

# Portage Bay Park

**Edward B. Murray**  
Mayor

**Diane Sugimura**  
Interim Director, OPCD

**Shannon Loew**, Chair

**Ross Tilghman**, Vice Chair

**Brodie Bain**

**Lee Copeland**

**Ben de Rubertis**

**Thaddeus Egging**

**Rachel Gleeson**

**Laura Haddad**

**Theo Lim**

**John Savo**

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**Valerie Kinast**  
Coordinator

**Aaron Hursey**  
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## Commissioners Present

Shannon Loew, Chair  
Ross Tilghman, Vice Chair  
Brodie Bain  
Lee Copeland  
Rachel Gleeson  
Laura Haddad  
Theo Lim  
John Savo

## Commissioners Excused

Ben de Rubertis  
Thaddeus Egging

## Project Description

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is proposing the development of Portage Bay Park, located along the north shore of Portage Bay in the University District. The 3-acre site, 1.65-acres of which is comprised of dry land, is west of the intersection of NE Boat Street and 15th Ave NE and is adjacent to Sakuma Viewpoint. The site was purchased from the University of Washington as mitigation for impacts from the SR520 expansion project.

The project proposal includes the removal existing structures, on-site remediation, and habitat restoration. The park will also provide recreation opportunities, community gathering space, water access, and shoreline habitat areas.

The design team is also creating a remediation plan for the site and as well as several design scenarios for park programming. SPR and the design team will hold four public meetings throughout the design phase of the project. The park will start permitting, bidding, and construction in mid-2016 and is planned to open in late 2018.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the project. The purpose of this meeting is to review the concept design for Portage Bay Park and provide feedback to SPR and the design team. At the meeting, the SDC voted 8-0 to approve the Portage Bay concept design with a condition and recommendation.

## Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

March 17, 2016

2:00 - 3:30 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Concept Design

Previous Reviews

[10/15/15](#)

