

Waterfront Park Cultural Master Plan

A vision for reflecting and
shaping Seattle

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER, WATERFRONT BLOCK PARTY, 2023

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Land Acknowledgment

Waterfront Park is situated on the land of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have resided here since time immemorial and continue to thrive. With respect and humility, we acknowledge the history of the waterfront, the dispossession of land from the Coast Salish people and, most importantly, the strength and resilience of the Native people and their culture through this history to the present. This acknowledgement serves only as a first step in honoring the land that we occupy and the first peoples of this land. Friends recognizes that this will be long and evolving work to build and repair relationships with Native communities.

Sounds of the Park

Waterfront Park has already hosted many wonderful musicians and bands. As you read this document, you can listen along to some of them.



SCAN ME

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Park



PHOTO: ADAM LU, PIER SOUNDS, 2023

A Collective Dream

A letter from Joy Shigaki, President and CEO

After over two decades of imagining, planning, and building, Waterfront Park will open to the public in early 2025. Residents and visitors alike will be able to experience this world-class 20-acre park built on shoreline reclaimed from a former highway, reconnecting the city to the water. Overflowing with natural beauty, public art, and stunning views, Waterfront Park will be a place unlike any other in Seattle.

While the city has been building this monumental new public space, Friends of Waterfront Park has played and continues to play an indispensable role, offering non-profit leadership in

its management, programming and activation, and sustaining the park now, and for generations to come. Our vision is a Waterfront Park that is as vibrant and rich in community as it is in natural beauty; a place where everyone who visits feels safe, welcome, and at home.

With the Park's grand opening clear on the horizon, I am excited to share with you our Cultural Master Plan. The Cultural Master Plan is our commitment to honor the stories and histories of our Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities and continue to center these communities in all aspects of our work. What Waterfront Park can become is laid out in this plan – a collective dream by the growing community of people who see the endless potential of this new place.

While this plan's origins were to initially support programming at Waterfront



PHOTO: JOSHUA LEWIS, JOY SHIGAKI ON PIER 62



PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER
WATERFRONT BLOCK PARTY, 2023

Park, we aspire for the Cultural Master Plan to be a living, breathing tool used in our work across the organization. It will serve as a frame of reference, ensuring that our efforts are rooted in the principles of inclusivity, authenticity, and sustainability; and serve as a roadmap charting our course as we navigate the complexities and opportunities of stewardship, programming, and activation at Waterfront Park.

Waterfront Park will be a place of healing. We acknowledge that the downtown shoreline has been the setting to some of our city's history of violence and exclusion, as well as hopeful stories of solidarity, resilience, and joy. We are deeply appreciative to all of the 148 community members who gathered with us to contribute their perspectives, stories, and hopes during the process of co-creating this plan. Together, we are creating a new civic space that reflects the rich tapestry of our city and serves as a place of joy, hope, healing, and inspiration for generations to come.

Our vision is a Waterfront Park that is as vibrant and rich in community as it is in natural beauty

What an extraordinary place this will be for our city and region. We're excited about the journey ahead!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joy Shigaki'.

Joy Shigaki
President and CEO
Friends of Waterfront Seattle

Who have we been?

Who are we becoming?

The story of Seattle unfolds along its waterfront. From the long-ago geological events that shaped the land itself to the modern feats of design and engineering that dot today's shoreline, the waterfront traces our history. It connects us to the ancient forests, rivers and sea that defined the lives and legends of the Coast Salish people. Through its landmarks and indelible views, it recalls the pains and triumphs of change, holding both the memory of who we've been and the dreams of who we want to be.

Seattle's complex history gives it a complex identity. The city is simultaneously a place with deep Indigenous roots and a place where Indigenous people were once outlawed

from their own lands; a place built by immigrants working in sawmills, mines, canneries and railroads, and a place that later expelled and incarcerated them; a home to both cultural and technological innovation and racial inequities; a colonial outpost and a beacon of progress.

As Seattle emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and reckons with injustices new and old, it continues to be among the country's fastest growing cities. Our prosperity today presents an unprecedented opportunity to embrace bold hopes for the future and usher in a new era that uplifts everyone.

