

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Richmond Beach Saltwater Park – Master Plan
DEPARTMENT:	Public Works Department
PRESENTED BY:	Dick Deal, Director, Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Dave Buchan, Capital Projects Manager

This Staff Report provides Council with background and recommendations regarding the development of a Master Plan for Richmond Beach Saltwater Park.

BACKGROUND

Richmond Beach Saltwater Park is a treasured resource for the Shoreline community. The forty (40) acre site on Puget Sound offers spectacular views of the Sound, the Olympics, features a wide sandy beach, facilities for picnics, barbecues, children's play area and more. Saltwater Park is widely used by the community for such activities as quiet strolls on the beach, enjoying the views, city sponsored concerts, the Christmas Ship or family picnics.

The spectacular views available at Saltwater Park and the great beach area have tended to mask a series of on-going problems at Saltwater Park. The lack of proper drainage and storm water control facilities has created significant erosion problems at the park. This erosion has the potential to do long-term damage to this priceless resource for the City of Shoreline. Pockets of erosion damage are evident along both sides of the main access road to the beach parking area and at numerous points along the steep, sandy banks of the park "bowl". The proliferation of invasive non-native plant species, particularly Scotch Broom, threatens to take over the park and crowd out the remaining native vegetation at the site.

These concerns led the Council in 2005 to allocate \$150,000 for the preparation of a Saltwater Park master plan that will be used as a guide to address both short and long-term improvements at Saltwater Park. Staff conducted a consultant selection process and hired Hewitt Architects in October 2005 to begin analysis for the master plan for Saltwater Park.

Site Evaluation and Opinion Assessments

The first step in the Master Plan process was to provide a thorough inventory of existing conditions in the park and sample public opinion about Saltwater Park. In November of 2005, the City Manager authorized Hewitt Architects to conduct a Phase 1 evaluation of Saltwater Park. This initial effort identified and mapped existing plant communities on site, evaluated soil conditions on site with particular attention to erosion patterns and areas of potential slope instability, and assessed the condition of existing storm water systems, potable water services, pumps, motors and other mechanical equipment.

This Phase 1 analysis provided an initial sampling of public opinion about Saltwater Park. Interviews with Park Board members, other key stakeholders and community representatives were held to document public attitudes and interests about the future of Richmond Beach Saltwater Park.

This Phase 1 analysis was submitted in a summary report issued to the Park Board in December of 2005.

Preparation of Master Plan

In February of 2006 Council authorized staff to proceed with a Phase 2 contract with Hewitt Architects to prepare the Saltwater Park Master Plan. This effort focused on testing a range of possible future uses, activities and improvements that should be considered for Saltwater Park. Alternative master plan concepts were illustrated and described in a consistent and objective manner so that preferences were more easily understood. These ideas were then tested through an extensive public involvement effort to determine attitudes and preferences about the park from a broad cross section of park users and City of Shoreline residents.

Public Involvement Process

A variety of public involvement tools were used to understand more about the community's preferences for Saltwater Park. In January, 2006 articles in the Enterprise newspaper provided early information about the scope of the master plan effort. Questionnaires were distributed at community meetings and were also available at information boxes at the park itself.

On March 18, 2006, the first open house for Saltwater Park was held at the Richmond Beach Library. Attendees viewed illustrations depicting the existing conditions on site and had opportunity to express preferences regarding a range of park uses and priorities. Tours of the park were offered to give the public opportunity to see first-hand the issues and possibilities for Saltwater Park.

Public comments from the open house and a summary of questionnaire responses received over many weeks from Shoreline residents helped shape the preferred alternatives and key master plan principles for a Saltwater Park Master Plan. Shoreline staff and the design team used this information as a basis for evaluating specific project opportunities to help realize the preferred master plan elements. The design team prepared new illustrations and sketches to help communicate these master plan principles and project opportunities. These recommendations were shared with the Park Board in May, 2006. The Park Board enthusiastically supported the design directions presented at that meeting.

On July 29, 2006 a second open house was held, this time at Saltwater Park itself. The preferred alternatives for the Saltwater Park Master Plan and all supporting project analysis previously shared at the initial open house and the Park Board meetings, were presented at this second open house. Strong support for the Master Plan principles and project recommendations was evident. Both staff and the design team feel confident that the plan recommendations clearly represent the public's sentiments for Saltwater Park.