Project Team Present

Lara Rose

Walker Macy

Attendees

David Graves

SPR

Jason Huff

Office of Arts and Culture

Ann Marie Schneider

Walker Macy

March 17, 2016

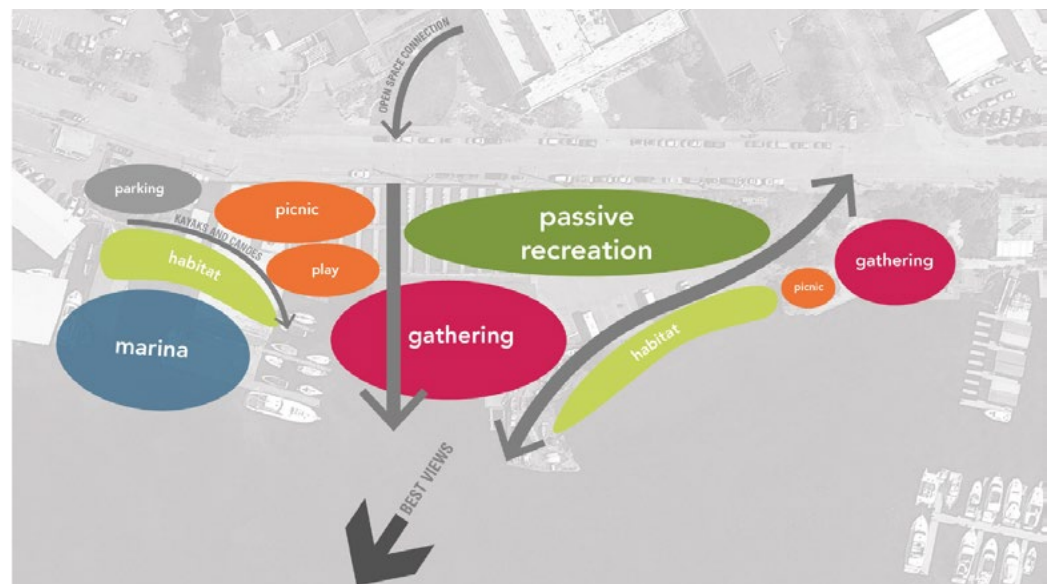
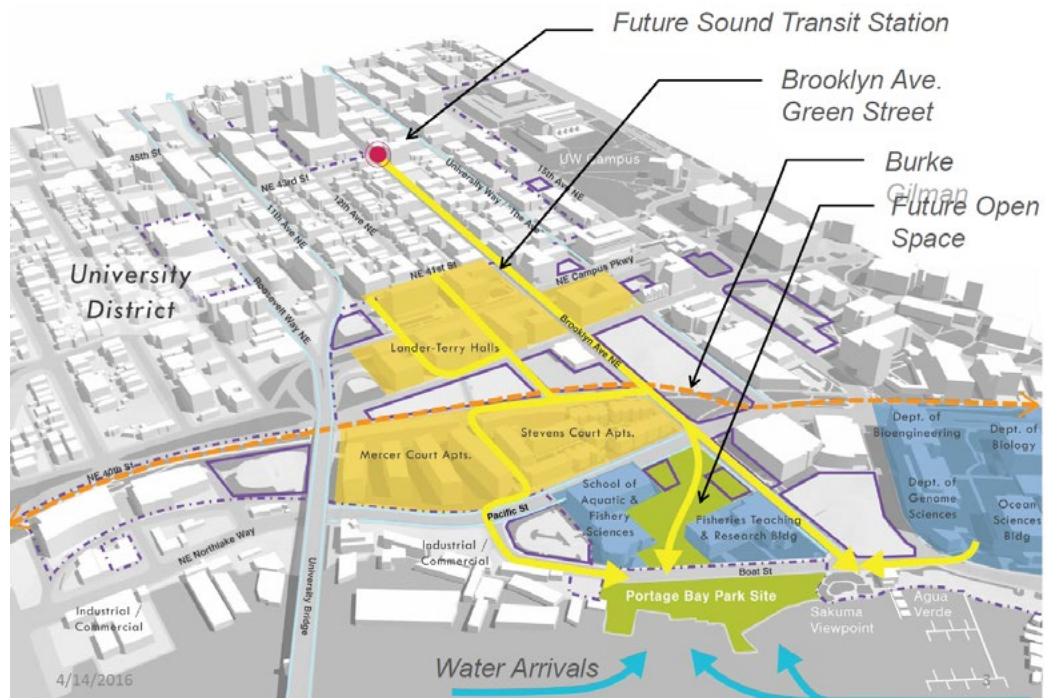


Figure 1: Neighborhood context (Above) and site programming (bottom)

**Summary of Presentation**

Lara Rose of Walker Macy presented the proposal. Ms. Rose provided an overview of the existing and future surrounding context. She stated that as the community continues to grow access to waterfront parkland will become increasingly important. Since their last meeting with the SDC, the project team has continued involvement with community members as well as Faculty and Students at the University of Washington (UW). See figure 1 for more detail. Ms. Rose then presented background information about historical landscapes and uses surrounding Portage Bay.

The concept design combined elements from the three conceptual designs into one preferred concept. The preferred design concept combines an accessible pathway connecting parking, play areas, and gathering space located west of the park to passive recreation along the eastern edge of the park from option one, an over water pier structure from option 2, and a central pathway connecting boat street the Portage Bay from option 3. Park programming will include a central gathering space near the water, a series of pedestrian pathways, and views across Portage Bay. The park site plan will also include a shade structure, publicly accessible restroom,