Waterfront Park is both a steward of Seattle's legacy and a catalyst



PHOTO: CHUCK REISINGER, PIXABAY

for its future: 20 acres of open space for communities to gather, for ecosystems teeming with native flora and fauna, for

elevated Overlook Walk, an expanded Seattle Aquarium, a transit hub, a restored beach, miles of pedestrian and bike paths, and a direct link to downtown's many amenities. It is a living, breathing extension of people who call this place home. So what should happen here? What kinds of experiences will make Waterfront Park a welcoming reflection of who we are? What histories need to be remembered? What stories have yet to be written? Who will we become?

What histories need to be remembered?

rest and play, imagination and healing. A once-in-a-lifetime civic project, the park is the culmination of many years of listening and planning—and it's coming to fruition as the city stands on the verge of its latest reinvention. Like the 1962 World's Fair, the opening of Waterfront Park is a chance to amplify Seattle culture and set the city's trajectory for the next 50 years.

Organized around five core values, this Cultural Master Plan offers a roadmap and a framework for the ways millions of people will experience the park for generations.

Waterfront Park is more than its physical footprint and Seattle's front porch—more than a new Pier 58 and a revived Pier 62, an

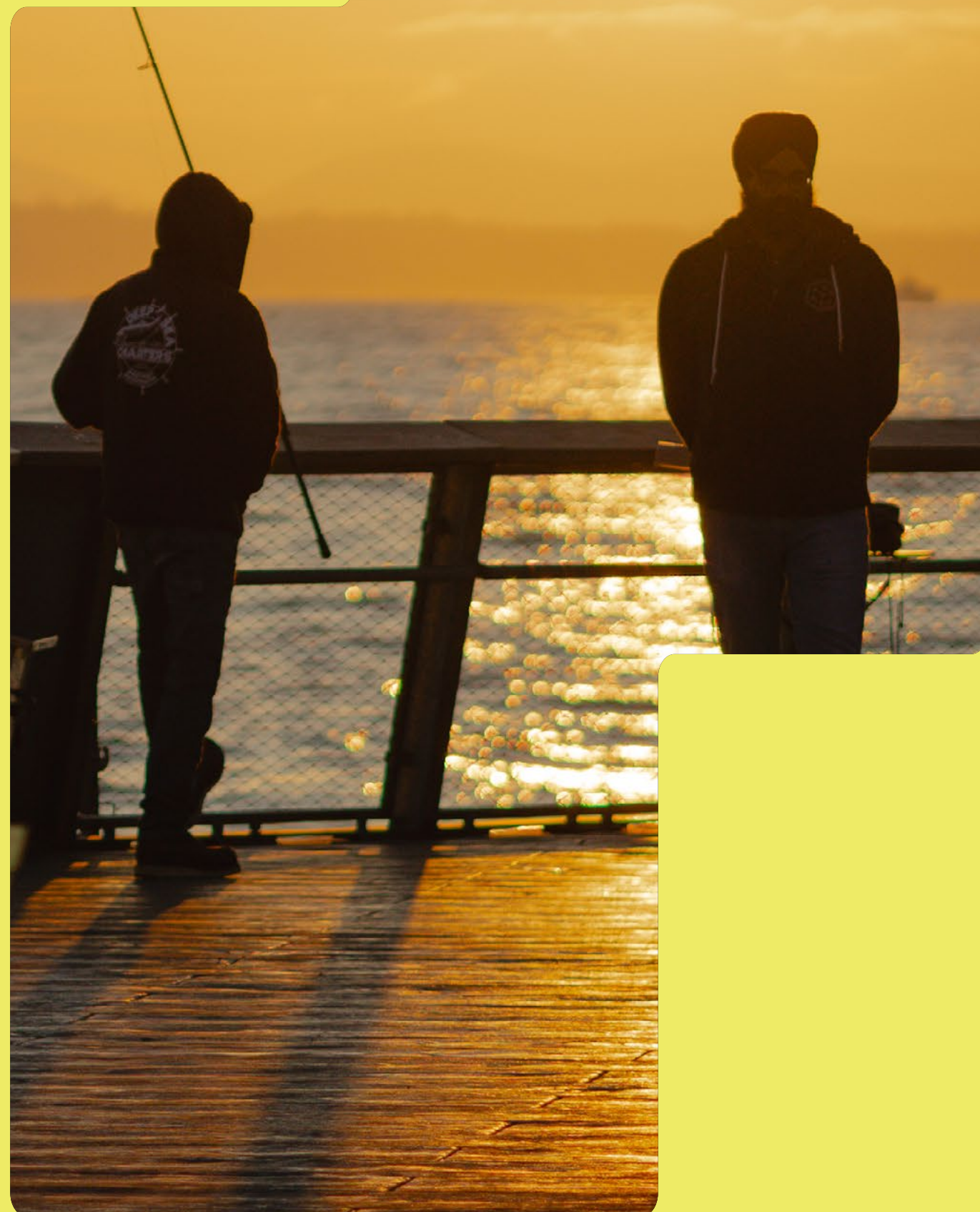


PHOTO: JO COSME,
LANGSTON BEATS ON THE PIER, 2023

Executive Summary

The Journey to this Cultural Master Plan

In 2009, the city of Seattle established a Central Waterfront Committee to begin exploring a redesign of the waterfront and the possible removal of the viaduct, which had separated downtown from the water for nearly 60 years and had been damaged in the 2001 Nisqually earthquake. In 2012, voters approved a \$290 million seawall bond to replace the Elliott Bay Seawall, and in 2014 Friends of Waterfront Park (Friends), formed as the independent nonprofit to steward, activate, program, and ultimately manage the park into the future. While the City of

Seattle took responsibility for designing and building the park, Friends emerged to support the private philanthropy needed to fund construction. In 2019, the viaduct came down and construction of Waterfront Park began.

A year later, portions of the park began opening to the public, starting with the rebuilt Pier 62, a large community space that previously had fallen into unsafe disrepair. Next came the Union Street Staircase, connecting downtown and Pike Place Market to the waterfront and featuring two large-scale artworks by Norie Sato. Then, in 2023, Pioneer Square Habitat Beach made its debut near Ballast Island, the site of Native encampment in the face of exclusionary laws and acts of violent displacement.