On September 21, 2006 staff and the design team presented the proposed master plan and a three phased list of proposed capital improvements at Saltwater Park to the Park Board. The proposed master plan and the three phases of capital improvements reflect the principles identified for the master plan. Phase I of the capital improvements list would be funded with the Parks and Open Space Bond allocation for Saltwater Park. The Park Board endorsed the prioritized list of projects and recommended that this package be forwarded to the Council for review and adoption.

Master Plan Recommendations

Throughout the public involvement process, a clear consensus has emerged about Saltwater Park. A set of goals was prepared for the master plan. People want to see Saltwater Park left in a more natural state and preserved for the benefit of future generations. Improvements should be made to protect the park from additional erosion, to improve pedestrian safety of park visitors, restore more natural vegetation for the site and improve opportunities for full use of the site.

Highlights include:

- ☐ The Park entry should be modified to present a welcoming feature, to slow incoming traffic, and provide clear visual clues to motorists about park access.
- ☐ The main access road should be improved to provide curbing to define edge conditions, control storm water and provide a safe, protected walking corridor for pedestrians.
- ☐ The Bluff trail is a popular attraction and left intact. Only modest trail surfacing and landscaping should be pursued.
- ☐ Greater use should be made of the mid-level area of the park with improved picnic facilities and trail access.
- ☐ Additional parking facilities should be provided at mid-level locations to benefit the elderly and people who simply want to enjoy the view.
- ☐ An arrival feature at the park's primary parking area should be created to provide visitor orientation, improved restroom facilities and access to mid-level picnicking and informal play facilities.
- ☐ Improvements at the beach area should include improved restrooms, outdoor wash down showers and an activity information center.
- ☐ Interpretive materials should be provided throughout the site to inform visitors about the natural features of Saltwater Park and some of the history of this magnificent waterfront site.

The proposed Phase 1 capital improvements for Saltwater Park, as recommended by the Park Board, are intended to accomplish the key projects necessary to protect the park and improve public safety. The projects will be highly visible to the visiting public and will create the foundation for long-term improvements at Saltwater Park.

Attached you will find the proposed master plan illustration with supporting sketches, narrative material, and the proposed phase 1 capital improvements for the park.

Financial Impact:

The Saltwater Park Master Plan effort is being carried out within the budgetary parameters previously established by Council.

The Master Plan identifies a series of capital improvements that are important to protecting the park, that have received strong consensus through our public process and that are consistent with Park and Open Space Bond allocations for Saltwater Park. The Phase 1 list of proposed Capital Improvements at Saltwater Park can be achieved within the dollar allocation identified in the Parks and Open Space Bond allocation for Saltwater Park.

If Council approves the master plan and the proposal for the first phase of capital improvements, staff will prepare a contract modification for the design team to begin design of the first phase capital improvements for Saltwater Park. The contract modification would be presented to Council for approval at a subsequent Council meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that Council approve the Saltwater Park Master Plan principles and proposed Phase 1 capital improvements as depicted in the attached materials.

