



# MEMORANDUM

**Date:** March 31, 2014

**To:** Parks & Community Services Board

**From:** Glenn Kost, Parks Planning & Development Manager (425-452-5258)  
Scott Vander Hyden, Parks Project Coordinator (425-452-4169)

**Subject:** Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update/112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE noise barrier

**Action Requested:** Proposed Motion: Recommend that City Council adopt the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update, together with the 112<sup>th</sup> Street Park Edge Treatment depicted in the 2/7/14 sections prepared by the Berger Partnership

## **BACKGROUND:**

At your January 14 Study Session, we presented the proposed Master Plan Update for Surrey Downs Park, including the community process leading up to that recommendation (**attachment 1**). The Surrey Downs community supported the plan but requested additional noise protection along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE for the residents living adjacent to the park. We agreed to work with the neighborhood to explore modifications to the existing plan to provide additional sound protection from the light-rail trains.

## **ISSUES & INTERESTS:**

In developing the master plan along 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we have recognized the challenges and limitations created by the presence of the light rail. It not only eliminates vehicle access, but creates safety and aesthetic issues that must be addressed. Some elements cannot be changed, including the track location, guide wires and poles, and specific safety requirements governing wall and fence heights and setbacks. The topography along the park frontage also provides both challenges and opportunities. In addressing these issues, our park interests were three-fold:

- To create a green “front door” to the park for passing motorists and pedestrians consistent with the landscaped corridor desired throughout the length of the light rail corridor in Bellevue, specifically along Bellevue Way and 112<sup>th</sup>;
- To create a pleasant experience for the park user. This includes allowing visitors to experience territorial views to the east and southeast without feeling “walled-in,” and also allowing visitors, especially young children, the ability to see the passing trains;
- To be a good neighbor to the residents living near the park.

Surrey Downs' interest was to effectively eliminate the noise and visual intrusion of the trains. Some of these issues were addressed during the development of the master plan, including a series of berms along the east edge of the park that provide visual and noise relief from the trains. It also includes a series of retaining walls that accommodate the topographic variations along the frontage. The neighbors want to increase the height of these walls to fully block the sight and sound of the trains. Our challenge was to develop a solution to satisfy both parties' interests.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

Subsequent to the master plan meetings identified in your January report, we met with the Surrey Downs Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) on Dec. 11 who requested additional noise buffers along 112<sup>th</sup>. Working closely with the Berger Partnership, several retaining wall sections were revised and presented at a joint meeting of the TAC and Park Advisory Committee (PAC) on January 7. Further modifications were requested and described in detail in a letter from the PAC Co-Chair Beth Sievert-Muller (**attachment 2**). Working again with our consultants and representatives from our Transportation Department, walls were revised again to accommodate all requested changes, while still trying to achieve one of our goals of retaining a green "front door" to the park. These plans, dated 2/7/14, were prepared by the Berger Partnership and presented at another joint meeting on February 11. The Surrey Downs joint committee then requested an additional 6 foot high noise barrier be added to the second wall (**attachment 3**). We questioned the benefit of the added height, but agreed to complete a sound study to determine the benefits of this and to explore other options to reduce noise to the neighbors. The results of that study and the City's response and recommendation will be presented at a joint meeting of the Surrey Downs committees scheduled April 3.

### **NOISE STUDY:**

The City retained The Greenbush Group, Inc. to complete the "Surrey Downs Noise Wall Performance Analysis." The study compared several noise wall, landscaping and fencing options. The report is fairly technical in nature but offered the following findings:

- The minimum sound level variation perceptible to a human is generally 3 decibels (3-dB);
- Adding a 6' high noise barrier atop the second retaining wall will not noticeably reduce noise to the homes surrounding the park;
- We preferred a wider (15') landscape planting strip between the first and second walls, while Surrey Downs preferred a narrower (5-10') strip thinking that it would more effectively reduce noise. The study demonstrated that the distance between the first and second walls made no discernable difference in reducing noise;
- We asked that Greenbush study the effectiveness of constructing a noise barrier between the park and the rear property line of the adjacent homes. Again, this barrier is not very effective at reducing noise from the trains. Our standard boundary fence is chain-link. Though not part of master plan, we generally work with our adjacent neighbors to determine a preferred fence style during project design and construction, and would do so here as well.

After carefully reviewing the wall configurations, together with the noise study, we recommend approval of the Master Plan that includes the two tiered retaining wall approach along the 112<sup>th</sup> park

edge consistent with the plans presented to Surrey Downs February 11. We do not support or recommend the added 6' noise wall atop the second retaining wall requested by the joint committee. It provides no discernable benefit (noise reduction) for the neighbors but would negatively impact views into the park, would compromise territorial views from within the park, contribute to a more confined (walled-in) feeling, and would add unnecessary cost.

