

PROCESS & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



The process of preparing a master plan for Saltwater Park took over a year and involved a wide range of participants with the goal to arrive at a common understanding about the best way to preserve and protect this significant community resource. The diagram below illustrates the process, with public involvement activities shown on the upper portion of the diagram and work tasks and products shown on the lower portion.

The process began with two concurrent activities: a site assessment and stakeholder interviews. First, the site assessment involved an inventory and analysis of existing conditions on and adjacent to the park site. This provided the master planning team with a fundamental understanding of how the park is used and helped identify both opportunities and constraints for future improvements. The site assessment is summarized in the next section of this report.

The second activity involved detailed interviews with key Shoreline stakeholders, including members of the Shoreline Park Board, community representatives and selected residents living adjacent to Saltwater Park. It was important to better understand how the community uses the park, how it views the long-term potential of the park and what future park improvements would best serve this long-term vision. The results of these interviews are as follows:

- Beach access is the most important aspect of the park to the community.
- Stakeholders personally value a combination of park features including the views, trail and beach access.
- The park is viewed as three distinct segments: several stakeholders recommended improvement at the 1) beach level, 2) mid-area and 3) Upper Bluff. Most believe the upper bluff should be left in its existing state.
- Make improvements that enhance and elevate the uses at the park and create an even more aesthetically pleasing surrounding.
- Encourage respectful use and communication between the park and adjacent residents.
- Retain the natural character of the park.

The team presented the results of the stakeholder interviews and site assessment to the Park Board and Planning Commission in December 2005.



Background and Brief History

Saltwater Park is a treasured resource in the Shoreline community. The park comprises 42 acres on Puget Sound, offering a wide sandy beach and spectacular views of the Sound and the Olympic Mountains. The park offers facilities for individual, family and group gatherings, picnics, beach barbecues, walking trails, paths and much more.

Reason for a Master Plan

Saltwater Park is a popular attraction that offers year-round recreational and leisure opportunities for Shoreline residents. While picnics and group gatherings are fun in summer months, the park is also popular for beach walks year-round during low tidal periods and during winter storm conditions. With the exception of the main access road, parking facilities, picnic shelters and some lawn, the park remains essentially a natural place.

The City's Board of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (Park Board) has generally concurred that Saltwater Park should remain a more natural place with improved opportunities for interpretive walks, trails, and habitat enhancement. To test these assumptions and to consider possible directions for future park use, the City determined that a Master Plan would be an important tool to guide short and long-term capital improvements, program initiatives and proposals for Saltwater Park..

Master Plan Goals

The development of this Master Plan has been guided by the following goals:

1. Preserve and protect Saltwater Park as a community asset and amenity for the citizens of Shoreline.
2. Improve accessibility to the beach and amenities of the Park and to views of Puget Sound.
3. Improve the overall appearance of the Park without significantly altering its existing character.
4. Upgrade existing site improvements to improve their safety and durability, extend their useful life and integrate their design.
5. Implement a series of selective site improvements and a program of restoration ecology to control erosion and eliminate invasive plant species.
6. Increase the capacity of the park by providing improved, safe and convenient access and circulation to all parts of the park.



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Shoreline City Council

Bob Ransom, Mayor
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Ron Hansen
Cindy Ryu
Janet Way

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Board

William Clements, Chair
Patricia Hale, Co-Chair
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Robin McClelland
Chakorn Phisuthikol
David Pyle
Michelle Wagner

City Staff

Bob Olander, City Manager
Julie Madzajesk, Assistant City Manager
Dick Deal, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Director
Kirk Paterson, Parks Superintendent
Dave Buchan, Capitol Projects Manager
Maureen Colaizzi, Parks Projects Coordinator

Contributing Consultants

Kris Snider, Principal-in-Charge, Hewitt Architects
Jerry Ernst, Project Manager, Ernst & Associates
Jeff Benesi, Landscape Designer, Hewitt Architects
Dave Seman, Civil Engineer, KPFF
Kern Ewing, UW - College of Forest Resources
Diane Brewster, Touchstone EcoServices
Dennis Stettler, Landau Associates
Ken McCarty, Graphics, Hewitt Architects

CONCEPT PLAN & PHASE ONE PROJECTS

Park improvements included in the Master Plan and illustrated on the accompanying drawing consist of the following:

