



GROUNDSWELL NORTHWEST

BALLARD OPEN SPACE PLAN

by David Folweiler

In 2013, I made it a point, as the new Groundswell NW president, to meet with our founder, Lillian Riley. Groundswell NW began over 20 years ago with Lillian's dream of giving children a place to play without having to play in the streets or cross an arterial.

Lillian's spirit and drive continue to serve as the backbone of Groundswell NW. Current board members are often reminded of what she stands for and what can be accomplished by citizens if they have passion and work hard.

When I met with Lillian and she described to me in words and pictures the history of Groundswell NW, I felt a strong urge to continue the work she began. When she asked me where I thought Groundswell NW should go in the future, I said that I thought it was time to update the Ballard Open Space Inventory and Action Plan from the 1990s. Without missing a beat, she said she was thinking exactly the same thing. I knew I had hit on a resonant idea.



BEFORE AND AFTER PHOTOS of Ballard Corners Park, Identified in our 1996 Open Space Inventory and funded in part by parks levies. (Photos courtesy of David Folweiler)

In the 1990s, the City conducted a survey that indicated that the Ballard District had the least open space of any neighborhood outside of Downtown Seattle. In response, Groundswell NW spearheaded an effort, led by board members Dave Boyd and Davidya Kasperzyk, recruiting neighbors to walk every single block in Ballard to identify and inventory all possible open spaces in Ballard.

The resulting Ballard Open Space Inventory and Action Plan was distributed widely and its proposals brought forth a multitude of new open spaces in Ballard, including: * Crown Hill Glen/Plumis

(continued on page 3)

WHAT'S THE FUTURE OF SEATTLE PARKS?

by Frana Milan

In 2012 the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation launched a planning effort to examine how our parks, one of our city's strongest assets, are being used today, how they should be used in the future and how they should be funded. In July 2013 The Mayor and City Council convened a 15-member Seattle Parks Legacy Citizens' Advisory Committee as part of this process.



After more than six months of meetings, including multiple opportunities to listen directly to residents, these civic leaders drafted an initial set of recommendations and have been seeking additional public input. Groundswell NW received regular updates from Ballard residents and committee members Jessie Israel and Bill Farmer, and provided feedback throughout this process.

The Advisory Committee has recently released a preliminary report identifying priorities for funding, such as major infrastructure repair, public-private partnerships, new acquisition and development, and operation of community centers and pools. Although Seattle Parks and Recreation receives funding for its operations from the City's General Fund, the department has experienced budget cuts in recent years. In response, the committee's report also explores possible funding mechanisms for ongoing operations and capital investments, including property tax levies and a metropolitan parks district, which offer more sustainable and stable solutions.

Although the overall recommendations in this preliminary report are reasonable, Groundswell NW is concerned that it allocates too little funding for development of existing park

(continued on page 3)

SALMON BAY NATURAL AREA DAMAGED BUT RECOVERING

by Dave Boyd

Many of you heard the news of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) clear-cutting the Right of Way (ROW) at the west end of the Salmon Bay Natural Area (SBNA) last March. The clearing was done on a portion of the old spur line ROW along both sides of their mainline bridge. BNSF retained this area for maintenance reasons, while granting the City the right to franchise the shortline rail operation along the spur; build, maintain the Burke Gilman Trail and – we thought – restore the portion of the ROW immediately adjacent to the City’s SBNA property. BNSF claimed federal exemptions from local permitting rules and informed the City of their plans to clear-cut, but none of our contacts with multiple City departments knew about this plan. BNSF claims the cutting was done for three main reasons: 1) homeland security (claiming the urgent need to see potential bombers who might be approaching the bridge, more than 10 years after 9/11); 2) protecting the bridge, itself, from falling trees and limbs (which could have been accomplished with a small fraction of the cutting they did); and 3) preventing illegal camping on the property (though that hadn’t been an issue since Seattle Public



(Photo courtesy of Dave Boyd)

Utilities installed a security fence shortly after removing the house and boatshed that once stood next to the ROW and restoring the whole area with native species).

