Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
Feasibility Study and Design Program
03.08.2016
Volunteer Park Trust
ORA + Walker Macy
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2015, the Volunteer Park Trust engaged ORA and Walker Macy to investigate the feasibility of revitalizing the outdoor Amphitheater in Volunteer Park and developing a design program for improvements to be made. The study was funded by a grant from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods “Small and Simple Projects Fund”. The study confirmed that there is a clear need and broad support for revitalizing the Amphitheater space. Important observation and research identified the extensive current deficiencies and possible improvements that integrate with the surrounding historic Olmsted landscape.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The feasibility study has included extensive outreach, interviews and meetings with the community, neighbors, and diverse users, including daily park visitors, as described in detail under the “Process Overview” section following this executive summary. On October 15, the project team presented the initial analysis and studies in a major Public Meeting, gaining valuable insights from community members. A second Public Meeting was held on February 16 to review the evolved study and program and identify comments for inclusion in the final report.

LANDMARKS BOARD REVIEW

On November 18, the project team presented the initial findings and site studies to the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board to seek their preliminary feedback on potential modifications to the existing stage and related open space. The existing stage and adjoining lawn area were designed in 1971 by Richard Haag. Although it was not part of the original park design, the entirety of Volunteer Park was designated as a landmark following the construction of the stage, so any modifications to it require Board approval. The Board was receptive to the preliminary studies presented, particularly where there was opportunity to restore original elements of the Olmsted design intent.

CORE PRINCIPLES

Through the outreach and engagement with the community, users, and public agencies, a core set of principles emerged as fundamental to the vision for the amphitheater revitalization:

• Enhance Olmsted Landscape (distinctive character that respects original Olmsted vision)
• Improve Quality of Space for Daily Park Users (design for non-event / informal use and views)
• Broaden Performance Diversity - Not Size (existing 500-600 primary audience capacity is optimal)
• Provide Accessibility for All (full ADA compliance – pathways, audience, and backstage)
• Improve Acoustics and Noise Control (physical acoustic improvements + tighter event management)
• Improve Safety and Access (parking and traffic; lighting; improved visibility and safety)
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - CONTINUED

SITE ANALYSIS & ALTERNATIVE STUDIES

The site analysis and alternative studies resulted in the following key recommendations:

**Accessibility:** recommend upgrades to existing pathways along south and west edges of the great lawn area to create an accessible route from Volunteer Park’s primary Boulevard to the stage area. Provide ADA compliant grades and surfaces with added handrails at limited areas where required, integrated carefully to minimize modifications to the existing landscape.

**Sun Orientation and Landscape Enhancements:** recommend moving stage north of existing location as explored in preliminary concept studies. Advantages include a) improved sun orientation to reduce glare for audiences; b) reintroduction of a key Olmsted pathway; and c) more idyllic view from the great lawn.

MANAGEMENT OF THE AMPHITHEATER SPACE

A key issue identified in reviews with neighbors and in the Public Meetings was the strong desire to establish more active management and more stringent noise limitations by the Department of Parks and Recreation. There was also strong interest in developing a method of assuring that the range of performance uses are both diverse and compatible with other park uses. To assure project success and broad community support, it will be important to develop this management plan with clear criteria in parallel with developing the project design.

DESIGN PROGRAM

The design program includes comprehensive recommendations for the entire amphitheater space. The stage, backstage, open lawn area, pathways, and related site work should integrate seamlessly with the surrounding park to create a unified space which respects and enhances the historic Olmsted landscape. The design should be optimized for everyday non-event uses and diverse performances. The key design program elements are as follows:

**Stage:** provide a 1200 sf stage floor surface, nominally 30’ deep by 40’ wide; provide a resilient floor surface (concrete is problematic for actors and precludes dance performances). Provide backstage entry positions for improved performer access.

**Backstage:** provide a flexible dressing room (500 sf), 2 single restrooms, and a storage area (100 sf). Spaces should be flexible to accommodate summer youth programs or small community meetings. Provide an open outdoor space behind the backstage area.

**Acoustics and Weather Protection:** provide mass at back walls for noise control; recommend integration of a retractable translucent roof over the stage for improved acoustics and weather protection when the stage is in use. The design of the acoustics and roof system will each require in-depth exploration and review during concept design and are described more completely in the full design program.

**Lawn & Amphitheater Seating:** maintain continuous lawn area for optimal flexibility. Limited integral bench seating at front edges of space was considered but is not desired due to the desire for flexibility for other uses. Provide continuous ADA compliance accessible pathways from ADA parking spaces to ADA compliant seating areas within the lawn area.

**Public Restrooms:** the current outdated and normally closed public restrooms are proposed to be replaced with new public restrooms with fixture counts and access as described in the detailed program. The new public restrooms, to be integrated within the design of the new amphitheater, will include fully accessible men’s, women’s, and universal / all-gender facilities consistent with City of Seattle requirements for new facilities.
FEASIBILITY STUDY

PROCESS OVERVIEW

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EXPLORATION

Volunteer Park Trust and the consultant team commenced the feasibility study by conducting intensive research, outreach, and exploration of precedents, existing conditions, and alternatives. The process included extensive interviews and focused reviews in September and October 2015 with community members, neighbors, and amphitheater space users to analyze existing conditions, identify community desires and concerns, and explore alternative approaches to revitalizing the existing stage and open-air amphitheater space. (Summaries of the community and focus group interviews and comments are provided in later sections of this report).

On October 15, the project team presented the initial site analysis, program recommendations, and site studies in Public Meeting #1 at the Asian Art Museum, gaining valuable insights from a broad range of community members. The team then conducted additional interviews including on-site dialogue with daily park users, integrating the feedback from the Public Meeting and the additional interviews into the developed feasibility study and design program presented in this document.

On February 16, the findings of this report were presented in Public Meeting #2, held at Miller Community Center. The feedback and dialogue from this meeting is summarized under the “Community and User Engagement portion of this report.

The final feasibility study and design program report, including public comments, will then form the basis for evaluating next steps, laying the groundwork to proceed with design. It is important to note that this first project phase is focused on site analysis and program definition and does not include schematic design. While conceptual studies have been developed to facilitate dialogue and discovery, this pre-design phase does not include final design recommendations.

Process Outline

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<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
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<td>Preliminary Research, Interviews &amp; Community Outreach</td>
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<td><strong>PUBLIC MEETING #1: OCTOBER 15, 2015</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Detailed Research &amp; Develop Report</td>
<td>3 months</td>
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<td><strong>PUBLIC MEETING #2: FEBRUARY 16, 2016</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Incorporate Comments &amp; Publish Final Report</td>
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CONTEXT - OLMSTED VISION AND PRIOR BAND SHELLS

VOLUNTEER PARK

Centrally located on Seattle’s Capitol Hill, Volunteer Park is the most complete and well preserved example of the Olmsted Brothers’ landscape design among Seattle city parks. It is often referred to as the crown jewel of Seattle’s Olmsted-designed park system. The park plays a dual role as a citywide destination park and as a neighborhood park in one of Seattle’s most prominent and densely populated neighborhoods. The Olmsted plan emphasized provision of space for passive recreation, with each intended structure directly supporting and subordinated to the overall landscape experience.

Conceived as the centerpiece of the Olmsted Brothers’ 1903 Comprehensive Park and Boulevard System plan, Volunteer Park was designed between 1904 and 1910, and substantially completed by 1912. Despite a few notable changes over the past century Volunteer Park retains its overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is both a National and City Landmark, which confers significant protection for identified “contributing” park features.

PRIOR BAND SHELLS

From the beginning, Volunteer Park has contained structures to accommodate outdoor performances. The original, Olmsted-designed band pavilion was integrated into a 150 foot long wood lath pergola paralleling the ridge line. It faced a semicircular “Concert Grove” to the east on axis with the reservoir to the west. The entire pergola and concert grove were destroyed in 1931 to make way for the Seattle [now Asian] Art Museum.

In 1915, the city concluded that the original Olmsted-designed pavilion was not adequate for larger events, so a new significantly larger band shell was constructed on the north side of the reservoir, close to the site of the current stage. It was a wooden structure designed by prominent local architects Bebb & Gould.

This structure was razed in 1947 and not replaced until 1971, when landscape architect Richard Haag designed the existing brick structure. At that time, the lawn in front of the stage was regraded to form an amphitheater.
1913 PARK VIEW (BAND PAVILION WITH SEATING ON RIGHT; DEMOLISHED IN 1931)

1915 BAND SHELL (demolished 1947)

The 1915 Band Shell was constructed at the west edge of the great lawn area. The original Olmsted curved pathway forming the western edge of the great lawn is visible in the left hand image, between the stage and audience seating area. (This pathway was removed along with the regrading for the 1971 Amphitheater project.) The major tree grove to the west of the lawn, a significant aspect of the original Olmsted vision for the park, was largely obscured by the imposing height of the 1915 Band Shell.
EXISTING CONDITIONS - 1971 AMPHITHEATER

The existing stage was designed in 1971 by Richard Haag, relatively close to the siting of the prior 1915 Band Shell. The lower western portion of the great lawn was regraded to create a more steeply sloped audience area close to the stage. The original Olmsted curved pathway along the lower west edge of the lawn was also removed at this time, with the relocated pedestrian pathway routed behind the new stage. Public restrooms were integrated behind the stage, but due to limited visibility, they are typically left closed for safety reasons and are only opened during some performances.

Reviews with daily park users, community members, and performers consistently identified issues with the current space as follows:

- Detracts from the surrounding landscape; impacts views to the forest
- Looks Abandoned when not in use
- No Wheelchair or Mobility Access
- Inflexible and poorly configured to support diverse performances
- Lack of back stage spaces and poor weather protection limits quality and diversity of performances
- Lack of roof cover causes more sound dispersion with less directed sound to audience
- Safety issues due to concealed public restrooms and limited view to public pathway behind stage
- Stage orientation creates major glare issues for audiences in afternoon and early evening performances
EXISTING STAGE

The 1971 Stage consists of a concrete stage floor approximately 30 feet deep, tapering in width from 30 feet at rear to approximately 50 feet at front. The solid large scale brick back wall with angled sides provides a solid backdrop but the lack of openings at rear of stage creates awkward performer access issues.

EXISTING PUBLIC RESTROOMS

The restrooms are typically closed due to safety issues and poor visibility; interior conditions are poor and do not meet ADA / Accessibility codes. During performances, these are the only enclosed backstage spaces, so they are sometimes used as performer change rooms creating conflicts with use by the public.
MUSIC PERFORMANCES: examples above include Seattle Chamber Music Society and Vibrations Music Festival. Lack of roof cover creates acoustic issues; lack of sun protection is also a problem for high quality music instruments. Temporary tents are often used to address these issues. The stage orientation creates major problems with glare in late afternoon during summer months.
THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES: the images above are from a Green Stage performance in August. The lack of back stage performer spaces requires temporary set up outdoors within the public pathway and adjoining public open space. The concrete stage surface makes it problematic for dramatic performances. Greenstage typically performs on the grass in front of the stage to create a closer connection with the audience.
OTHER EVENT USES: the stage is used for a range of other events, including evening films and cultural festivals. Upgrades to pathway lighting are needed to improve safety and access for evening park users as well as event-goers. Weather protection and roof cover would reduce the need for temporary set up and improve functionality for these uses.
EXISTING ACCESS AND WALKWAYS: the images above show some of the key pedestrian pathways used to access the amphitheater space. Improvements are needed to the pathway surfaces and grading to improve safety and provide ADA compliant accessibility to the amphitheater stage, seating, and back stage areas. The bike racks are often overfilled during active park use.
SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The site inventory and analysis identified the following key considerations as described in the site plan below and the enlarged plan on the following page.