**NEXT STEPS:**

A meeting is scheduled April 3 with the joint Surrey Downs committee to review the findings of the sound study and to discuss our recommendations. Following the Park Board meeting, a study session is tentatively scheduled April 14 with City Council to discuss the Park Board recommendations. Depending on Council feedback, changes may be required and the environmental review (SEPA) completed. In addition, a Subarea Plan policy in the Comprehensive Plan requires that all vehicle access to this site be from 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. This policy must be revised before the updated Master Plan can be adopted, which will likely delay adoption until late 2014 because Comp Plan policies are only reviewed once annually. Upon completion, staff will return to Council to request adoption of the Master Plan Update.

Recall that no funding exists for Surrey Downs Park in the 2013-19 CIP Plan. Staff will request funds in the upcoming budget to demolish the court building, complete park design and construction. Significant coordination will be required between the City and Sound Transit to determine specific areas of responsibility and the timing of park construction. Sound Transit anticipates light rail construction to start in 2015, but construction sequence is not yet known. The City is now finalizing the lease for a new district court facility, with relocation expected in the spring of 2015, after which the court buildings will be demolished.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: January 14, 2014 Park Board memo with the 2009 Adopted Master Plan and Proposed 2014 Master Plan Update

Attachment 2: letter from Beth Sievert-Muller

Attachment 3: email from Carole McKinstry and Beth Muller

The *Surrey Downs Park Noise Wall Performance Analysis* report is expected to be finalized the week of March 31 and will be distributed;

2009 Surrey Downs Park Master Plan document available upon request





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**Date:** January 14, 2014

**To:** Parks & Community Services Board

**From:** Glenn Kost, Parks Planning & Development Manager (425-452-5258)  
Scott Vander Hyden, Parks Project Coordinator (425-452-4169)

**Subject:** Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update

**Action Requested:** Recommend that City Council adopt the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update

**SUMMARY:**

The approved light rail alignment eliminates vehicular access to Surrey Downs Park from 112<sup>th</sup> Ave SE. Because the adopted Surrey Downs Park Master Plan included vehicle access from 112<sup>th</sup>, changes to the adopted plan are necessary. We have worked closely with the Surrey Downs Community through its Park Advisory Committee to propose changes to this plan. At your meeting, we will review these revisions as well as the process leading up to this proposal. We are seeking feedback from the Board. Based on your feedback we will ask that you recommend to the City Council that they adopt the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update.

**BACKGROUND:**

The public process that lead to the adoption of the initial Surrey Downs Park Master Plan began in Nov. 2007. Over 200 citizens participated in that process, which included three community meetings, two Park Board study sessions and two City Council meetings. The Master Plan (**Attachment 1**) was strongly supported by the Surrey Downs community and adopted by Council in March of 2009. It balances passive and active recreational areas while providing a variety of elements to accommodate the multi-generational interests of the community. It contains a large open lawn area, walking trails, picnic facilities, environmental and traditional play areas, two youth baseball/softball fields enlarged to accommodate greater programmed use, a soccer field overlay, basketball court, hazelnut grove, skate spot, and contemplative area.

The Boys and Girls Club also participated in that process and advocated for the development of a large, multi-use community center and gymnasium at the park. Because of the uncertainties surrounding the light rail alignment, together with the fact that the neighborhood opposed the idea of a large community center, the plan also includes a large "Development Zone" reserved for a building program and parking which was to be determined at a later date after the light rail alignment was established. The development zone includes a series of "building parameters" that limit a building's

impact on the neighborhood. The complete Surrey Downs Park Master Plan document is available for Board review upon request.

The voter-approved Park and Natural Areas Levy provided funds to develop Surrey Downs Park. However, because of the delays in the light rail alignment decision and court relocation, funding for Surrey Downs Park was deferred from the 2013-2019 CIP budget.

### **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:**

The master plan update planning effort has been led by the Parks staff with assistance from the landscape architecture firm of The Berger Partnership, the same firm that assisted with the development of the initial Master Plan. The Surrey Downs Community Club (SDCC) has actively participated in the process, and established a Park Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide input and to generally represent the neighborhood throughout the process.

The public involvement process to-date has included four meetings with the PAC, two meetings with the SD Sound Transit Advisory Committee (TAC), attending the annual SDCC picnic, a Park Board Study Session and two community meetings at City Hall. Also, the PAC conducted two mail surveys to gauge neighborhood interest in various park facilities.

