

Yesler Terrace Pocket Park

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Shannon Loew, Chair

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Grant Hromas

Martin Regge

John Savo

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883
seattle.gov/dpd

Commissioners Present

Ellen Sollod, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Thaddeus Egging
Grant Hromas
John Savo

Incoming Non-Voting Commissioners

Rachel Gleeson

Commissioners Excused

Shannon Loew, Chair
Brodie Bain
Martin Regge
Ross Tilghman

Project Description

In 2006, Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) began planning for the redevelopment of Yesler Terrace into a new 31-acre master planned community including replacement of low-income housing, market-rate housing, two community centers, 2.5 acres of open space, and other neighborhood improvements. As part of the redevelopment, SHA petitioned to vacate several streets and proposed several public benefits, including three pocket parks. The pocket parks are part of the Green Loop, a connected network of public open spaces included in the redevelopment master plan.

As part of the vacation petition SHA identified the locations of the pocket parks but not their precise configuration, programming, or design. Figure 1 shows the pocket parks identified along 8th Ave, 10th Ave S, and the subject site at E Fir St and 10th Ave. The City Council's vacation approval included a framework requiring that each pocket park be a minimum of 12,000 square feet in area, have a frontage of at least 70 linear feet on a public street, and include active and passive uses. It also required Design Commission review for the pocket parks.

SHA is now ready to proceed with the pocket park located in the block bounded by E Fir St, 10th Ave, E Yesler Way, and Broadway. In addition to the pocket park design, the Commission is considering SHA's request to reconfigure the park as shown in Figure 2.

Meeting Summary

The Commission unanimously approved the pocket park at the concept design phase. As part of its approval, the Commission support SHA's request to reorient the pocket park to extend along the entire north frontage E Fir St. To guide the park design, the Commissioners recommended that the project team further explore opportunities to make stormwater a fundamental part of the design, through both management techniques and expression of how stormwater function occurs on the site. The Commission also requested that the project team bring an artist on board as soon as possible, particularly to influence the design of the seating and discovery play elements.

Recusals and Disclosures

John Savo disclosed that he has worked on projects for the petitioner but is not involved in this project.

May 7, 2015

11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Type

Public Benefit item from Yesler Terrace street vacations

Phase

((Schematic)) Concept
Design

Previous Reviews

none

Presenters

Tom Eanes
Seattle Housing Authority

Scott Rosenstock
HEWITT

Kris Snider
HEWITT

Attendees

Beverly Barnett
SDOT

Pearl Leung
Vulcan

Constanza Marcheselli
Runberg Architecture

Brian Runberg
Runberg Architecture

Val Sporleder
SEIU Local 6

Jing Sun
University of Washington

Mike Woo
Vulcan

Summary of Presentation

Tom Eanes identified the pocket park site and the larger open space system approved with the Yesler Terrace redevelopment, as shown in Figure 1. Mr. Eanes explained that, as part of the street vacation process, the pocket parks were platted in certain locations, but the vacation conditions did not specify their particular configuration, shape, and design.

Scott Rosenstock provided background information about the Yesler Terrace redevelopment and where development is occurring in the neighborhood. Mr. Rosenstock explained how the vacation conditions would be fulfilled for this pocket park, including meeting the requirements for at least 12,000 square feet of area; at least 70 linear feet of frontage on E Fir St; and opportunities for active and passive uses, street furniture, and facilities for children's play.

Kris Snider compared the original park configuration with the proposed reconfiguration, as shown in Figure 2. Figure 3 is a site plan of the ((schematic)) concept design for the pocket park. Mr. Snider described that the proposal includes the creation of curb bulbs along both edges of Broadway and the south edge of E Fir St.