**Sun Orientation:** the yellow arc represents the sun path at summer solstice. The current stage location and orientation creates significant glare and visibility issues, since the audience faces southwest, looking directly toward the sun in late afternoon and early evening.

**Accessible Route:** there is currently no ADA compliant accessible route to the stage or the lawn seating area in front of the stage. The existing pathway from the primary Boulevard to the stage area and front of the lawn exceed in some areas the 5% maximum slope allowed without handrails. The pathways should be upgraded to meet accessibility requirements with relatively minor regrading, improvements to walkway surfaces, and with added handrails at limited areas, integrated carefully to minimize modifications to the existing landscape.

**Lawn Slopes and Grading:** the dotted lines show two foot contour lines, demonstrating the steeper grades and flat area in front of the current stage integrated in the 1971 amphitheater construction. (The original Olmsted grading maintained a gradual grade to the edge of the forested area.)
ENLARGED SITE PLAN - INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

Refer to key considerations summary on previous page.
COMMUNITY AND USER ENGAGEMENT

ORA and the consultant team worked closely with Volunteer Park Trust and Seattle Parks and Recreation to develop an extensive outreach process and attempt to identify and explore as many different perspectives as possible, through an inclusive, transparent community consultation process. The goal of conducting outreach was to capture the dreams and concerns of the community, park neighbors, everyday park visitors, performance groups and performance attendees.

GOALS OF THE COMMUNITY AND USER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The aims of the community and user consultation process were to:

• Understand and address the dreams and concerns of the community, neighbors and everyday park visitors
• Explore the full range of desired uses
• Develop a proposed design program that meets the needs for new and existing users
• Coordinate with the Volunteer Park Trust and Seattle Parks staff to identify and address operational issues
• Develop proposals which respect and enhance the historic Olmsted vision for Volunteer Park
• Encourage active dialogue and understanding of all community needs and goals
• Develop a shared vision with strong community support

The team gathered information on spatial needs by interviewing focus groups of performance and community organizations that currently use the performance space, as well as other parties interested in using an improved facility. The preliminary results were shared at a public meeting in October where local community members were invited to provide feedback on the existing performance space and information gathered to date. The intent of this report is not design development, but to present feedback from the user focus groups that guided preliminary drawings for performance space program and scale.

Comments from the public meetings groups are summarized below and incorporated into the suggestions presented in this report. The report itself is a part of the input process intended to allow interested parties to examine the issues surrounding the existing performance space, and respond as the design of the project develops.

VOLUNTEER PARK TRUST - STEWARD OF COMMUNITY PROCESS

ORA worked closely with the Volunteer Park Trust and Seattle Parks and Recreation to develop the overall engagement and interview process, with a focus on assuring that as many perspectives as possible were identified and explored throughout the feasibility study and review process. The Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project Task Force was actively involved in nearly all the interviews and outreach, providing strong continuity and insights, with deep understanding and responsiveness to community concerns. A representative from Parks and Recreation was also actively involved in key reviews and community meetings as well as the monthly Task Force meetings, maximizing the collaborative discovery process and assuring that Seattle Parks was aware of and responsive to community concerns and operational issues.
PUBLIC MEETING #1

Volunteer Park Trust, ORA, and Walker Macy solicited community input and presented preliminary site analysis and initial research at a well-attended public meeting on October 15, 2015 at the Seattle Asian Art Museum. The team collected community feedback through extended comments and dialogue following the initial presentation. Attendees also submitted comments on paper through comment sheets distributed and collected during the event, and by e-mail after the presentation. The full meeting notes and written comments are available on the Volunteer Park Trust website at: http://volunteerparktrust.org/current-projects/amphitheater/

The most frequently expressed concern centered on improving acoustics and minimizing noise impacts beyond the amphitheater area. Many attendees expressed concern that some amplified events are too loud and disruptive.

There was a consistent desire that physical changes and management of the space be compatible with the contemplative character of the park. Equally important was maintaining flexible use of the space for non-event use. The large open green space is a desirable spot for fun and relaxation in the park and should not be compromised.

SUMMARY OF DESIGN-RELATED REQUESTS AND COMMENTS:

Acoustics and Noise Control
• Improve acoustics to focus sound within amphitheater space minimize event audibility beyond space
• Enhance the acoustics for quieter events (theater, spoken word, chamber music)

Character and Quality of Space
• Maintain/improve flexibility of space for non-event use
• New stage should be iconic yet appropriate to the natural park environment
• Enhance space to encourage a wider diversity of events

Access and Accessibility
• Improvements to accessible paths and ADA compliance very important
• Raised seating desired by some but many others concerned about fixed elements limiting non-event use
• Overall park access should be evaluated including parking, traffic, safety and bike storage

Safety
• Keep the Volunteer Park lower loop road closed except for event access
• Improve pathway lighting to make safer for evening use
• Provide open visibility to woods and restroom facilities
• Address safety concerns regarding campers on stage

SUMMARY OF MANAGEMENT-RELATED REQUESTS AND COMMENTS:
• Request more vigilant enforcement of decibel restrictions
• Request greater diversity of programs and possible limits on single type of events
• Requests to improve procedures for event management and communication with neighbors
• Minimize temporary impacts on park use during construction
INTerviews: Daily Park Users

Interviews were conducted by approaching daily users on the paths and lawn in front of the existing performance space. Those interviewed use the amphitheater space frequently for a variety of activities ranging from walking past it with their dogs, to stopping by for various events, to playing on the stage itself.

Positive feedback on the existing performance space

- Calm, pastoral, small venue atmosphere, no cars on the back road adds to this
- Ability to see the stage from the whole lawn
- Great to have a gathering space in the park
- Lack of city busy – ads, graffiti, posters, etc.
- Amphitheater simple back drop for iMovies or impromptu performances

Preferences for a new performance space:

Stage
- Plants or art to blend the stage with the natural setting
- Potential water feature on stage when not used for performances
- Most users felt that a roof would be desirable but some expressed concern about encampments
- Desire to keep lawn open and flexible but some built-in seating at the back of the bowl to define the space
- Improve drainage to eliminate wet, muddy pit in front of stage

Programming
- Desire for diverse mix of events; not much concern expressed by these users regarding loud events.
- Natural acoustics should be enhanced – especially for theater
- Public drinking fountain should be added
- Paths behind stage should be improved
- Opening up visibility to the woods behind existing stage would make the park feel safer

Interview: Volunteer Park Institutions

Representatives of Seattle Asian Art Museum and The Volunteer Park Conservatory provided feedback on existing use, desired improvements and potential for expanded programming:

Existing Use
- Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM) outdoor films
- Some progressive events that start at the SAAM and move to the amphitheater

Desired Improvements
- Reduce potential for graffiti, current maintenance issue
- Increase flexible use during non-event times
- Locate and light public restrooms to accommodate safe daily park use as well as events
- Improve general visibility of performance space and wayfinding from other park facilities
- Add lighting connecting the amphitheater space to other park facilities for safety and wayfinding
- Power service and locations should be improved

Potential Expanded Programming
- More events with SAAM or Conservatory serving as a pre-function space for amphitheater events
- Traditional Asian Performance – dance and music
- Contemporary Composers – Asian/American collaborations – commissioned pieces
- Choreography and Video Art
- Flexible education space would be great for education programs and small special events
INTERVIEWS: PERFORMANCE GROUPS

A series of interviews with diverse performance groups examined existing performance space issues, minimally required improvements, and desired improvements to support higher quality and more diverse performances. Groups interviewed included:

- Theater Groups - GreenStage, Seattle Shakespeare Company, Outdoor Theatre Festival
- Dance Groups - Spectrum, Whim Wh'im, PNB
- Music Performer/Presenters: Seattle Chamber Music Society, Seattle Opera, Peace Concerts
- Spoken Word & Media Arts - Hugo House and Jack Straw Cultural Center

Other groups contacted and pending interviews:
- PNB, Seattle Symphony, Eritrean Cultural Festival, Garfield Jazz

The comments from the full range of performing arts groups often overlapped, with the synthesized feedback summarized as follows:

**Stage**
- Stage Floor area should be 30’d x 40’ w x 2’h with backstage entry positions (currently stage has none)
- Space from stage front to sloped lawn / audience seating: 10’ flat area would be ideal (currently 20’+)
- Access to backstage equipment and scenery: need minimum 10’ wide path and access
- Concrete floor against union codes for dance and theater, wood floor needed for dance
- Need improved electrical provisions at rear of stage

**Roof**
- Very important to provide cover for instruments and performers from the elements
- Desirable as a framework for lighting and speakers to properly direct sound to audience
- A translucent roof is desirable to avoid ‘cave effect’ on stage when audience in bright sunlight

**Backstage Support**
- Flexible dressing room / green room space 20’ x 25’ divisible for separate dressing rooms
- (2) flexible restrooms
- Warm up space with mirror
- Storage: flexible 100 sf space, nominal 10’ x 10’
- Cubbies or lockers
- Infrastructure (perhaps in the lawn) for additional speakers

**Access**
- Need space for two vehicles behind stage for loading/unloading
- Public restrooms should not be located backstage in order to keep audience in front of house
- Accessibility needed to stage (wheelchair and mobility access does not exist currently)
- Connection to backstage at center stage desirable
- Provide lighting for safe exiting after evening performances

INTERVIEWS: OTHER USER GROUPS

Other event-based user groups such as Parkour Visions and Taco Truck Challenge were interviewed. These groups do not currently use the existing stage portion of the lawn for their events, but they would be interested in utilizing an improved facility. As they do not currently use the existing structure, many of their comments involved more specific design suggestions. These comments were recorded and will be taken into more detailed consideration as the design of the amphitheater progresses.
DANCE / MOVEMENT - (NEED RESILIENT FLOOR & WARM-UP SPACE)

NEW PROGRAMMING AND USES / FLEXIBILITY
In the meetings with the diverse users and performance groups, two key groups were identified as highly desirable to accommodate a new programming: dance/movement and youth education.
PUBLIC MEETING #2

For the second public meeting, Volunteer Park Trust, ORA, and Walker Macy presented a summary of the Feasibility Study findings and recommendations and solicited community feedback at Miller Community Center on February 16, 2016. After a summary presentation, community members engaged in small group and one on one conversations with the project team at three review stations, each focused on a key aspect of the project: site, program, and character. Each station presented key graphics from the report and included posters with specific questions for feedback regarding those issues. Graphic summaries of the boards have been included on the following pages, and images of the original posters with comments have been included in the appendix. Attendees were asked to submit written comments on comment sheets distributed and collected during the event and by e-mail after the presentation. Those comments have been included in the appendix.

