



December 8, 2022

**MEMO RE: 1125 HARVARD PUBLIC MEETING**

A public meeting was held from 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the Seattle Asian Art Museum on Saturday, October 15, 2022.

Project staff and City staff present:

- Parks: Susanne Rockwell, Karen O'Connor, Kevin Bergsrud, Rachel, Colin
- Karen Kiest Landscape Architects: Karen Kiest, Meredith Hall, Ivana Begley, Diana Hammer

**EVENT**

The event was organized for a presentation and small table discussions. There were about 80 attendees, gathered at 8 tables of 6-8 people. This was the second public meeting for the project.

Susanne Rockwell introduced the project and Parks and the Public's role in planning for the new park. Karen Kiest presented a slide show that summarized key findings from the first meeting and provided a framework for planning for opening the park and future improvements for the park.

Following the presentation, the attendees discussed the project and planning at their tables. The tables reviewed three key topics: The Vision; Developing a Framework; and First Steps. Notes were kept by each table, and table leads summarized their key findings following their table discussions (Table recommendations are at the end of the document).

**THE VISION**

**a neighborhood park, for gathering, strolling, nature, building on a layered history**

There was general support for the vision for the park, with consideration for developing a framework for the park based on this vision.

**A Neighborhood Park**

There was strong support for a neighborhood park. The park doesn't need to duplicate elements found in a larger regional park, like Volunteer Park, with concerts, or active sports courts or dog areas.

There was support for consideration of the park as a specialty garden, building on the work of Plant Amnesty. Suggestions of gardens in parks include Dunn Garden, Wright Garden, Golden Gate Park.

There were additional programming elements suggested, including providing area for children to play, area for picnics, a community garden, and opportunities for dogs.

There was discussion about the age and background of potential park users, ranging from young families to the predominant age demographic of the current neighborhood, most likely people over 50.

There was interest to make sure we're getting diverse input from the broader Seattle community. Efforts should be made to recruit broader participation in the planning process for the park, and actively recruit Seattle diversity,

### **Gathering**

There was general support for small and informal gatherings. There were concerns raised about large gatherings primarily due to parking and noise in the largely residential neighborhood.

Specific programming should be considered, the type and size of gatherings that might be scheduled.

Parking is related to programming; there were several comments that parking would need to be considered.

There was general support that the main lawn is the best location for gathering, not the SW corner of the property. There was concern about adding lawn, due to water demands, specifically in the SW corner, with native planting areas suggested as an alternative.

### **Strolling**

There was general support for the pathway layout as shown. Walking through the space provides activation for the park.

There were suggestions to extend pathways as needed to provide a larger path loop incorporating the west slope of the site. Making this a strolling area supports increased activity and visibility throughout the park. It is also helpful to have a maintenance path.

### **Nature**

The natural setting serves as a good starting point for the park. Native plants and sustainability are seen as a positive to the space. There is strong support for the opportunity to extend strolling throughout the natural setting.

The natural setting can still be considered as an adventurous area for kids to explore.

Native plants should better support reduced watering and lower maintenance. Plantings should be selected to support pollinators -- butterflies and bees. Water depressions for birds should be incorporated.

### **History**

There was support for incorporating the history of the property in the planning, design, and programming of the property. Preserving historical information includes identification for remaining benches, or memorial trees, and providing informational materials on the history of the property.

### **House**

The residence provides a lot of opportunity and possible complications. The landmark process is a long, and there is an interest to confirm an approach to the use of the house in the interim. There was support for considering the residence for a caretaker, as an office, or as a revenue generator for organizations or events, which would have added benefit of providing security for the park.

## **FIRST STEPS - INITIAL PRIORITIES**

### **Hedge and Fence**

Safety remains the primary concern. Given there are no identified funds to create a park for years, individuals want a clear plan for safety and maintenance before opening the property, specifically taking down the hedge and fence. There were additional concerns voiced the slope of the property will not allow for visibility from a drive-by inspection, and the stairway should be secured. There was support for park lighting.