Approximately 20 residents and four Park Board members attended the Sept. 25 community meeting in which neighbors were given background about the 2009 master plan and invited to offer suggestions for revisions at two facilitated breakout stations (charrettes). Most of the attention focused on vehicle access points, neighborhood traffic, parking size and location and noise buffers along 112th. Except for programmed athletics, many of the park elements in the original master plan continued to be desired park features. Using feedback from this meeting, three alternative plans were developed and reviewed with the PAC. A preferred plan (**Attachment 2**) was identified and well received at a Nov. 21 community meeting attended by 20 residents and three Park Board members.

We attended a follow-up meeting with the TAC on Dec.11 where we were asked to increase noise buffers in the park along 112<sup>th</sup> to reduce noise to the surrounding neighborhood caused by light rail trains. Working closely with the Berger Partnership, several retaining wall sections along 112<sup>th</sup> were revised and presented to representatives of the TAC & PAC on January 7 and are incorporated into the preferred plan.

### **PROPOSED MASTER PLAN CHANGES:**

Information received throughout the community process formed the basis for the updated master plan. The most obvious changes to the original master plan involve the conversion of the sports fields into a grass play meadow and reduction and relocation of the parking lot and access drive. Though the design of the master plan has not been greatly altered, these revisions effectively change the use of Surrey Downs Park from a place that featured both neighborhood and community park elements to a more neighborhood-focused park. The loss of scheduled athletics here will be offset by the proposed sports field capacity improvements at Hidden Valley Sports Park.

Notable revisions reflected in the Surrey Downs Master Plan Update include:

- The programmed sports fields are converted to a grass “play meadow.” While this area will continue to be available for pick-up games and practices, athletics will no longer be scheduled here;
- The 112<sup>th</sup> Ave SE parking lot has been relocated, and vehicle access will be off of SE 4<sup>th</sup> St;
- Parking lot capacity will be reduced to 15-25 stalls. There are currently 140 spaces to accommodate both the park and district court. The adopted Master Plan contemplates a 50-60 capacity lot with no building. The final capacity will be determined in part through the environmental review process;
- Skate spot and climbing wall is eliminated;
- The labyrinth is relocated from the SW corner to a more central location within the park and renamed the “Woodland Maze”;
- A pedestrian “overlook” is incorporated into the trail system;
- The series of retaining walls along 112<sup>th</sup> Ave will be modified slightly to include additional landscaping and earthen berms to provide passers-by aesthetic views into the park, while also providing park neighbors visual and sound buffering from passing trains.

#### **NEXT STEPS:**

A study session is tentatively scheduled January 27 with Council to discuss the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update recommendations. Depending on feedback received from Council, necessary changes will be made and the environmental review (SEPA) completed. Upon completion, staff will return to Council to request adoption of the Master Plan Update. A potential delay is that a Subarea Plan policy in the Comprehensive Plan states that vehicle access to the Surrey Downs site must be from 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Development Services is now reviewing this policy to determine if the Comprehensive Plan must be revised before the updated Master Plan can be adopted. If so, this could delay adoption until late 2014 because Comp Plan policies are only reviewed once annually.

Recall that no funding exists for Surrey Downs Park in the 2013-19 CIP Plan. Staff anticipates requesting funds in the upcoming budget to complete park design and construction. Significant coordination will be required between the City and Sound Transit to determine the best course of action regarding park construction. Currently, Sound Transit anticipates light rail construction to start in 2015, though the construction sequence is not yet known. The City is now finalizing the lease for a new district court facility. Relocation is expected in early 2015, after which the current court buildings will be demolished.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1: 2009 Adopted Master Plan

Attachment 2: 2014 Proposed Master Plan Update

2009 Surrey Downs Park Master Plan document available upon request





# Surrey Downs Park Proposed Master Plan

PLAN SCALE: 1" = 40'









January 16, 2014

To: Glenn Kost, City of Bellevue  
Scott VanderHyden, City of Bellevue

On behalf of the Surrey Downs Park Committee and the Surrey Downs East Link Committee, we would like to express our appreciation to the City of Bellevue staff for the collaborative efforts that have resulted in a revised master plan for the Surrey Downs Park that is well suited to the needs of the city and the residents of Surrey Downs. That being said, we do have concerns related to proposed alterations to the existing contour on the east boundary of the park which would increase noise impacts to our neighborhood after the completion of East Link light rail on 112th Ave.

