



FREEWAY PARK IMPROVEMENTS

Open House #1 Summary

9/20/2019

MEETING DETAILS

September 10, 2019, 4:30 - 6:30 pm

Freeway Park's Seneca Plaza (600 Seneca Street)

EVENT PURPOSE

The goal of this first public event was to introduce the project, including:

- Scope, budget, schedule
- Original design (1970-1976)
- The park today
- Moving forward – Building on recommendations from the Finding Freeway Park project
- Design process (2019 – 2021) and public outreach, including advertising the October 28, 2019 Expert Panel (Open House 2)

STAFFING

SPR

Katie Bang

David Graves

FPA

Riisa Conklin

Christina Kim

Consultants

Rebecca Fornaby

Yang He

Calder Gillin

Lara Rose

Marcia Wagoner

ATTENDANCE

Roughly 100 members of the public stopped to view the exhibit boards, which were displayed at the Park entrance in conjunction with the Freeway Park Association's Brews and Tunes event. Based on discussions with the project team, attendees were predominantly:

- Residents of First Hill
- Employees of nearby buildings
- Residents of Capitol Hill

NOTIFICATION

- Flyer sent via email to “Freeway Park Neighbors and Friends” mailing list (SPR)
- Flyers (hard copy) distributed (FPA)
 - Lyle Bicknell, OPCD
 - Scott Bonjukian, I-5 Lid Steering Committee
 - Jeff Blosser, WSCC
 - Robert Taylor, Compass Housing
 - In and around park
- FPA monthly newsletter (FPA)
- SPR Facebook event created (SPR)
- SPR social media push – Twitter, Facebook (SPR)
- FPA social media push – Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (FPA)
- Press release (SPR)
- Parkways blog post (SPR)

WHAT WE HEARD

The project team collected feedback from participants through casual conversations as well as a sticky dot exercise. (See appendix A)

Key takeaways

- Most attendees had not heard of the project.
- Most attendees were both supportive of and interested in attending Open House 2.
- Attendees were very willing to take the handout cards containing the project URL, suggesting that similar cards would be an effective way to get the word out about surveys in the future—some even took extras to share with others.
- Likely due to the walk-by nature of this event, sign-in sheets were not an effective way to capture names and email addresses, suggesting that it will be critical to do so at Open House 2 to build a public mailing list for this project.
- There is substantial interest in learning how homelessness is being considered and addressed in this project, including displacement during construction.
- Attendees expressed concern about the use and condition of the south end of Freeway Park (Box Gardens). What can be done so that it isn’t misused and neglected?
- Attendees also expressed interest in improvements to the restrooms.

Anecdotes

- **Green Tree Early Childhood Center:** Parents would like the kids to use the park more—they used to take the kids outside more frequently, but over the last few years safety issues have prevented them from doing so (e.g. kids getting scraped up on the concrete paving).



- **YWCA:** A woman thanked the team for the effort to restore the park, explaining that it means a lot to her to have people and music in the park as it makes her feel less alone as she recovers from addiction.
- **Recent transplants:** Two people who moved to Seattle a year ago had never heard of Freeway Park and came to the event after seeing a post on Twitter. They loved the park and said they would come back even though they do not live nearby.
- **First Hill resident:** One attendee highlighted all of the new high-rise development planned for 8th Ave, stressing the importance of how bikes are able move across the park and making connections to dedicated bike lanes. Could the 8th Ave bridge be widened or improved?
- **Families with young children:** Several families expressed excitement about the improvements.
- One woman requested better cleaning and maintenance of the park, including the addition of a working bathroom. Another attendee expressed excitement about the renovations.

APPENDIX A: Sticky dot exercise

MOVING FORWARD

This project will build on the recommendations of the *Finding Freeway Park* project, a community based planning study led by the Freeway Park Association.

Messages from the Community
 Community input for the *Finding Freeway Park* project was gathered several ways: 3 public meetings, directed outreach and interviews, online surveys, and on-site opportunities to provide feedback.
 The following key messages emerged from the *Finding Freeway Park* project's outreach.

- We love the greenery, landscape, and variety of plants.
- We love the architecture and fountains.
- We want to see even more programming.
- We want functioning restrooms.
- We want more lighting and people in the park, so that it feels welcoming and safe all the time.
- We want more opportunities for recreation, play space for children and families, and art in the park.

How would you like to use the park?

 as a neighborhood park for people of all ages, including children

 as a destination park for programmed events and activities

 as a tranquil oasis

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