In addition to the written comments received, several attendees strongly reiterated during one on one conversations the concern to control noise impacts beyond the amphitheater area. There was a request that the proposed new location be carefully assessed when the project proceeds to design phase to confirm that the location will not increase noise transmission beyond the amphitheater area to the surrounding neighborhood.

Many attendees were excited for an improved community space, particularly in regards to increased flexibility of the lawn. Improved safety of the amphitheater space, new public restrooms, and improvements to pathways were also expressed as strong desires.
FEEDBACK POSTER SUMMARY:

SITE . LOCATION . ACCESS

The presentation boards for this station included information on the site analysis, the proposed location of the new amphitheater space, and the ways of getting to the amphitheater. Below are the prompts that were shown on the poster at this station. All items in *italics* were written in. The stars represent stickers placed next to each question category.

Site
In order to determine what activities the amphitheater space should strive to enhance when not in use for events, community members were asked to place a sticker next to or write in an activity that they were most interested in for everyday use of the great lawn. Below are the categories that were listed; people were asked to place a sticker by the activity most important to them.

- Exercise/Active Play ★★★★★★★
- Picnic/Gathering ★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Relaxation/Meditation ★★★★★★★
- Walking past or through Drum circles ★★★★★★
- Photography

Location
The direction people approach the amphitheater space from could influence wayfinding and path improvements. The graphic below was shown, and attendees were asked to place a sticker next to the direction they approached from MOST often.

A - Tennis Courts/West Entries off Federal ★★★★★★★
B - Conservatory/Playground/East Lawn ★★★★★★★
C - SAAM/Black Sun/Reservoir ★★★★★★★
D - Loop Drive/Prospect St SE Entrance ★★★★★★★

Also included under ‘location’ was a request to identify which amphitheater site location they preferred. All attendees preferred the new location, except for one person who wrote in “SW off of Prospect.”

Existing Location

New Location ★★★★★★★★★★★

COMMUNITY AND USER ENGAGEMENT
Access
To determine how to prioritize access improvements, people were asked to place a sticker next to the method of transportation they use to get to the amphitheater MOST often. As the majority of participants put a sticker next to ‘walk,’ this suggested that most participants of the public meeting were likely neighbors of the park.

- Walk ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Bike
- Drive ★
- Public Transit

PROGRAMMING
This station included pictures of potential event types and uses for the flexible support space as well as the diagrams of the amphitheater program. There were two feedback posters for this station, one addressing amphitheater activities and one on the support spaces.

Amphitheater Programming
Meeting attendees were asked to place stickers next to the top THREE activities they would like to see more of in the amphitheater space. The results are shown below with the stars representing stickers placed and *italics* representing activities that were written in.

Performance
- Rock Shows ★★★★★
- Classical Music ★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Dance/Movement ★★★★★★★
- Theater ★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Video/Digital Performance ★
  - Drum Circles ★
  - Jazz

Special Events
- Public Speakers/Education ★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Ceremonies ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Movies ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Rally/Activism ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Cultural/Special Interest Event ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Drag Shows ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

Everyday Activities
- Yoga/Group Exercise ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Dance Instruction ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Games ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Meditation ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Story Telling ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- Dogs ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
- *Girl Activities*
- *Flirting*
- *Frisbee*
- *Sun Basking*
Backstage Programming
For this programming poster, people were asked to write in their comments in response to the prompts and images shown below. All legible comments have been transcribed below the images. Comments in (parenthesis) were added to an original comment by another person.

Performance Support

Share any comments regarding backstage access, performer preparation space, and storage.

- Hangout space covered + heated (- YES!)
- Restrooms, changing rooms - all private (no public access during performances) Safe (safety)
- Individual dressing rooms, lockers, mirrors, restrooms, space for drum set up + instrument prep.
- Enough power so performers don't have to bring generators
- ADA from Broadway streetcar
- Some sort of surface tram from Broadway streetcar to E Galer St.
- Prefer a Square Stage
- Really need a good accessible load-in for equipment, etc.

Flexible Space/ Education

What uses could you envision for the flexible, backstage space?

- Storage space for Tiny Tots
- Drum circles for when it rains(!)
- “Greenroom”
- On the main promenade - benches
- Community meetings - children’s day camps in art, dance, performance, etc.
- Public bike racks near stage where they can be seen by audience, but out of way
- Pronto Station
- Media Space
- Clock Tower
- Easy access to & from #10 Metro
Restrooms
Please share your preferences, ideas or concerns about new public restrooms:

- These should be as nice as can be. Hotel standard. Staffed. We settle for such low grade facilities in Seattle. Raise the bar. (YES!)
- We need nice, safe bathrooms in the Park. How to do it I don’t know. (Ditto to above!!)
- Gender neutral bathrooms (YEESS!)
- BIG!
- Plenty stalls, sinks in cab, painted in neutral colors.
- We need more restrooms in the park.
- Safety!
- Keep them open so we can use them. (!!!)
- Dedicated to performers and huge public toilet space under.
- Not just in children’s area.
- Some people are uncomfortable that go to existing stage lawn...
- Need safe handy restrooms located where everyday park users can access!
- Restrooms near the amphitheater - for shows after dark, it is crazy to have to walk far in the dark.
- Big.

EXPERIENCE . CHARACTER . EXPRESSION

This station identified key issues with the existing space and core design principles that emerged from the feasibility study. It also included several images for inspiration. The community members were asked to respond to the following two questions with stickers and write in comments and select images shown on the following page.

User Experience
Which TWO approaches do you think will MOST improve the experience of the amphitheater space?

- Restore historic Olmsted landscape character ★★★★★
- Reduce visual dominance of Amphitheater ★★
- Define upper edge of Amphitheater space
- Provide accessible, well lit paths ★★★★★
- Provide convenient, safe restrooms ★★★★★★★★★
  Interesting design ★

Amphitheater Features
In your opinion, which will have the LARGEST impact on the quality of amphitheater character?

- Area in front of stage for accessible seating
  Keep the grass for the children to run around. (Yes! No fixed seats, folks to seat on grass.)
- Better stage orientation ★★★
- Improved acoustics ★★★★★★★★★
- Safer stage surface ★★
- Seasonal weather protection ★★★
Expression
Community members were asked to select TWO images from those shown here that they liked the best. The stars represent stickers placed next to each image.
ACCESS AND TRAFFIC OBSERVATIONS

PARKING AND ACCESS - NEIGHBOR INTERVIEW AND OBSERVATIONS SUMMARY

Volunteer Park Trust organized a focus group meeting with community members and neighbors, to discuss access, traffic, and parking considerations with the team’s transportation consultant, Kendra Breiland of Fehr Peers. Fehr & Peers’ full report, incorporating neighbor feedback as well as Fehr and Peers’ site observations is attached to this report, and is summarized as follows:

Parking Conditions

There is not a large volume of parking in Volunteer Park, and on street parking is in high demand in the neighborhood around the park, even during non-event times. Fehr & Peers suggest the following be considered for further review in future project phases or in concert with other parkwide improvements:

Access by Car

• Consider Eliminating striping on E Highland Drive to encourage more efficient use of on-street supply
• Improved signage related to parking restrictions
• Improved enforcement of parking, especially during events
• Consideration of a Residential Parking Zone
• Consideration of implementing on-street paid-parking nearest to the park
• Discussion with churches and other off-street parking owners to consider shared-parking agreements
• Consider added wayfinding to off-site lots to reduce driver frustration and “cruising” for parking

Access by Foot

Although there are plenty of sidewalks and plenty of pleasant paths within the park, a lot of them are a bit worn and ADA-compliant access is inconsistent. Some of the sidewalks near the park and transit stops are narrow and poorly lit. Along with poor lighting, high shrubs and overgrown tree foliage make for dark, unsafe pedestrian paths. The following are key recommendations:

• Prioritize sidewalk facilities and lighting nearby transit stops.
• Consistent with the law, incorporate ADA-compliant designs into new pedestrian infrastructure.
• Improve maintenance so that foliage is less of a visibility issue.
• Consider removal of on-street parking in key locations where pedestrian/vehicle conflicts are most severe
• Consider providing wider and better separated pedestrian facilities.
• Incorporate non-intrusive lighting improvements for pedestrian paths

Access by Bike

There is very little bike parking in Volunteer Park, so the following are recommended:

• Find additional locations for secure bike parking
• For major events, consider how valet bike parking might be offered
• Explore implementation of an additional Pronto Station

Access by Transit

To improve connections to transit, the scope of the project should consider:

• Improved pedestrian connections and lighting at and around transit stops
• Plan for long-term connectivity with Link and Streetcar networks
• Improved signage and wayfinding to make transit stops and key destinations more apparent
The above images, from Walker Macy projects, convey the team’s intent to develop a sensitive integration of the built environment with the surrounding landscape to create a holistic sense of continuity, craft, and human scale compatible with Olmsted’s vision for Volunteer Park.

**LANDSCAPE PRECEDENTS**

Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
ORA + Walker Macy  03.08.2016
STAGE STRUCTURE PRECEDENTS: The above images were assembled to explore community and user reactions to a range of potential stage and roof configurations. The images which consistently evoked the most positive response are the images on the top row. The combination of a sense of lightness and relatively low profile were noted as especially appealing within the Volunteer Park context. The concept of a retractable fabric roof with a fixed structural frame, as represented in the upper left image, also was cited as highly desirable given the concern to avoid issues with a fixed roof and since a translucent material will avoid issues with performers being in shadow during daytime performances as represented in upper right image.
SITE ALTERNATIVES: The team developed two site alternative studies to explore potential resolution of issues relative to sun orientation as well as possible improvements to the stage’s integration with the surrounding landscape. Study A examined reconfiguration of the stage at the same location as the existing stage. Study B examined the possibility of moving the stage north. These studies are presented in more detail on the following pages. A strong preference for Study B was expressed by most reviewers, including the Landmarks Preservation Board, who appreciated the opportunities this presented to restore the primary Olmsted pathway and improve visibility to the major grove of trees west of the existing stage.
SITE PLAN STUDY A: RECONFIGURED STAGE / EXISTING LOCATION

- Widen Existing Path to 8' to Accommodate Vehicular Access
- Raise Grade 3' +/- to Match Current Stage Height
- New ADA Pathway
- Olmsted Path Alignment
- Expanded Backstage
- New Stage - Modify Location to Minimize Solar Angle
- Grade Break - Possible Seating
- Re-grade
- ADA Accessible Seating
- Improved ADA Accessible Pathway

Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
ORA + Walker Macy  03.08.2016

ALTERNATIVE SITING STUDIES
VIEW 1: EXISTING AMPHITHEATER (looking northwest - fall)

VIEW 1: MASSING STUDY  (shows recommended scale of a new stage with roof at current location)

ALTERNATIVE SITING STUDIES
VIEW 2: EXISTING AMPHITHEATER (looking southwest - summer)

VIEW 2: MASSING STUDY  (shows recommended scale of a new stage with roof at current location)
PLAN STUDY B: NEW STAGE / NEW LOCATION

Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
ORA + Walker Macy  03.08.2016
VIEW 1: EXISTING AMPHITHEATER (looking northwest - fall)

VIEW 1: MASSING STUDY  (shows recommended scale of a new stage with roof at potential new location)
PLAN STUDY B: NEW STAGE / NEW LOCATION

Expanded Backstage
New Stage
ADA Accessible Seating
Re-grade
Grade Break - Possible Seating
Improved ADA Accessible Pathway

Olmsted Path Alignment
Existing Stage Location

View 2
VIEW 2: EXISTING AMPHITHEATER (looking southwest - summer)

VIEW 2: MASSING STUDY  (shows recommended scale of a new stage with roof at potential new location)
On November 18, 2015, the project team presented the initial findings from the community outreach and user interviews as well as the alternative site studies to the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board to seek their preliminary feedback on potential modifications to the existing stage and related open space. The existing stage and adjoining lawn area were designed in 1971 by Richard Haag. Although the existing stage was not part of the original park design, the entirety of Volunteer Park was designated as a landmark following the construction of the stage, so any modifications to it require Board approval. The Board was receptive to the preliminary studies presented, particularly where there was opportunity to restore original elements of the Olmsted design intent. The above pair of images demonstrating how Study B would enable restoration of the original curved Olmsted pathway at west edge of the lawn was especially compelling to the Board. The Board also appreciated the opportunity to comment on alternative expressions for the new stage construction. The Board expressed preference that the stage design be developed as a distinctly modern structure while also blending with the surrounding landscape.
DESIGN PROGRAM
DESIGN PROGRAM

The feasibility study explored a wide range of issues and alternatives in dialogue with community members, neighbors, regular park users, neighbors, and performers. Through this process, a clear set of criteria and program requirements emerged and are summarized below. The detailed development of these components will be refined when the project moves forward with design.