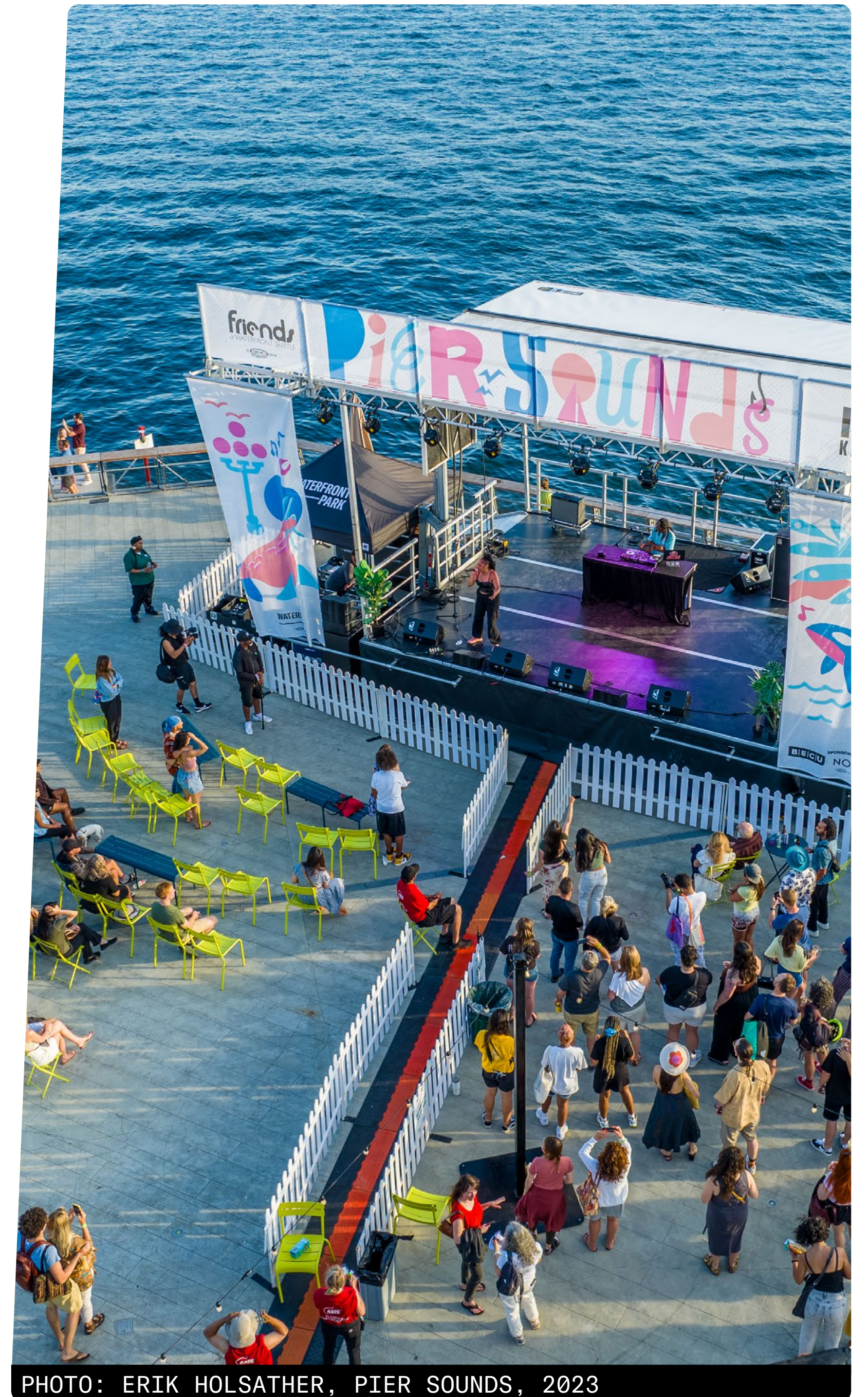


PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER, PIER SOUNDS, 2023

As the park moves closer to opening the full 20 acres in 2025, Friends sees an opportunity to engage the local community in envisioning programming for the future. With support from Third Way Creative, in 2023 the organization convened a series of conversations across the city to explore ideas for events, artwork, food, and vending, as well as ways the park could reflect community values and ignite positive change for Seattle and the people who call it home. These conversations involved more than 142 people in 11 round table sessions that centered Indigeneity and community voices. Grounded in an authentic commitment to racial equity, the process itself modeled the creativity and collaboration that will be hallmarks of Waterfront Park.

These conversations revealed a wealth of meaningful possibilities for the park as it moves ahead, consistently returning to a core set of values that represent Seattle—values that shape and define this Cultural Master Plan.



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, EAST SIDE INTERSECTIONS



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, PROMENADE

Belonging

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: JESSICA LEA, WABA KOREA FESTIVAL, 2023, MORNING STAR KOREA CULTURAL CENTER

Waterfront Park is a place for *everyone*.

Comfort.
Togetherness.
Safety.
Acceptance.
Connection.

These are the hallmarks of belonging, of having a place where you fit, a place where you feel at home, a place that's truly yours.

At Waterfront Park, everyone is always invited to stop or stay a while: A group of friends meets up on their way to a game in Sodo, grabbing a bite to eat as they walk south along the promenade. Grandparents watch their grandchildren play on Habitat

