

Board of Park Commissioners  
Meeting Minutes  
June 9, 2005

***Board of Park Commissioners:***

Present: Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Angela Belbeck  
Terry Holme  
Jack Collins  
Debbie Jackson  
Amit Ranade

Temporary

Leave: Joanna Grist

***Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:***

Ken Bounds, Superintendent  
B.J. Brooks, Deputy Superintendent  
Mariella Cacadac, Acting Coordinator

Commission Chair Kate Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Commissioner Pflaumer noted that it was recommended approval of the May 26 minutes be postponed until the June 23 meeting as all members had not had a chance to review. **Commissioner Holme moved and Commissioner Ranade seconded the agenda be approved. The vote was taken and the motion was passed. Commissioner Collins moved and Commissioner Ranade seconded that the May 12, 2005, minutes be approved. The vote was taken and the motion passed.**

**Superintendent's Report**

Colman Park: Parks held a June 6 groundbreaking at Colman Park that went very well and had a good turnout. There was a little rain and a little sunshine — good Seattle weather.

Seward Park Vegetation Plan: A June 8 meeting was held on the Seward Park Vegetation Plan, and there was an article in today's paper. There was a mix-up on the meeting notice, so an additional meeting is scheduled for June 21.

Woodland Park Zoo Garage: Last night there was a public hearing on the design/build option for the parking garage at Woodland Park Zoo, with 200–250 people in attendance. Most objected to the garage, the event center, the carousel, and the new office building. Those were the long-range plans elements that were reviewed and approved last year. There were only a few comments about the design, but there was concern about the design getting lost and coming through Parks and the impact it will have on Phinney Avenue. Parks will keep the Commissioners posted. Commissioner Holme asked if the Board will receive another presentation on the garage and Superintendent Bounds answered yes, at some point in time.

Magnuson Park: Parks staff sent out a request for a letter of intent on the vacant Magnuson Park buildings and have received a number of responses. Staff will review the responses and narrow the list, and will keep the Commissioners posted.

Freeway Park Renovations: Canyon Fountain is clean and up and running. Parks staff met with members of the Freeway Park Neighborhood Association (FPNA) to review and discuss proposed 2005 improvements: (1) removal of up to 12 trees to improve visual access into and through Freeway Park and to allow for more sunlight for improved

health of under story plantings; and (2) planning for park lighting and well-designed permanent signage. Lighting and signage were FPNA's highest 2005 priorities.

Magnuson Park: Parks is experiencing increasing interest in the indoor Recreation Center opportunities at Magnuson Park. This comes in response to a mailing last week of 300 brochures to potentially-interested businesses around the region and an ad in the Puget Sound Business Journal.

National Aquatics Week: Staff members have confirmed 75 events and discount programs for National Aquatic Week, which runs from July 17 through 23. In partnership with the National Recreation and Parks Association, a wide range of activities and events will be offered at pools, beaches, wading pools, and small craft facilities.

Downtown Parks: Staff planted 205 planter boxes with spring annuals in seven downtown parks: Westlake Park, Tilikum Place, Victor Steinbrueck Park, Waterfront Park, Pioneer Square Park, Occidental Square Park, and Freeway Park. 62 hanging baskets were installed in key downtown locations, and the Department is receiving compliments on how good the flower baskets and planter boxes look. Commissioner Collins asked if the baskets and planters are maintained by the Department and the Superintendent responded yes.

Automated Tee Times for Golf: The new automated tee time reservation system went "live" the last week of May with resounding success. Users can now book, check on, or change tee times 24 hours a day by touch-tone phone.

ARC Temporarily Fills Budget Gaps to Support Parks' Programming: The Associated Recreation Council (ARC) voted to make a one-time expenditure of \$49,746 to fund, for this year only, the six summer playground sites cut in last year's biennial budget. ARC hopes that the City will be able to fund these programs in 2006 or obtain grant funding, as ongoing funding from ARC is not likely. ARC also made a two-year commitment to supplement professional and curriculum development for Community Learning Centers in support of the New Families and Education Levy in the amount of \$40,000 each year. Individual Advisory Councils also joined Parks to buy first aid jump bags for the Specialized and Senior Adult Program vans.

Starbucks Grants: Parks received two Starbucks Neighborhood Partnership Grants. The first, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Parks, and Groundswell Northwest, is \$15,000 to buy plants and coordinate volunteer plantings of "The Seattle Garden Club Landscapes" in the Historic Colonnade along the Fremont Canal near the Ballard Locks. The other went to Friends of Fremont Peak Park to advance its efforts to get this new viewpoint park built. The grants have been expanded to Pierce and Snohomish Counties.

2005 Interagency Coordinating Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) Grants: IAC has notified Parks that funding is approved for four of the five projects applied for: Myrtle Edwards Park/Olympic Sculpture Park Expansion, \$300,000; Ercolini Park Acquisition, \$245,000; South Lake Union Park Development, \$190,042; and Myrtle Edwards Beach Restoration, \$500,000. Lower Woodland Skate Park did not receive funding, but is the first alternate should additional funds become available.

Aquarium Society (SEAS) Annual Fundraiser: SEAS annual fundraiser in support of the Seattle Aquarium, SPLASH! 2005, was a resounding success and netted more than projected. The 597 in attendance at the gala surpassed the set goal as well. A special portion of the auction raised \$119,000 for educational programs for those children who could not ordinarily afford an Aquarium field trip, which surpassed last year's high of \$91,000. A total of over over \$700,000 was raised, with \$500,000 of that netted.

Parks Diversity Award: Parks and Recreation has been selected by the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) as a 2005 Diversity Champion in honor of its outstanding diversity work on the Race and Social Justice Initiative. Our City will be formally recognized at a luncheon on June 22 during the AWC's Annual Convention in Kennewick, Washington. The judges' notes stated, "The Parks Department is using a team of diverse employees to ensure the quality and accessibility of services to the diverse community and is a great step to making government accountable

and accessible to diverse citizens of the community. This effort is a model for other City and County departments across our great State”.

