

Meeting Notes

Wedgwood Landbanked Site Park Development - 2nd Public Meeting

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thornton Elementary Creek School Cafeteria, 7712 40th Ave NE

Attendees: Approximate 30-35 participants

Project Team Colin Campbell, Project Planner
Shannon Glass, PLA, Project Manager
T. Frick McNamara, Studio 41, Consultant Designer

Budget Seattle Park District provides \$1,273,388 for planning, design, and construction

Schedule Planning: Spring 2018
Design: Spring 2019
Construction: Winter 2020

Project Description

In 2014, Seattle Parks and Recreation purchased the .33-acre site at 8605 35th Ave NE using King County Conservations Futures funds, to provide more open space for the Wedgwood community. Seattle Park District funds the development of the site into a new neighborhood park. The design will incorporate accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as SPR's intent to create access to open space in areas of high urban density. This King County Conservation Futures funds restricts park use to low impact, passive recreation, and limits impervious surfacing to 15% or less, excluding trail and circulation surfaces.

Project Background

This project is located in the Wedgwood neighborhood in Northeast Seattle, in a small neighborhood commercial zone that is surrounded by single family residential zoning. The lot is currently mostly empty, and relatively flat, with one existing tree on the property. Previously, the site was home to a gas station and electrical substation. While previous soil testing found that the soil was safe for planned use, a change in scope may necessitate more testing. Since SPR purchased the site in 2014, it has been left undeveloped. Neighborhood groups have activated the space, and a portion of the site is used as parking for nearby businesses. The site is well connected on 35th Avenue NE; as the neighborhood is likely to continue to grow, the open space will be a resource for the community. Constraints will come from the proximity to single family zoning, commercial uses, and the busy adjacent 35th Ave NE arterial street.

Meeting Summary:

The meeting started with SPR staff providing a project overview, introducing the project team, and answering questions about the project budget and schedule. The project introduction was followed by Studio 41's concept presentation. After presenting the three concepts, SPR staff and Studio 41 answered general group questions before breaking out into small group discussions. There were (4) different small break out groups with each table analyzing the three options.

A spokesperson was designated at each table to present their ideas back to the full group of attendees. The small groups had diverse and collaborative conversation. General comments were in favor of option 'c' with ideas in option 'b' ranking a close second.

Desired Improvements from User Survey:

Three Concept Options:

Some basic ideas for all concepts:

- Maintain a mulch area under the existing conifer to minimize impact within the CRZ (Critical Root Zone). Install low fence (maybe split rail) at the corner to control where folks enter and minimize foot traffic at this tree.
- New streetscape improvements at 86th to include curb/gutter, sidewalk and bike racks.
- Maintain perimeter fence along west and north lot lines at existing location. Detail of fence TBD / coordinated w/ SPR.
- Natural features are incorporated in all concepts. None have a manufactured play structure.

General differences between the 3 concepts:

Wedgwood hub – concept 'a':

- Includes bocce ball court (lawn surface)
- Large lawn area
- Minimal pathway looping folks from residential edge to commercial building (café Javasti). No internal path loop, the ROW sidewalk continues the loop in this scheme.
- Seasonal movie wall that can be attached to the perimeter fence.
- Community long table (w/ potential overhead canopy) closest to adjacent commercial building w/ good eyes onto the space from the main street and apartment building across street.
- Smaller square lawn area could incorporate seasonal tiles over the lawn for chess play, scrabble pieces or similar.