Beach, giggling as they skip rocks into the Salish Sea and climb on sandbag-like sculptures by Buster Simpson. A newly emigrated young couple stands on the overlook, taking in the views of the Olympics on a crisp sunny day for the very first time. Bicyclists and wheelchair users roll along Railroad Way as commuters stream in and out of Colman Dock. And so on and so forth, countless scenes like these play out all day long every day.

But beyond the regular bustle of daily life, a home reveals the history of the people who live—and have lived—there. So it is at Waterfront Park, where the Coast Salish people have strolled along these

A home reveals the history of the people who live—and have lived—there.

shores since time immemorial, where the gritty and working legacy of the port is constantly visible in its huge orange cranes, and where small vendors offer delicious foods and beautiful wares from around the world, celebrating Seattle's vibrant immigrant communities and their cultures.

Whether in the quiet moments of early dawn or the constant activity of a major festival on Pier 62, this free and accessible space that is our Waterfront Park, and the moments that will continue to shape it, belong to us all.

Welcome home.



The Origins of “Belonging”

In 1995, social psychologist Roy Baumeister and psychologist and neuroscientist Mark Leary published a landmark research paper about the importance of belonging to overall well being. Their work demonstrated that belonging is not only a universal human need, it also has been a driving force in the survival of humanity. Thirty years later after this breakthrough paper was published, leaders in the social sciences continue to emphasize belonging as essential to addressing some of today’s greatest challenges—from loneliness among elders to depression among teens. Like all places where people gather, public spaces can play a part in stimulating belonging for everyone who uses them—and these efforts can have far-reaching benefits in a community.