### **Renovate Lawn**

Renovating the lawn is a priority. A functioning irrigation system needs to be in place to make that happen.

### **Secure House**

The house needs to be protected because it is a potential landmark and an important safety priority to keep it from being inhabited and damaged by campers.

### **Secure Walls**

Protecting visitors from falling at the walls and the stairs is an essential first step. There was support for landscape beds to keep people back from the walls

**Key Notes per Table Shared with All**

**Table 1**

- Safe and accessible for all
- Nice vision
- Place for children to play
- Place for young families
- Green space for bees and birds
- Environmentally friendly
- House – alarmed not having security for house before budget in place
- Place for people to gather and enjoy meals
- Drought tolerant
- Kid exploration
- Accessible and safe should be first priority
- Provide lighting in initial plan; not too light or dark

**Table 2**

- Quite contemplative park
- Small community activities
- Friendly, maybe kids but not like Volunteer Park
- Secure perimeter
- Wall safety
- Parking – coordinate w/SDOT plan for parking. Parking depends on house use
- Opening hedge: secure perimeter first
- Viability of maintenance w/o budget?
- House depends on landmarking
- Support what Plant Amnesty has done and appreciate it.

**Table 3**

- Design is lovely, looks good and has good feel
- Safety and security of perimeter – gates, hedge, open
- Neighbor involvement
- Roanoke Park is open and safe
- Power – lighting for access and safety

**Table 4**

- Like neighborhood park – views, paths, strolling, native plants and small gatherings
- Safety – recommend site lights...
- House
- Irrigation
- Long term vs. interim – concerned about safety and access at interim

**Table 5**

- General agreement w/vision – small, not destination park
- Share a lot more history around park – provide info boards
- Security – keep hedge or fence till property developed more fully, then open
- SW slope – lawn –not sustainable in drought. Look at native plants
- Old carriage house good spot for rain garden

**Table 6**

- Grateful

- Security theme – protection of site until developed—RVs, drugs
- Need safety to welcome everyone, even if delays opening
- Very doubtful about maintenance
- Use house for caregivers
- Organization could open and close park.

**Table 7**

- Vision makes sense – contemplative, strolling
- Preserve history
- What does landmark entail?
- Provide caretaker
- Security during transition – want open – fence off structures

**Table 8**

- Appreciated preserving history
- Talked about other histories – existing benches honoring women
- Memorial trees
- Prior use – indigenous peoples
- Didn't hear a lot about public comments influence planning (#1 priority was gardens from August meeting)
- Opportunities for education
- Resist climate change
- Funding, interim use
- Safety – the slope makes visibility difficulty. Move work until fence came down.

## COMMENTS FROM THE TABLES AROUND THE TOPICS

### THE VISION: Gathering, Strolling, Nature

#### DOES THE VISION MAKE SENSE?

The Vision makes sense. There is general support for the idea of a neighborhood park, a place for community gathering, strolling,

A community gathering space should support neighborhood, community gathering space

There is general support for the idea of a neighborhood park, rather than a destination park.

#### Table

- The idea of a neighborhood (vs. a destination) park
- Views
- Protection for a potential landmark building/s
- Curving paths and strolls
- Native plants and sustainability
- Informal gathering spaces for small groups

#### Table

- This describes lots of parks
- Would like it to be not an active park – not big enough. Needs to be quiet
- Nice to keep it a green space
- Dunn gardens, Bloedel reserve, as inspiration. Tashkent

#### Table

- It is a neighborhood park and should not be a destination
- Like the curves and its welcoming
- Big enough to have this – more distance to walk. Maintain feeling larger than it is.
- Building on a layered history – continuation of the legacy and build on this – foster respect
- Community involvement – written history include surrounding history.
- Like the open feel and sweeping lines
- Sun and shade analysis – native planting
- Grass may not be ideal on Harvard and SW

#### Colin Table

- Vision makes sense, appropriate for the neighborhood, community gathering space
- Kay's history, and native history. Students and community have put time/effort in
- Is grass/gathering space useful year-round, rented space

#### Table

- History is more complex
- Want more consideration of Garden, public gardening, education