Wedgwood tree – concept 'b':

- Community is defined by large mature trees. This concept takes the pattern of the trunk/branch structure and abstracts it into the pathway configuration. *This would need to be defined as circulation so it wouldn't count against the 15% impervious. (CFT: Conservation Futures Tax provided funding used to purchase the site restricts the use to 15% impervious surfacing and passive use. Trails and pathways are exempt from this limit.)* Pickleball court – this came up in multiple comments from different attendees at the first community meeting. The design locates it towards the front half of the site to buffer the adjacent residential with planting, a grove of trees and the perimeter fence. This element uses up most of the 15% impervious so pathways would need to be considered circulation for this to work. *Note: after discussion with King County DNRP (Department of Natural Resources and Parks), it was confirmed that no active / court uses are permitted on the per the Conservation Futures Tax (CFT) regulations.*
- Elements at the terminus of some of the 'branch' paths to play off the Wedgwood China idea and develop small decorative installations.
- Low wall with planted berm north of the existing conifer to define this zone but also offer the safety element / buffer the community requested from 35th. Note the wall and berm would stop north of the tree to stay out of the CRZ.

Wedgwood teacup – concept ‘c’:

- Large central lawn area w/ a striking form abstracted from a teacup saucer. Sloped berm defining the edge and forming sloped seating overlooking a seasonal movie wall (projected onto the perimeter fence as in the hub concept ‘a’). Perhaps some fun accent seating elements located w/in the lawn area?
- Natural logs / boulders tucked into a mass of legacy trees. The community asked for the installation of a few large trees that can grow to be significant over time / generations. Perhaps Sequoia or similar in the spirit of the area’s history. Install large stone element in the lawn portion as a sculptural nod to the Wedgwood Rock.
- Picnic zone in mulch under the existing conifer.
- Café seating area where the elliptical pathways come together near the adjacent commercial building.

Questions and Discussion

Table 1:

- Liked option ‘a’ the least. Liked the trees lining the west and north lot lines. Liked the long table but maybe not the location near 35th. The area(s) with natural logs and boulders were well received.
- Option ‘b’ received 3 votes. Liked the café tables but were concerned with them ‘walking off’. Make pickleball area more grass with enlarged play zone. Liked opposing benches/seat walls in this scheme for conversation.
- Option ‘c’ received 4 votes. Liked the berm element near 35th, loop walking path all on site, rocks and boulders, tables (maybe add a trellis). Didn’t vote for seasonal movie concept b/c summer months stay light out too long so it would conflict with the city’s quiet time after 10 pm requirement. Maybe consider flipping sloped berm to other side to optimize solar access. Would like to see conifers planted on site, a dog poo bag dispenser and compost, recycling and garbage receptacles.

Table 2:

- Like the option(s) with a more organic feel. Option ‘a’ felt too rigid.
- Would like safe spaces for children to play during weekdays when the school playgrounds are close to the general public.
- Like the conifers in option ‘c’.
- Would like a canopy or rain/shade cover over some seating.
- Would like SPR to consider the feasibility of a composting toilet.
- Like the natural logs and boulders.
- Could the neighborhood contribute to the history of the construction of the park...maybe palm print on tiles cast into the concrete, write in the concrete, etc.
- Would like a lighted crosswalk at 86th considered.
- Like the movie idea.
- Safety of kids and 35th is a concern.

Table 3:

Option ‘a’

- Group was mixed on the long table idea. Maybe not picnic tables as too hard to get into for some. Liked the idea of it having a weather protection canopy.
- Like the open, non-programmed lawn for flexibility.
- Mixed on the movie wall idea.
- Some felt the bocce ball area was too confined, leaving the space not flexible.
- Liked the natural elements.
- Option ‘a’ was too square, prefer a more natural flow.
- Neighbor to NW was concerned about shading from the proposed trees in the NW corner.

Option ‘b’

- Like the smaller, intimate off-shoot sitting areas and that users can experience different paths.

- Maybe consider rocks around the trees in NW corner to discourage unwanted camping/sleeping.
- Grassy areas too small.

Option 'c'

- Design has great flow.
- Liked the movie wall idea.
- If there are no trees adjacent the existing building to the north, consider a mural to make the façade more appealing.
- Provide seating under trees.
- Balance lawn and shade areas. Make sure lawn area is not shaded out.