New Youth Baseball Program in South Park: South Park's Teen Development Leader started a baseball program this year for South Park youth. Because it was a brand new program there wasn't much usable equipment, so the teens have been out selling candy and raising money for league fees, uniforms, and gear. Staff hit the jack-pot when they entered several competitions and were selected to receive almost \$3,000 in new equipment, including a full-size batting cage, pitching machine, and a \$1,000 shopping spree at Athletic Supply.

Family and Education Levy: The City Council approved the funding for the new Family and Education Levy (FEL) Program. Parks and the Office for Education are very close to signing a Memorandum of Agreement. Under this agreement, Parks will operate the Community Learning Centers (CLC) at Denny, Mercer, and McClure Middle Schools. Additionally, Parks will partner with the YMCA and Madison Middle School in developing Madison's CLC program. Parks will expand its role under the new levy and become the After School Activities service provider for Eckstein and Whitman Middle Schools, as well as in the K-8 schools—African American Academy, Alternative #1, Blaine, Madrona, Pathfinder, Salmon Bay, TOPS, and Summit K-12. Both the CLC and After School Activities will better align their programs with the school day and academic achievement. Parks has entered a partnership with the Associated Recreation Council, which will support the creation of curriculum alignment, a professional development plan, resource development, and formative evaluation data.

### **Upcoming Events**

<u>Lake People (Xacua'bs) Park:</u>	A dedication is scheduled for June 10, at 6:00 pm..
<u>Longfellow Creek Legacy Trail:</u>	A dedication is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21, at 6:30 p.m.
<u>Seward Park Vegetation Plan:</u>	A public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 21
<u>West Seattle Stadium:</u>	A public meeting is scheduled at West Seattle Golf Course, Tuesday, June 21
<u>Pritchard Reopening Celebration:</u>	A re-opening celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 25
<u>Gas Works Park Improvements:</u>	A dedication is scheduled for Wednesday, June 29, 6:00-7:00 p.m.
<u>Nantes Park:</u>	A dedication is scheduled for Saturday, July 9, at 10 a.m.
<u>Parks Employee Picnic:</u>	The employee picnic will be on Thursday, August 25, at Magnuson Park

Superintendent Bounds also provided the Commissioners with the summer class schedule for Langston Hughes Performing Arts Center.

### **Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience**

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Two people signed up to testify.

Matthew Lee Johnston: Mr. Johnston is a member of the Puget Sound Skate Boarding Association (PSSA) and co-chair of the Department's Skateboard Park Advisory Committee (SPAC). SPAC sent recommendations about the Lower Woodland skatepark siting and the much-talked-about process developed for site review for future skateparks. The Committee is not only interested in receiving feedback on the recommendation, but also on the process that was undertaken to make it. If the Board needs any more information, Mr. Johnston is available to answer questions. There is an urgent need for skateboard parks, and skaters are not interested in prolonging the process. Please let the community know if there are ways to speed up the process.

SPAC is interested in the design-build process for the Woodland Park Zoo parking garage, mentioned earlier by the Superintendent. SPAC would very much like to do design build-projects for skateparks. Also, SPAC is looking at West Seattle for skatepark sites. A tour of sites will take place this weekend and members will be visiting community

councils to network and talk to citizens. SPAC members are involved with Langston Hughes and its summer program of skateboarding and break dancing performances. SPAC members are helping participants get resources and build ramps — which helps make Seattle Parks look really great. He invited the Board to send a representative to SPAC meetings.

Scott Shinn: Mr. Shinn is also a member of the Department’s Skateboard Park Advisory Committee (SPAC). SPAC wanted to report back to the Board on the results of some alternative site analysis conducted for the Lower Woodland skatepark. He understands that a SPAC subcommittee will do community outreach, as well as an evaluation of alternative sites. It is important to build the skatepark quickly. Mr. Shinn stated that, for Lower Woodland, Parks is not following the process that it normally follows for other kinds of park improvements — and he believes the cart should not come before the horse. Parks should find out what the community thinks and get feedback. SPAC did get community feedback, has received some good suggestions, and listed some alternative sites. He thanked the Board members for their time and asked them to consider the communication received over the last four months.

Commissioner Pflaumer raised a question about the May 23 letter the Commissioners received from SPAC regarding Lower Woodland skatepark. She noted that the second page reads that “safety concerns lead us to unanimously favor the Aurora triangle over the Chip site by a small margin.” Commissioner Pflaumer asked how an issue can be “favored unanimously by a small margin”. Mr. Johnston answered that SPAC members indicated a numerical preference, with 60% in favor of the Aurora triangle site and 40% for the chip site. While everyone voted in favor of the triangle, the percentages for each were not overwhelmingly for the triangle, but were split more evenly between the two sites. Commissioner Collins asked how many people attended the meeting and Mr. Johnston replied that there were approximately ten voting SPAC members and one non-voting member, who lives in Renton.

## **Briefing: Waterfront Trolley Update**

Kevin Stoops, Seattle Parks’ Manager of Major Projects and Planning, presented an update briefing on a proposal to relocate the Waterfront Trolley. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing; both are included in these minutes.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

The Board of Park Commissioners will be briefed on the proposed extension of the Waterfront Streetcar through Myrtle Edwards Park to a new maintenance barn and station near the Port of Seattle Pier 86 grain terminal and the new Amgen campus. No action is requested from the Board at this time.

#### **Project Description**

Seattle’s Waterfront Streetcar was developed in the 1980’s when antique streetcars were purchased from Melbourne, Australia and the City reached agreement to reuse Union Pacific Railroad tracks to operate the streetcars along the central waterfront. A maintenance barn for the streetcars was built at the northern end of the streetcar route at Broad Street in the Alaskan Way street right of way just northerly of Pier 70. The streetcar originally ended at the south end of the waterfront but later was extended to its present southern terminus at 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and South Jackson. Ridership on the streetcar is approximately 400,000 people per year, with peak use in the summer months. The streetcar is operated by King County as part of the Metro transit system.

The development of the new Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park will involve two upland parcels as well as the Alaskan Way street right of way northerly of Broad Street where the streetcar barn is situated. The sculpture park design does not accommodate the streetcar barn, which must be relocated. Earlier this year the Port of Seattle offered land at the Pier 86 grain terminal for a new streetcar maintenance barn. This will involve a one mile extension of the streetcar line, through Myrtle Edwards and Elliott Bay Parks to reach this new barn. The extension offers the potential for new streetcar stations at West Thomas Street at a new overpass, and at the new Amgen campus, which is just northerly of Pier 86 and just southerly of the Magnolia Bridge.

