

City of Seattle

ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF  
SEATTLE PARKS AND RECREATION

Proposal Name: **Burke Gilman Playground Park**

Address of Proposal: **5201 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle, WA 98105**

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

Seattle Parks and Recreation is proposing to renovate the east portion of the Burke Gilman Playground Park. The site will be regraded to provide universal accessibility throughout. The existing comfort station will be renovated to provide a new community room and three (3) ADA compliant restroom stalls with adult changing tables. The park improvements consist of new play equipment, planting, stormwater bioretention facilities, art, signage, pedestrian lighting, a picnic shelter, and an overlook. The project includes approximately 4,500 cu.yds. of grading.

**SEPA DETERMINATION: Determination of Non-Significance (DNS)**

**BACKGROUND DATA**

Burke-Gilman Playground is a neighborhood park located along Sand Point Way in northeast Seattle. The park is connected to the Burke-Gilman Trail, with jogging trails, a playground and artworks by Robert Shinbow. The park also includes bathroom facilities, benches, grills, and open lawn areas. There are multiple bike racks and a small parking lot for cars.

Seattle Parks and Recreation (SPR) is working with the Eli's Park Project and the community to create a park tailored to be welcoming to all. Grounded in the principles of equity, the project is a collaboration between the people experiencing exclusion from nature and the people designing the park. Through a community learning process, SPR heard that people with physical and medical disabilities, people of color, senior citizens, immigrants, people living in poverty, teenagers, people of all genders and sexual orientation all want to experience nature and community but are too often excluded. SPR and their community partner prioritized the voices of those that are least often heard in order to ensure that this park will serve all.

In response to the community engagement and feedback, the following aspects have been incorporated into the design for the new park: Parallel pathways that encircle the park providing opportunities for walking, biking, running and exploration of the park; providing an entry point to physical activity regardless of experience and level of activity; Accessible surfaces throughout the park to allow people of all abilities and fitness levels access to strengthen their bodies and minds; Sensory experiences to encourage people to move throughout the park to discover a variety of experiences; Play pockets to invite people to be active and expand their minds through physical activity and challenging play opportunities; and Nature interwoven throughout the park providing respite and encouraging prolonged time outdoors.

## **PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this project is to renovate the Burke-Gilman Playground Park into a nature-based park for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Approximately 70,000 square feet of the park will be improved. The site will be regraded to ensure universal accessibility across the site. The existing comfort station includes a community room; this structure will be renovated to include three (3) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant restroom stalls with adult changing tables. The park improvements include new play equipment, planting, bioretention facilities, art, signage, pedestrian lighting, a picnic shelter, and an overlook. All of the work will be within the developed already developed area of the park with the exception of the overlook which will be cantilevered from the existing sidewalk over the slope on the south edge of the park. The project will be constructed via public bid led by a general contractor and managed by SPR and the design team. The general contractor will be supported by several sub-contractors including electricians, underground utility contractors, carpenters, landscapers, etc. The scope of work includes earthwork, vertical concrete, asphalt and concrete pavement, wet and dry utilities including lighting, building renovations, playground installation, planting and irrigation. Inspections and permit adherence will be provided by the City of Seattle and the SPR team, including both internal and external special inspectors supported by the design team. Construction is expected to take 6-9 months for completion.

As indicated in the Checklist, approximately 4,500 cu.yds. of site grading is proposed to enable the majority of the site to meet accessibility standards of the ADA. Roughly 4,000 cu.yds. of cut will be reused on site with 500 cu.yds. exported and used at another SPR site or disposed of at an approved facility. No additional fill is anticipated. Grading will occur over approximately 65,000 sq.ft. of the site. All disturbed areas on the site not receiving new surfaces will be restored with erosion control and hydroseeding or new landscaping. All the applicable BMP's for construction site management will be applied to the areas where the work will take place.

## **ANALYSIS – SEPA**

Initial disclosure of potential impacts from this project was made in the applicant's environmental checklist, dated April 1, 2021. The basis for this analysis and decision is formed from information in the checklist, graphics and exhibits attached to it, the lead agency's familiarity with the site and experience with review of similar projects.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 23.05.665) discusses the relationship between the City's code/policies and environmental review. The Overview Policy states, in part, "[w]here City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact; it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation". The Policies also discuss in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts. This may be specified otherwise in the policies for specific elements of the environment found in SMC 25.05.675. In consideration of these policies, a more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts is appropriate.