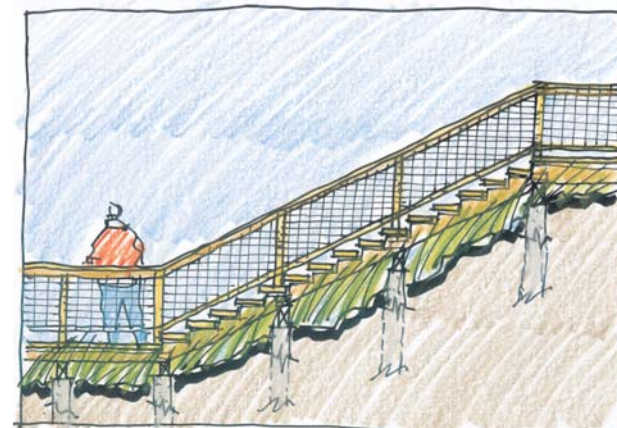


1. **Park Entrance Improvements** – Create a sense of arrival, anticipate the turn in the road as the grade drops, slow down vehicles and improve safety for pedestrians and vehicles.
2. **Park Road Improvements** – Stabilize the existing roadway and control drainage and surface water runoff. Provide a pedestrian path adjacent to the driving lanes and separated from them. Control access to steep slopes and accommodate some overflow parallel parking near the lower end of the road.
3. **Upper Terrace and Bluff Trail** – Incorporate planned and committed landscape improvements in the northeast corner. Consider resurfacing the existing pathway with crushed rock to accommodate wheelchairs, and seek appropriate locations to add unobtrusive interpretive elements.
4. **Overlook Parking Across from Caretaker's Residence** – Create a new paved parking area on the existing terrace west of the road across from the caretaker's residence. Provide a place to park and look at the view. Provide parking for users of the bluff trail and for activities at the caretaker's residence and the mid-level terrace.
5. **Caretaker's Residence** – Evaluate the long-term feasibility of maintaining a caretaker's residence and consider alternative uses for the site, including: adapting the building for group activities and events, creating a picnic area with a picnic shelter and restrooms, and developing a facility and exhibits for interpretation. This is a good location for an activity area with a lawn and irrigated landscape, but vegetation or structures likely to affect views from the bluff trail should be avoided. Consider a stair connection to parking at the mid-level terrace.
6. **Mid- Level Terrace** – Improve this area to accommodate more intensive use, including providing a lawn for informal recreation and an irrigated landscape to provide an oasis of green in an otherwise arid natural habitat. Consider creating a place to accommodate private gatherings with a picnic area. Expand the existing parking area and control access to steep slopes.
7. **Central Activity Area** – Enhance and supplement existing improvements to create a central focal point or "heart" for the park. Expand existing facilities and incorporate new ones in a way that organizes the area and creates a sense of place. Create a sense of entry from the parking lot. Create terraces for activities and direct circulation with paved surfaces. Contain any cultivated landscape and control access to areas with steep slopes and to vegetated areas without irrigation. Control drainage and surface water runoff. Incorporate interpretive and educational elements.
8. **Beach Trailhead** – Provide access for all park visitors from the parking lot to the bridge over the railroad. Protect the existing stream and cluster of trees and control access to steep slopes.

9. **Bridge Over Railroad** – Make safety improvements to the existing bridge to enhance its usability and appearance for the foreseeable future. Consider alternative locations and designs for an eventual replacement bridge.
10. **Beach Activity Center** – Renovate existing facilities as needed and provide expanded picnic facilities. Provide access for all park users from the bridge to the beach activity area. Protect natural vegetation and beach dunes. Provide a beach wash-down area.
11. **Steep Slope Stairs and Trails** – Control access to steep fragile slopes to reduce erosion and protect vegetation. Improve connections to activity areas across steep slopes by constructing raised stairs and boardwalks in selected locations. Incorporate intermittent platforms with seating to pause and enjoy views. Allow the uninterrupted ground plane and vegetation to continue beneath stair and trail structures.



12. **Wetland Overlooks** – Build one or two structures to provide views into and over the lower wetland area east of the railroad. Control access to the wetland and slope leading down to it. Provide access for all visitors to the park to the overlook structures from the parking lot. Include interpretive signing and exhibits.
13. **Steep Slope Stabilization** - Implement a program of removing invasive plants and replacing them with dune grass and other native plant species tolerant of dry, sandy and gravelly soils. Create a community participation program to involve volunteers in this effort, to be coordinated by a city staff person. Work with the University of Washington Restoration Ecology Network in this program. Establish an ongoing program to restore and maintain this park habitat.



14. **Lower Wetland Restoration** - Implement a program to remove blackberry and replant the bank east of the railroad with woody native species to provide shade to suppress weeds and improve stream water quality. Remove invasive plant species and nurture native species in the wetland at the base of the slope (this will require the cooperation of the railroad). Create a community participation program to involve volunteers in this effort. Work with the University of Washington Restoration Ecology Network in this program. Establish an ongoing program to restore and maintain this park habitat.
15. **Beach and Dune Restoration** – Implement a program to remove invasive plant species from the west bank of the railroad right-of-way and replace them with native species (this will require the cooperation of the railroad). Implement a program to remove nvasive plant species from the beach dune area and replace them with native species (this is unlikely to be successful unless invasive species are also removed from the west bank of the railroad right-of-way). Establish an ongoing program to restore and maintain this park habitat.
16. **Signage and Interpretation** - Design and install a series of interpretive signs and exhibits at appropriate locations in the park to explain history, natural features and site ecology. Develop a system of directional and informational signs for the park.

After estimating the total project cost of each potential improvement project, the master plan concept and a revised list of recommended phase one projects with cost estimates was presented to the Park Board. The Park Board endorsed the Master Plan and recommended the following projects for design and construction within the near future, utilizing funds designated for Saltwater Park in the Parks Bond Issue:

- Park Entrance Improvements
- Park Road Improvements
- Steep Slope Stairs and Trails
- Steep Slope Stabilization
- Bridge Access and Safety Improvements
- Beach Wash- Down Area
- Overlook Parking Across from Caretaker's Residence
- Mid-Level Terrace
- Signage and Interpretation