More specifically, the reduction of the currently existing bluffs diminish natural sound mitigation which will result in additional impacts to homes in the immediate vicinity for twenty hours per day once East Link is completed. One need look no further than the operations of Central Link in Seattle as evidence of unforeseen noise impacts to neighborhoods on both Rainier Avenue and in Tukwila. It should also be noted a crossover is planned adjacent to our neighborhood which will create additional noise impacts for many on an almost continuous basis once the trains commence operation.

We understand the city desires to create an aesthetically pleasing view of the Surrey Downs park when viewed from 112th and we believe this can be achieved with the creative use of rockeries and greenescapes without compromising the existing bluffs. When our city council accepted the current light rail alignment the use of exceptional mitigation for single family neighborhoods was stated many times. Using already existing natural mitigation falls below the exceptional standard and is a reasonable request for our already heavily impacted neighborhood.

The following are more specific suggestions in response to the 112<sup>th</sup> Berger drawings presented on 1/7/2014:

**Starting foundation** - Surrey Downs would like to maintain the existing bluffs and where possible increase the existing elevations to mitigate train noise. We are operating under the position that Berger has provided an accurate depiction of the existing elevations on the attached documents and labeled them 'Sound Transit Proposed'.

**Section 1** - We would like the existing 11' elevation to be retained and additional sound mitigation to be added on top of the existing grade (59'5"). If absolutely needed, we are willing to accept a terraced approach similar to Section 3 Alternate as long as the overall elevation exceed 11' within a short distance.

**Section 2** - We would like to see the existing 7'6" retained for an elevation of 59'5". Similarly, we would like the Secondary Path elevation to be moved up to its existing height of 66'1". We

recommend additional terracing above the 7'6" train level edge similar to the Section 3 Alternate B solution which will bring the elevation up from 63'8" (shown in Section 2 - Alternate) up to 66'1" (existing) at the Secondary Path.

**Section 3** - We are supportive of Alternate B as long as the terracing is shortened between the proposed 6'10" edge and the 3'4" edge. We would also like to get clarity on what the exact elevation is of the proposed 6'10" edge as the drawings have omitted this item. We are looking to retain the existing elevation of 72'4" when adding up the elevation of both walls and incline between.

**Section 4** - We are working under the guidance that the drawings provided are at the same elevation as today, therefore no changes are needed.

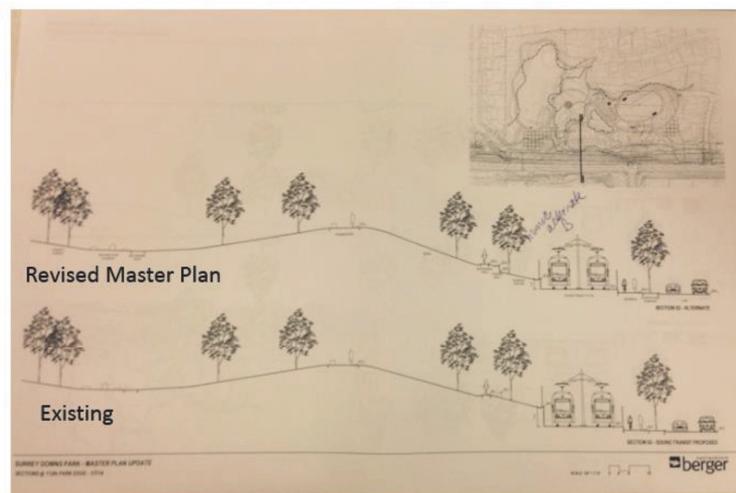
Thank you once again for the excellent work on the revised park master plan and we look forward to a satisfactory resolution of this remaining issue that will allow Surrey Downs to fully support the final proposal to be presented next month.

**Carole McKinstry**  
**Beth Muller**  
**Surrey Downs Park Committee Co-Chairs**  
**Arjun Sirohi, Surrey Downs East Link Committee Chair**