CORE PRINCIPLES

The following core principles and goals define the program on a conceptual level:

- **Enhance Olmsted Landscape** (distinctive character that respects original Olmsted vision)
- **Improve Quality of Space for Daily Park Users** (design for non-event / informal use and views)
- **Broaden Performance Diversity - Not Size** (existing 500-600 primary audience capacity is optimal)
- **Provide Accessibility for All** (full ADA compliance – pathways, audience, and backstage)
- **Improve Acoustics and Noise Control** (physical acoustic improvements + tighter event management)
- **Improve Safety and Access** (parking and traffic; lighting; improved visibility and safety)

DETAILED PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The following design program includes comprehensive recommendations for the entire amphitheater space. The stage, backstage, open lawn area, pathways, and related sitework should integrate seamlessly with the surrounding park to create a unified space which respects and enhances the historic Olmsted landscape. The design should be optimized for everyday non-event uses and diverse performances. The key design program requirements are as follows:

STAGE

Provide a 1200 sf stage configured to be highly adaptable to suit everyday non-event use as well as a wide range of performances. The stage floor surface should be nominally 30’ deep by 40’ wide. This size and shape stage was agreed to be an optimal size by the majority of performance groups, providing for diverse uses while maintaining an appropriate scale to integrate with the park landscape. (The existing stage is similar size but is shaped awkwardly with a narrow backstage wall which limits performance flexibility.)

The front edge of the stage should be 2’ above the audience seating lawn area in front of the stage. Provide flexible entry options from the backstage support spaces along the rear walls of the stage. Provide built-in steps at the front of the stage and accessible ramps or at grade alignment with landscape lawn areas to the side of the stage. At grade alignment would allow for expanded wing or staging areas for certain theatrical performances.

Provide a more resilient floor surface than the current concrete, which is problematic for actors and precludes dance performances. Alternatives to consider include a rubberized surface and possibly a wood deck surface, although the durability concerns with the wood surface will almost certainly preclude this option. If a wood floor is not selected, it will be important to develop a method to provide or accommodate a moveable sprung floor system for dance performances.

A translucent, retractable roof cover over the full stage is highly recommended for improved acoustic performance and to provide weather protection for performers. The roof framework will also provide improved capability for theatrical lighting and to orient speakers directed properly toward the audience and thus reducing sound spill to areas outside the amphitheater space. The retractable roof is recommended to address concerns relative to undesired encampments on the stage and to provide flexibility for events or uses...
which prefer to not have a roof cover. A translucent or partially translucent roof surface is recommended to avoid shadowing of performers when viewed from brightly daylit audience areas.

**ACOUSTICS AND NOISE CONTROL**

The design of the amphitheater space should be developed with a focus on creating excellent acoustics for diverse events while minimizing the transference of event sound beyond the amphitheater space. The acoustic design approach will be developed in greater detail during concept design in close coordination with the acoustical consultant. The following key elements are proposed to be incorporated:

- Provide mass at rear of stage to reduce noise transmission to park and neighboring areas behind the stage. This can be achieved with a single high density wall or by placing enclosed backstage support spaces directly behind the full width of the stage.
- A roof covering over the stage with a nominal 15 degree upward slope will improve the sense of ensemble of the musical group by reflecting sound back to the musicians, while also increasing the amplitude of the performance for the audience and providing some sound attenuation to areas behind the shell.
- Provide an integrated roof frame and infrastructure to accommodate controlled amplified sound to help direct sound toward the audience and reduce sound transference outside the amphitheater space. The type of sound system used to amplify performances is as important as the size, shape and construction of the stage walls and roof. Column arrays provide greater directionality to amplified speaker’s sound across most of the frequency range of music.

**LAWN AND AUDIENCE SEATING AREA**

Maintain a continuous lawn area for optimal flexibility. The current grading condition with a more steeply graded space close to the stage that accommodates 500-600 audience members, is well liked by the performance groups and audiences since it draws the primary audience close the stage, while still providing the possibility of viewing by other park users from farther east on the lawn area.

The existing flat lawn area in front of the stage is considered too wide by many performance groups and has drainage issues during prolonged rains. Consider reducing the flat area to 10 feet width, and add sub-grade drainage to improve surface drainage.

Provide ADA accessible seating areas at the front and rear of the primary audience spaces. Limited integral bench seating at front edges of space may be appropriate and should be explored in concept design, with careful attention to maintenance and flexibility concerns expressed by users and Parks Department staff.

**ACCESS PATHWAYS**

Upgrade existing pathways from ADA compliant parking to Amphitheater audience, stage, and backstage areas to provide fully compliant access. Repairs to pathway surfaces and improved lighting should also be incorporated.

**PUBLIC RESTROOMS**

It is recommended that the current outdated and normally closed public restrooms be replaced with new public restrooms, configured to provide good visibility to restroom entries while also being unobtrusive relative to the stage and audience space. Restroom design shall meet Seattle Parks and Recreation most current standards including provisions for all-gender facilities. Finishes and fixtures should be highly durable and energy efficient. The restroom size and number of fixtures is recommended to be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restroom Type</th>
<th>Toilets</th>
<th>Lavatories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Restroom</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Restroom</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 Urinal, 2 Lavatories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal All-Gender Restroom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Lavatory</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DESIGN PROGRAM**
BACKSTAGE SUPPORT SPACES

Provide a consolidated groups of flexible spaces to optimize performance support as well as providing for potential use for education programs or small community meetings. Provide the following spaces:

Dressing Room / Green Room: 500 sf, flexible space with easy access to stage and from outdoor access. Incorporate wall mirror and allow space for moveable dressing tables, or provide built-in counters; provide 20 small (9”w x 18”h x 12”d) lockers for securing valuables. Provide exterior operable windows and consider integrating large scale sliding or swinging doors to allow for opening the Dressing / Green Room directly to the Stage for events or alternative performance use. Provide 10 feet minimum ceiling height, with good lighting suitable for a wide range of uses.

Backstage Restrooms: (2) all-gender fully accessible restrooms each with toilet, lavatory, and shower; open directly off the Dressing / Green Room.

Storage Room: 100 sf flexible space with easy access from stage and dressing room.

All Backstage spaces should be flexible with durable finishes to accommodate heavy performer use as well as education programs and community meetings. Provide a flexible outdoor space behind the backstage space.

The above plan diagram shows the required spaces for the stage and backstage and demonstrates the desired relationship between the spaces. The shape and configuration of the spaces will evolve when the stage design is developed, but the scale and relationship of the pieces should be maintained.

Note: this diagram only shows the stage and backstage spaces. The public restrooms are not shown in this diagram but will be integrated within the overall amphitheater design as the concept design is developed.
The Section Diagram Option A above demonstrates the scale and preferred relationship of the stage, roof, backstage and ground surface. The heights and roof angle indicated will be refined in design but are indicative of the likely scale to optimize acoustic performance and weather protection.

The Option B section demonstrates an alternative that was explored, but this option is not preferred based on reviews relative to accessibility and optimal functional relationship between the backstage support spaces and the stage.

END OF DESIGN PROGRAM SUMMARY
ATTACHMENTS:

• Public Meeting #1 and User Interview Notes (22 pp)
• Public Meeting #2 Comment Sheets and Posters (6 pp)
• Access and Traffic Observations: Report by Fehr & Peers (13pp)
• Acoustical Report by Michael Yantis / Stantec (1pp)
Meeting Notes  
Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project – Public Meeting #1  
Meeting Date: 2015.10.15  
Page 1 of 3

Location Seattle Art Museum Auditorium

Presentation Summary:

Volunteer Park Trust, ORA, and Walker Macy presented background information on the Amphitheater Project assessment, a summary of the focus group feedback to date, and site analysis including location ideas. The presentation was followed by an hour of active dialogue and public comments.

Public Comments Summary:

I. Program and Use

A. Noise and Acoustics
   1. Widely shared concern that some events especially amplified music are too loud and disruptive to neighbors and other park users
   2. Decibel Festival noted as the most extreme, but many said multiple events per year are too noisy
   3. Number and type of events should be compatible with the contemplative character of the park
   4. Noise from flight path was noted as impacting quality of performances

B. Park Character and Quality
   1. Flexibility, use, and quality of space during non-event times very important – don’t just focus on event use.
   2. Many event-goers don’t respect other park users
   3. Noise limiting general enjoyment of the park for children, elderly, etc.

C. Access and Parking
   1. Volunteer Park lower loop road closed for safety reasons – strongly oppose reopening of road except for events.
   2. Concern that other improvements are needed to address event impacts on parking, traffic, pedestrian safety and bike access.

II. Amphitheater Design

A. Acoustics
   1. Improve acoustics for quieter events such as theater and chamber music
   2. Propose how upgrades can reduce noise emanating outside park

B. Character
   1. Preserve the park as a contemplative space
2. Quality of performance space geared towards quality events
   a) Design to encourage a diversity of events
   b) Design for fine arts performances

C. Seating
   1. Concern that added built-in seating would impact flexibility of lawn use for non-events
   2. Some dry, sheltered seating might enhance the space
   3. Suggestion to explore sunken seating
   4. If seating is to be included, it must be comfortable for use during non-event times

D. Roof
   1. Concern that a roof or enclosure would encourage people to camp out on the stage
   2. Retractable roof desirable

E. Orientation
   1. Option B (move stage north) - good for opening up the view to the trees
   2. Option B - sun angle at midsummer sunset a concern
   3. Option B would allow for use of current stage for events during construction of new stage

F. Additional Comments
   1. The addition of ‘garden’ lights and path lighting requested to improve safety at night
   2. Any design should accommodate non-event use and maintain flexibility of the lawn.