## **Short Term Impacts**

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: hydrocarbon emissions from construction vehicles and equipment; increased dust caused by construction activities; potential soil erosion and potential disturbance to subsurface soils during site work; increased traffic from construction equipment and personnel; increased noise and displaced recreational users.

Several adopted codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. The Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code requires that soil erosion control techniques be initiated for the duration of construction. Erosion will be prevented by implementation of a required Temporary Erosion Control and Sedimentation Plan. Best Management Practices, such as mulching and seeding will be implemented at the site to minimize erosion during construction. Puget Sound Clean Air Agency regulations require control of fugitive dust to protect air quality. The Building Code provides for construction measures and life safety issues. The Noise Ordinance regulates the time and amount of construction noise that is permitted in the city. Compliance with these codes and/or ordinances will lessen the environmental impacts of the proposed project. While there will be a short-term increase in greenhouse gas emissions during construction, overall usage of the park will not change.

The impacts associated with the construction are expected to be minor and of relatively short duration. Compliance with the above applicable codes and ordinances will reduce or eliminate most adverse short-term impacts to the environment. However, potential impacts to existing ECAs, recreational uses, construction traffic, and construction noise warrant further discussion.

### ***ECAs***

The overall site contains identified Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs); Steep Slopes surrounding a branch of the remnant of Yesler Creek, and Riparian Corridor and Wetland associated with the branch of Yesler Creek. While the project will be conducting work within 200 feet of the wetland and creek, the majority of the work will occur on the developed area(s) of the site. There will be no work over or in the wetland or creek. Limited work may occur in the Steep Slope ECA to install the support(s) for the proposed overlook. All work will comply with the applicable provisions of the City's ECA Code and no further conditioning is necessary or warranted.

### ***Recreation***

During construction, a portion of the park will be closed to the public. Park users will be directed to the large areas of the park that will remain open during construction. Park users will be notified of planned construction activities impacts in advance so they can plan their visit to the park accordingly. No significant short-term adverse recreation impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

### ***Construction Traffic***

There are adequate areas on-site for the construction crews and equipment. The site is adjacent to an arterial which provides convenient truck access consistent with the requirements of the Street Use Ordinance. As noted in the checklist, approximately 4,000 cubic yards of material will be excavated/filled and graded over the course of the project; only approximately 500 cubic yards will be exported from the site. There will be limited construction traffic beyond equipment and construction workers entering and leaving the site such as material deliveries. Traffic associated with the construction is not anticipated to be significant and thus no conditioning is necessary or warranted.

### ***Noise***

Construction activities will be confined to weekdays. Hours of construction are limited by the Seattle Noise Ordinance, SMC ch. 25.08, to 7:00 a.m. and ten 10:00 p.m. on weekdays (SMC 25.08.425). The reality of the local construction industry is that contractors typically work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.; the likelihood that any construction activities will occur up to 10 p.m. is slight. The

Noise Ordinance also regulates the loudness (dB) of construction activities, measured fifty (50) feet from the subject activity or device. The City has dedicated noise inspectors to monitor construction activities and respond to construction complaints. Compliance with the City's Noise Ordinance will prevent any significant adverse short-term noise impacts and thus no further conditioning is necessary or warranted.

Compliance with applicable codes, ordinances and regulations will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation.

## Long Term Impacts

### ***Recreation***

Once the improvements are completed, the park will have enhanced and expanded recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. There will be additional recreational amenities in the park to better serve the community. No significant long-term adverse recreation impacts are anticipated, and no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

### ***Traffic & Parking***

No change in the park operation is proposed. Vehicle trips will not change; the existing park serves a predominantly local population, particularly the adjacent residents and users of the nearby Burke Gilman Trail. Very few people drive to the park as it is not a destination facility. With the proposed enhancements, usage of the park and play area may increase but the users will likely come from nearby; few new vehicle trips will be generated. No significant adverse traffic and/or parking impacts are anticipated and thus no mitigation is warranted or necessary.

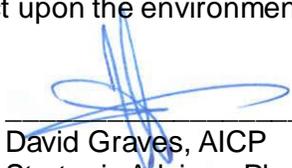
Upon completion of the project, no long term adverse environmental impacts are anticipated and thus no conditioning is necessary or warranted.

## DECISION

This decision was made after the responsible official, on behalf of the lead agency, reviewed a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and final decision on application of SEPA's substantive authority and mitigation provisions. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

- (X) Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).
- ( ) Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. AN EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(C).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

  
David Graves, AICP  
Strategic Advisor, Planning, Development & Facilities Division  
Seattle Parks and Recreation

Date: May 20, 2021