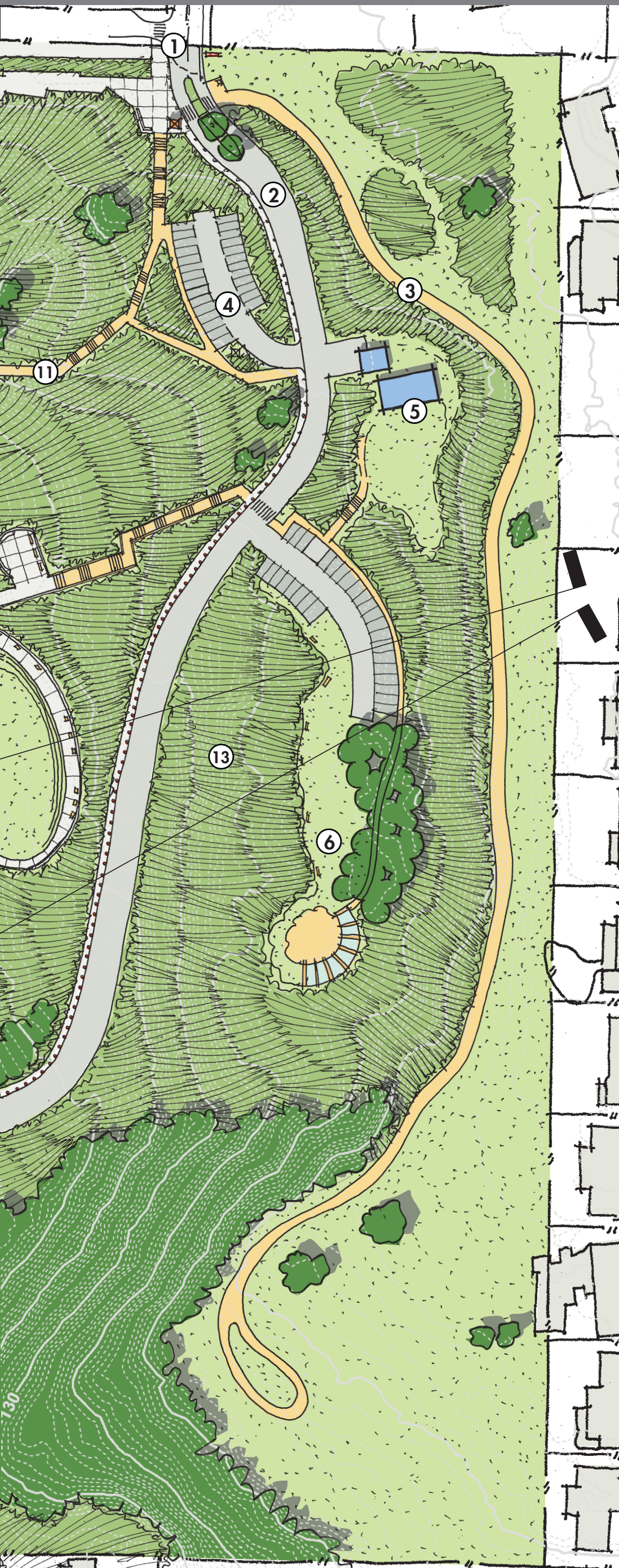
Approved By: City Manager _____ City Attorney _____

Attachments:

- A. Master Plan Images
- B. Supplemental Illustrations

Potential Improvements to Saltwater Park





- Protecting and maintaining the assets we have
- Building on and improving existing facilities
- Connecting the different areas of the park
- Creating a cohesive park experience
- Establishing appropriate vegetation and habitat

- ① Park Entrance Improvements
- ② Park Road Improvements
- ③ Upper Terrace and Bluff Trail
- ④ Overlook Parking Across from Caretaker's Residence
- ⑤ Caretaker's Residence
- ⑥ Mid-Level Terrace
- ⑦ Central Activity Area
- ⑧ Beach Trailhead
- ⑨ Bridge Over Railroad
- ⑩ Beach Activity Center
- ⑪ Steep Slope Stairs and Trails
- ⑫ Wetland Overlooks
- ⑬ Steep Slope Stabilization
- ⑭ Lower Wetland Restoration
- ⑮ Beach and Dune Restoration
- ⑯ Signage and Interpretation

Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Phase 1 Improvements

Projects Recommended for Early Implementation

Projects that address an immediate need, for which an agreed upon solution has been developed and that should be constructed as soon as possible



A. Park Entrance Improvements

- Create a safe and inviting path for pedestrians along 20th Avenue N.W.
- Provide a new park entrance sign and perhaps a pylon or similar landmark
- Create a landscaped median at the park entrance to slow down vehicles and improve safety for pedestrians
- Provide an overlook with seating at the top of the bluff

Estimated Cost: \$100,000 to \$120,000

Projects Recommended for Early Implementation

Projects that address an immediate need, for which an agreed upon solution has been developed and that should be constructed as soon as possible

B. Park Road Improvements

- Stabilize the existing roadway
- Control drainage and surface water runoff by sloping the road toward a curb at the hillside
- Provide a parallel pedestrian path on the outside of the roadway with bollards to separate the path from the driving surface
- Provide a defined edge to the path to control access to fragile steep slopes
- Make the roadway wide enough in a few places to accommodate overflow parallel parking

Estimated Cost: \$650,000 to \$800,000

C. 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
- One priority location should be addressed: Connect the park entrance with the central activity area and the lower parking lot

