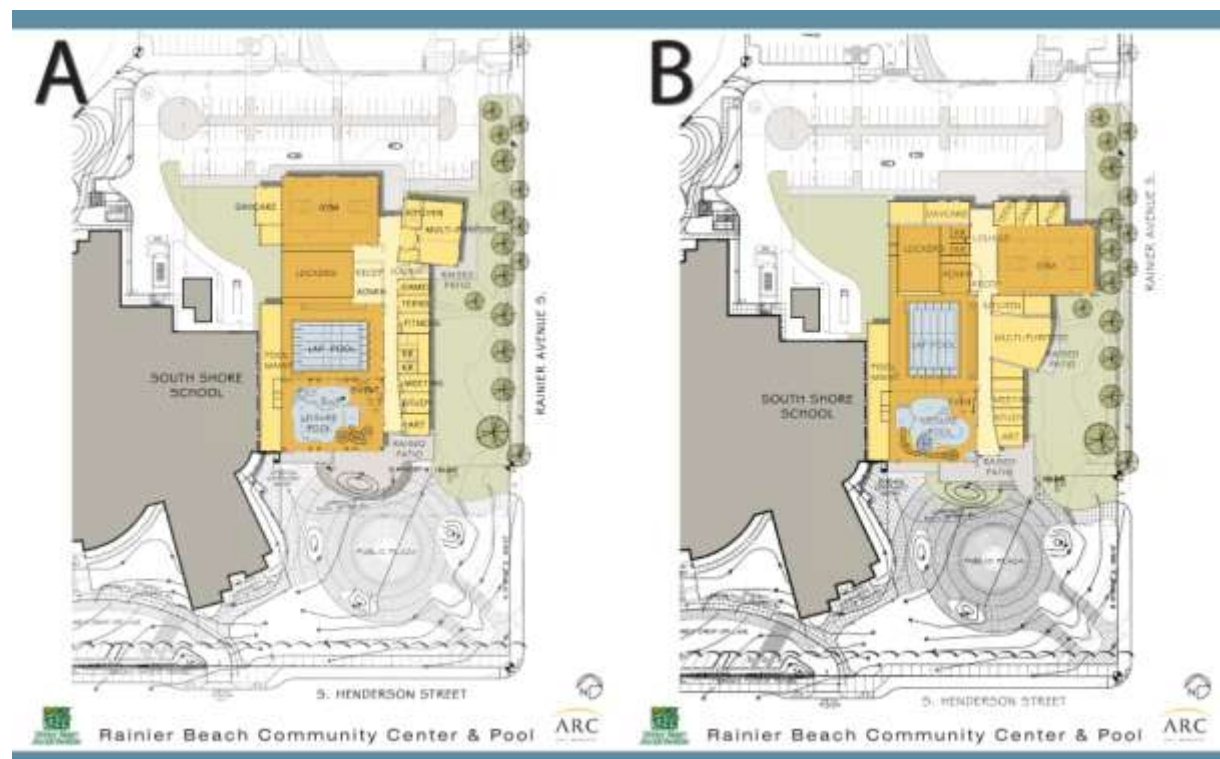
The program is much like other community centers, with the addition of a lap and leisure pool. There is low scale development nearby, including a couple of schools. The existing community center is focused inward. It was built in the early 1970s. Half of it was torn down for a school. The diversity in the community is very broad; it is the most diverse zip code in the US.

Meetings with the community led to the inclusion of more storage for cultural supplies, a larger computer lab, and more privacy in the pool, more barbecues, greater security, and facilities for drill team use.

### Design Issues

- Connections
- Sustainable design
- Public presence
- Security
- Clear organization of uses

Three options were drawn. The first, Option A, is a linear option and the leisure pool and stage animates the plaza. This creates a large lawn and rain gardens along Rainier. The second option, B, makes an L with the gym adjacent to Rainier. In this option, the multipurpose room is not in an ideal location. The third option, C, creates more space to the west which connects to fields behind the center. In this option, both pools face south.



## Commissioners' Questions and Comments

*What's the square footage?*

43,000 sq ft. A more traditional community center is about 20,000.

*Talk about the South Shore School and shared use.*

A loading dock and storage abuts the center. Behind it is a playground.

*What is the use of the open space? It's hemmed in by service and parking lots.*

We plan an outdoor play for a daycare, which will be fenced. A landscape architect was just hired and will explore this more.

*What issues have come up from the diverse community? It's important to consider their concerns in the design process and afterwards to guide how the center will be used.*

The Pacific Islander community has lots of festivals. They desire a close relationship between the kitchen and the gym and the outside. The Vietnamese community's biggest interest was the pool. The teens were interested in cooking, safety and security.

*You need to get your landscape architect involved immediately. It's always a loss is to bring them on after major decisions have been made. When we see this again, bring him along.*

*Why is the pool always at the south end?*

Leisure pools are best when south facing. The gym is located toward the north for natural ventilation and connections to the lot for outdoor use.