III. Process and Management

A. More vigilant enforcement of decibel restrictions needed

B. Possible limitation on number of events of a single type, to encourage a larger diversity of programming, including arts and dance.

C. Clarify and improve procedures for event management.
   1. Neighbors would like more involvement in the process
   2. Clarification of proper means to voice concerns about events
   3. Clarification of rental process and restroom access

D. Maintain amphitheater green space usability and quality during construction
   1. Phasing and minimizing of construction extent important
IV. Further Action

A. Request for focused interviews and input from daily park users

B. Acoustics
   1. Analysis of different sound levels of different events
   2. Provide suggestions to improve range for quieter events
   3. Provide suggestions to minimize effects of louder events

C. Events Listing
   1. Posting of events in advance would help neighbors plan for them
   2. Greater outreach for events needed

D. Event Capacity
   1. Request for summary of current use of the stage – event types and attendance vs. what is proposed.
   2. Analysis of park capacity for projected increase in event requests

E. Olmsted Intentions
   1. Analysis of original Olmsted topography and vista design requested. Specifically, was the lawn intended to slope to provide a vista?

END OF MEETING NOTES.
Meeting Notes  
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Site Interviews: Daily Users  
Interview Date: 2015.11.12  
Page 1 of 2

Location: Volunteer Park

Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felix Penn</td>
<td>Neighbor – weekly user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tos Fackenthall</td>
<td>Neighbor – daily user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare Flynn</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Ross</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget Thompson</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keevey Maria Carpenter-Schwartz</td>
<td>Walks through the park weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Keim</td>
<td>Occasional user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven Brewer</td>
<td>Daily user – lives close to Cal Anderson, but visits Volunteer Park instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Perchlik</td>
<td>ORA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Richards</td>
<td>ORA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes prepared by Emily Perchlik and Owen Richards.

Overview
On November 12, 2015, we approached a number of regular park users in the vicinity of the amphitheater to solicit their feedback about their use of the park, how they view and use the stage and immediate surroundings, and their feedback about potential enhancements to the amphitheater areas including the option to relocate the stage further to the north. The following notes consolidate the key feedback from these frequent users:

I. Current Regular Uses
   A. Strolling or walking dogs on paths past the amphitheater
   B. City escape (getting away from traffic/bustle)
   C. Playing fetch with dogs on the green
   D. Playing on the stage (3 neighborhood girls, approx. 12 years old on day off school, bouncing wall on rear of amphitheater wall.

Occasional Individual Uses or Events Attended
   A. Video recording using the amphitheater acoustics
   B. Making mini iMovies on stage
   C. Stop by various events – impromptu – discovery when passing through
   D. Shakespeare in the Park
   E. Taco Truck Challenge
   F. SAAM Films
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Site Interviews: Daily Users
Interview Date: 2015.11.12
Page 2 of 2

II. Current Positives: what do you like and what works well?

A. Calm, pastoral, small venue atmosphere, no cars on the back road adds to this
B. Ability to engage with the stage from the whole lawn
C. Great to have a gathering space in the park
D. Lack of city busy – ads, graffiti, posters, etc.
E. Height of the wall good for bouncing balls
F. Amphitheater simple back drop for iMovies or impromptu performances

III. Current Negatives: what would you like to see improved?

A. Stage Character
   1. Current stage is too stark
   2. Include Plants or art to blend the stage more with the natural setting
   3. Maybe a water feature on stage when not used for performances
   4. Nearly all felt that a roof would be desirable

B. Seating / Lawn Area
   1. Desire to keep lawn open and flexible but most also felt some built-in seating could be nice.
   2. Reduce wet, muddy pit in front of stage
   3. Seating at the back of the bowl to define the space?

C. Programming
   1. Most liked the mix of events on the stage; not much concern expressed by these users regarding the few very loud events.
   2. One user felt a weekend-long music festival rather than just the single-day festivals. would be desirable added program
   3. Natural acoustics should be enhanced – particularly for theater
   4. Public drinking fountain should be added.

D. Access & Location
   1. Paths behind stage should be improved
   2. Most felt Scheme B was preferable as is could open up view to the forest and paths; this would improve safety
   3. Scheme B was also preferred for sun angles
   4. One person expressed concern that Scheme B would have a greater impact during construction – due to need to shut down a larger portion of the lawn area for a longer period.

END OF INTERVIEW NOTES.
Meeting Notes  
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Site Interviews: Daily Users  
Interview Date: 2016.01.28  
Page 1 of 2

Location    Volunteer Park

Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul Jensen</td>
<td>Neighbor – weekly user (3-4 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristine Sweeney</td>
<td>Neighbor – daily user (2x daily)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doreen Twohy</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user (1-2x a month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chris Gammon</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user (1-2x a month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Coleman</td>
<td>Neighbor – weekly user (4-5x a month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janna Krein</td>
<td>Regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Wilson</td>
<td>Regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Brainara</td>
<td>Neighbor – regular user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Allen</td>
<td>Neighbor – weekly user (4-5x a month)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zanny Milo</td>
<td>Neighbor – daily user (3x daily)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Anderson</td>
<td>Seasonally regular user (lives in NYC 50% of year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Perchlik</td>
<td>ORA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes prepared by Emily Perchlik.

Overview
On January 28, 2016 we approached a number of regular park users in the vicinity of the amphitheater to solicit their feedback about their use of the park, how they view and use the stage and immediate surroundings, and their feedback about potential enhancements to the amphitheater areas including the option to relocate the stage further to the north. The following notes consolidate the key feedback from these frequent users:

I. Current Regular Uses
A. Strolling or walking dogs on paths past the amphitheater
B. City escape (getting away from traffic/bustle)
C. View across the reservoir
D. Biking
E. Running

Occasional Individual Uses or Events Attended
A. SAAM and Conservatory
B. Stop by various events – impromptu – discovery when passing through
F. Theater Schmeeater
G. Shakespeare in the Park
H. Chamber Music
I. Dahlia garden

II. Current Positives: what do you like and what works well?
A. Flexible green for sitting and enjoying sun in the summer
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Site Interviews: Daily Users
Interview Date: 2016.01.28
Page 2 of 2

B. Simple, non-invasive design
C. Whole lawn engagement during events
D. Adds excitement and activity to the park
E. Brick is a nice material in the park

III. Current Negatives: what would you like to see improved?

A. Stage Character
1. Current stage is ugly and out of date
2. Reference the age of Olmstead in the design
3. Roof could be a chance to make a more iconic piece in the park
4. Materials in keeping with Northwest style - wood, natural look
5. Most users were excited about the idea of a roof covering.

B. Lawn and Forested Area
1. Desire to keep lawn very flexible
2. Reduce wet, muddy pit
3. Cut out unhealthy undergrowth
4. Open up views to woods to increase safety
5. Love the gentle slope of the lawn

C. Programming
1. Idea of rentable flex space exciting
2. Natural acoustics should be enhanced –for theater and chamber music
3. The ability for concessions would be desirable
4. Improve safety of restrooms
5. Provide ‘mosh pit’ seating area for kids close to the stage that is not muddy and wet
6. Added programming could include story telling (for families) or dance instruction (such as swing)

D. Access & Location
1. Paths behind stage should be improved
2. Some reservations about a new location as the engagement of the whole lawn and passersby was desirable
3. Any location should consider availability of shady seating in the summer
4. Majority of users supported the new location of the amphitheater
5. ADA access needed
6. Tennis court noise should be considered, especially if in new location

END OF INTERVIEW NOTES.
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
Meeting Date: 2015.09.01
Distribution: 2015.09.08
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Project: Volunteer Park Amphitheater Project
Date: September 1, 2015 10:30 – 11:30 AM
Location: Seattle Parks & Recreation
PKS_RAD 3C Conference Room

Attendees:
- Pam Kliment, Seattle P&R, Project Manager, pamela.kliment@seattle.gov
- Redi Karmeto, Seattle P&R, Architect, redi.karameto@seattle.gov
- Shwu-jen Hwang, Seattle P&R, Landscape Architect, shwu-jen.hwang@seattle.gov
- Gary Gibbons, Seattle P&R, ADA P.W, gary.gibbons@seattle.gov
- Pamela Alspaugh, Seattle P&R, Landscape Architect, pamela.alspaugh@seattle.gov
- Mohan Khandekar, Seattle P&R, Architect, mohan.khandekar@seattle.gov
- Kyle Griggs, Seattle P&R, Event Permits, kyle.griggs@seattle.gov
- Karen O’Connor, Seattle P&R, Communications, karen.oconnor@seattle.gov
- Robert Stowers, Seattle P&R, Park Maintenance Manager, robert.stowers@seattle.gov
- Eliza Davidson, Volunteer Park Trust, Chair of Amphitheater Project, elizad@comcast.net
- Owen Richards, ORA, Architect, orichards@orarchitects.com
- Stephanie Hsie, ORA, Architect, shsie@orarchitects.com
- Chris Jones, Walker Macy, Landscape Architect, cjones@walkermacy.com

Meeting notes prepared by Owen Richards. Please notify the writer of any corrections within 5 business days of receipt.

Overview
This was the first meeting with Seattle Parks and Recreation staff to introduce the project and solicit their input regarding programming, operational, and context issues related to the project. The sponsor is Volunteer Park Trust (VPT), with funding for the first phase of programming and site analysis provided by Department of Neighborhoods. Subsequent funding will be secured by VPT through public and private sources.

Introduction
Owen Richards and Chris Jones gave an overview of the project as well as ORA and Walker Macy’s experience in developing outdoor performance spaces within park settings. The existing stage was built in the early 1970’s and needs significant upgrades to remedy the current deficiencies, to meet user needs, and to integrate well with the surrounding park. The project
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Scope includes the stage and directly adjoining support spaces, the sloped lawn area facing the stage and the pathways leading to the stage.

**Current Programming**
Current programming consists of:

- Dramatic performances
- Music festivals
- Community events and festivals
- Rallies

All equipment is provided by users including tents, tables, sound equipment, and other miscellaneous items.

The following issues have been identified as being challenges to current programming:

- **Access to Stage**
  - The paths behind the stage are too narrow with irregular grading which makes it difficult to access the stage. Dressing support spaces have to be set up outdoors, and parking of support vehicles is awkward.
  - The stage and the access paths do not meet ADA and accessibility codes. It will be a baseline requirement to upgrade access and restrooms to meet ADA and current accessibility codes, including connections to surrounding park circulation such as around reservoir.

- **Parking**
  - Parking is tight especially during larger events. Further review of parking needs and how to mitigate parking impacts is needed.
  - Volunteer Park Road is closed to the public 24/7. People do park on the Road when the bollards are removed. The road was originally closed due to illicit behavior. Use for event parking would require a policy change.
  - The closest existing bike racks are at the east end of the reservoir. They are relatively old and were observed to be overflowing with bikes at a recent event. Bikes were also observed locked to stair railings and parking signs in a number of other locations around the park.

- **Grading at Sloped Lawn Area**
  - The sloped lawn areas make it difficult to set up tents for festivals (such as the Vibrations Festival).
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- Backstage Support and Restrooms
  - There are currently no backstage dressing rooms or other performer support spaces, making it very awkward for performers.
  - The current restrooms are used for performer support but when open must also be available for public use, creating awkward overlap of uses.
  - For major events renters often provide portable toilets.
  - There is a deficiency of restrooms in the park. Current restrooms behind stage were built for public use but while centrally located were hidden and became unsafe.
  - Amphitheater project must include replacement, accessible restrooms, whether part of or separate from stage structure.

