

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update.

STAFF CONTACTS

Patrick Foran, Director, 452-5377

Glenn Kost, Planning & Development Manager, 425-5258

Scott Vander Hyden, Project Coordinator, 452-4169

Parks & Community Services Department

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

Action
 Discussion
 Information

BACKGROUND

The approved light rail alignment eliminates vehicular access to Surrey Downs Park from 112th Avenue SE. Because the adopted Surrey Downs Park Master Plan provided vehicle access from 112th, changes to the adopted plan are necessary. Staff have worked closely with the Surrey Downs community through its Park and Transit Advisory Committees to propose changes to this plan. At this evening's meeting, staff will review these revisions and the process leading up to this proposal, with feedback from Council being sought. Based on that feedback, staff will make any necessary changes, initiate the environmental review and Comprehensive Plan revisions, and return to Council to request adoption of the Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Update.

INITIAL SURREY DOWNS PARK MASTER PLAN

The public process that led to the adoption of the initial Surrey Downs Park Master Plan began in November 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 2009. The Plan 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 & Girls Clubs of Bellevue also participated in that process and advocated for 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 that were to be determined at a later date after the light rail alignment was established. The development zone includes a series of "building parameters" to limit a building's impact on the neighborhood.

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.

MASTER PLAN UPDATE: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The master plan update planning effort has been led by Parks' staff with assistance from the landscape architecture firm of The Berger Partnership, who 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 represent the neighborhood throughout the process.

The public involvement process has included four meetings with the PAC, two meetings with the SD East Link Committee (ELC), two community meetings, three joint PAC/ELC meetings, attendance at the annual SDCC picnic, and two Park Board Study Sessions. The PAC also conducted two mail surveys to gauge neighborhood interest in various park facilities.

Approximately 20 residents and four Park Board members attended a September 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 second community meeting (November 21, 2013) attended by 20 residents and three Park Board members.

At a follow-up meeting with the ELC on December 11, staff were asked to provide additional noise protection for the neighbors living adjacent to the park. Working closely with the design team, retaining wall sections along 112th were revised and presented at a joint ELC /PAC meeting on January 7. Further modifications were requested and described in detail in a letter from the PAC (**Attachment 3**). 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 February 7, 2014, were presented at a second 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 4**). Staff questioned the benefit of the added height, but agreed to complete a sound study to determine the benefits and to explore other options to reduce noise to the neighbors. The results of that study and the City's response and recommendation were presented at a third joint meeting on April 3.

The Parks & Community Services Board reviewed the Master Plan Update on two occasions, once at a January 14 Study Session and a second meeting April 8 to review the results of the 112th Avenue noise protection.

PROPOSED MASTER PLAN CHANGES

The most significant 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. Although the overall 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 activities 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.

Key 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 be available for pick-up games and practices, athletics will no longer be scheduled here.
- The 112th Avenue SE parking lot has been relocated, and vehicle access will be off of SE 4th Street.
- 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 are eliminated.
- The labyrinth is relocated to a more central location and renamed the “Woodland Maze”.
- A pedestrian “overlook” is incorporated into the trail system.
- The retaining walls along 112th Avenue will be modified to reflect the cross-sections discussed below.

112th AVENUE ISSUES AND INTERESTS

The presence of the light rail alignment along 112th creates both challenges and limitations. It not only restricts vehicle access to the park, but it creates safety and aesthetic concerns. Some elements are fixed, including the track location, guide wires and poles, and specific safety requirements governing wall and fence heights and setbacks. The topography along the park’s frontage also provides challenges and opportunities. In addressing these issues, City 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 112th.
- 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 to allow visitors, especially young children, the ability to see the passing trains.
- To be a good neighbor to the residents living near the park.

The Surrey Downs neighborhood’s interest was to 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. The challenge was to develop a solution to satisfy both parties’ interests.

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

The initial Sound Transit solution proposed a single retaining wall that varied in height to accommodate the topographic variations along the park frontage. The initial Surrey Downs Master Plan proposed a series of earthen berms, together with shorter, curved retaining walls and landscaping to reduce train noise but also provide more pleasing views from 112th. The proposed solution retains the berms and provides a two-tiered retaining wall approach with a 15-foot sloped, landscaped strip between the two walls. Both walls would be approximately 5-foot tall. The Surrey Downs neighbors preferred that the second wall be 6-foot taller (a total of 11

feet) to further reduce noise. A noise study was completed to test this theory and to evaluate several different wall and landscaping options.