Goals, Strategies & Outcomes

The goals, strategies, and outcomes below were developed through an extensive series of listening sessions and are intended to guide the way people experience Waterfront Park's programming managed by Friends.

Goal

Waterfront Park should reflect the full breadth and diversity of the Seattle region and its rich cultures, a place where stories are shared, history is interrogated, and curiosity is explored.

Strategies

Offerings at Waterfront Park are provided and used by the community in ways that feel authentic.

- Program the Park with community to reflect the full diversity of the region
- Maintain elements of grit and imperfection by keeping rugged elements on the Waterfront



PHOTO: JOCELYN R.C., FRIENDS X REI S'MORES ON THE SHORE, 2023



PHOTO: JO COSME, REN XUE QIGONG, 2023

- Be a place of innovation and future thinking, grounded in local history and culture
- Use technology to help access the Park's amenities remotely and share information about programs

Strategies



PHOTO: SEATTLE AQUARIUM POP-UP, 2023



PHOTO: JO COSME, INDIGIQUEER, 2023

All ages, races, cultures, abilities, and incomes can enjoy an inclusive Waterfront Park.

- Ensure safe and affordable activities for families and youth, fostering space for intergenerational experiences
- Make communications and wayfinding available in multiple languages, ensuring these cultures are reflected in the Park's activities
- Create a space where everyone who lives, works, or plays in Seattle feels welcomed and seen
- Ensure all aspects of the Park are physically accessible to the broadest possible audience

Outcomes

Park resources are shared with historically excluded groups, supporting their cultural expression and economic self-determination, and allowing a sense of community agency over Waterfront Park and its programs.

Visitors experience Waterfront Park as a vibrant and inclusive gathering space where they are welcomed and feel a sense of belonging, emotional and physical safety, and connection to others.

What Community Voices Had to Say

*Let's start a collective dream for our city?
One where you can create belonging and
connection.*

Where we can hold that in Perpetuity?

*I feel like I live in a city built into a forest.
If you are walking in a park, you will eventually end
up back into community.*

*When you ride your bike along the pathway you
smell different food and hear music.
Rush hour bike traffic is actually enjoyable.*

*The water will attract people who want to move
here, people from all over the world.
The Waterfront should taste like the whole world.
But with places to sit.*