The good news is that most of the understory vegetation survived the clearing & resulting exposure over the summer. The greater exposure led to the establishment of new invasive species, and suckers, from the bigleaf maples that had been removed are now starting to shade out the native plants as part of the site restoration.

Groundswell NW took the lead in getting estimates for restoring the site, along with vegetation management on the adjacent property owned by the City and The Canal, previously restored with Groundswell’s help. The latter two areas are complete, and the estimate was shared with BNSF, but to-date we have not received a reply.

In the meantime, we continue to help monitor and maintain the upland areas, and if we can get BNSF’s cooperation, may tackle their clear-cut area this spring. Stay tuned to Groundswell NW’s monthly e-newsletter for work party opportunities.

2013 GROUNDSWELL NW UPDATES

Groundswell NW thanks all who attended our Annual Meeting on April 7, 2013 at the Sunset Hill Community Club. Featured speakers were Pomegranate Center founder Milenko Matanovic, and East Ballard Community Association’s Dawn Hemminger, who gave inspirational presentations on creating parks and community spaces.

In addition to a question-and-answer with the two speakers, Groundswell NW presented its annual “Local Heroes” awards, which recognize fellow Ballardites’ efforts to create and enhance parks, public spaces, and habitat in our community. The Friends of Kirke Park were recognized for their wildly successful efforts to create Ballard’s newest community park. Candace Jarrett was lauded for her “beyond the call of duty” efforts to improve the Sunset Hill - Shilshole Gateway. And because he wasn’t able to attend the annual meeting, Rob Mattson received his award and was recognized at the April 10 Ballard District Council meeting for being the “man behind the curtain,” for many years helping Groundswell NW and other groups and citizens negotiate the City bureaucracy and build community in Ballard.

We also elected our slate of officers for the coming year: President David Folweiler; Vice president Frana Milan, Secretary Jan Satterthwaite and Treasurer Matt Hutchins. At the end of 2013, Matt stepped down and the board elected Frana Milan as Treasurer. During 2013 board members Catherine Darley, Ann Sauer and Lydia Marshall also stepped down. Many thanks to Matt, Ann, Catherine and Lydia for their efforts!

Ballard Opportunity Fund Projects

(continued from back cover)

a hub of gathering spaces that reinforce cultural and recreational activities. Imagine heading down to the park in the evening to enjoy a sunset paddle or strolling along the pedestrian path with your family and spotting amazing boats like the ones from Deadliest Catch at Pacific Fisherman Shipyard! Design features will improve traffic safety & sightlines for businesses and create a vital waterfront connection for the community. Walkability will also be optimized with a fully accessible pedestrian path that features storm water solutions with art. Our partnerships with community and business stakeholders create long-term stewardship and appreciation for the complex history of our waterfront.

Connect with us and share your thoughts on our Facebook page: Threading the Needle Park.



THREADING THE NEEDLE PARK CONCEPT (Image provided by Threading the Needle Partnership)

Ballard Open Space Plan

(continued from page 1)

Park * Greenwood P-patch * Salmon Bay Natural Area * Thyme Patch Park * Ballard Corners Park * Kirke Park * Baker Park expansion * Burke Gilman Trail extension to Golden Gardens Park * Salmon Bay Natural Area * Numerous traffic circles * Crown Hill Park * Playground improvements at Whittier, Loyal Heights, West Woodland, North Beach, and Salmon Bay schools * Salmon Bay School Sports Field * Soundview Playground * 14th Ave NW Park Boulevard.

Lillian and I agreed that since the 1990s Ballard has undergone significant change, including higher density residential buildings, more pressure on existing open spaces, outdated park designs, overgrown vegetation, etc, which has made the old inventory and plan out of date.

In response, Groundswell NW recently applied for and received a \$25,000 Department of Neighborhoods Matching Fund Small & Simple grant to update the original Ballard District Open Space Plan.

What's the Future of Seattle Parks?

(continued from page 1)

sites and future acquisitions. We also continue to encourage the Parks Department to further empower community-level partner organizations to be active in maintaining and activating our neighborhood parks.