Estimated Cost: \$300,000 to \$400,000

D. 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

Estimated Cost: \$50,000 to \$70,000

E. Bridge Safety and Appearance

- Consider cosmetic and safety improvements to the existing bridge, such as a new walking surface, new fencing and guard rails and paint
- Explore cost effective ways to improve access gradients at both ends of the bridge

Estimated Cost: \$500,000 to \$700,000

Projects Recommended for Early Implementation

Projects that address an immediate need, for which an agreed upon solution has been developed and that should be constructed as soon as possible

F. Beach Wash-Down Area

- Provide a convenient and accessible facility for washing adjacent to the beach
- Provide an outdoor shower and hose connection
- Provide a bench or platform to place cleaned equipment
- Control drainage and runoff

Estimated Cost: \$20,000 to \$30,000

H. Overlook Parking Across from Caretaker's Residence

- Create a new paved parking area on the terrace on the west side 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
- Provide parking for activities at the caretaker's residence and the mid-level terrace

Estimated Cost: \$120,000 to \$160,000

I. Mid-Level Terrace

- Expand existing parking area
- Consider creating a place to accommodate private gatherings
- Potential picnic area
- Potential lawn area for informal recreation
- Potential for cultivated and irrigated landscape
- Control access to steep slopes

Estimated Cost: \$350,000 to \$500,000

O. Signage and Interpretation

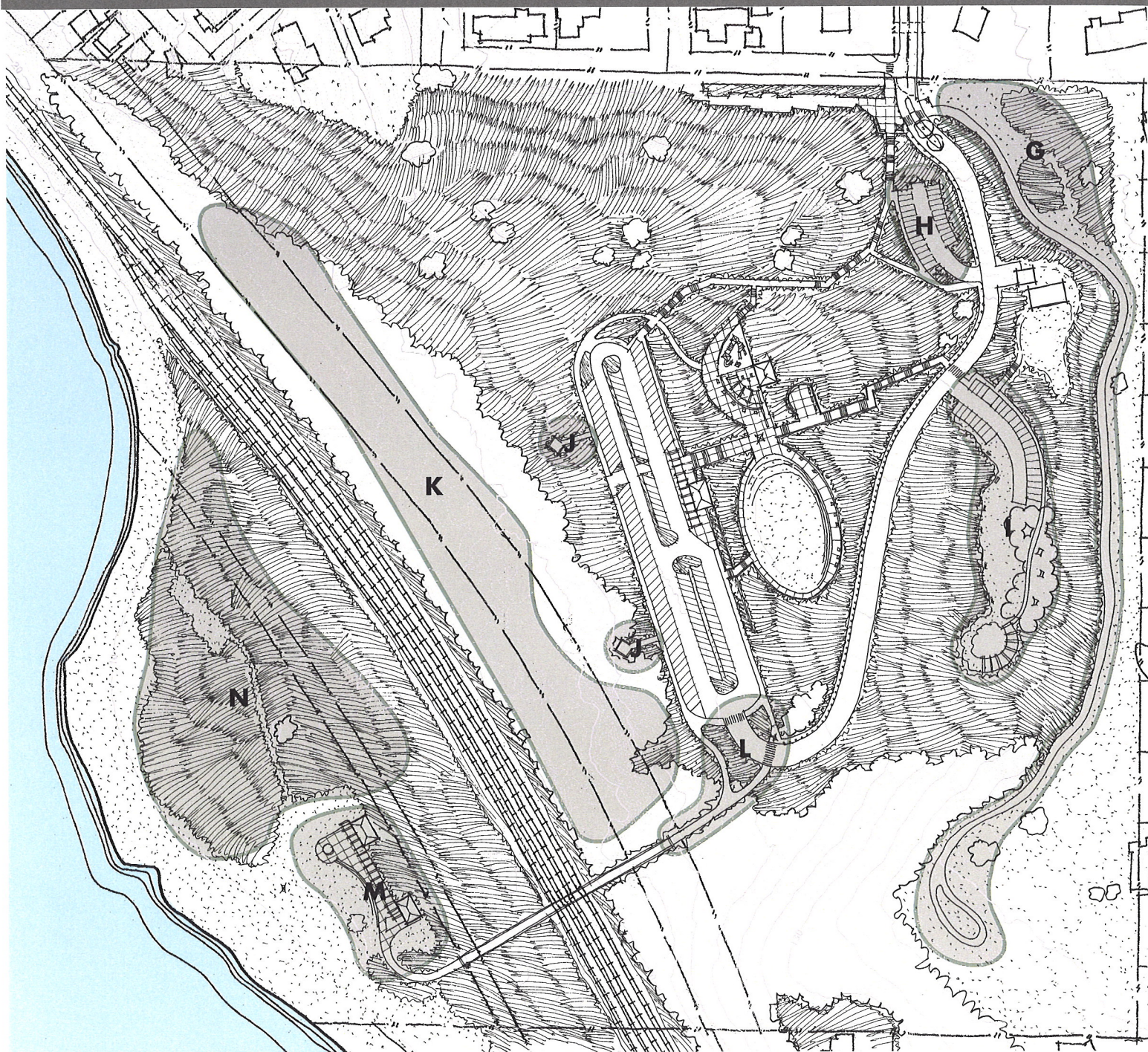
- Design and install a series of interpretive signs and exhibits at appropriate locations in the park to explain history, natural features and site ecology
- Develop a system of directional and informational signs for the park

