

Victor Steinbrueck Park Improvements

PARKS AND GREEN SPACES LEVY PROJECT



Project Overview

Victor Steinbrueck Park was created in 1981 by architect and activist Victor Steinbrueck and landscape architect Rich Haag. After helping to save Pike Place Market from demolition, the two designed the park (originally named Market Park) as a place to enjoy the view and to act as an extension of Market's social life, providing a place to gather outside. The park designers felt strongly that the park provide for all people, including disadvantaged members of our community. This project will take a holistic approach to improving the park for all.

In 2008, City Council passed a Levy that allocated \$1.6M for "Improvements to Public Safety". These include but are not limited to:

- improving sight lines into the park
- renovating seating
- renovating the former children's play area*
- improving and expanding lighting
- upgrading landscaping

The park is within the Pike Place Market Historic District; the Pike Place Market Historical Commission has adopted guidelines which outline the "character defining features" of the park. These guidelines must be considered as part of any park improvements.

*Note: Since this levy was passed, the former children's play area was replaced by a gathering space and Tree of Life sculpture.

The scope of this project includes public outreach, design, and construction related to improvements outlined above. In addition, the park was constructed on top of a parking garage, and it has recently been determined that the waterproofing membrane between the park and garage is failing. The replacement of the membrane will require that the entire park be removed and reconstructed. While \$1.6M will cover park improvements described in the Levy language, additional money will be required to cover the membrane replacement and reconstruction of the park.

The design team meets regularly with numerous local stakeholders and park users. The design team also meets regularly with Seattle Parks & Recreation and the Pike Place Market Historical Commission, which is responsible for making decisions on all use and design changes in the Market to ensure that the historic character of the Market is preserved. The Seattle City Council must approve the final design pursuant to the levy language.

Public outreach includes three open houses, the first of which occurred on May 17, 2016 and the second of which occurred on Oct. 4, 2016. The design team may also hold on-site events to solicit input from park users.

We are in the early stages of what is expected to be a multi-year design and construction process.

October 2016 Public Meeting Summary

Seattle Parks and Recreation hosted a public meeting at Waterfront Space on October 4, 2016. The purpose of the October 2016 public meeting was to inform stakeholders and the general public about:

- What the design team heard during the May 2016 public meetings
- Ways the project team has engaged with stakeholders since May
- How the park improvements design has progressed

The design team also asked for feedback on design options for:

- A play or children's area at the north end of the park, and
- The "south room" and its connection to the adjacent MarketFront public space.

Doors to the public meeting opened at 6 p.m. and staff were available to answer questions until 7:30 p.m. The meeting began with a presentation from the design team, followed by an opportunity for participants to read informational boards and provide feedback or comment. More than 40 people signed in at the public meeting.

Online Open House

The in-person event was accompanied by an online open house, which included the same information as the public meeting and was available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from September 30 through October 18, 2016. The online open house provided an opportunity for stakeholders to stay engaged, in case they were unable to participate at the in-person public meeting.

Throughout the time the online open house was live 265 unique users visited the site.

Outreach and Notification

The project advertised the public meeting and online open house using several methods of communications, including:

- Emails to the Seattle Parks and Recreation project listserv: participants in previous meetings, City Council, Market organizations, and other interested parties.
- Approximately 3,500 postcards mailed to residents and businesses within a three block radius.

- Facebook and Twitter posts by Seattle Parks and Recreation.
- Announcement on Seattle Parks and Recreation project website.
- Flyers distributed to businesses in and around Pike Place Market.

Feedback Received

The following is a summary of perspectives shared during Public and Online Open Houses.

General

- Everyone should feel welcome in the park.
- The park's renovation and management should improve safety and discourage illegal activities.
- The lack of restrooms in the park is a problem. It is unfortunate that the scope of the renovation does not address this issue.
- Some aspects of the original design are unsuccessful. Preserving them in the renovation limits the potential to improve the park.

Play / Children

- The renovation should improve the park for kids and families.
- Downtown needs more places for kids to play.
- The future Overlook Walk will provide better playground opportunities than Victor Steinbrueck Park
- The north end of the park is not well used as other parts of the park are.
- Keep it simple. Don't add new features to the park.
- The Tree of Life is a significant part of the park and must be respected.
- A play area is not necessary.
- A dedicated place for children is not right for this park.
- This park is too gritty for a children's area.

Native American Cultural Elements

- The existing "totem poles" are not authentic and do not represent local Native culture.
- The park should honor both local tribes and the many tribes represented by the city's urban native population. It should be welcoming to all.
- Native American art and design should be integrated throughout the park.
- Use a contemporary approach to celebrating Native American culture, with authentic respect.

Furnishings

- Fixed benches and tables promote camping in the park.
- The existing furnishings are not comfortable.
- More options are good.
- Flexible seating for different sizes of groups or one person makes the park more comfortable.
- A shelf/counter at the guardrail overlooking the view will be well used.
- Movable tables and chairs will be successful in the park.

- Movable furnishings are a practical way to make areas of the park more flexible.
- Who will manage and maintain movable furnishings?
- ADA compliance is important.

Lighting

- The park needs better lighting. Currently, the park can feel uninviting, uncomfortable, and unsafe after dark.
- New lighting should be understated, not necessarily brighter. A warmer quality of light would be an improvement.
- Lighting technology has changed since the park was originally designed.
- Better lighting will encourage better use of the park at night.
- Light should be directed to where it is needed. We are concerned about glare in our building.
- Lighting will not solve the park's problems at night.
- The park's character and view should not be impacted the lighting design.

Connection to MarketFront

- A good pedestrian connection to the Market, MarketFront, and Waterfront is crucial.
- The park should feel distinct and separate from the MarketFront public space.
- Circulation should be intuitive and generous. A small opening is not sufficient.
- The existing character and use of the south part of the park should not change.
- Better circulation and more activity will make the park more welcoming.

Appendices

- A. Photos from the public meeting on October 4, 2016
- B. Copies of the public meeting boards
- C. Screenshots of the online open house
- D. Email notifications
- E. Social media notifications
- F. Postcard notification
- G. Online Open House comments and data.