

ShoreScore Update

November 2017



CHANGES TO AREA SHORELINES NEAR YOU

In this issue of ShoreScore, we look at two projects near our lake shorelines. Both have been under construction for some time. Both have been controversial among shoreline property owners.

Meydenbauer Bay

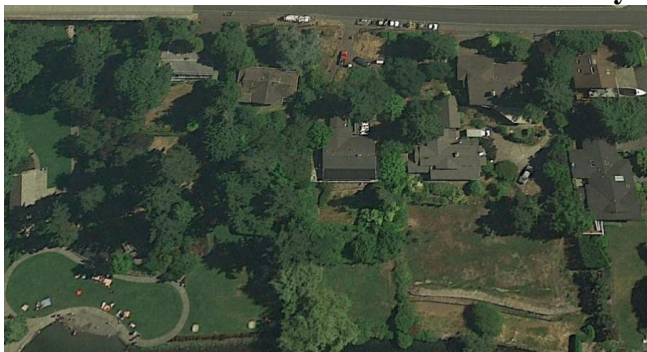
Over the last decade a great deal of City effort has been focused on opening this 10 acre area, immediately SW of Downtown/Old Main Street, to the public. Surrounded by prime residential homes, city-acquired public moorage, and private yacht club moorage, the existing beach park and city-acquired land & moorage is rapidly changing as construction here is only exceeded by the regional light rail construction activity just a few blocks away.



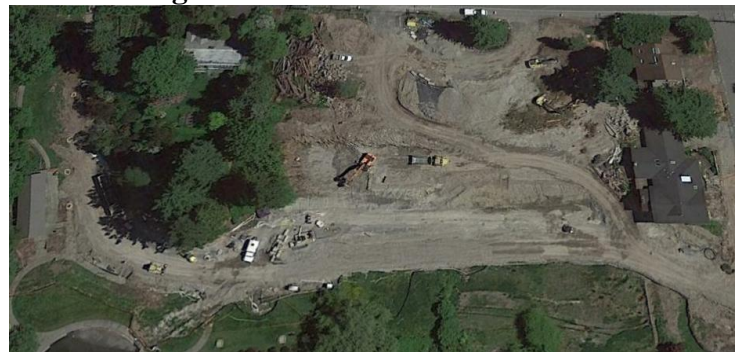
Artist's Sketch of Waterfront Renovation (Seattle Times, May 12, 2017)

The project began with acquisition and removal of 8 homes surrounding the existing park/beach facility (partially shown below). This year it has progressed rapidly, clearing the way for physical changes (picture on right).