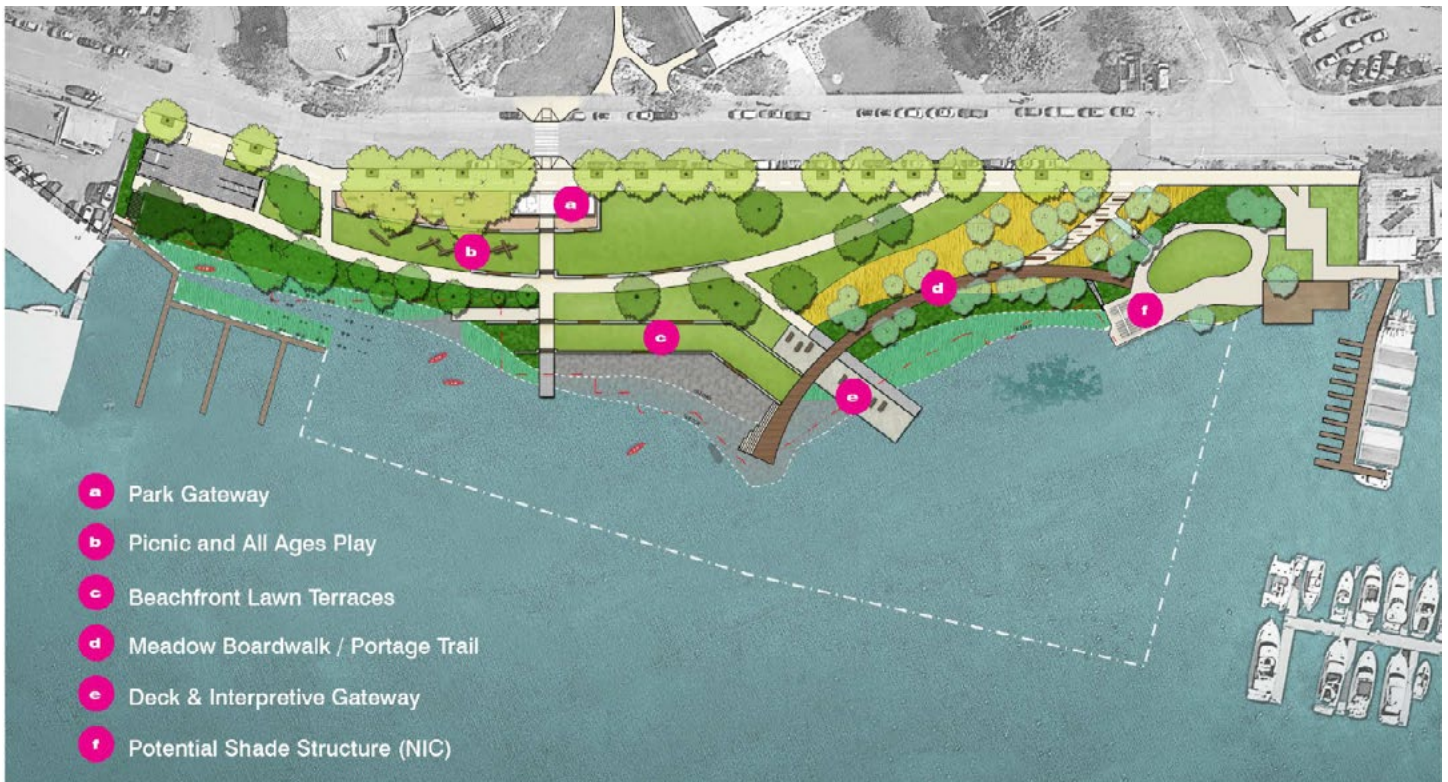


Figure 2: Proposed site plan

and picnic zone near Boat St as well as Interpretive trail, boardwalk, beachfront lawn terraces, shoreline access, and non-motorized watercraft put-in area. The proposed plan will also include 75% permeable materials, 70 tree plantings, and a fully naturalized shoreline while treating on-site contaminated soil and reducing over water structure coverage from 14,000 square feet (sf) to 3,000 sf. See figures 1, 2 & 3 for more detail.

Although the project team has not identified specific materials nor architectural designs, they plan on reusing material salvaged from the demolition of existing on-site structures. The proposed design will include several planting typologies, ranging from Aquatic and floating wetland plants to semi-aquatic, riparian, and meadow plant typologies, throughout the site.

**Agency Comments**

**David Graves**, SPR, is very excited about this project. The buildings located on site were not approved for landmark status and will be deconstructed. SPR will potentially re-use materials from the buildings in the park design.