The committee is expected to present their final recommendations to the Mayor and City Council by March 2014. To learn more and to view the report, visit www.seattle.gov/parks/legacy.



Keep current with GROUND SWELL NW NEWS & LOCAL EVENTS. Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter: dextercowley@gmail.com.

BALLARD CELEBRATES FIRST NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY

by Jennifer Litowski

In 2013, Ballard celebrated the completion of its first neighborhood greenway along NW 58th St. Hundreds of people came to the opening street party, which included a bicycle rodeo, a ¼ mile hopscotch, a family bike ride and a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Our neighborhood is now enjoying the calmer traffic, safer crossings at intersections and smoother sidewalks. Even in the cold weather, we're seeing more families walking and biking together!

Ballard Greenways continues to speak for safer streets and better places where we live and work. We're looking forward to a north-south route to add to Seattle's growing network of Safe Routes for All! www.facebook.com/BallardGreenways



BALLARD GREENWAY (Photo courtesy of Dawn Hemmiger)

SEEKING GNW BOARD MEMBERS

Groundswell NW is seeking additional board members committed to making NW Seattle a greener, more livable community. We're seeking positive, creative individuals with skills in a number of areas, including financial, real estate, marketing and community organizing.

Please contact our President David Folweiler at: david@folweiler.com or (206) 714-4271



GROUNDSWELL NW 2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Frana Milan, Vice President Dawn Hemminger Catherine Darley
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JOIN US APRIL 8, 2014!

ANNUAL MEETING AND DESSERT POTLUCK

Featuring MAYOR ED MURRAY discussing
The Future of Parks and Green Infrastructure in NW Seattle

BALLARD LANDMARK - LIBRARY

5433 Leary Avenue NW

7:00 PM

We are happy to welcome our new Seattle Mayor to address future funding of parks and green spaces and invite community members to join us in a question and answer session. Also present will be displays by parks and habitat groups throughout Ballard and beyond. Bring a dessert if you can, but do not feel you need to – there will be plenty for all!

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TWO BALLARD PROJECTS AWARDED PARKS LEVY OPPORTUNITY FUNDS

by Dave Boyd

After reviewing over 100 applications, the Parks and Green Spaces Levy Oversight Committee recommended awarding Opportunity Funds to two Ballard projects—BAKER PARK EXPANSION and THREADING THE NEEDLE PARK. The Opportunity Fund was created to give community groups the chance to apply for money addressing park needs, with either expansion of existing parks, creating a new one, or enhancing existing parks and public lands.

BAKER PARK EXPANSION

Baker Park on Crown Hill was one of Groundswell NW's first projects. Over the years, its narrow through-block layout has created challenges, making it less open to neighbors and attractive to various kinds of illicit activity. When the property just south of the park on 14th Ave NW went on the market last year, neighbors rallied, with support from Groundswell NW, to apply for Opportunity Funds to expand the park. The additional area would open up the park and provide space for more neighborhood oriented activities.

This project was in jeopardy when a developer stepped in and bought the parcel before Seattle Parks Department completed their appraisal, but the City was eventually able to purchase the site. The house on the property is now slated for demolition in the first quarter of 2014, and the fence and hedge between the new parcel and the park have already been removed. There are no funds to plan or develop the space, so it will be "land-banked" for now.

An initial Neighborhood Matching Fund application to engage the



BAKER PARK EXPANSION SITE. (Photo courtesy of Dave Boyd)

neighborhood in planning the site was not successful, but Groundswell NW is committed to working with the neighbors and the City to identify alternative ways to move the planning, design and development forward - possibly through a renewed parks levy or metropolitan parks district (see Future of Seattle Parks, page 1).

THREADING THE NEEDLE PARK

By Elizabeth Dunigan

Threading the Needle Park, located at the 24th Ave NW street-end, was conceived by members of the Threading the Needle Partnership to restore an underutilized space to a public waterfront greenway. The project name references a canoe pathway along Salmon Bay and is derived from the Duwamish word Shilshole, which comes from cilcole and means "to thread the needle".

The site's maritime heritage and historical context is celebrated with

(continued on page 2)