Estimated Cost: \$120,000 to \$160,000

Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Phase 2 Improvements

Projects Recommended for Design Development

Projects for which a design concept has been proposed and generally agreed to and for which the design should be completed to enable construction within the next 2-3 years



G. Upper Terrace and Bluff Trail

- Incorporate planned landscape in northeast corner
- Consider surfacing pathway with crushed granite
- Opportunity to include exhibits for interpretation

Estimated Cost: \$180,000 to \$250,000

Projects Recommended for Design Development

Projects for which a design concept has been proposed and generally agreed to and for which the design should be completed to enable construction within the next 2-3 years

J. Wetland Overlook

- Build one or two structures to provide views into and over lower wetland area east of the railroad
- Provide access for all park visitors to the overlook structures from the parking lot
- Include interpretive signing and exhibits
- Control access to the wetland and slope leading down to it

Estimated Cost: \$220,000 to \$300,000

K. 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

Estimated Cost: \$90,000 to \$130,000

L. 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
- Control access to steep slopes

Estimated Cost: \$200,000 to \$250,000

M. Beach Activity Center

- Provide access for all park visitors from the bridge to the beach activity area
- Renovate existing facilities as needed
- Improve the beach volleyball play area
- Build a fishing pier
- Build a boat dock
- Provide an area to accommodate concerts on the beach
- Provide expanded picnic facilities
- Protect natural vegetation on beach dunes