NOISE STUDY

The City retained The Greenbush Group, Inc. to complete the “Surrey Downs Noise Wall Performance Analysis.” The study, which has been provided to the Parks Board, City Council and Surrey Downs Community Association, compared several noise wall and landscaping options. The report offered the following findings:

- A sound variation of 3 decibels or less is generally not perceptible to the human ear.
- Adding a 6-foot high noise barrier to the second retaining wall will not noticeably reduce noise to the homes surrounding the park.
- The depth of the landscaped strip between the first and second walls makes no discernable difference in reducing noise. Staff preferred a wider (15-foot) planting area, while Surrey Downs neighbors preferred a narrower (5-10-foot) strip thinking that it would be more effective at reducing noise.
- A noise barrier between the park and the rear property line of the adjacent homes is not effective at reducing noise from the trains. The City’s standard park boundary fence is chain-link, but staff generally work with adjacent neighbors during project design to determine a preferred fence style and will do so here as well.

RECOMMENDATION

After carefully reviewing the wall configurations, together with the noise study, staff recommend approval of the Master Plan that includes the two-tiered retaining wall approach along the 112th park edge consistent with the plans presented to Surrey Downs February 11. Staff do not recommend or support the added 6-foot noise wall atop the second retaining wall requested by Surrey Downs. 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 be more costly. At their April 8 meeting, the Park Board supported this plan and recommended that the City Council adopt the Master Plan Update as presented.

NEXT STEPS

Depending on feedback received, necessary changes will be made and the environmental review (SEPA) completed. A Subarea Plan policy stating that vehicle access to this site must be from 112th Avenue SE must also be revised before the updated Master Plan can be adopted. Comprehensive Plan policies are only reviewed once annually, so this will delay the process. Upon completion of these two steps, staff will return to Council to request adoption of the Master Plan Update.

No funding exists for Surrey Downs Park in the 2013-19 CIP Plan. Staff will request funds in the upcoming budget to demolish the existing District Court buildings and to complete park design and construction. Significant coordination will be required between the City and Sound Transit to determine the best course of action and timeline for park construction. Sound Transit anticipates light rail construction to start in 2015, although the construction sequence and timeline for work adjacent to the park is not yet known. Relocation of the District Court functions 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