Land Stewardship

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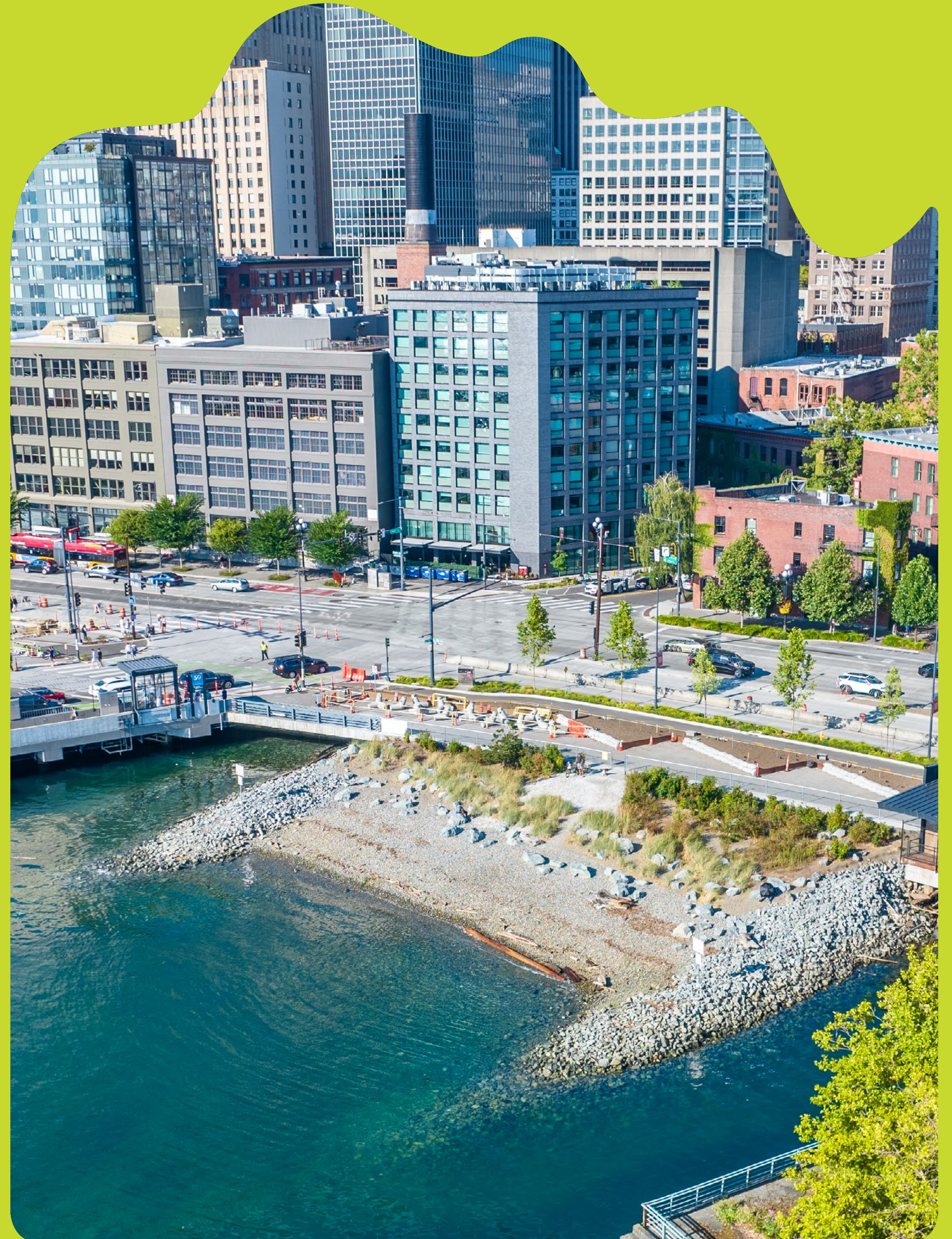


PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER, HABITAT BEACH

A thriving ecosystem connects us to nature.

Coast Salish people have been living in harmony with the land and waters of Seattle for thousands of years. Then, as now, they relied on the natural world for everything from food to clothing, medicine to transportation, storytelling to spirituality, weaving rich culture from their experiences with wildlife. Today, they continue to be essential stewards of our region's ecosystems—including the downtown waterfront.

But, for most of a century, downtown Seattle largely lost its connection to its natural coastline. As the city industrialized, two behemoth structures severed the city's core from Elliott Bay. In 1934, a 7,000-foot concrete seawall eliminated downtown beaches, destroying intertidal habitats and ultimately decimating salmon populations. Then, in 1953, the first segment of the Alaskan Way Viaduct opened, placing an

elevated freeway between the city and the Salish Sea.

After several decades, however, earthquakes and erosion insisted on change, and a vision emerged for restoring the shoreline and reconnecting the city

of concrete to encourage vegetation and support marine invertebrates, such as shellfish. It features shelves and benches that create places for marine life to hide and find food, forming a shallow corridor where juvenile salmon can swim safely as they make the precarious journey from the

A vision emerged for restoring the shoreline and reconnecting the city to the water.

to the water. In 2012, Seattle voters overwhelmingly approved a bond to replace the seawall. The viaduct followed suit, coming down in 2019, with a promise to the community to manifest a new, green waterfront.

Completed in 2017, the new seawall uses textured panels rather than smooth slabs



A thriving ecosystem connects us to nature.

Duwamish River to the Pacific Ocean. On land, Waterfront Park mimics the natural shoreline with thousands of new trees and native plants, which reduce the urban heat island effect, support mental and physical health, and help to filter more than 6 million gallons of stormwater every year. The rebuilt Pier 62 offers its own ecological benefits—replacing the old pier’s creosote deck and pilings with nontoxic materials. And a new Habitat Beach returns the tide to the shores of Seattle’s urban core.

Now the people of Seattle once again have a public space on the waterfront where nature can flourish throughout the seasons. In spring, the juvenile salmon arrive and the trees grow the leaves that shade the promenade in summer. By autumn, the salmon have gone and by winter the leaves have fallen. And, as it has been since time immemorial, people will gather on the shoreline all year round.