Some type of cost sharing between the Port, King County, and the City may be necessary to enable the extension and new barn development.

**Public Involvement**

There have been no public meetings on the potential streetcar extension to date. News stories earlier this spring about the upcoming development of the Olympic Sculpture Park and the potential demise of the streetcar led to a voicing of public sentiment to keep the streetcar operating.

**Issues**

The extension of the streetcar and the development of the new maintenance barn will necessitate changes to Myrtle Edwards Park, owned and operated by Seattle Parks and Recreation, and the adjacent Elliott Bay Park, owned and operated by the Port of Seattle. Both parks feature open lawns and plantings, and separate pedestrian and bicycle paths parallel to the northern waterfront of Elliott Bay. The bikeway is a popular commuter route to downtown, and the parks are a popular day-time jogging destination for downtown office workers. The parks are the site of the annual “Fourth of Jul-Ivars” celebration on Independence Day as well as other special events.

While the new Olympic Sculpture Park effectively will extend the green of Myrtle Edwards Park southerly to Broad Street, the proposed streetcar extension will mean a loss of green space between the park’s bikeway and the fence that separates the park from the main railroad lines that serve the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway and the Union Pacific Railroad. This is a distance of about 1800 lineal feet or about 25,000 square feet of parkland, along with attendant plantings and the parks’ irrigation main. It appears that the park’s recently re-built bikeway will need to be shifted westerly as well to accommodate the streetcar alignment, necessitating other irrigation changes and relocation of storm drainage facilities.

The parkland at Myrtle Edwards Park that would be converted to streetcar alignment is actually part of the undeveloped Alaskan Street right of way and, technically, is not subject to Ordinance 118477 that adopted Initiative 42 to protect parkland, requiring replacement for any displaced park use. It should be noted, however, that there may be a gain of parkland at the Port’s Elliott Bay Park between their bikeway and a relocated fence alignment that could somewhat offset the loss at Myrtle Edwards Park.

The City’s shoreline code classifies Myrtle Edwards Park as Conservancy Management, where shoreline recreation is the permitted use, along with several others (existing yacht and beach clubs, aquaculture, etc). Some form of exception may be needed to permit the streetcar extension.

No decisions have been made on the fate of the streetcar. Any extension and new maintenance barn will require substantial capital funding.

**Staff Recommendation**

None at this time.

*Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers*

Mr. Stoops introduced himself and presented the Waterfront Streetcar briefing. The Seattle Art Museum will break ground for the construction of the Olympic Sculpture Park, which will displace the existing streetcar maintenance barn. The streetcar was brought to Seattle in the late 1980’s when the City brought some antique streetcars from Australia to Seattle. When it was announced earlier this spring that the streetcar barn would be displaced and that the streetcar may potentially be shut down, the Port Commission offered land at the Port of Seattle grain terminal site to house the maintenance barn. Under this offer, the Port would provide land for the barn, the barn could be rebuilt, the track could be extended and the streetcar could stay in business.

The extension running up to the grain terminal will reroute the trolley through the City’s Myrtle Edwards Park and the Port of Seattle’s Elliot Bay Park, with a new terminus at the bridge built by Amgen. There is the potential that a station

could be located midway along the line at Thomas Street where there will be a future overpass to connect with Queen Anne. Mr. Stoops showed images of what the new route might look like when built. He showed where the existing streetcar runs and where the extension would be located in Myrtle Edwards and Elliott Bay Park. The extended line will basically run between the existing bikeway and the railroad tracks on the east margin of the Park. There will be a narrow pinch point where the tracks enter the park — an already narrow area will become narrower. Bridges will be built as part of the Seattle Art Museum project.

The City has not taken any position on the streetcar extension at this time. One issue is that the green grass strip in Myrtle Edward Park will be eliminated in some areas. Right now the distance between the bikeway and the existing fence line is 10 to 15 feet. The streetcar alignment may need a little more room depending on safety standards and clearance requirements. This would mean that several hundred trees and shrubs would be eliminated by development of the new line. The irrigation main for the park would need to be relocated. The bikeway will remain exactly as it is. If more clearance is needed for safety purposes, the bikeway would need to shift westerly and the storm drain would need to be reconfigured in the area. The worst case is in the vicinity of the King County Metro regulator station, located in the brick building. Some relocation of facilities may be necessary. If the elected officials for Seattle, King County and the Port of Seattle all agreed to the extension of the line, the fastest it could be built would be 1-1/2 years.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked what needs to be rebuilt. Mr. Stoop stated he could not fully answer this question, as there is an underground junction with three different sewer lines.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked if there were any repercussions to the seawall and Mr. Stoops answered probably not. A key question is the cost sharing between the three jurisdictions (Seattle, King County and the Port of Seattle). The issue is that in the bikeway area just north of the existing parking lot (in the green margin between the bikeway and the fence line), which is about 25,000 square feet of parkland, will go away.

Commissioner Collins commented that from Parks' perspective, it bears the cost of the project but does not reap the benefits and asked what are the benefits. Mr. Stoops answered that, from the broadest perspective, extending the streetcar provides a degree of accessibility that isn't there now. It will allow people on Queen Anne to more easily enjoy places along the waterfront. Superintendent Bounds mentioned that one benefit is that currently there is a corridor with little activity. There is a large fence in the corridor. On its east side, is railroad track and on the west side is Elliot Bay. Having the streetcar go through the park would provide eyes on the park and more activity in the area. Mt. Stoops noted that overhead poles that are part of the trolley system could provide overhead security lighting for the park.

Commissioner Collins asked where the money is coming from for the City's contribution, while the benefit is so general or non-department specific. It looks to him like Parks is taking a hit on this project. Superintendent Bounds answered that Parks would lose green space, mostly between the bikeway and the fence, and most of it shrubbery. Parks may gain some green space from the Port. Mr. Stoops commented that the City, County and Port will pay for the work — not specifically Park funds.