Table 4:

- 2 votes for 'b', 5 votes for 'c'. Generally liked 'c' the best b/c of its openness and the internal walking loop.
- Liked the berm along 35th in 'b'.
- Consider a water feature to neutralize the traffic noise along 35th.
- Would like to see a place for music.
- Okay with pickleball area becoming green area instead.
- Liked the branches in 'b' providing varying paths and seating areas.
- Consider fire pits and/or grills.
- Since there is no 1% arts funding for this project, consider putting in a pedestal to allow for a future art installation.
- Consider a driveway access for loading/unloading during events with removable bollards.
- Exercise – provide a few simple elements such as a pull up bar.
- Playability of sculptural elements – such as the orca tails that kids can play on. Like the rocks as play and art.
- Consider fruit trees.
- Like the covered long table idea.
- 'b' while allowing variability is maybe too programmed to allow for larger community events.
- Consider a water/drinking fountain.

General questions:

- Will the park get developed or is there the potential for it to go on hold for many years? SPR confirmed the budget is fully funded.
- Will the park be irrigated? SPR confirmed yes.
- Are street improvements required on 86th? Couldn't people just walk in the street edge pavement to access the park as per current condition? SPR confirmed streetscape improvements are required.

Other passport comments:

- 'c' is my favorite – but needs back supporting seating, lots of it. Long table good to allow picnics and eating. Ramada type covered areas to allow park use when raining. Electrical outlets for cell phone and laptop charging. Deluxe porta potty and multi-purpose play/climb structures for kids.
- 'c' – love this! Fruit trees perhaps, edible shrubs, water feature please.
- 'a' – like table with cover, consider play structure/swings at #13, consider adding a sand box for kids. 'b' #13 could be playground for children, again add sand box. With so many different offshoot areas, would be nice to have a designated dog potty area so dogs are not pooping throughout whole park. 'c' please consider adding play structure in NW corner (away from street) bigger than #12. Yes, to rocks and logs for kids to play on. Consider sand box for kids. Would be cool for Audubon (or simimilar) to add some educational plaques about birds and trees. Would be cool for play structure to be tree themed – this is

Wedgwood! If swings, I vote for one of the new fancy swings that has a baby seat opposed to an adult seat.