Potential Future Programming
The intent is to improve capacity to meet current program needs and enhance flexibility to accommodate a more diverse range of programming, but there is no desire to accommodate significantly larger events. In addition to events currently accommodated, the following programming may be desirable:

- Dance performances (requiring increased stage size and better surface)
- Spoken word performances
- Movies (although the time of year this is feasible is limited to due to late nightfall during summer and due to the ordinance for no amplified sound after 10PM).
- Small scale educational activities such as summer camps or nature classes.
- Group exercise activities such as yoga, conditioning and tai chi.
- Ceremonies and memorials. (The space is currently rarely used for wedding or other ceremonies due to poor visual character as well as access limitations and stage configuration).

Support Spaces:
The following support spaces were noted as desirable:

- Dressing rooms with dedicated restrooms (separate from public restrooms.)
- Flexible backstage “green room” and temporary storage that could double as classroom / meeting space. Park has no indoor facility to accommodate small community events, meetings, day camps or educational activities.
- Ceremonies and memorials: Current stage size limits the size of weddings. Weddings currently occur inside the museum, conservatory and the Dalia Gardens.

Stage Location
The current stage is badly situated for sun orientation: the audience faces slightly south of west so looks directly into afternoon sun, making it very difficult to see performers. It would be very desirable to consider reorientation to improve audience viewing angle. A potential relocation
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would require approval by the Landmarks Board. Since the original Olmsted Plan did not include a stage in this area, the Landmarks Board might be willing to consider a change if design results in net improvement to Olmsted landscape. It was also noted that moving the stage might actually make it more feasible to reintroduce a path from the original park design which was removed when the current stage was constructed.

Other Stage Considerations

- A roof structure is highly desirable to provide cover from rain and sun, as well as providing better theatrical lighting capabilities.
- Flexible audience shade with retractable elements to address the direct sun during the day would be desirable.
- Sliding panels at the rear of the stage may be a desirable feature to enhance views to the trees beyond and improve performance access.
- Built-in sound system would be very desirable – this would enhance quality of performances and enable better control of acoustics.
- It was suggested that 30' x 40' would be a preferred minimum size for dance performances.
- Maintenance and graffiti prevention should be considered.

Service Access

- Improvement of the path behind the stage is desirable.
- Currently, a 15' box truck can load/unload but it is awkward. A 10' width access path would allow for better stage access as well as improving service access for park maintenance.
- Stage access might double as part of ADA circulation route.

Restrooms

- Restrooms are locked 24/7. Users pay to have them unlocked during events, or they rent portable toilets.
- There have been no specific complaints from audiences regarding the closed restrooms, but many general park users miss them. The restrooms near the Conservatory are well liked and heavily used but are remote from Stage area.
- Parks would require replacement of the current Stage restrooms if the current restrooms were to be repurposed (as performer support related to dressing rooms) or demolished during this project.
- It would be desirable to consider an alternative location of the public restrooms that is less hidden and not behind the stage which can cause distractions during performances.

ADA / Accessibility
Providing ADA access to the stage and fully code compliant ADA accessible restrooms must be included in any improvements.
Utilities

- No drainage issues identified.
- Water and sewer available to area would allow for drinking fountains
- There are currently (3) 20 amp panels provided in the front and one 50 amp panel in the back. Upgrades would be desirable.

SPU Reservoir Project

- The timing for this project is undetermined but will likely be on a slower timeline than the Amphitheater project.
- SPU has identified an area 100' outside of reservoir for construction staging. There may be some flexibility along the side abutting Amphitheater since construction access probably will be from south.
- An ADA study will be triggered once this project is underway.

Landscape Planting

- There are some trees that were planted within the great lawn area that were not part of the original Olmstead design. Although existing healthy trees are not proposed to be removed, it is the long term expectation that unhealthy trees within the original great lawn area will be removed.

Other Park Comparisons

Seward Park Amphitheater: open air amphitheater with fixed wood benches.

- Visually appealing but not currently used much due to access issues and lack of visibility.
- The wooden benches were discussed as appealing but present maintenance issues.

Gasworks Park

- Accommodates much larger sized events (Microsoft etc). This scale event is not desired to be accommodated at Volunteer Park.

Parks and Recreation to identify other outdoor event spaces within Parks that would be worthwhile as points of reference.

END OF MEETING NOTES.
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Theater Groups
Meeting Date: 2015.09.28
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Location    Miller Community Center

Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ken Holmes</td>
<td>GreenStage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Griffin</td>
<td>Theater Schmeater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Mount</td>
<td>Seattle Shakespeare Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Carter</td>
<td>12th Ave Arts/Strawberry Theater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Davidson</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Crandall</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Perchlik</td>
<td>ORA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Richards</td>
<td>ORA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes prepared by Emily Perchlik and Owen Richards. Please notify the writers of any corrections within 5 days of receipt.

Introduction
This is one of a series of focus groups to solicit input from existing and potential users of the amphitheater to examine existing issues and identify potential enhancements to the space.

I. Background and Experience Using Volunteer Park Amphitheater

A. GreenStage - Ken Holmes
   1. 27 seasons of Shakespeare in the Park at VP + many other Seattle Parks.
   2. Prefers to perform on the grass in front of stage
   3. Has done shows back to back where the audience shifts to face a different set

B. Theater Schmeater - Julia Griffin
   1. 17 seasons of Free for the Family shows in Volunteer Park
   2. Prefers to perform on the stage despite challenges
   3. Youth theater

C. Seattle Shakespeare Company (+Wooden O) – George Mount
   1. 15 years of participation in the Outdoor Theater Fest at VP
   2. Marks out Mercer Island stage set up with tape to keep entrances and staging consistent.
   3. Most complex sets and larger casts

D. 12th Avenue Arts/ Strawberry Theater Workshop - Greg Carter
   1. No current outdoor productions but interested in possible future
   2. Greg is a park neighbor and has performed at the stage
II. Current Positives: what do you like and what works well?

A. Ideal Location – Volunteer Park is beloved and natural draw for audiences
B. Large Lawn with view to stage is good
C. Steeper grade close to stage draws audience close and creates intimacy
D. Setting of stage with tall trees behind is nice; good shade late in afternoon
E. Stage height relative to grass is good; would not want any higher

III. Current Negatives: what would you like to see improved to enhance programming?

A. Stage Character – What is it?
   1. Stage is eyesore; not iconic or easy to identify as performance space
   2. Does not fit with character of the park
   3. Looks like a building foundation
B. Lighting
   1. Poor path lighting for night performances
   2. Simple permanent stage lighting needed (not theatrical lights (too complex))
C. Size
   1. Stage too small for typical 15-20 person cast of GreenStage and Seattle Shakespeare productions.
   2. Typical space needs (Seattle Shakespeare)
      a) (2) 10 x 10 changing tents have to be set up on stage
      b) No space for backdrops, equipment etc.
      c) 20 ft. Playspace on stage very narrow due to tents/dressing behind
D. Stage Access
   1. Can’t communicate easily from backstage
   2. Stage too wide with no rear entrance
   3. Built in steps at front of stage would be desirable
E. Weather Issues
   1. Current lack of overhead cover is bad for rainy weather – consider roof structure?
      a) Possible fabric/translucent covering
      b) Ken Holmes expressed concern that any roof cover would tend to put performers in shadow relative to audience in sun: stay away from roof structure that obscures light, creating a ‘cave’ effect
   2. Sun in audience faces is a problem for 2pm shows – difficult to see stage; okay in late afternoon due to tall trees
F. Support Spaces
   1. Currently no useful support space: need flexible space perform support:
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Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Theater Groups
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I. Focus Group: Theater Groups

a) Green Room / Dressing Room (15x20 min?)
b) Storage (6x12)
c) Utility sink/kitchenette
d) Example: Cal Anderson Meeting Room

2. Restrooms / Changing
   a) (2) Separate restrooms off green room
   b) Make up space could be accommodated with a counter in restrooms
   c) Example: Broadway Performance Hall

G. Other Thoughts
   1. Surface of stage too hard – consider resilient surfaces
   2. Loud flight path

IV. Positive Examples: Other Outdoor Performance Spaces

A. Marymoor – fabric covering
B. Luther Burbank @Mercer Island – good staging, terraced seating w/railroad ties
C. Magnuson – good terraced seating
D. Seward Park – Good backstage and access, nice seating but stage too far from seats; good acoustics
E. Lowell, Mass. Bandstand – open behind stage for connection to urban setting.

END OF MEETING NOTES.
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Music
Meeting Date: 2015.09.29
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Location
Jack Straw Cultural Center

Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don Glenn</td>
<td>Seattle Peace Concerts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joan Rabinowitz</td>
<td>Jack Straw Cultural Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Morgan</td>
<td>Musician / Performer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Whetzel</td>
<td>Musician / Performer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Peters</td>
<td>Wayward Music Festival (at Good Shephard Center Chapel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Crandall</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Davidson</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen Richards</td>
<td>ORA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Notes prepared by Owen Richards. Please notify the writer of any corrections within 5 days of receipt.

Introduction
This is one of a series of focus groups to solicit input from existing and potential users of the amphitheater to examine existing issues and identify potential enhancements to the space.

I. Background and Experience Using Volunteer Park Amphitheater & Other Venues
A. Seattle Peace Concerts – Don Glenn
   - Over 30 years performing at Volunteer Park + many other Seattle Parks.
B. Terry Morgan & James Whetzel
   - Variety of music and other events at VP and throughout the country.
C. Steve Peters
   - Audio artist & programmer for music/audio events – attended Laurie Anderson concert at space many years ago.

II. Current Positives: what do you like and what works well?
A. Great setting - Volunteer Park is very popular and a great draw
B. Large lawn with view to stage is good
C. Drainage in grass areas seems good
D. Stage size ok for music events
E. Elec outlets adequate (3) 20amp circuits at rear of stage
F. Don Glenn said that in his experience the sun orientation is fine

III. Current Negatives: what would you like to see improved to enhance programming?
A. Stage Access
   1. Access drive too narrow; widen and create space to pull off path to avoid blocking pedestrians
   2. Entry points at rear of stage needed
B. Restrooms
   1. Too small and hard to find; not always open and conflict with musician staging
   2. Too far to other park restrooms

C. Weather Protection
   1. Current lack of overhead cover is problem - in sun, light rain, or even potential rain – especially keyboards and string instruments need shade and protection from possible rain.
      a) Fabric/translucent covering would be great

D. Audio Provisions
   1. Sound mixing tent is always set up at rear of steeper slope – create a flat 10x10 space for tent, ideally with power and 6” PVC conduit underground (with pull-string to enable concealed audio feed)

E. Support Spaces
   1. Following spaces desired:
      a) Green Room to house musicians before going on stage
      b) Storage – for instruments / AV equipment
      c) Performer restrooms separate from public

F. Other Thoughts
   1. Surface of stage not seen as a problem; Don Glenn mentioned that the wood stage at GasWorks caused vibration/sound issues; changed to concrete.