Commissioner Belbeck asked about the new location for the barn. Mr. Stoops commented that the barn provides a location to bring the cars in at night, and to provide a place for streetcar repair. The barn has to be along the track, and is currently located on the northern terminal. The barn will need to be moved, consequently, the track must be extended. This also means the trolley line would have to be extended from Pioneer Square to the grain terminal area.

Commissioner Collins asked if there is any discussion of linking the streetcar to the Seattle Center. Mr. Stoops said it was not on the table at this time. He noted that the antique streetcars in use are not similar to the ones in Portland. In the future, it is likely that the antique cars will be used on Sunday excursions along the waterfront, and would not be part of a streetcar transit system. The Superintendent added that these cars cannot climb the hill at Wall Street.

Commissioner Holme asked whether Parks would lose any parking spaces at the barn. Mr. Stoops answered that all of the parking spaces in the area of the existing barn will be gone when the Olympic Sculpture Park is built.

The Board thanked Mr. Stoops for the briefing.

### **Update Briefing: Pier 62/63 Feasibility Analysis**

Mr. Stoops next gave an update briefing to the Commissioners on Pier 62/63. Assisting with the briefing was Stephanie Lakey from MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design. The Board received both a written and verbal briefing, with both included in these minutes.

#### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

The Board of Parks Commissioners will be briefed on the progress of the Pier 62-63 Piling Replacement and Waterfront Park Planning Study at the June 9, 2005 meeting. The Board was previously briefed on the scope of work for this planning effort at the April 14 meeting earlier this spring.

#### **Project Description and Background**

In 2004 Mayor Greg Nickels proposed undertaking a Pier 62/63 Piling Replacement project, beginning in 2005, in his Proposed 2005-2010 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The entire piling system supporting the piers, which has been the home of the *Summer Nights on the Pier* concert series since 1991 and other major public events, has deteriorated and public use has been restricted. Subsequently, the City Council approved \$500,000 in funding from the Cumulative Reserve Subfund in the 2005 Budget for planning and preliminary design of the Pier 62/63 project. The 2005-2010 CIP anticipates funding the pier replacement phase, expected to cost \$12-14 million, with Councilmanic debt issued in 2006. In addition, the Council adopted a Statement of Legislative Intent (SLI) requesting “that the Department present alternative design concepts for a renovated Pier 62/63 open space prior to proceeding with the project.”

The Mayor has directed Seattle Parks and Recreation to work with the Department of Planning and Development (DPD) in order to coordinate planning for the pier replacement with Central Waterfront planning work already under way. This expanded planning process, to be funded with the appropriated Pier 62/63 project budget, now includes the public park spaces between Pier 57 and the Port’s Bell Harbor marina at Pier 64, and the potential upland open space that will be created atop the SR-99 Alaskan Way Tunnel from the vicinity of the Seattle Aquarium to the Pike Place Market.

Seattle Parks and Recreation has retained the architectural and urban design firm of MAKERS, supported by several sub-consultants, to undertake this study. To date, Parks staff and the design team have assembled background information, participated in three workshops held by the Seattle Design Commission on the Department of Planning and Development’s Waterfront Concept Plan, and begun to define a series of alternative concepts. Included are short term and long term revisions to Waterfront Park, alternatives for redevelopment of Piers 62-63 (including a no build scheme), and alternative strategies for a new open space that will link the waterfront and the Pike Place Market. Possibilities for marine habitat enhancement will be considered as well.

#### **Public Involvement**

The planning process is largely built upon the Department of Planning and Development’s work over the past two years, including an intense charette process in early 2004 that involved over thirty teams of interested citizens and a number of members of the Seattle design community. As noted above, the planning process is dovetailed with the Department of Planning and Development’s Waterfront Concept Plan effort, which has involved three workshops with the Seattle Design Commission, and a separate advisory group that will meet for the first time on June 10.

#### **Issues**

In the long run, the plan for the expansion of the Seattle Aquarium involves removal of the Waterfront Park to allow for the new over water structure that will be added outside of Pier 59. Public park uses will be shifted to the Piers 62-

63 site. In the near term, there are use issues that need to be addressed at Waterfront Park to improve visibility, safety and recreational uses. In the long term, there is the possibility of improving marine habitat at this location.

The disposition of the site of Piers 62-63 involves issues relative to special uses (i.e., concerts), casual recreational use, and habitat protection and enhancement. Options under consideration for replacement of the Piers involve standing any new structure off shore of the seawall so as to enhance the nearshore marine corridor along the seawall. Replacement could involve simply re-creating the large pier platform that could support temporary structures as occurs at present, or could involve provision of permanent facilities. The possibility of not rebuilding Piers 62-63 is also under consideration, and would allow for maximization of habitat enhancement at the site.

Ideas for a new park atop the SR-99 lid to the vicinity of the Pike Place Market at Victor Steinbrueck Park involve possible changes to that existing park and focus attention on redevelopment of the Market's PC-1 site that has been vacant for a number of years. This site is the primary location where appropriate adjacent development could provide for activation of the new park space. The nature of the park space is at issue as well-it could be a verdant greensward or could be a lively extension of the market.

### **Budget**

As noted above, \$500,000 has been appropriated for planning and design work on Pier 62/63. Approximately \$200,000 is devoted to the current planning study and the balance to the schematic phase design for Pier 62/63 replacement, once the plan is completed. Other funding, such as the Councilmanic bonds noted above, could provide for the final design and construction of the Pier 62/63 project. This and the other work, such as short term improvements to Waterfront Park, nearshore habitat enhancement, and the future park development atop SR 99, are unfunded. Certain portions of this work, however, ultimately may be accomplished as part of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall project.

### **Schedule**

The current study will be completed this summer, with preliminary presentations to the City Council in late June and final presentations in August per their SLI that asks for alternative concepts for Pier 62/63. The study recommendations will be incorporated into the Department of Planning and Design's Waterfront Concept plan that will be presented to the City Council this fall.

If the plan is approved, design work would proceed this fall into schematic phase. If funding is approved, design could proceed into design development and permit application in early 2006 and construction documents later that year. Assuming permits are issued and favorable bids are received, the project conceivably could be under construction in mid-2007 and completed by mid-2008. In-water construction work will be limited by the fish window that precludes work from February 15 to July 15 each year.

### **Staff Recommendation**

None at this time.

### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers***

Mr. Stoops stated that earlier this spring the Board was presented with the plans for Piers 62/63 and the waterfront planning study. At that time he discussed the study area around the Seattle Aquarium, Piers 62/63, and a future lid to be placed on top of SR99 at Victor Steinbrueck Park. Parks hired the design firm MAKERS Architecture and Urban Design to assist with this planning effort. The Department has participated in three workshops with the Seattle Design Commission and is now working with other City staff to look at the possibility of recreating Piers 62/63, not as an isolated project, but also in the context of future redevelopment of the Seattle Aquarium. Parks is looking at designing the open space on the lid, what kind of open space it will be, and linking the Pike Place Market with Piers 62/63. The project is moving very quickly, with meetings and workshops being held, including a study group called Waterfront Partners. There is a subcommittee meeting at the end of June, a briefing before the Seattle City Council at the end of June, and the study recommendation will be presented to the City Council in early August. This will put the design at a "go" or "no go" decision regarding Piers 62/62. There is funding not only for the study, but also for the design.



Commissioner Pflaumer asked what would constitute be a “no go” option. Mr. Stoops’ response was that a no go decision would be to not invest in the redevelopment of Piers 62/63. Commissioner Pflaumer asked what would then happen with the piers. Mr. Stoops replied that he doesn’t yet know the answer to that question. In the short term, the piers might just remain as is. Parks has not yet figured out the details and all the options.

Mr. Stoops next introduced Ms. Lakey. She described the models and noted that her firm has been working collaboratively with a number of people from the City. The Makers team includes an architect, landscape architects, urban designers, and a biologist. The model is a draft concept plan for the entire waterfront, and includes public spaces, Piers 62/63, Waterfront Park, and the lid over SR99. The goal is to maintain the connection up and down the waterfront.

Ms. Lakey reviewed a model of the waterfront and described its features. The connections along the waterfront are very important, as both visual and physical connections. The view from Victor Steinbrueck Park overlooking the waterfront is critical. The view needs to be considered from the top of condominiums across the water and the view from the water over the new lid.

The physical connection from the Pike Place Market is very important. The downward slope is an ADA-accessible slope. The challenging area is the triangle which drops 35 feet; Makers is looking at options for this challenging slope. The connection from the upland to the ferry terminal is also a critical area. One issue with the replacement of the viaduct is the potential for a 10-foot hump/bump on Alaskan Way in front of the Aquarium. The consultants are looking at different options to remedy this situation. Superintendent Bounds added that Seattle Department of Transportation is looking at ways to reduce the bump and may have it reduced to two feet.

The consultants have begun the analysis and development of opportunities. Regarding Waterfront Park, there are short- and long-term issues to address, as well as critical structural issues and safety issues. The project will devise a plan to address the short- and long-term issues and incorporate into the overall plan for the waterfront. This could include enhancement of the seawall if the area is identified as a prime enhancement area. There are also educational opportunities which will be coordinated with the Seattle Aquarium.

The Piers 62/63 options being considered include relocating the pier — the piers do not have to be replaced as is. The 77,000 feet of existing over-water coverage could go anywhere from its existing location to about 100 feet from the Aquarium expansion area. Options being considered include relocating, reconfiguring, or removing the piers. Whatever is decided, Ms. Lakey noted the desire to not to lose the over-water coverage. If the pier is removed there may be another over-water feature added, possibly connecting to the Aquarium.

Ms. Lakey identified potential habitat enhancement areas. For the physical connection, the plan considers bridges, escalators, and elevators. For the lid area, the plan considers commercial retail development on one side, so that views are maintained, and a potential green space. There is a great potential to extend Victor Steinbrueck Park out over the lid.

Superintendent Bounds remarked that Parks is looking at the entire context and recognizing that the proposed Viaduct tunnel issue is bigger, much more complicated, and costs much more money. Commissioner Pflaumer asked when the recommendation on Piers 62/63 will be made. Deputy Superintendent Brooks stated that the issue will be brought back to the Board at its June 23 meeting, in more detail. At that time the Board can begin eliminating some of the options.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked what happens during the viaduct construction period. The Superintendent responded that it depends on the strategy for replacement of the viaduct. One option being considered is to completely close the viaduct during the construction, which would allow the project to be completed faster. Another option is to keep the viaduct partially open, which would take longer to complete. Either option will greatly impact traffic.

In response to a question from Commissioner Holme, Seattle Aquarium Director John Braden remarked that the waterfront planning has taken into account the long-term expansion needs of the Aquarium. His concern is how the spaces work together, not a need for more space. Direct water access, which is one of the options being considered, is appealing and the Aquarium would consider providing staff for outdoor education.

The Board thanked Mr. Stoops and Ms. Lakey for the briefing.

## **Briefing: Major Maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects**

### *Written Briefing*

The Commissioners received a 10-page briefing paper on Major Maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects. This document is reflected in the minutes as Attachment A.

### *Verbal Briefing/Board Questions & Answers*

Mr. Stoops and Kathleen Conner, Seattle Parks' Planner, briefed the Board on the Major Maintenance and Capital Improvement Project (CIP). This briefing is a blending of two separate topics: the Major Maintenance Plan and the Capital Improvement Plan. There is an invisible line separating the two. The City Capital Improvement Plan is a major capital investment plan for building new facilities or adding onto existing facilities. For Seattle Parks, funding for the Capital Improvement Plan is through a combination of levy money, including Pro Parks and the Community Center Levies, bond issues, and Forward Thrust. Parks also gets funds from the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET). While the local economy has been volatile over the last several years, the real estate market has been continuously robust. Therefore the money for the Cumulative Reserve Fund has been strong.

Seattle Parks has been getting approximately \$20 million per biennium for major maintenance projects. The bond issues the City has done in the past and the current levy presented a slate of projects. Once the voters adopt a levy, the CIP for those projects is fixed. For example, the Pro Parks Levy is a six-year levy with a slate of projects with dedicated funding. The Cumulative Reserve Fund money that comes to the Department is discretionary but is directed by the City Council to be used for major maintenance. The Department has a large backlog of maintenance needs. Some of the parks are 100 years old, and even though a park might look new, under the ground the utilities may be in bad shape and in need of replacement.