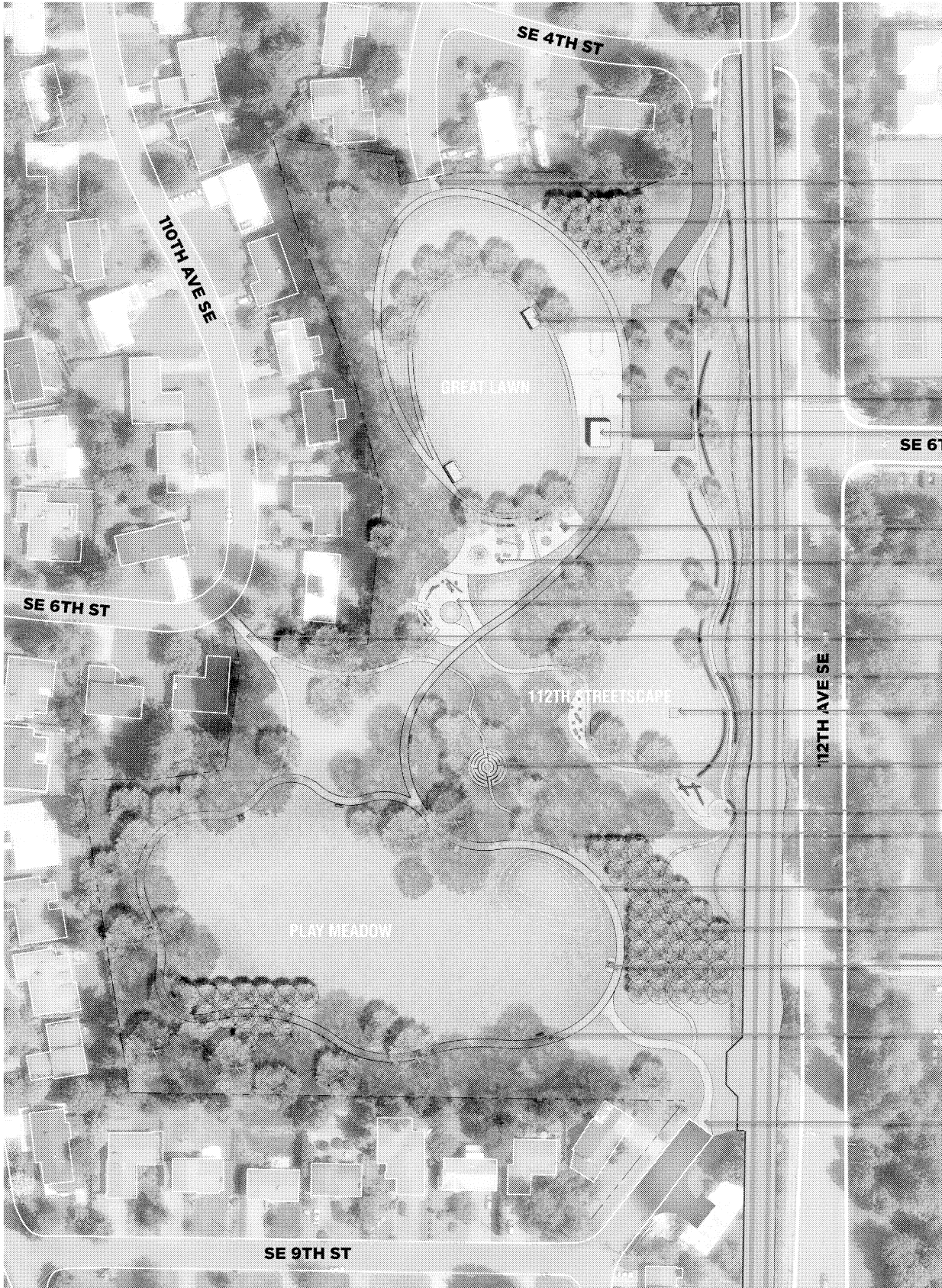
Attachment 3: January 16, 2014 Letter from Surrey Downs PAC

Attachment 4: February 24, 2014 Email from Surrey Downs PAC

SURREY DOWNS PARK

Master Plan Update

Contact: Scott Vander Hyden - SVanderHyden@bellevuewa.gov



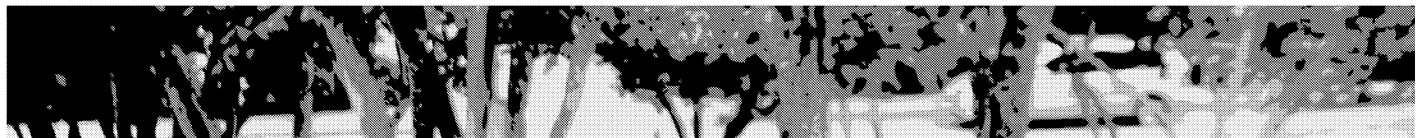
- PARK PORTAL
- ENTRY GROVE
- PICNIC SHELTER, TYP.
- SPORT COURT
- RESTROOMS
- TOT PLAYGROUND
- PLAYGROUND
- NATURAL PLAY
- PARK PORTAL
- SECONDARY PATH
- BERM PROMONTORY
- WOODLAND MAZE
- OVERLOOK CANOPY FOREST
- MAIN LOOP PATH
- PROMONTORY GROVE
- PICNIC TABLE, TYP.
- BENCH, TYP.
- PARK PORTAL

PARK PORTAL



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 112th 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.

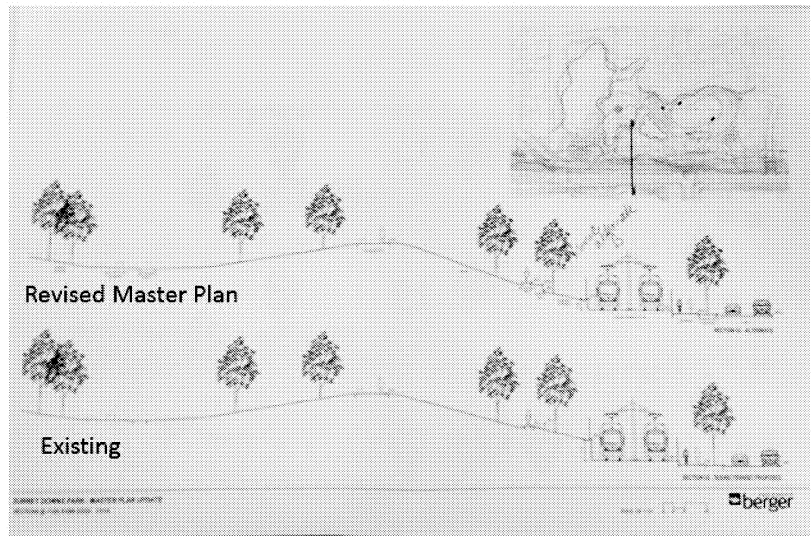
Thank you once again for the excellent work on the revised park master plan and we look forward to a satisfactory resolution of this remaining issue that will allow Surrey Downs to fully support the final proposal to be presented next month.