The ((schematic)) concept design proposal included several perspectives of the proposed seating, plazas, community table, play sculpture, and exercise stations. Sections illustrated the relationship among the pocket park, right-of-way, and adjacent residen-

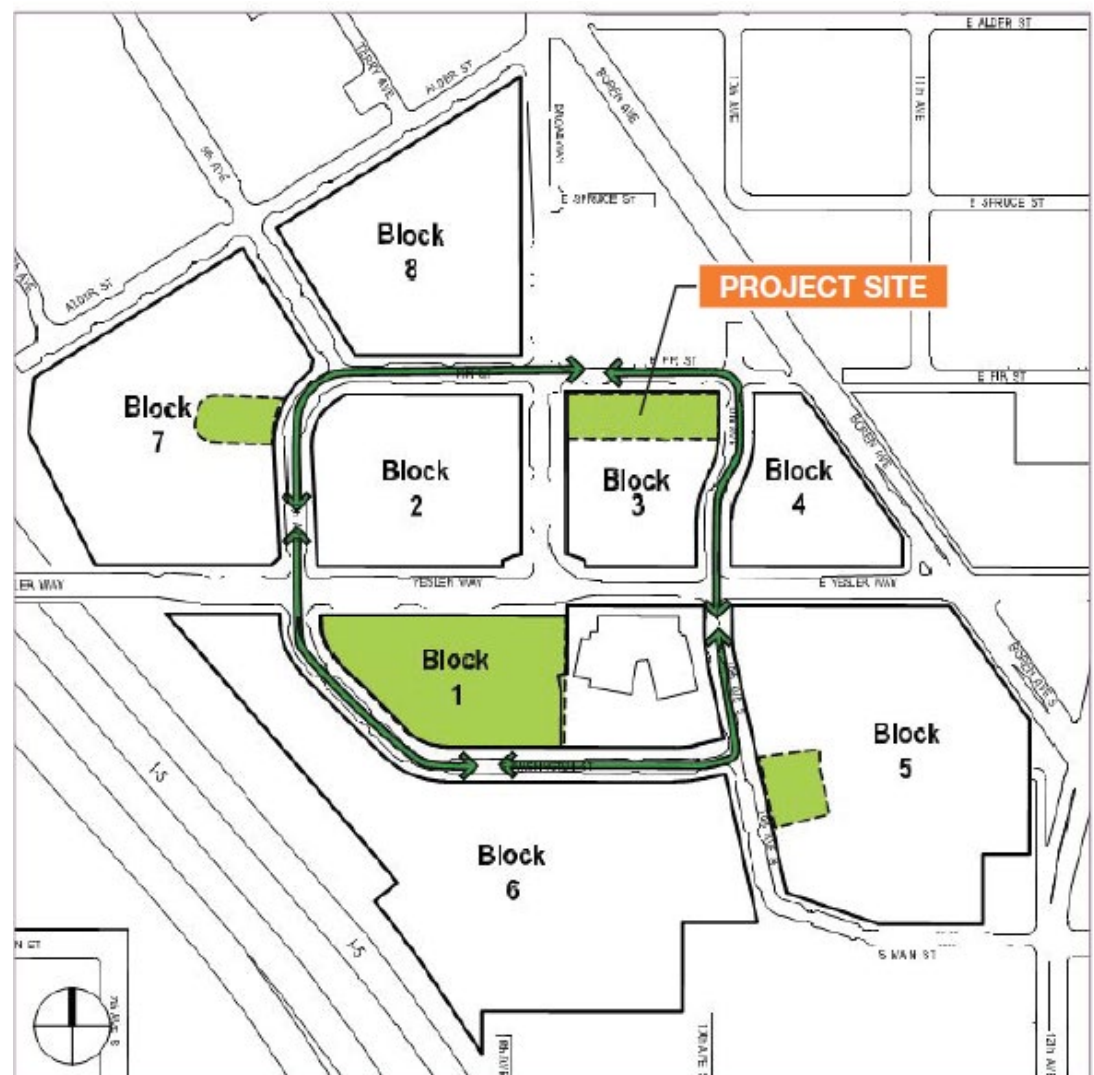


Figure 1. Site plan for the Yesler Terrace redevelopment identifying the locations of the three pocket parks and the central Yesler Park.