Ms. Conner next described the process Parks uses to inventory, catalog, and prioritize major maintenance projects. Parks is just beginning the process for the 2007 -2012 Major Maintenance capital budget process, which takes about a year to complete. Parks tries to be very thorough in the assessments, both internally and externally, so that the right projects get on the list. Parks receives about \$20 million per biennium for Major Maintenance. There are over 700 projects and nearly \$200 million worth of known needs. The plan is called a six-year plan, but for the Department to get through all of the projects it might be a 15-20 year plan. The goal is to be efficient and to do the neediest projects.

The projects include ballfields, comfort stations, Volunteer Park Conservatory, and range from buildings to landscaping and everything in between. The process to update the list includes removing projects that have been completed and ongoing assessments of our facilities. Much of the assessment work is performed in-house; however, consultants are hired for larger projects. In late summer staff will meet with Seattle Parks Project Steering and other senior staff who will review the Major Maintenance Plan and will receive direction on where priorities may have shifted.

Seven criteria are used to rank projects. These include safety, facility integrity, how busy the park is, and whether the repair a legal requirement. The project rankings do not start from scratch each year — projects do move up the list. By the end of November, a draft plan is reviewed by Project Steering and senior staff and sometimes there is a retreat to go over the list of projects. Funding rules designated Parks to include one

ballfield, one tennis court, one comfort station, and one field lighting project per biennium, as these are the most used facilities. Once the list is finalized, usually in May, it is forwarded to City Council for review. A major issue the Department is facing is that the cost of projects is rising, particularly over the past year, with the result that Parks is able to do fewer projects than have been done in the past. For most projects, the first year funding is spent on planning and design and the second year is for construction.

Public input comes partially from Parks' staff working in the community and who hear from citizens as to what they perceive as the big problems. A presentation is made to the neighborhood district councils and their feedback is solicited.

The major maintenance plan includes 16 umbrella programs that receive the same funding every year. These are for smaller projects that may not be funded under Major Maintenance. By combining the smaller projects, they can be done cost effectively and efficiently and more projects can be completed. A very successful umbrella program is the small roof program for comfort stations and small utility buildings. By maintaining them Parks is able to get more life out of the buildings. An umbrella program at tennis courts includes color coating and repairing cracks, resulting in 5-8 more years' life before the courts must undergo a major improvement.

As previously mentioned, Major Maintenance funding is a flexible source of funds and there often is pressure to expand uses and not just limit the use to maintenance. Other reasons that the list may change include new mayoral or City Council priorities that come to light. Downtown parks are a new mayoral priority and were added to the list. The Restore Our Waters fish habitat program is another new priority. Also emergencies occur, such as Piers 62/63, which cause some projects to be deferred.

City Council asks Parks to provide information about the project prioritization and selection processes. This presentation to the Council will occur soon and may result in an additional request from the Council for a strategic plan for major maintenance.

Ms. Conner described some specific projects: (1) Bobby Morris had \$400,000 withheld by the City Council, causing a delay in the project. The project was re-funded and the resurfacing of the field is underway and will be completed soon. The entire park will be renovated, including resurfacing the tennis courts; (2) There may be a new "green roof" at South Lake Union; (3) Volunteer Park Conservatory will be renovated. Commissioner Collins remarked that he thought Volunteer Park Greenhouse had been completed. The Superintendent responded that the Greenhouse has been done in bits and pieces and that the new project is to improve the west wing and the greenhouses in the back.

Ms. Conner noted that the underground systems, such as irrigation, are often old and in need of repair. The Department will be preparing an irrigation replacement plan to address this issue.

Commissioner Holme asked for a definition of the City Neighborhood Council. Ms. Conner responded that it is the umbrella organization of the 13 neighborhood district councils. In the past, the City Neighborhood Council has held a public meeting at which Parks presents the draft Major Maintenance Plan and receives citizen comments.

Commissioner Holme also asked for clarification as to whether the plan is to renovate one or two playfields per biennium. Ms. Conner responded that the plan is for one.

Commissioner Holme asked at what point in the funding process is money committed to a project and cannot be redirected. Mr. Stoops stated that generally when a contract is let, the money is committed.

Commissioner Holme asked for a definition of the Neighborhood Response Fund. Mr. Stoops replied that this is a \$300,000 fund that provides flexibility to the Superintendent to meet issues that arise for small projects that

are not named on the CIP. A good example is a playground project where the community raised money to renovate the playground, but that when the project was underway it was learned that the storm drain at the site would need to be replaced. The cost for that element would have used the majority of the community-raised funds. Another example was at the Loyal Heights Community Center where some improvements were being made to the front counter. When the project was underway, it was discovered that the electrical box needed to be replaced. Having the Neighborhood Response Fund enables funding for unforeseen needs such as these without requiring a City Council appropriation or waiting for a budget cycle. The Department has a process and criteria that are used to allocate the funding.

In response to a question from Commissioner Holme, Mr. Stoops noted that the \$17,000 in the plan for lighting at Lower Woodland is for design only.

The Board thanked Mr. Stoops and Ms. Conner for the briefing.

## **Update Briefing: Lower Woodland Skatepark Siting**

Susan Golub, Seattle Parks Strategic Advisor, next briefed the Board on the Lower Woodland Skatepark Siting. The Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing; both are included in these minutes.

### *Written Briefing*

#### **Requested Board Action**

At its May 26 Park Board meeting, Commissioners requested an analysis of the siting options for the Lower Woodland skateboard park. Upon receipt of this information, the Commissioners may opt to take action.

#### **Project Description and Background**

The idea to build a skateboard park at Lower Woodland emerged during the debate in January and February 2004 over the future of the skatepark in Ballard. When it appeared possible that the new park in Ballard would not include a skatepark, Parks began the search for an alternative site. The goal was to move quickly to find a site and build a new park so that the skating community would not be without a place to skateboard.