## Section 2

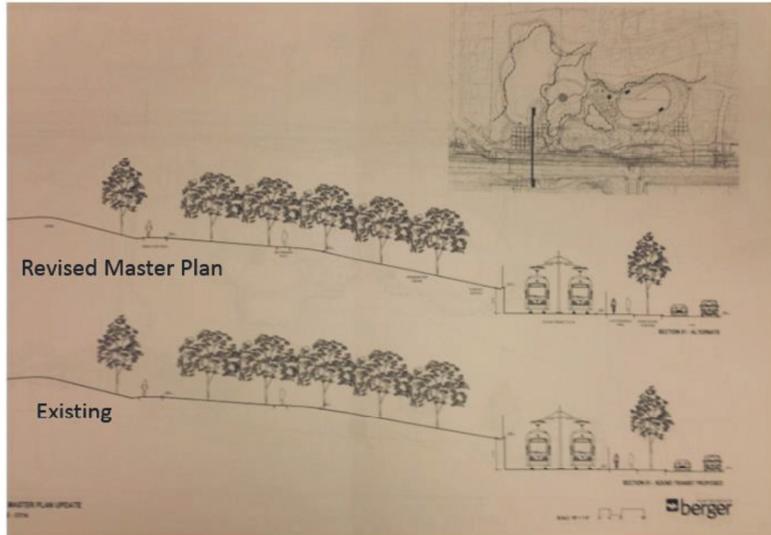
Summary of variation to current: Existing grade would have a 7'6" edge cut with an elevation of 59.5' (ground). Revised plan has an edge cut of 4'0" and elevation of 55.8". There is a slight terrace wall that brings the elevation up to 63.3'.

Request of revision from Surrey Downs – revise edge cut to bring elevation back to 59.5' and 7'6" and revise secondary path from 63.8' to 66.1'. Using terracing in section 3



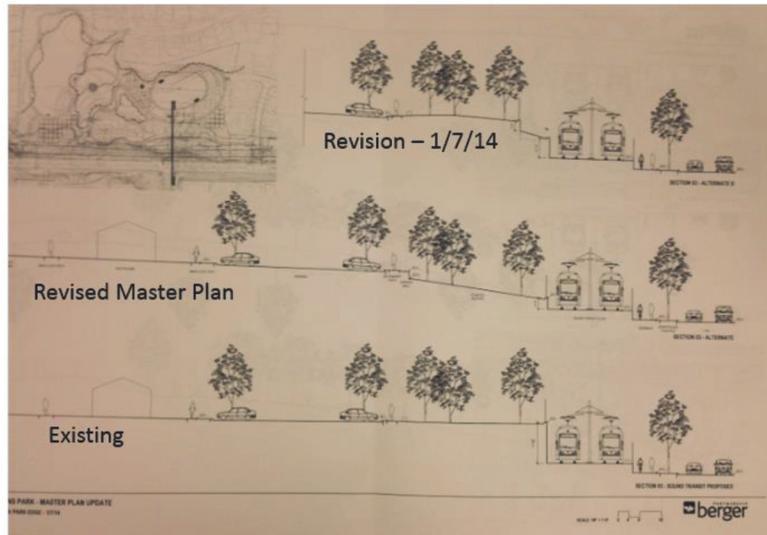
Section 1 – furthest South

Summary of variation to current – current edge cut is 11'0" with an elevation grade of 59.5'. Revised Master plan has an edge cut of 9'0" and elevation grade of 57.5'.



Section 3 - Mid-section view

Summary of variation to current – current edge cut is 14'8" with an elevation of 72.4'. Revised Master plan brought elevation at train to 4'0" and elevation 61'7". Berger provided an alternate (B) with an edge cut of 6'10" and a slope over approximately 15' plus a 3'4" edge with fence on top. Elevation at parking lot brought to current elevation of 72'1"





**From:** Beth Sievert Muller [<mailto:bethsievert@hotmail.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 24, 2014 10:12 AM  
**To:** VanderHyden, Scott; Kost, Glenn  
**Cc:** [scottlampe@msn.com](mailto:scottlampe@msn.com); Carole Mckinstry  
**Subject:** Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Revisions

Dear Scott and Glen,  
Surrey Downs would like to thank you again for your community engagement and cooperation in the Surrey Downs Park Master Planning process. We are thrilled with the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Revisions and were very encouraged by the 112th edge re-design we saw on Monday, February 17th.

As you are aware, noise mitigation is a serious concern to our community. On the drawings we saw on the 17th there appears to be a 6' fence along the train and a secondary 6' fence up the 15' slope. It is our strong desire to have this secondary fencing material made of solid construction in order to create an added barrier for noise mitigation. We believe Julie is doing a more thorough analysis on the best type of noise reducers and we look forward to her recommendation. We hope that through beautiful plantings and hedges, this secondary fencing will blend-in with the natural parkscape that is being created (on both sides)

We are aware how much time and effort your department and Berger Consulting have put into this project. We thank you for your engagement and hope to wrap up these loose ends quickly so that we can jointly make a recommendation to the Parks Board on March 11th.

Sincerely,  
Surrey Downs Park Committee