IV. Positive Examples: Other Outdoor Performance Spaces

A. Cuthbert Amphitheater – Eugene OR
B. Levitt Amphitheaters – Pasadena CA, Denver CO
C. Red Butte Gardens, Salt Lake City UT

END OF MEETING NOTES.
Meeting Notes  
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Theater Groups  
Meeting Date: 2015.10.01  
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Location  ORA

Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adam Miller</td>
<td>Spectrum Dance Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olivier Wevers</td>
<td>Whim W’him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliza Davidson</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Perchlik</td>
<td>ORA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Owen Richards</td>
<td>ORA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

I. Background and Experience Using Volunteer Park Amphitheater

A. Have not used the space since currently not feasible for dance performance
   1. Excited about the potential of outdoor dance performance
   2. The location and setting very appealing

II. What Enhancements are Needed to Make Dance Programming Feasible?

A. Stage
   1. 40w x 30d min performance space (40w x 40d ideal)
   2. Sprung wood floor is a must
      a) Built in, weatherproof system preferred (sophisticated deck)
      b) Potential of a modular option, but management and assembly would likely make it cost prohibitive
      c) Marley floor (roll-out surface) would still need to be brought in to apply over sprung wood floor; typically dance groups have or can rent

B. Roof
   1. Grid to provide infrastructure for lighting, sound, other equipment
   2. Block UV rays and rain, but not light
      a) Surface not feasible for dance if too hot or wet

C. Support Spaces
   1. Flexible Space
      a) Dividable for separate changing areas when needed
      b) Cubby lockers for secure storage of bags, etc.
      c) Warm up space
         (1) Should accommodate stretching and smaller moves
         (2) Floor same as stage
         (3) Mirror and barre ideal
   2. Restrooms
      a) (2) Separate
      b) Sinks could be in flexible space instead of in toilet room
      c) Ideally (2) separate showers

D. Other
   1. Supplemental heating of outdoor space would make performances in cooler weather more feasible.
   2. Retain the ‘in the woods’ character of the space and simplicity of the outdoors
III. Positive Examples: Other Outdoor Performance Spaces

A. Jacob’s Pillow – Becket, MA
B. Wolf Trap – Vienna, VA
C. Stern Grove – San Francisco, CA
D. Cemil Topuzlu Open-Air Theatre – Istanbul, Turkey
E. Ed Kenley Amphitheater – Layton, UT
F. Scott Outdoor Amphitheater – Swarthmore, PA
G. Lincoln Center Bandshell – New York City, NY
H. SummerStage Festival – New York City, NY

END OF MEETING NOTES.
**Meeting Notes**

**Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Volunteer Park Institutions**

**Meeting Date:** 2015.10.07

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**Location**

Volunteer Park Conservatory Cottage

**Attendees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Loudon</td>
<td>Seattle Asian Art Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anthonio Pettit</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Conservatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget Lamp</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Conservatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giselle Blythe</td>
<td>Volunteer Park Conservatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily Perchlik</td>
<td>ORA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Notes prepared by Emily Perchlik and Owen Richards. Please notify the writer of any corrections within 5 days of receipt.*

**Introduction**

This meeting reviewed comments from a series of focus groups to examine noted issues within the context of the existing park and identify potential connections to other facility programming.

**I. Current Use**

A. SAAM uses the stage for outdoor films and would like to use for other events.
B. VPC does not currently use the stage for events; they have hosted some pre-events and are interested in doing more.

**II. Current Positives: what do you like and what works well?**

A. Site is excellent for exposure to events and engagement with the park
B. Capacity of site seems good for wide range of events (except for public restroom issues)

**III. Current Negatives: what would you like to see improved?**

A. Stage Character
   1. Current stage is an eyesore
   2. Does not fit with character of the park
   3. Wall is a graffiti magnet and maintenance issue

B. Use
   1. Stage not used unless there is an event – looks forlorn
   2. Parking for patrons is hard to find during events

C. Restrooms
   1. Current stage restrooms are a safety issue
   2. Capacity of public restrooms is not enough for events
   3. Location of restrooms could be moved to accommodate use in the park and for events
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Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Volunteer Park Institutions
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D. Access
1. General visibility and wayfinding from other park facilities not clear
2. Little to no lighting connecting the amphitheater space to the other park facilities.

IV. Existing Programming
A. SAAM - Outdoor Music and Films
1. Music begins around 8:30 pm, Film begins at dusk
   a) Lighting needs to be improved for safety and could increase attendance
2. Attendance ranges from approximately 120 – 350
   a) Exiting seems to be efficient
3. Food trucks park on main road
   a) Food truck access to back loop road would provide a more convenient proximity to the amphitheater
4. For music - sets up tent and speakers on stage
5. Currently a spider box is used for power
   a) Power access could be improved
6. Inflatable screen currently used (size?)
7. Set up takes about 2 hours

B. SAAM – Events that utilize the Museum and Amphitheater
1. Visitors have difficulty finding their way from Museum to Amphitheater
   a) Events with programming in both locations often draw different audiences as the lack of clear connection loses people
   b) Creating a more distinctive and visible stage structure would be desirable to enhance patron wayfinding

V. Potential Programming Improvements
A. Seattle Asian Art Museum
1. SAAM could serve as a pre-function space for amphitheater events
   a) Evening events: 30min – 1hr pre-event at museum with connection to main event/presentation at amphitheater
   b) Improvements: visibility and iconic character, ADA, lighting, perception of safety (possibly need other park improvements)
2. Potential performances SAAM would like to present:
   a) Traditional Asian Performance – dance and music
   b) Contemporary Composers
   c) Asian/American collaborations – commissioned pieces
   d) Choreography and Video Art
3. Daytime programming:
Meeting Notes
Volunteer Park Amphitheater – Focus Group: Volunteer Park Institutions
Meeting Date: 2015.10.07
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a) Flexible education space could be utilized for class events
b) Classes split in half could use both the museum and a flexible space at the amphitheater at once and switch spaces to accommodate different educational programming

B. Volunteer Park Conservatory
1. Currently no desire to create new programming for Conservatory at the amphitheater
2. Conservatory is interested in serving as pre-function or post-function space in collaboration with events at the amphitheater
   a) Conservatory could be open late to catch event spillover
   b) Small lectures, music, or other programming could be held in the conservatory before a larger event at the amphitheater
   c) Visibility and wayfinding would need to be improved to provide connection to larger events
**Public Meeting #2 - Public Input Posters**

**PERFORMANCE**
- Rock Shows
- Classical Music
- Dance/Movement
- Theater
- Video/Digital Performance
- Other

**SPECIAL EVENTS**
- Public Speakers/Education
- Ceremonies (weddings, graduations, memorials, etc.)
- Movies
- Rally/Activism
- Cultural/Special Interest Event
- Other

**EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES**
- Yoga/Group Exercise
- Dance Instruction
- Games
- Meditation
- Story Telling
- Other

**AMPHITHEATER PROGRAMMING**

**PERFORMANCE SUPPORT**
Share any comments regarding backstage access, performer preparation space, and storage:
- Stage-right space located above - Y/N?
- 72" power? Yes or no?
- 72" power re-routed above and to back of stage - A/N from brown/gray?
- Pretend a Square Stage
- Sound/Stage Switch
- 72" from exchange
- 63" from exchange
- Rack space?

**FLEXIBLE SPACE/ EDUCATION**
What uses could you envision for the flexible, backstage space?
- Storage Space/Tiny Trees
- Draw circles for wine or craft
- On the move programs
- So soon can it reach the park?
- Community Meetings
- Children's day camps, etc.
- Performance
- Open space

**RESTROOMS**
Please share your preferences, ideas or concerns about new public restrooms:
- Not sure if children can use them
- Need more restrooms located above everyday public area
- More info on location and quantity

**BACKSTAGE PROGRAMMING**
Use sticky notes to add comments regarding the backstage/flexible space program.
QUESTIONS:

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE DESIGN PROGRAM PRESENTED TONIGHT?

A WORLD CLASS SOUND STAGE FOR A
WORLD CLASS CITY

ANY ADDITIONAL TOPICS YOU'D LIKE COVERED IN THE FEASIBILITY STUDY?

LARGE OR SMALL PUBLIC TOILET?

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON PUBLIC OUTREACH MOVING FORWARD?

MILLION COMMUNITY CENTER IS BEAUTIFUL
TO GO TO IN DARK TIMES
S A M, R E A D P U B L I C M E N T
IN NEWS PAPER
5-26, STRANGE CONCEPT WORTH YING

OTHER COMMENTS
MORE MUSIC & LOW
DANCE
QUESTIONS:

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT THE DESIGN PROGRAM PRESENTED TONIGHT?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

ANY ADDITIONAL TOPICS YOU'D LIKE COVERED IN THE FEASIBILITY STUDY?

More discussion about how acoustics are going to be addressed.

__________________________________________________________________________

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON PUBLIC OUTREACH MOVING FORWARD?

You have to get in touch with the Capitol Hill Blog. It is a great resource.

__________________________________________________________________________

OTHER COMMENTS

I like the new location, but there may be slope issues that need resolution.

__________________________________________________________________________
BACK SIDE OF STAGE. DO BUILD UP TO BE EVEN WITH THE FRONT.
NO RAMPING WILL BE NEEDED.

BACK STAGE ACCESSORIES:
LIGHTED MIRROR WITH WIDE METAL SHELF,
OUTLETS + A FULL LENGTH MIRROR, LOCKERS WITH KEYS.
A SINK + POSSIBLY PRIVATE RESTROOM, SEATING + A FLAT DOLLY.
BENCHES + HOOKS IN DRESSING ROOMS.

FOR THE STAGE:
PORTABLE 18'' HIGH DRUM RISER MEASURING 8' X 8'
COVERED WITH RUBBER TO HOLD DRUMS IN PLACE.
RUBBER CAN BE ROLLED UP FOR STORAGE. THE RISER
CAN COME IN 2 PIECES THAT CLAMP TOGETHER.
INCLUDE PORTABLE STAGE.

LIGHTING FRAME + FIXTURES FOR HANGING BACKDROPS
+ BANNERS, BOTH FRONT + BACK.
ADJUSTABLE SPEAKER MOUNTS.

STAGE CANOPY: PARABOLIC SHELL
ROWS OF METALLIC MATERIAL THAT MATCHES THE FOUNTAINS
IN FRONT OF THE MUSEUM. UNDERSIDES PAINTED WITH LIGHT
EARTH TONE COLOR. LAYERED FROM FRONT TO BACK. 3 OR 4 BANDS.
SAME SHAPE AS THE MUSEUM FOUNTAINS WHERE THEY CURVE
IN TO THE NEXT.