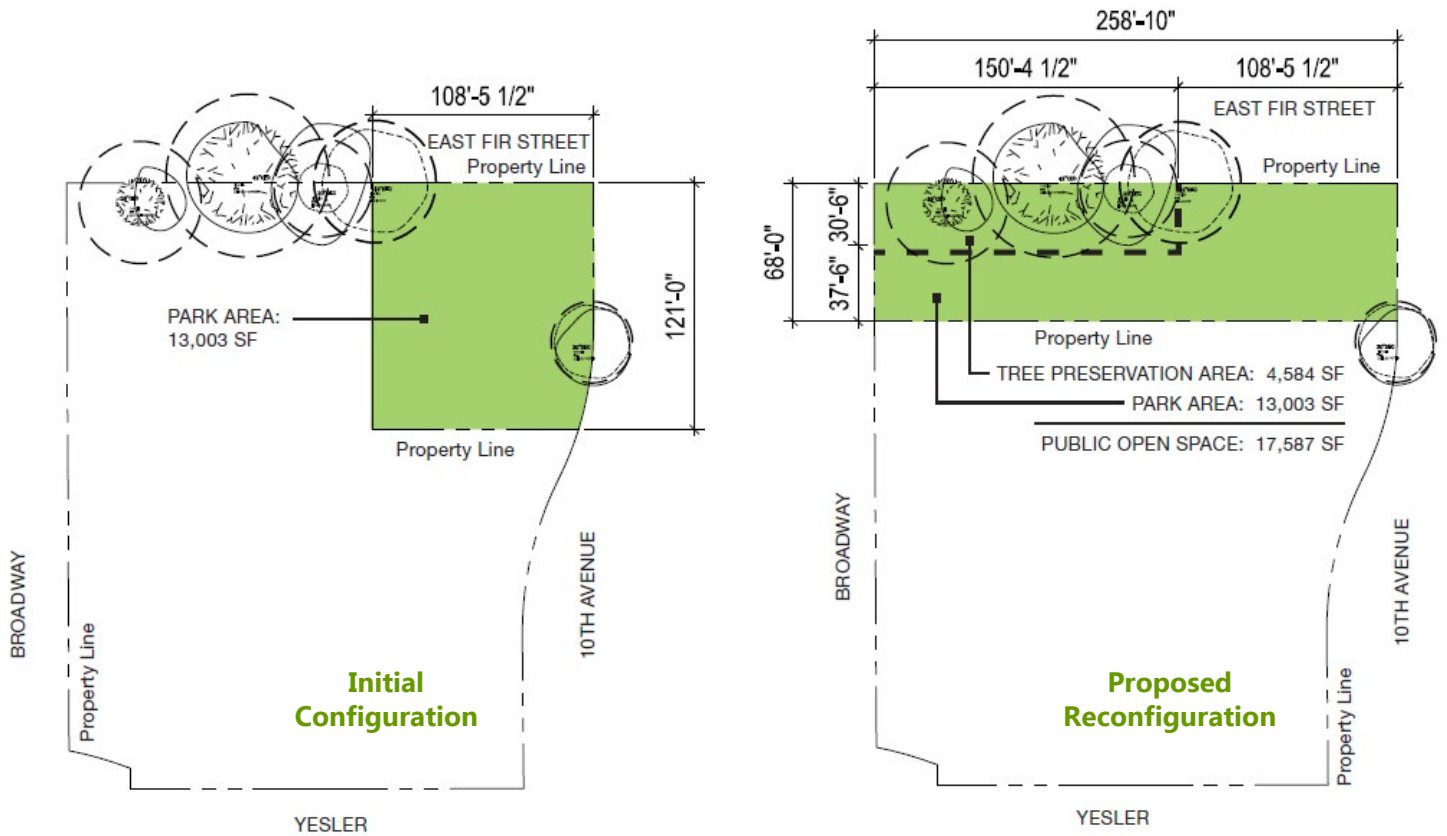


Figure 2. Site plan for the original pocket park configuration at the corner of E Fir St and 10th Ave (left) and the proposed reconfiguration along the entire E Fir St frontage (right).