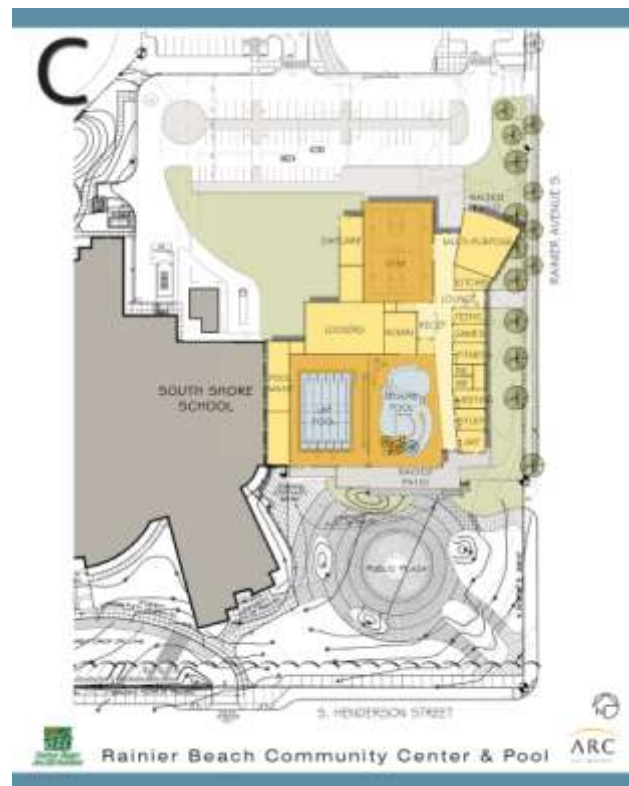
*How do people arrive by foot? What's your front door?*

85% drive large cars. We hope light rail will change that. The door to the north near the parking lot will be used most often, most likely. We like to have the reception area close to this door.

*I'm trying to picture the bulk of the building and treatment. Have you thought about transparency?*

We've started to think about massing. All the low uses would be a benefit to the street, so that you could see the activities inside the building.

*Are there a gender segregated times for swimming? Is there a wall?*



Yes, maybe. There could be a wall around the private terrace which you couldn't see through. We've thought about movable walls, translucent glass.

*What is the status for artist selection? It would be great to allow the artist as much time as possible.*

The call went out this week for artists. One will be on board by January. When the artist arrives, we'll have established basic uses and massing, but not materials.

*I'm intrigued by the Henderson Street function with light rail, and the flow of people to light rail. All the things that could be happening there will be exciting. The indoor-outdoor blur is exciting. I just don't know the security issues you'll confront to make it successful. Henderson may become your main entrance.*

If you drive in from the south, that will also be very visible. We want it to look civic. The entrances on both the north and south, especially, seem weak right now.

*If you open up the corridor through the building to serve more as a place than just a conduit, people will love it.*

*The multipurpose room is important. The link to the plaza should be important.*

That's where we started, but there are service needs to consider.

*Can you load and unload along Rainier?*

There's no parking allowed there right now.

*You could make the building feel more urban and pull the structure closer to Rainier. You're missing an opportunity to present it to the community.*

*I don't have a clear concept between the relationship between the school and community center. The reasons you are joining them together are good, but you need rigor. I'm not seeing the clarity in B and C, but more so in A.*

We agree. We think we could bring the clarity to C that we have in A.

*In A, the lawn seems big. It needs to be an active and dynamic use.*

Yes. We're thinking it is defensible space, like the lawn at Northgate.

*The daycare green space could use berms or non-traditional playground to serve as a buffer and would make it more compelling.*

*The patio's connection to the plaza seems so indeterminate and unresolved. It doesn't feel generous. Anything that we can do to encourage pedestrians and biking would be great. We need to emphasize the Henderson Street entrance for that reason. The outdoor spaces need connection back into the building and programming.*

We don't own the plaza. The school district does. We're negotiating with the school district what the boundaries are with the site.

*The south, the Henderson entrance, should be the front door.*

*What are the concepts behind each of these? That could play a role in informing the design.*

The culture will drive the materials, which has not yet been explored. The response right now has been an urban design and sustainability. We've been thinking about as a foil to the school.

*It's a community center. Where's the heart? What's going to make it beloved? Some of that will help you guide some of the decisions in the process, beyond the pragmatism you have used so far.*

*The response maybe pays too much attention to the school.*

*As with ballfields, do you need to consider orientation of the pool?*

Yes. Spectators don't like to look into glare to watch lap swimming.

*The question is about Rainier and the relationship to it.*

Yes, it's a struggle. The conditions are more suburban right now. Do you want a building at the street? The Northgate community center, which we've seen and is set back from a busy road, feels comfortable.

*I would encourage as much flow possible between indoor and outdoor space. The climate here is very moderate.*

*Consider the significance of water in your design concept.*