STAGE FACE!
TILES WITH LEAF, NEEDLE + CONE IMPRINTS, LADIED WITH
TYPE OF TREE. SOFT EARTH TONES.
STAGE SHOULD BE RAISED TO ABOUT 3''.
LEAVE GRASS IN FRONT FOR THE CHILDREN TO RUN AROUND.

hurricanekelley88@gmail.com

MAKE A COUPLE CHECKERBOARDS ON THE STAGE SURFACE
TO PLAY CHESS.
MEMORANDUM

Date: October 7, 2015
To: Owen Richards, ORA
From: Kendra Breiland, Fehr & Peers
Subject: Volunteer Park Performance Space Feasibility Study and Design Program – Transportation Observations

Fehr & Peers has supported ORA on the transportation assessment for the Volunteer Park Performance Space Feasibility Study and Design Program. This memo summarizes our key findings and observations that have been collected through field work and participation in a Parking and Access focus group session. The findings are organized by topic area, which each conclude with recommendations for future phases of this project.

At the end this document, we include excerpts of maps from SDOT's pedestrian, bicycle, and transit master plans showing planned projects and/or investment priorities in the vicinity of Volunteer Park.
Located in a historic neighborhood in north Capitol Hill, on-street parking surrounding Volunteer Park is in high demand even when there are no events at the park. Our team visited the park on Sunday, August 16th both before and during the Vibrations Festival. Along the streets bordering the southern portion of the park (Federal, Prospect, and 15th), we observed that on-street parking was between 60 and 90 percent occupied prior to the event, and between 70 and 100 percent occupied during the event. Within the park, E Highland Drive has some striped parallel parking. The striping itself seems to be designed for long vehicle lengths, which could lead to some wasted space. The day of the Vibrations Festival, we noticed that drivers tended to ignore the stripe and park as tightly as possible.

The consultant team observed that there was excess capacity at off-street locations, including at churches along Federal. These might offer opportunities for shared-parking arrangements.

Discussion at the Parking and Access focus group confirmed these observations, and provided the following insights:
• There are no parking restrictions in much of the neighborhood. Where restrictions exist (time limitations, or only being able to park on one side of the street), neighbors felt restrictions were not well marked or enforced effectively.

• Parking is at a premium year-round. Some older residential units do not have parking and need to use on-street capacity. Moreover, folks from outside of the immediate neighborhood appear to use the streets around the park (including neighborhood streets) as a park-and-ride.

• During events when parking is most tight, drivers cruise searching for parking. Frustrated drivers sometimes speed through neighborhoods, presenting a safety risk.

• Participants discussed the pros and cons of opening the loop road to parking. While it would be a relief valve for the neighborhood, it would also detract from the loop road’s value as a safe to walk and bike.

• Even without improvements to the park, parking concerns are only expected to get worse with planned increases in density within portions of the neighborhood.

The following ideas are recommended for further exploration in future phases of this project:

• Eliminating striping on E Highland Drive to encourage more efficient use of on-street supply
• Perform a more detailed evaluation of the pros/cons to opening the loop road to parking consistently during events
• Improved signage related to parking restrictions
• Improved enforcement of parking, especially during events
• Consideration of a Residential Parking Zone
• Consideration of implementing on-street paid-parking nearest to the park
• Discussion with churches and other off-street parking space owners to consider shared-parking agreements
• To the extent that new parking areas become available, wayfinding to those lots to reduce driver frustration and “cruising” for parking
ACCESS BY FOOT

Volunteer Park is a major pedestrian destination, including folks heading to the park for recreation, as well as passing through en route to other destinations or to access transit. Pathways in the park are generally circuitous and the pavement condition is showing their age. The connection between the park’s pedestrian network and the surrounding neighborhood shows some gaps. There are a number of locations where the park is missing sidewalks adjacent to the street, including Prospect at the southwest edge of the park, where there is a goat trail that people have warn, and along 15th, where there is no sidewalk on the west side of the street despite transit stops.

Given the historic nature of the neighborhood, there is fairly consistent sidewalk coverage. Most of the sidewalks (though not all) are buffered from street traffic by a planter strip and on-street parking. Some of the sidewalks are showing their age. Given the overall age of the pedestrian facilities in and around Volunteer Park, it is doubtful that many meet today’s ADA standards (a specific survey was not performed in this scope).

Discussion at the Parking and Access focus group provided the following additional insights:

- During events at the park, space allocated to pedestrians on the neighborhood streets can be too narrow. Sometimes pedestrians, bikes, parked cars, and vehicle traffic are
jockeying for the same space, which can be a safety concern. Specific locations were cited along Prospect and Federal.

- Pedestrian connections to transit stops (particularly along 15th) are very lacking. Provision of sidewalks on both sides of the street, as well as sufficient lighting would increase people's comfort with accessing transit on foot.
- Overgrown trees and bushes obstruct the sidewalk and lead to personal security concerns and visibility issues for drivers and pedestrians.

The following ideas are recommended for further exploration in future phases of this project:

- Reconsider the park’s pedestrian network – while the curving sidewalks are aesthetically appealing, they are not as conducive for people who walk through the park en route to transit, etc. It might be appropriate to consider a two-tier system of pedestrian facilities.
- Prioritize sidewalk facilities and lighting nearby transit stops.
- Consistent with the law, incorporate ADA-compliant designs into new pedestrian infrastructure.
- Work with the City to identify ways to better maintain trees and shrubs or redesign the pedestrian system so that foliage is less of a maintenance issue.
- Consider removal of on-street parking in key locations where pedestrian/bicycle/vehicle/parking conflicts are most severe to provide wider and better separated pedestrian facilities.
ACCESS BY BIKE

Volunteer Park is also a major destination for bikes. Young children practice riding their bikes within the park and the low volume, low speed nature of many of the streets surrounding the park at non-event times make it an ideal environment for cycling. The City of Seattle has included Federal, 12th, 14th, 16th, and Prospect (east of the park) in the neighborhood greenway network. Moreover, a cycle track is planned for 10th Avenue.

The closest Pronto station is at 12th and Mercer, three blocks south of Volunteer Park.

The main observation we had during our site visit was the lack of bicycle parking within the park. We only observed one bike rack near the Asian Art Museum, which was fully utilized during the Vibrations Festival. Other bikes were laid in the left in the lawn and locked to trees, stair rails, and signs (as shown above).

Discussion at the Parking and Access focus group confirmed these observations. The group also re-emphasized the safety concerns they had related to bicycle/pedestrian/vehicle conflicts.
The following ideas are recommended for further exploration in future phases of this project:

- Find additional locations for secure bike parking
- For major events, consider how valet bike parking might be offered.
- Explore implementation of an additional Pronto Station

ACCESS BY TRANSIT

There are two King County Metro routes that serve the vicinity of Volunteer Park: Route 10 along 10th and Route 49 along 15th. Transit service in the area is planned to be much more robust in the future with the Capital Hill Link and First Hill Streetcar both planned to have a station at Broadway and Olive (.7 miles away). In the more distant future, the First Hill Streetcar may be extended to Broadway and Roy (.3 miles away). The City’s Transit Master Plan identifies 10th Street as a bus priority corridor.

Discussion at the Parking and Access focus group focused primarily on pedestrian access to transit stops and personal security/lighting concerns (discussed above). Two additional observations included:
• Vehicles occasionally park in bus lanes during events.
• Wayfinding between transit stops and key destinations (such as the park) would be appreciated

The following ideas are recommended for further exploration in future phases of this project:

• Improved pedestrian connections and lighting at and around transit stops
• Plan for long-term connectivity with Link and Streetcar networks
• Improved signage and wayfinding to make transit stops and key destinations more apparent

SEATTLE MODAL PLANS

The following pages include excerpts of maps from SDOT’s pedestrian, bicycle, and transit master plans showing planned projects and/or investment priorities in the vicinity of Volunteer Park.
The Tier 1 and 2 lines in Purple and Blue respectively show opportunities for new sidewalk along a roadway in high priority areas where sidewalks are missing. This includes along the south edge of Volunteer Park on E Prospect St and along the east edge of the park on 15th Ave E.

The big dark green circles and small light green circles represent opportunities for pedestrian crossing improvements. This includes at the intersection of 10th Ave E and E Prospect St near the park and at the 15th Ave E intersections of Prospect and E Highland Dr.
Relevance to Volunteer Park:

There are many proposed future bicycle facility improvements in the area surrounding Volunteer Park. Including the extension of the existing Protected Bike Lanes along Broadway continuing onto 10th Ave E., neighborhood greenways on Federal Ave E, 12th Ave E, 14th Ave E, E Prospect St, and an in street facility with minor separation on E Galer St.
Relevance to Volunteer Park:

There is not much for planned transit improvements in the direct vicinity of Volunteer Park, but the Link Light Rail Station at Broadway and Olive (0.7 miles from the park) is opening this spring. Also opening soon is the First Hill Streetcar which currently will end also at Broadway and Olive, but is proposed to extend up to Broadway and Roy (0.3 miles from the park).

The nearby bus corridor on 10th Ave E is also listed as a Priority Bus Corridor for Capital Investments.
Relevance to Volunteer Park:

The Priority Bus Corridor on 10th has already had some stop consolidation completed near the park, and there are other proposed future improvements along the corridor for facilitate faster bus service.
Volunteer Park Bandstand Acoustic Narrative

A band shell can be a valuable asset to a musical performance. It can improve the sense of ensemble of the musical group by reflecting sound back to the musicians, increase the amplitude of the performance for the audience, provide sound attenuation to areas behind the shell and provide a visual backdrop to frame the performance.

Two of the band shell acoustic attributes described above, improving the sense of ensemble and projecting sound to the audience, are only valuable for musical groups that rely on acoustic, non-amplified instruments. Amplified instruments create the needed sense of ensemble via monitor speakers, located on stage and oriented toward the performers. Projection of amplified sound into the audience is achieved through an amplified sound reinforcement system with speakers typically located above the performers near the front edge of the stage.

The two remaining purposes of the shell are important: sound attenuation to nearby residential areas and a visual backdrop for the performance. The properties of the shell that aid in the reduction of sound to the neighborhood across Federal Avenue East include the mass (weight) of the shell and its extent. High frequencies are relatively easily directed away from areas where less sound is desired. Low frequencies are not so easily controlled.

Sides and an overhang on a band shell aid in the control of all the frequencies of sound. If the shell is to reduce the sound of a performance to residences behind it, the sides and top need to obscure the speakers from the line of sight to the neighbors. The more the speakers are obscured, the greater noise reduction provided.

Lightweight materials such as heavy canvas can reduce mid and high frequencies significantly but are not as effective at reducing low frequencies. The loudness of mid and high frequencies can be reduced by half but low frequencies would only be reduced by one-quarter of their unobstructed volume. In order to provide substantial reduction to the residences across Federal Avenue, the sides and top would need more mass. CMU or concrete construction can reduce low, mid and high frequencies sound by as much as 40 dB, a reduction of loudness by a factor of 16. The actual reduction would be limited by how much the speakers were shielded from the direction of the residences.

If the band shell is not solid, if it has openings at the back, sides, or top, it won’t effectively reduce sound in the direction of the openings.

The type of sound system used to amplify performances is as important as the size, shape and construction of the band shell. Line arrays provide greater directionality to amplified speaker’s sound across most of the frequency range of music. Moderately amplified performances could use steerable speaker columns which are even more directional than line arrays. Using speakers such as these and imbedding sub-woofers in massive alcoves can help direct sound away from residential areas and simultaneously improves the fidelity of sound to the audience. If musical groups bring their own equipment to amplify their performance, the experience for the audience and for nearby residences will vary and be dependent upon the sound system used.

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