Figure 3. Site plan identifying key elements of the proposed pocket park design.

tial building. A series of diagrams illustrated anticipated circulation through the park, proposed planting, and proposed lighting. Mr. Snider referred to the project team's early thinking about opportunities for art integration.

Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett provided background on the Yesler Terrace street vacations and the somewhat unusual process for this public benefit item. Ms. Barnett explained that, because SHA did not know which blocks would develop first, the vacation conditions specified only the area and general guidelines for each pocket park, such as requiring that each one be public and not serve only the adjacent building. She also noted that each pocket park can vary in use and that together they are intended to complement the Green Loop and Yesler Park.

Public Comments

none

Summary of Discussion

The Commissioners were supportive of the ((schematic)) concept design for the pocket park. They also supported SHA's request to reconfigure the park because it allows for preservation of existing trees, expanded visibility of the pocket, increased sun exposure, and creation of a frontage on Broadway.

The Commissioners identified several areas for additional exploration, including treatment of stormwater on the site, lighting, opportunities for artwork and integration of an artist into the design team, and the relationship of the pocket park to the Green Loop and Yesler Park. Given its ongoing review of Yesler Park, the Commission was eager to understand how this first pocket park relates to or complements the central neighborhood park. The Commissioners agreed that each pocket park should reflect its surrounding context and offer distinct programming opportunities.



Figure 4. Sketch of the pocket park schematic design. The Commission recommended the project team continue to refine the proposed raised stage outlined above.

The Commissioners expressed concern about a few project elements. Some Commissioners questioned the intended programmatic use of the raised stage shown in Figure 4 for children's plays. They also recommended that the design team continue to study how the paving strategy reinforces site circulation and avoids becoming a patchwork of disparate treatments.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the project team for presenting the ((schematic)) concept design of the first Yesler Terrace pocket park. While the general location and required elements of the pocket parks were identified in the conditions of the Yesler Terrace street vacations, the Commission reviewed the specific design of the pocket park as a public benefit item.

The Commission appreciated that the revised configuration preserves a grove of trees and recognized that it will increase opportunities for circulation through and around the park and strengthen the network of green spaces in the neighborhood. The Commission also appreciated the effort to incorporate both passive and active uses, including play elements that emphasize discovery rather than playground equipment.

Furthermore, the Commission supported the decision to reorient the park from its original configuration as a 13,000-square-foot open space in the northeast corner of the block to its proposed configuration as a 17,000-square-foot open space along the entire north edge of the block, as shown in Figure 2.

With a **vote of 5 to 0**, the Commission approved the ((schematic)) concept design of the first Yesler Terrace pocket park at the north edge of the block bounded by E Fir St, Broadway, Yesler Way, and 10th Ave. The Commission offered the following recommendations to guide the park design going forward:

1. Continue to explore opportunities in the park design to use recycled or salvaged materials that reference the history of Yesler Terrace, as currently proposed for the seating walls.
2. Explore opportunities to manage and express stormwater in the park, including through permeable paving as soil conditions allow and by utilizing the grade change from northwest to southeast through the site.
3. Continue to refine how the paving treatment complements and reinforces circulation through the site without being a patchwork of distinct, unrelated materials.
4. Integrate an artist into the design effort as soon as possible, especially given the opportunities in the design of the discovery play and seating elements.
5. Consider pulling back the landscaped area shown in Figure 5 to the south in order to create a more unobstructed visual and physical connection into the pocket park from the corner of E Fir St and Broadway.

The Design Commission expects to review the pocket park design again at the ((design development)) schematic design phase.



Figure 5. The Commission suggested that the landscaped area shown above be shortened so that pedestrians have a clearer path into the pocket park.

* At the meeting held on May 7, 2015, the SDC reviewed the concept design phase for Yesler Terrace Pocket Park, not schematic phase. Updates to this document reflect the changes made to correct the error.