Estimated Cost: \$500,000 to \$650,000

N. Beach and Dune Restoration

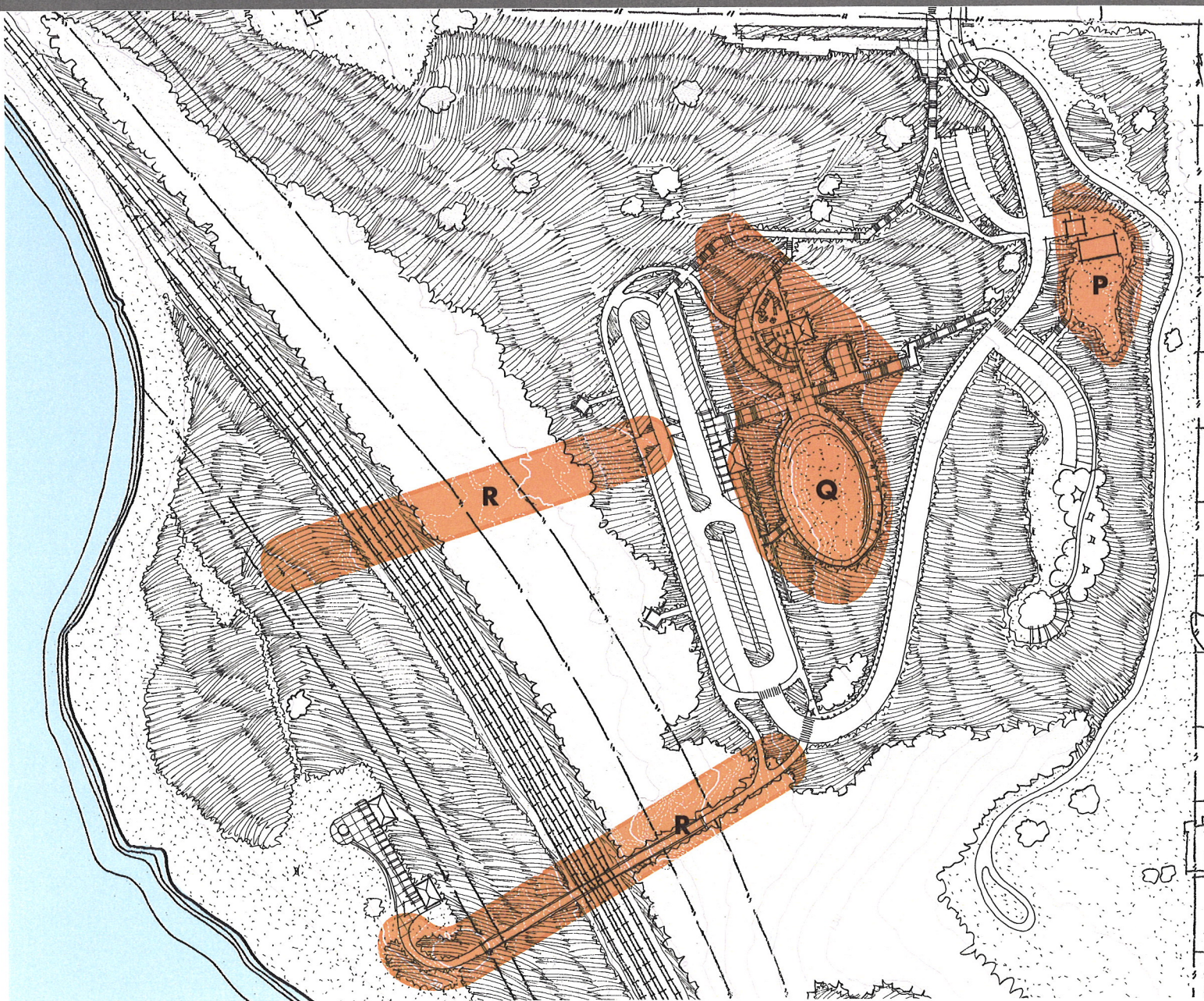
- Implement a program to remove invasive plant species from the west bank of the railroad right-of-way and replace them with native species (this will require the cooperation of the railroad)
- Implement a program to remove invasive plant species from the beach dune area and replace them with native species (this is unlikely to be successful unless invasive species are also removed from the west bank of the railroad right-of-way)

Estimated Cost: \$70,000 to \$100,000

Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Phase 3 Improvements

Projects Recommended for Further Study

Projects which need further analysis and definition as part of the master plan



P. Caretaker's Residence

- Should the building be demolished?
- Consider adapting the building for group activities and events
- Potential picnic area with shelter and restroom
- Opportunity to include facilities and exhibits for interpretation
- Potential for cultivated and irrigated landscape
- Avoid vegetation or structures likely to affect views from bluff trail
- Consider a stair connection to parking at the mid-level terrace
- Consider implications for park management and security

Estimated Cost: \$500,000 to \$1,000,000

Q. Central Activity Area

- Create a central focal point or "heart" for the park
- Create a sense of entry from the parking lot
- Renovate existing facilities as needed
- Expand existing facilities and incorporate new ones in a way that organizes the area and creates a sense of place
- Create terraces for activities
- Direct and contain circulation and connections with paved surfaces
- Contain any cultivated landscape
- Control access to areas with steep slopes and to vegetated areas without irrigation
- Control drainage and surface water runoff
- Identify near-term improvements consistent with chosen long-term vision
- Incorporate interpretive and educational elements

Estimated Cost: \$1,000,000 to \$1,300,000

R. Bridge Over Railroad

- Consider alternative locations and designs for a replacement bridge
- Coordinate planning with BNSF railroad
- Evaluate grading to provide wheelchair access at both ends of the bridge
- Improve connections to activity areas, trails and parking
- Accommodate views from the bridge and approaches
- Consider the visibility and appearance of the structure
- Provide maintenance and security vehicle access

Estimated Cost: \$3,000,000 to \$5,000,000