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

Section 2

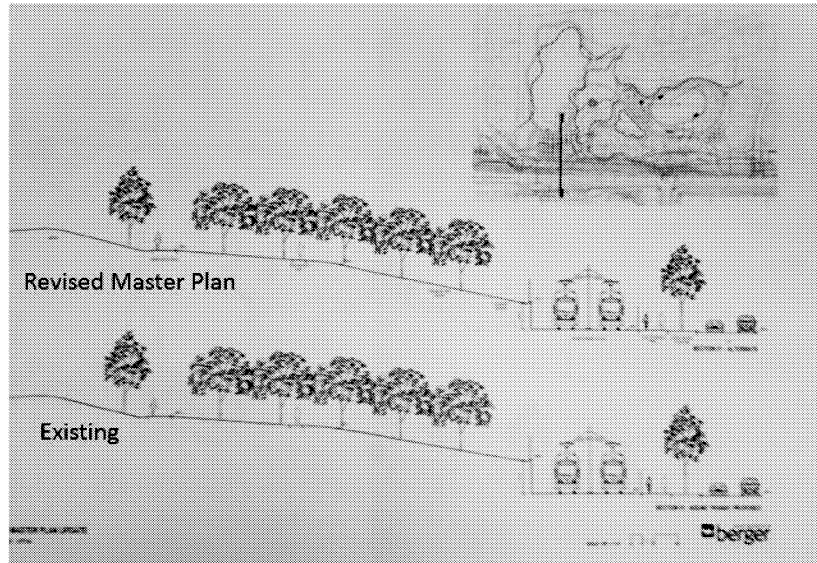
Summary of variation to current: Existing grade would have a 7'6" edge cut with an elevation of 59.5' (ground). Revised plan has an edge cut of 4'0" and elevation of 55.8". There is a slight terrace wall that brings the elevation up to 63.3'.

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



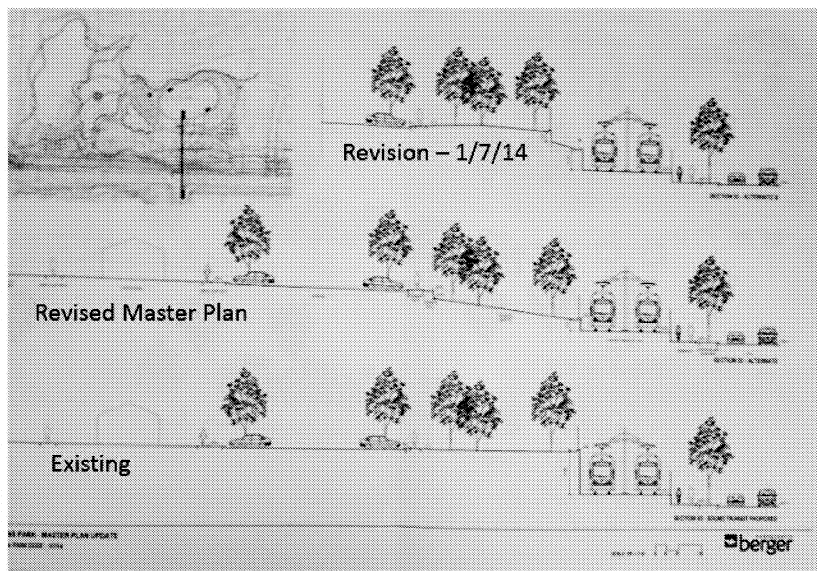
Section 1 – furthest South

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"



To: VanderHyden, Scott
Subject: RE: Surrey Downs Park Master Plan Revisions

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; 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