**Public Comments**

**None**

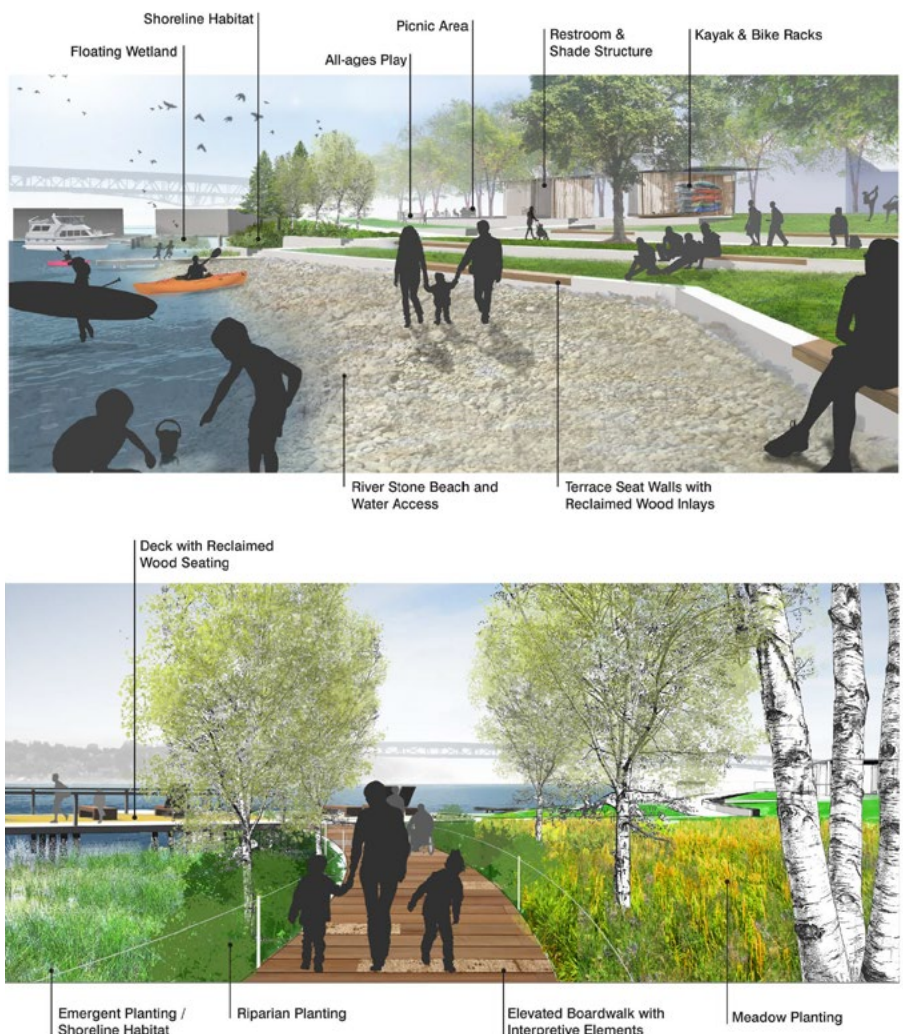


Figure 3: Proposed beachfront lawn (above) and meadow boardwalk (bottom)

## Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Context
- Program
- Circulation and access
- Materials
- Sustainability

### *Context*

The Commission commended the project team for including waterfront access and connections to Sakuma Viewpoint, located to the east of the park. The SDC stressed the importance of having a mid-block crossing across Boat St.

### *Program*

The SDC is encouraged by the continued development of the park design. Commissioners recommended the project team to consider extending the pier further over the water in order to increase recreation opportunities. The Commission also recommended that the project team consider commemorating past, present, and future uses on-site within the park design.

### *Circulation and access*

The SDC had concerns regarding circulation and access to park programming. Commissioners are concerned the ADA accessible pathway provides limited accessibility to park programming. They encouraged the design team to fully articulate how to make programming throughout the park accessible to all users. Commissioners also recommended the project team provide a more direct route from the vehicular drop-off area, located on Boat St, to the kayak drop off point located near the southwest shoreline.

Commissioners recommended the design team provide examples of views looking toward Portage Bay from the proposed boardwalk, so that they can better understand the best orientation for the proposed boardwalk as well as other outlook points located throughout the park.

### *Materials*

The SDC recognized the lack of detail presented by the project team. Commissioners requested the project team provide more detail with respect to materials and architectural design.

### *Sustainability*

The SDC recommended the design team provide more detail about onsite sustainability measures, including information about permeable materials, material source location, and percentage of salvaged material used.

## Action

The SDC thanked the project team for presenting the concept design for the Portage Bay Park project. The Commission appreciated the degree to which the team has incorporated prior comments from The Commission.

The SDC voted to approve, 8 to 0, the concept design for Portage Bay Park with the following Condition:

1. Provide a mid-block crossing along Boat Street, connecting the park to future development located north of the site

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Further develop the connection from park to Sakuma Viewpoint
2. Consider providing direct access to the kayak drop-off from Boat Street
3. Further study the orientation of the boardwalk to provide greater visual and functional access to Portage Bay