Kathie Huus, who was then manager of the north district, proposed three possible locations after a thorough assessment of north end parks. Ms. Huus has had a long interest in skateboard parks and the search of the north district for potential skatepark locations was not a hasty or spur of the moment undertaking. (Ms. Huus' son coordinated a skateboard park design charette while a graduate student at the University of Washington. The outcome of the charette, an analysis of siting issues regarding skateboard parks, formed the basis for the Department's Skateboard Park Policy.) Sites identified by Ms. Huus included Gas Works Park, which has the potential for an undercover park but also faces likely opposition from the historic/landmark constituency; and Magnuson Park, which is not easily accessible and is a bit too far from Ballard to be considered a replacement.

We selected the Lower Woodland site as our best option. The site has been tagged the "chip site" because it has served as the location for storage of wood chips used by our gardeners. (Its pluses and minuses are discussed below.) In February 2004, the newly formed Skateboard Park Advisory Committee (SPAC) met at the Green Lake Small Craft Center and walked over to Lower Woodland to look at the skatepark site. Over the next several months the Committee worked with our Parks Landscape Architect, Kim Baldwin, on a preliminary design for the park. Two Committee members spoke in favor of the project at a City Council budget public hearing and in Olympia before the Board of the State Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation (IAC). A presentation to the Board of Park Commissioners on this project, which included an analysis of site suitability, occurred in September 2004.

#### **Public Involvement Process**

The formal public involvement process for the Lower Woodland skatepark has not begun. The public meetings in the community will occur once funding has been secured and a project manager is assigned.

## **Issues**

**Chronology:** Several months ago some skateboard community activists raised issues about the Lower Woodland skatepark site and proposed an alternative site identified as the Aurora triangle. Concerns regarding the chip site were raised at successive Skateboard Park Advisory Committee meetings and a letter expressing the concerns and promoting an alternative site was sent by a citizen to public officials. In response to the citizen letter, the Park Board at its April 14 meeting approved a motion endorsing Parks' preferred location for the skatepark. The SPAC subsequently asked the Board to reconsider its motion after the SPCA site assessment process was complete.

A SPAC sub-committee reviewed the siting issue and reported back to the full Committee at its May meeting. The SPAC had a thorough discussion of the pros and cons of both sites. They voted to endorse the triangle site. Safety concerns about the chip site were the primary reasons for the SPAC vote for the triangle. (The SPAC letter is attached.)

Separate from the Advisory Committee's process, skateboard advocates have been attending community meetings promoting the triangle site.

**Site Evaluations:** A big advantage of both the chip and triangle sites is that they should not create noise concerns in the neighborhood as they are separated from housing – the chip site by the athletic fields and the triangle site by Aurora. Both are served by bus routes.

### **Chip Site:**

*Positive aspects of the chip site for use as a skatepark are:*

- Because of its use for wood chip storage, there are no competing existing uses for the site;
- It is part of an active park – a skatepark is a compatible use; and
- In the future, were funding available, it could be lit by adding light fixtures to the existing field light poles.

*Problems with the chip site are:*

- Lack of high visibility leading to safety concerns;
- Proximity to the wooded area of Lower Woodland and possible criminal activities in this area; and
- Shade from proximity to the hillside extending the time it takes the park to dry after rain.

### **Aurora Triangle**

The triangle site was once considered by the Department as a potential off leash area, but was rejected in part because of the proximity to the Lake and the concern about pollutants from the dogs entering the lake. Also, the land was once a landfill. Whether this fact will have an impact on the development of a skatepark which could include excavation for a bowl is unknown, but there may be questions about the stability of the underlying soils.

*Positive aspects of the triangle site for use as a skatepark are:*

- It is easily seen from the surrounding streets;
- It is closer to the Green Lake path than the chip site; and
- It is not as shaded as the chip site.

*Problems with the triangle site are:*

- It is an open, green meadow now used for picnics and sunbathing;
- It is home to a multitude of rabbits and has become a place for people to see and feed the rabbits;
- Parking is limited;
- The road adjacent to the east is one way northbound leading directly to Aurora; if skatepark visitors park on this road and do not want to go north on Aurora they will make a u-turn creating a safety hazard (I've made this u-turn each time I've visited the site).

### **Budget**

We have a \$600,000 Cumulative Reserve Fund appropriation for this capital project. We applied for a \$300,000 grant from IAC, but a last minute budget proviso had the effect of skipping higher ranked development projects for lower ranked acquisition projects, so we did not receive funding. We are the “first alternative,” which means that funding may become available from a supplemental budget request or from unspent funds. Not knowing if, when, or how much this might be, we will proceed with a first phase park with the \$600,000 that we have.

### **Schedule**

Parks staff has begun the preliminary design program work for this park. Our original schedule has construction beginning in 2006 with the park opening in late 2006 or early 2007. This schedule may slip some if the triangle site is selected, because we would have to start on a new design program; in addition, the soils/landfill issues at the triangle site may lead to some additional site analysis that could delay the schedule.

### **Staff Recommendation**

Staff recommends no change in location for the Lower Woodland skatepark. General park planning principles recommend that active uses be located together. And the shortage of open green spaces speaks to doing what we can for their preservation. There are no existing competing uses, which should lead to an easier, quicker public involvement process. A more abstract plus for the chip site is that it contributes to mixing traditional and what has been termed “extreme sports” at one location. The skatepark and existing BMX bike mounds complement the soccer, softball, and baseball uses at Lower Woodland, thus creating a mix of sport cultures.

Parks will address in the park design and operation the safety issues raised by the community. The intention is to have a seating/viewing area that will be available for parents who do not feel comfortable dropping their children off at the park. There is a staff building at Lower Woodland and staff is often working on the fields. Should safety issues arise, Parks will explore other remedies.

### ***Verbal Briefing/Board Questions and Answers***

Ms. Golub described the process Parks went through to select the chip site for a new skatepark at Lower Woodland Park:

The briefing paper focuses on the siting process and provides the pros and cons for the chip site and the community-identified Aurora triangle site. Ms. Golub also provided the Board with minutes from the May 16 meeting of the Skateboard Park Advisory Committee (SPAC) and a sample of the worksheet filled out by SPAC members assessing the potential sites. When Commissioners have time to review the SPAC meeting minutes they will see that the preference for the Aurora triangle site was not overwhelming, that many members saw pluses and minuses for both sites, but ultimately weighed in favor of the triangle site.

