



Tracy Record <westseattleblog@gmail.com>

Follow up to the community regarding the Olmsted Parks Restoration - Schmitz Park project

1 message

Whitfield, Michelle <Michelle.Whitfield@seattle.gov> Fri, Jun 18, 2021 at 3:04 PM
To: "Whitfield, Michelle" <Michelle.Whitfield@seattle.gov>
Cc: "Aguirre, Jesús" <Jesus.Aguirre@seattle.gov>, "Sheffer, Andy" <Andy.Sheffer@seattle.gov>, "O'Connor, Karen" <Karen.OConnor@seattle.gov>, "Baldwin, Kim" <Kim.Baldwin@seattle.gov>, "westseattleblog@gmail.com" <westseattleblog@gmail.com>

Thank you all for attending the meeting on Monday, June 14th to talk about the Olmsted landscape restoration project at Schmitz Park. We appreciate the effort and thank you for sharing your questions and concerns. We hope we were able to provide you with more background and understanding of the project. As promised, we are following up with your group to recap what we heard and to provide an update on our next steps in response to our meeting.

Here is a brief summary of what we heard at the meeting:

- **Engagement:** The immediate neighbors would have appreciated more opportunity to provide input earlier in the project. Outreach for major maintenance and smaller scale projects is less than outreach for more involved projects. We recognize that even though this project is smaller, it would have benefitted from more direct engagement early on.
- **Goat Paths:** The neighbors don't know of any "goat path" at this location – Stevens and 57th, but there are two trails further up the block to the west. People aren't seen climbing up the slope at the intersection but they are further west. (Post meeting note: After the meeting, Liesa, Kim and Michelle walked further east along the slope and found what appears to be the goat path in question. It has a fallen tree blocking at the upper elevation and has become overgrown but is still visible.)
- **Stairs:** There was a discussion of locations of the proposed stairs. The 2018 Olmsted Parks Study showed stairs at the entry or at the alley – two sets of stairs. Through the design process, it was identified that the best location for the stairs is at the street intersection. The stairs are not proposed in the exact location of a goat path, but are located to meet the design intent and to be situated at the most beneficial location. After much discussion, the group agreed that IF stairs are installed, the intersection seems to be the best location among the three. However,

most of the attendees don't want the stairs in general or feel there is a strong need for them.

- Tree planting and vegetation enhancements: This work is supported.
- As with most of our projects there is positive support, people that are concerned about the project and people against. It was noted by SPR staff that the project was shared at the PTA meeting where there was support. Many of the neighbors at this Monday night meeting stated that their perspective differs as adjacent homeowners, yet we have also heard from neighboring homeowners that they support the project. SPR weighs the input from all the stakeholders when making design decisions.
- The following safety concerns were raised about placing stairs in this location:
 - The area becomes congested with vehicles during school drop-off and pick-up times.
 - When Alki Beach gets busy, people drive through this neighborhood looking for parking which also causes congestion.
 - Fencing near the intersection creates a blind corner so drivers can't see around the bend.
 - There are not city sidewalks for walkers to continue on at the base of the proposed stairs and users would have to walk along the road until they reach existing sidewalk.
- The neighbors noted negative externalities of Alki Beach weekend and evening activities coming to the corner.
 - Litter and debris often needs to be picked up by the neighbors after such activities.
 - The neighbors feel that stairs might create an additional place for people to sit and engage in negative activity.
 - It was noted by SPR staff that 'eyes on the park' can help to deter negative activities by inviting more wanted activities to the area.
- There was a request to look at other improvements within Schmitz Park instead of this one.

Once again, we appreciate your willingness to meet with us to hear about the project and voice your opinions. It is important that we pause and take the time needed to address your concerns. In order accomplish this, we will do the following:

- **We will delay the installation of the stairs but will continue with the tree planting, vegetation management and invasive plant removal at this time.**
- **We will continue to coordinate with SDOT to address the safety concerns which were raised at the meeting. An addition of a staircase in the future will be dependent upon this coordination.**
- **We will keep you informed of any progress, changes or general information as we shift our focus to address your concerns.**

As an interesting sidenote, we are working closely with the Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks to prepare for the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Law Olmsted in 2022. The replacement trees in this corridor will be the first of 200 trees that are intended to be planted to commemorate this celebration. Here is more information on this effort at <https://olmsted200.org/>.

Thank you, and once again, we will keep you informed as we continue to progress on this beautification and restoration project. Feel free to reach out with questions or concerns at any time.



Michelle Whitfield

Capital Projects Coordinator

Planning, Development & Maintenance Division
City of Seattle, Seattle Parks and Recreation

C: 206-465-8492

[Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Blog](#)

Pronouns: she, her, hers

[300 Elliott Avenue West](#)

[Suite 100](#)

[Seattle, WA 98119](#)



image001.png
10K