- 'a' discourages programming b/c access to center of park is too restricted. Programming is critical to attracting residents to gather. Like the long table. 'b' discourages programming b/c it is too cut up. 'c' best overall design, with lots of open space for programming and a circular promenade. Consider including a pedestal on which, at some future date, a sculpture could be added with funding from 1% for the arts or private donation. Consider a driveway to bring in equipment with access controlled by movable bollards. Consider a fire pit.
- 'b' not enough 'open' space. 'c' I like open spaces. Need to be able to throw a frisbee. Big trees add character over time. Big Maple or Oak. A fire pit would be good. Covered area is appealing at first but who goes to the park when it rains. Fruit trees are too messy. Need to support public events, concerts and festivals.
- 'c' my favorite design. Anchoring evergreen trees in NW corner, play area for pre-school children, tables, chairs for adults especially elders, round walkway and covered canopy in NE corner.
- 'c' my preferred option. Raised planters around perimeter to keep kids from running into street. Park lighting. Some covered structures. Lighted crosswalk across 35th – coordinate with current work. Imaginative play areas for young kids. More table seating – not movable.
- 'a' – love the movie screen in all 3 concepts! Quiet time at 10 pm? No diagonal path from SW to NE – people will make their own path through park and planting. 'b' – replace pickleball with grass. Concern about too much open space in SW corner. 'c' – my favorite! Concern about placing tall trees in NW corner. Water feature to mask noise?
- 'a' – love the long table. Please consider multiple covered tables. Like the bocce court if possible. Passive (chess/scrabble) would be appreciated as well. Not a fan of everything being rectangular. Rocks and logs are great! 'b' – natural berms would be great. Walled ones not so much. I like the offshoot paths. Keep the chairs and tables. Like that there were many places to sit. Opposing benches are great. Like the movie area idea, although there are challenges. 'c' – like the round walking path. Like the boulder / log circle. Berm on north side would be great. For all: add art, orca backs to play on? Water fountain is vital. Trash, recycling and dog waste bag dispenser would be great. Keep lots of places to sit. Please add covered areas over seating options. Rocks and logs are very important. Avoid massive lawns and instead have smaller lawn sections so more groups can do different things. Delineate with paths? A mural would be great on the building wall.
- 'a' – I like the flexible seating and the amount of seating. The covered seating is awesome. The multi-surface is good but no mulch. Can it be sand? Like that it can be easily reconfigured for multiple uses. EG food trucks around the perimeter and temp seating or an art walk. Multiple areas for kids to parkour on. Also, the N and E tree perimeter around fence should be minimized. 'b' – Don't like the wooded area in the NW area, is not functional and is 1/3 of the space. Can it be opened? The design has a log of pinch points and breaks the flow into the micro zones. This will lead to less people using spaces as first to be there claims the space. 'c' – positive open spaces and flow. Move the big trees in the NW corner to the SW corner or make smaller. Add rocks or fixed seating. Don't like the elevation concept, keep flat.
- 'a' – if people are going to be drawn to a public space, there's a responsibility to provide a place to relieve themselves. The question should not be whether the service is provided but how it can be accomplished. 'c' – This design seems best able to accommodate a play area for young kids in the NW corner and it is important to create such an area as far from the street as possible.
- 'a' – multi-level child play areas, lighted crosswalk at 86th, shade seating under trees, conifers, don't use grass, use wood chips or pea gravel. 'b' berms sound blockade. Need a raingarden type construction to absorb rainwater. I like the teacup much more than others. Dog walking accommodation and poo bags. Enough spaces for eating light lunches. Tables and picnic tables. Benches in greenery. Concert stage / outdoor movies against north building wall – or away from the traffic noise. 'c' – non-moveable accessories. Recyclable, compost and garbage. Teacup design but add benches / seat walls opposing and adjacent. Best design we agreed upon. Consider sun direction when construction conversation areas. Trellis scattered like tree design in teacup design overall pattern. Conifers over deciduous trees. Like natural wood / boulders to play on.

- 'a' – too many rectangles. I don't like that the only path is on the perimeter. This is my least favorite. 'b' – I love all the nook and crannies and private places to sit. Could the tree be less angular? I actually like it broken up. I suspect this small park will be used more for sitting and talking as opposed to frisbee and running, etc. 'c' – the design is very pleasing. I love the graceful arcs and paths through the park. I like the mix of seating, café and picnic. Do not like the huge trees. I'd like to see some covered areas. More intimate seating in the corners.
- 'a' – long table, natural play area. Larger play space, no daytime playgrounds in walking distance (all school yards). 'b' – for kids play, consider adding a 'natural' slide in the rocks – like at Maple Leaf or Carkeek playgrounds. Stairs for climbing / sitting. Stumps for playing, different heights along a path. Large rocks for climbing on like near Meadowbrook Pond. Like curvy features for kids running and scooting. Dislike bathroom idea (cost, smell, service, space). Most park visitors live nearby, can use Javasti. 'c' – see other comments.
- 'b' – I liked this design the best. Instead of movie wall maybe a gathering space for concert or other small event. I like the smaller conversation areas in this plan. Would be great to have trash, recycling, compost and doggie bags. I like the café tables and picnic tables.
- 'a' – too many right angles. Lawn in lieu of pickleball area, add a berm along 86th to create a natural amphitheater. 'c' – due to noise on 35th, do the 'berming' on the teacup along 35th. My favorite design - if- you add the benches along the walkway that face each other. Add trellis area above the café tables. Love the idea of the statement tree.
- All alternatives comments: some climbing latter/ropes play structures. Low fencing to keep kids from running out on 35th chasing balls, etc. Picnic tables. Public restroom should be included. Covered shelter should be included. Lighting w/ timer and power should be included. Retain existing trees. Sound walls along 35th, drinking fountain, fruit trees, mixed deciduous and evergreen, giant sequoia, fire pit.

