



Salmon Beach Slope Landscape Management Plan

Public Meeting Summary
August 10, 2017 - 6:00 to 7:30 pm
Point Defiance Park Pagoda

Welcome and Introductions:

Angie Thomson, EnviroIssues, welcomed the group and thanked them for attending. She began the meeting by introducing the project staff, reviewing the evening's agenda, and going over the meeting room layout and safety information.

Presentation:

Desiree Radice (City of Tacoma) began the presentation by providing an overview of the City's role in the Salmon Beach Landscape Management plan and explaining the project's purpose. She also noted the benefits of managed landscapes versus unmanaged landscapes. John Payne (KPG) continued the presentation by going over the project area and work that has been done to date. Kevin Lamb (GeoDesigns), John Payne, and Scott Maharry (Grette Associates) reviewed the existing conditions and site observations. Scott Maharry then presented on the vegetative management strategy for the project area.

Facilitated Question and Answer:

Angie Thomson opened the meeting to questions from the audience:

Question: Parkside neighborhood has installed an infiltration gallery on the backside of the property. Have you seen evidence of this?

Response: *Not in the field, although the City's GIS system shows an outline of a storm drain pipe.*

Comment: There is a storm drain nearby that is inaccessible and has missing manhole lids (manhole #2). People have been taking the manhole cover for scrap metal and replacing it with sticks and debris, which causes it to plug. The stormwater pipe connected to this manhole seems to be overloaded.

Response: *Thank you for letting us know. We will forward your concern to the City's real property services and our asset management group.*

Question: Does Himalayan Blackberry attract animals and/or stabilize the hillside?

Response: *No, Himalayan Blackberry does not stabilize the hillside. It may weaken it, as it forces out other species that are more deeply rooted. The plant covers a lot of ground, but has relatively shallow roots in a localized area.*

Question: Has the project team been in touch with residents from the Parkside neighborhood?

Response: *Parkside addresses received postcards informing them of this meeting, and the project team has received several phone calls from Parkside residents. The project team will continue to reach out to the Parkside neighborhood moving forward.*

Question: Does the city have the power to enforce the presence of a greenbelt in the project area?

Response: *The City owns the project area property. There are some legal matters to work out with the Parkside neighborhood and the project team is working to sort through them.*

Question: Has the project team considered selectively coppicing the trees to manage the area? This technique was used near the Parkside neighborhood and was said to provide more habitat for woodpeckers, although some of us are concerned that it will do more harm than good. It was used in recent years in Salmon Beach.

Response: *In the 1995 plan, Madrone trees were coppiced and Douglas Fir trees were snagged. Snagging a tree involves cutting off the top of the tree and all the branches – specifically to kill the tree while preserving habitat benefit, while coppicing involves cutting branches of the tree more towards the bottom of the trunk and letting it sprout again. The Madrones were coppiced because at the time the City agreed with the arborist's proposal that it would help the trees combat fungal diseases.*

Question: Are Madrone trees hypersensitive to nearby human activities? If so, how will the project team work around this issue to ensure the health of these trees?

Response: *Repeated human activity is what harms the Madrone trees, although this is true of all vegetation. The greatest human impact is compacting soil, which prevents water and soil from reaching the roots.*

Question: Will the property be opened to the public?

Response: *A trail easement was reserved in 1979, when the property was deeded to the City. Environmental Services has no current intention to put a public trail on this property, although that could change in the future.*

Question: Are there any trees native to the area that grow quickly and root quickly? I'm interested in canopy restoration.

Response: *Plant species for this project are to be determined, although they will all be native. Species selection will depend on where they are placed, i.e., a slope, shade, full sun, etc.*

Question: When is work expected to start and when will plant species be chosen?

Response: *Commencement of work ultimately depends on City resources (labor and materials). With projects in progress on Mason Gulch and Schuster Parkway resources are few, however it is anticipated that this project will be permitted by fall 2018. Fall 2018 is the earliest work would begin, as permits are needed for ground work. The overall schedule will also depend on public outreach/involvement and how many public meetings occur.*

Question: Is Wild Mountain Blackberry or Salal considered local?

Response: *Trailing Dewberry is often mistaken for Wild Mountain Blackberry. Trailing Dewberry and Salal are both native to this area.*

Question: What invasive species will be removed through this project?

Response: *The primary invasive species that we will be removing is Himalayan Blackberry. English Ivy and Scott's Broom are also present, although they don't present as much of a threat.*

Question: How long will it take for the hill to become safe after new species are planted?

Response: *It depends on the species and treatment. Trees can take 10-15 years to grow tall enough to stabilize the hillside, while shrubs can take 5-10 years. It depends on the species, where they are planted, and what other plants already exist. Other erosion control practices, like jute mats, straw wattles and logs, may be used to secure the slope while vegetation is establishing.*

Question: How do you fully eradicate an invasive species? Will herbicides be used? Won't the Himalayan Blackberry just grow back?

Response: *These details still need to be determined. It usually takes a few years of aggressive maintenance to fully eradicate an invasive species. Erosion control is something to consider because to remove Himalayan Blackberry, you must remove or kill the roots, which could disturb some soil. The goal is to remove the species while also maintaining slope stability. Herbicides sometimes need to be used to as the least invasive option.*

Question: What kind of mulch layer will be used to prevent erosion?

Response: *Straw and wood mulch are good options. With over 50% slope, a mulch layer coupled with jute mat stapled to the ground is likely the best option. We anticipate our next meeting will be in October, and we'd like to have more details ironed out by then related to plantings and erosion control.*

Question: Are Madrone trees currently on the slope healthy?

Response: *The Madrone trees on the northern side are showing signs of stress. We are still deciding on next steps to take care of these trees. The Madrones in the southeast area and on the west side of the parking lot are in decent shape because they haven't been bothered or cut. Madrones are hard to plant by humans- they need to self-seed. We would love to put in more Madrones but they're very difficult to grow.*

Question: Vine maple seems to grow fast and hold the bank well. Why don't we have any over here?

Response: *Vine maple could be considered for this project- it is a good understory species.*

Question: Are you aware that Salmon Beach is a historic district?

Response: *Yes, and we will make sure that it is protected as such through this project.*

Question: We've heard about passive areas, but what about the active areas around Point Defiance and Salmon Beach?

Response: *We have some ability to manage those areas, though we have different funding to manage that infrastructure. If residents have concerns about active areas in the park or near Salmon Beach, they can let us know. It would probably fall under Metro Park's jurisdiction, but we can help make that connection.*

Question: Do you have any plans for student interns?

Response: *There are multiple internship programs that we might pull from, including 253 interns and Washington Conservation Corps.*

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Geoff Smyth provided some City of Tacoma Environmental Services background and context to the passive open space program. Desiree Radice ended the presentation by noting next steps for the project, including another public meeting to be scheduled for October of this year. The project team thanked the audience for their attendance and participation.