Recent Meydenbauer Changes



Mid-2014

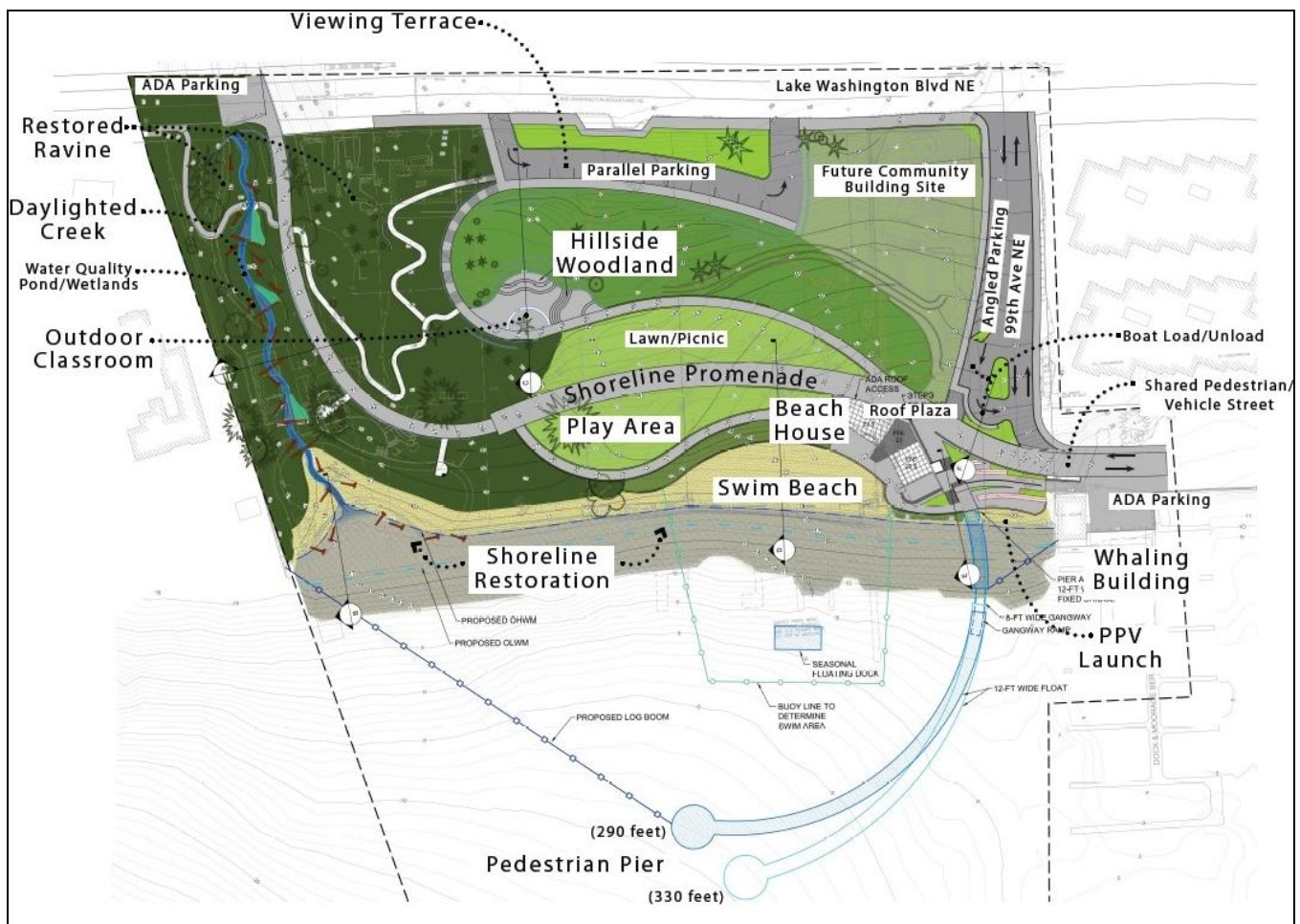


Mid-2017

Completion of Phase 1 is expected to extend through 2018 and include:

- extensive bulkhead removal,
- relocating the beach/swimming area towards city moorage,
- daylighting a dormant stream (in hopes of salmon returns),
- re-landscaping of the entire hillside,
- construction of a beach house with dressing rooms/etc.,
- retrofit of the Whaling Building (for an undetermined public use),
- creation of a hand-held boat launch, and finally
- construction of an approximately 400 ft long curved pier (extending about 300 ft across the 1200 ft wide Bay).

In future phases, the Master Plan calls for an 8,000 sq.ft. event center, a reduction of city moorage, retail kiosks, a Grand Connection at 100th from Old Main Street to the water, and addition of 125 parking spaces for a total of about 170 spaces. These improvements, in Phase 1, are shown below.



Meydenbauer Bay Renovation Plan

The total cost of improvements for all phases was originally estimated to be \$40 million, not including the nearly \$40 million spent to acquire the aforementioned properties. Phase 1 was slated at \$8 million but is running nearly \$11 million plus additional monies being spent to move 1100 ft. of lake sewer line to the shore.

Meydenbauer Bay residents are justifiably concerned with the magnitude of change being imposed on what has been a quiet residential area. The City's intension is that this become a regional park, attracting thousands of regional residents and tourists. The amphitheatre acoustics of the Bay will be tested as human voices carry over water, the constriction of boat traffic will be enhanced by the curved pier, car traffic will be intensified by increased car-trips/parking coupled with a future intent to remove an important neighbor access road. These all will be issues – and this is just Phase 1. Hopefully the City will focus sufficient budget to manage the concomitant problems and will find solutions.

Of concern to WSSA is the dichotomy between the shoreline changes that public agencies grant themselves versus the restraints imposed by these same agencies on private property owners. The root of this disparity lies in the State Shoreline Management Act. It calls for increased public access to our lakes, while you, the private property owner, would be asked to reduce your access to the shore, limiting it to just a 5 ft. path.

As another example of the disparity, we note that, under the pending SMP, parks & marinas are granted a 25 ft setback from water's edge. Your residential property would be held to a 50 ft water setback. And, as demonstrated by this Master Plan, dock requirements & shoreline planting requirements are being relaxed enormously for these public uses.

HOLIDAY NOTE: We're told that the Annual Holiday Parade of Boats on Lake WA WILL include passage through Meydenbauer Bay again this year on December 19th at about 8 PM.

East Lake Sammamish Trail

Widening and paving of the multi-use trail on the east side of Lake Sammamish continues. While this County project is supported by many adjacent property owners and the public in general, it also continues to be surrounded in controversy. Here's a status report.



Trail Prior to Reconstruction



Reconstructed Trail Section

The initial phases of the project, at the north end in Redmond and south in Issaquah, are complete and open. Construction of the south roughly 1/3rd of the trail, known as Segment 2A, is nearing completion. The middle, Segment 2B, is at the 60% design stage. As with the other segments, the County's design features a trail footprint that is 18 ft. wide throughout, but includes a band of clearing and grading up to 40 ft. wide. This will not only impact environmentally sensitive areas but also long standing property owner improvements (gardens, parking, driveways, garages, etc.). These and other citizen issues have been raised, but the County holds to its claim that the entire width of the rail corridor is now a public park.

At resident prodding, the City of Sammamish required several conditions be met when the County applied to Sammamish for approval of permits required by State Ecology. The County objected to the City's requests, so it is now a legal matter. A ruling is expected early next year, but that ruling could be appealed to higher levels, thereby further delaying project completion.

The key issue to some residents is ownership, and that remains in litigation as well. Two lawsuits are pending – one in Washington Superior Court and one in Federal Court. Adjacent property owners hope that the courts will agree with the Federal Court of Claims that the County, through "rail-banking", merely acquired a surface easement for the trail, not outright ownership of the former railroad right-of-way. [You can review the County's position here.](#)

WSSA board member Marty Nizlek, a retired traffic engineer, has followed the ELST project since inception. He points out - *"Rather than leave the trail as a 10 ft. gravel path that existed for many years, the County is creating a bike freeway. In paved conditions such as these, some cyclists will travel at speeds of 20 mph or more as they do on the Burke-Gillman trail in Woodinville. Placing this trail through the backyards of homes along the lake, residents and pedestrians will need to be extremely vigilant under these conditions."*

In summary, the current cost estimate for the 11 mile long trail was not readily available; but estimates during initial planning exceeded \$60 million or about \$5.5 million per mile. By comparison, 2013's improvement to 1 mile at the south end of West Lake Sammamish Parkway cost about \$10 million.