

Seawall Park Committee Report to City Council Draft Proposal #2

At its 5/15 meeting, the council directed that our committee present its report at the 6/19/17 Council meeting. They wanted the report to include immediate action items as well as a long-term vision. So the 6/12 meeting of the Seawall Park Ad Hoc committee must decide what to recommend to the council. Below is the proposal of Sharon Emerson

Immediate Action Items to Recommend

Below are the immediate action items that have been brought up at our meetings as well as one new one. Where Stan has provided a cost estimate, those are included.

To save time at the meeting, I've suggested some scores, from 3's, which are "Must Dos" to 0's which are "Don't recommend at this time". In general, I've suggested avoiding new projects, except the railing which is already funded, and putting routine maintenance items as a high priority.

Please take a moment before the meeting to think about any changes to the below you would like to see.

- 3 Repair/replace existing picnic tables & benches as needed (\$200 to repair 1 bench)
- 3 Fill in gaps next to seawall with appropriate material
- 3 Add more garbage or recycling cans
- 3 Assess repair needs of stairway
- 3 Hand rail on west side of Anthes extension, using existing grant of \$7000
- 2 Survey park
- 1 Professional removal of invasives prior to replanting with natives by volunteers
- 0 Build 4' wide gravel path next to seawall (\$3000-5000)
- 0 Repair & paint fence on private property on the east end of park (\$1000)
- 0 Develop picnic area at the east end
- 0 Add another picnic table

Long-Term Vision for Enhancement

In response to public feedback on the Arts Commission proposal for the Seawall Park, a community meeting was held last-year to get stakeholder input. The stakeholders made clear that their interest was in "sprucing up" the park, not creating an art-filled park and event space. They wanted it kept simple and attractive, with any art being primarily functional, for example, furniture. The Seawall Park Ad Hoc Committee, or SPAHC, was formed by the council to come up with a plan to execute the community vision.

The theme we have chosen for the park is Natural Beauty. The parameters we have determined the park should include are:

- Develop the park at the juncture of Anthes and First Street into an attractive “gateway” area that would, in addition to providing amenities such as seating, lure and encourage people to descend down to the main body of the park.
- Develop an easier, less steep pathway down the Anthes slope, though there is no room for a full ADA grade ramp.
- Install beds with low maintenance native plants that are adapted to the seaside environment.
- Plant city-owned lower bluff areas with attractive native vegetation that, by its dense & thorny nature, discourages ascent up the bluff. These could be a model to encourage owners of private property on the bluff to do the same to their property.
- Install wayfinding signage.
- Install interpretive signage to orient visitors to the immediate environment and surrounding area.
- Place plantings and amenities so as to draw people through the park.
- Create an attraction at the east end to draw visitors, perhaps a covered picnic area, swing, and/or other amenities. This might include an attractive fence that would define the end of the park and protect the private property owners on Sunrise Lane from trespassing.
- Have amenities that appeal to multiple age groups, as well as some that appeal just to children.
- The plan should be designed to be executed in phases, since funding is likely to come in chunks for specific purposes rather than one big lump sum.
- Wherever possible, Infrastructure should be functional art, preferably made by locals.

The Seawall Park ad Hoc committee is the ideal entity to execute this vision for the park. The committee brings together representatives from all the major stakeholders. We have representation from: the Arts Commission; Parks and Open Space; Commercial property owners, adjacent residential property owners, working artists, and interested members of the public. By chance we have ended up with a perfect mix of people to ensure the stakeholders’ vision is carried out.

Our first choice would be for the city to sponsor a design contest like the one that created the park at Anthes and Second. This process could lead to a wonderful design and would also create community involvement. However this process would cost several thousand dollars and take six months or more to come up with a final design. It also would necessitate the completion of the survey of the Park before asking for designs, another significant cost and delay.

Should the city want a less expensive, simpler and quicker option, our second choice would be that the SPAHC itself design the layout of the park including placement of paths, benches and tables, native plant beds, educational signage, art, and attractions such as swings or shelters. SPAHC would work with The Arts Commission, Parks and Open Spaces, the Historic

Preservation Commission and interested residents in this process. The design cost would be very low or free and take only a few months. Prior to actual execution, a survey would likely have to be completed to ensure that infrastructure avoids private property.

After the initial design, the park project would require assistance from the community and help from city departments.

- Planning and Public Works would be needed to provide feasibility and costing advice and to integrate the design into existing initiatives such as the wayfinding project.
- SPAHC would continue to work with The Arts Commission, Parks and Open Spaces, and the Historic Preservation Commission in their areas of expertise.
- Public input would be needed to make suggestions and identify improvements to the design.
- City staff would be needed to help find and prepare grant applications.
- Financial support from the community may be needed for park upgrades that are not likely to be funded by grants and not able to be funded by city revenues.
- Volunteers would be recruited to do planting and initial care of plants, which are already being raised by M. Edain.
- Path(s) and shelter(s) would need professional installation so would be the most expensive part of the project.

The result of this process should be a lovely space that invites visitors of all ages, whether resident or tourist, to appreciate, enjoy, and understand more deeply the natural beauty that Langley has to offer.