When it looked as though the new Ballard park would not include a skatepark, the Department set out quickly to find a site and moved to begin park development. The goal was that there would be the least amount of time the City would be without a skate facility. Parks had an internal process to identify a site, led by Kathie Huus, North District manager. She surveyed her area and the best location she found was the chip site. At about this time Parks formed the SPAC. SPAC met at the Green Lake boating center and walked to the chip site. Subsequently the SPAC held several meetings to work on the park design. The design was a necessary component of the Department’s grant application for skatepark funding from the State Interagency Committee on Outdoor Recreation (IAC). The design will be reworked when the Department brings in a professional skatepark designer for the project.

Ms. Golub noted that the Board previously received a presentation on this project which included a power point presentation and that a Board letter of support was sent to the IAC.

The Department received a letter of support for the project from the Parents for Skateparks organization, signed by Kate Martin and Scott Shinn. (Ms. Golub distributed copies of the letter to the Board.) The letter is further evidence

that the Department did not secretly select the site, and that the community was involved and in favor of the project. What has happened in the interim is that some new individuals have become involved in the process, although Ms. Martin and Mr. Shinn are two of the main proponents of the triangle site.

In response to a question from a Commissioner, Ms. Golub noted that the Department did not look at the triangle site as a potential skatepark location. The site had previously been proposed for an off-leash area by Citizens for Off-leash Areas, but the nearness of the site to Green Lake and the potential for harmful run-off from the dogs into Greenlake led to its removal from the list of sites the Department was considering for off-leash locations.

Ms. Golub noted that the Aurora triangle site has become a haven for rabbits.

The advantages of the chip site are that there are no competing users, there is parking available, staff is on site, and there is a drainage tie-in at the athletic fields. The primary disadvantage that parents are concerned about is safety. The site is not visibly accessible from the street, although a maintenance road runs adjacent. The Department's response is that Parks will ensure a safe park when the skatepark is built. While there have not been safety problems in the flat area of Lower Woodland, there have been issues in the wooded hillside and the concern is that these problems will migrate to the skatepark.

Commissioner Jackson asked whether the SPAC expressed concerns about the adjacency of the Aurora triangle site to busy roads. Ms. Golub responded that this issue had not been raised. Community members most like the triangle site because it is visible from streets on two sides and is near the trail around Green Lake. The site has good visibility which is a desirable characteristic for a skateboard park. At the chip site, the Department will need to work with the park design and operation to be sure that eyes are on the park.

Commissioner Jackson remarked that she rarely sees young children at the Seattle Center skatepark. Ms. Golub responded that a member of the SPAC commented that "you can't expect a skatepark to be a child care provider." Also, the preliminary design for Lower Woodland includes a viewing/picnic area so that parents will have a comfortable place to stay and watch their children skate. In fact, the design includes a full pipe elbow with a viewing area on top.

Ms. Golub stated that an additional issue with the Aurora triangle site is that it is a meadow and the park planning principles would not have an active use locate in open space when an active park with available space is nearby. Also, the road adjacent to the east serves as an on-ramp to Aurora and cars move quickly along the road. Proponents of the site have discussed with Seattle Department of Transportation the idea of putting a crosswalk at this location. Another concern is that if an individual does not want to leave the area and go north on Aurora, they may be inclined to do a u-turn, creating an unsafe situation.

Commissioner Collins asked what the politics of the siting decision is, in light of the fact that the SPAC vote, while unanimous, was not overwhelmingly in favor of the triangle site as SPAC members sited points in favor of both sites. Ms. Golub directed the Commissioners to review the adopted SPAC meeting minutes which describe the members' views. She noted that it was primarily single males who saw the value of the chip site and were not as concerned about finding the perfect site, but wanted the process to build the park to move forward. Parents of skateboarders were more adamant against the chip site. Whether the parents can sway the skateboarding community to disrupt the process is unknown. Superintendent Bounds commented that one option is to stop the project from moving forward and conduct a community review process regarding siting. The question is where the Department would likely end up at the end of that process. Ms. Golub noted that the SPAC had rejected all other sites they evaluated at Lower Woodland, other than the triangle site. If a public review process is confined to Lower Woodland, which would be a goal because the IAC grant application is for that park, the only sites in consideration would be the triangle and chip sites.

A Commissioner questioned what the community outreach process has been. Ms. Golub responded that community members have been attending many community council meetings speaking in favor of the triangle site and against the

chip site. The Department has not participated in these meetings. When the project gets funded and a project manager is assigned, the standard public involvement process will begin.

Superintendent Bounds suggested getting a better understanding of the concerns about the chip site and determining how we can deal with the concerns as we develop and operate the park.

Commissioner Holme expressed concern about the process for selecting the chip site that the process was not as fully exposed as it should have been. Superintendent Bounds said he would rate the Department's process with a C grade, and that the trade-off was to rush the process so that there was as small a gap in skatepark service as possible if the new Ballard park did not include skateboarding. Ms. Golub reiterated that at the time the site was announced there was no criticism from the community regarding the location. She also noted that the Department is considering initiating a city-wide skatepark planning process, similar to a recent planning process in Portland.

**Commissioner Holme moved, and Commissioner Jackson seconded, the following motion: The Board supports the staff recommendation to locate the Lower Woodland skatepark at the chip site and the Department will address the issues raised by the SPAC and the standard public process will be followed. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **Board of Park Commissioners' Business**

- None

### **New/Old Business**

Commissioner Pflaumer handed out copies of a power point on the Restore Our Waters (ROW) project and described some of the issues that project will address. She represents the Board on this new committee.

Commissioner Collins discussed three items:

- He referred to an article about a park controversy at Gramercy Park in New York City, and noted that the park system there has a tool called a "resist-o-graph" that can assess the health of trees;
- He thought the op/ed written by Superintendent Bounds about Occidental park was an excellent description of the importance of doing this project. The op/ed was published in the May 17 *Seattle P-I*; and
- A citizen mentioned to him that signage is missing from Greenwood Park to direct citizens to Carkeek Park.

Commissioner Holme stated that he will not be at the meeting on August 11 and asked that the discussion and recommendation for the Mountlake Playfield project be moved to August 25. Superintendent Bounds thought that this schedule change would be possible.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:00p.m.

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

Kate Pflaumer, Chair  
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE \_\_\_\_\_