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, PIER 58

Now the people of Seattle once again have a public space on the waterfront where nature can flourish throughout the seasons.

Indigenous Programming So Far

Friends of Waterfront Park began offering programming focused on local Indigenous communities in 2020, presenting and hosting several major events each year since. Friends produces the annual Indigiqueer Festival, which showcases the beauty and power of Two-Spirit people during Pride month, and it hosts the longstanding annual Salmon Homecoming, which supports the revival of canoe culture. All Indigenous programming at the park is—and will be—by and for Indigenous people, while being open to the wider community.

Friends has also been cultivating leadership and partnerships to support its Indigenous programming. Its Pulling Together Committee includes more than a dozen Indigenous people from the Seattle area who provide invaluable guidance and knowledge. This committee works alongside the Friends' Curator of Indigenous Programs. Additional partnerships are also underway, including an effort with yəhaw Indigenous Creatives Collective, to develop an Indigenous artist roster, which will connect people with opportunities to create temporary art projects in the park while reducing the application burden on Indigenous artists.



PHOTO: JO COSME, SALMON HOMECOMING, 2023, PERFORMER: SHANE MOSES

Goals, Strategies & Outcomes

The goals, strategies, and outcomes below were developed through an extensive series of listening sessions and are intended to guide the way people experience Waterfront Park's programming managed by Friends.

Goal

Connection to the land, water, and mountains is essential to the character of Waterfront Park, which nurtures and sustains the land as well as those who continue to care for it.

Strategies

Center Indigeneity.

- Beyond acknowledgement, explore how and where resources and decision-making can be given to Coast Salish communities to support cultural and economic self-determination
- Pursue ways that land back principles can be applied to park programming and stewardship
- Ensure the presence of the Lushootseed language in the park itself as well as in Friends' materials



PHOTO: JO COSME, SALMON HOMECOMING, 2023



PHOTO: JO COSME, SALMON HOMECOMING, 2023

- Accommodate and resource Indigenous artists, storytellers, and keepers of traditional knowledge to share their crafts

Strategies

Foster connections to water and land.



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, HABITAT BEACH

- Create a strategy that considers the impacts of projects and programs on the land and water
- Embed historic and interpretive wayfinding, both physical and virtual, that tells the story of the land and its people over time

Maintain balance between the natural and built environment.



PHOTO: JO COSME, DZIDZILALICH UNVEILING/ELLIOTT WAY OPENING CEREMONY, 2023

- Share history of the built environment over time, including its environmental impact
- Do not overemphasize infrastructure over culture; rather create a balance between the two

Outcomes

Coast Salish communities have authentic presence and representation.

The natural elements of Waterfront Park are nurtured, maintained, and in balance.

What Community Voices Had to Say

*Can we build a place that feels like it's "of this place?"
Whose ancestral land is this?*

*Not what government proclaimed but who does the land
remember? Where are we?*

We should really know this place?

*Consistency & sustainability,
Hub for the free community building and arts.*

We need to prioritize our own people.

*The People who wake up to the mountains and the ocean,
Plants grow,
We need to continually feed a place.*

*Open invitation
It's going to become our home too.*



Healing & Sustenance

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: ADAM LU, WATERFRONT BLOCK PARTY, 2023

A clear understanding of history leads to a healthy future.

Like Seattle broadly, the downtown waterfront bears the scars and unhealed wounds of its history—harms that require our ongoing acknowledgement, restitution, and care. They, too, are part of the cellular memory stored along the coastline, a body laden with generational traumas in need of healing.

Waterfront Park is a place for that healing, for telling the truth about the past and its lasting impacts, levied most of all upon Seattle’s communities of color, beginning with the Coast Salish people.

In 1850, Euro-American settlers began to settle in the city, and within a few years they had forced most Native people onto reservations using a pair of treaties—all the while relying on them for knowledge, resources, and labor. Not long after, colonists took to burning down Native longhouses and stamping out Native culture.

Chinese immigrants were the next to suffer at the hands of the settlers. By the 1880s, they comprised nearly 10% of the city’s population, many having come to the United States looking for work in lumber mills and railways. But racist sentiment and labor competition were mounting, and in 1886

to leave their homes and businesses and imprisoned in concentration camps, euphemistically renamed “internment camps,” for nearly three years during WWII. Their incarceration created labor shortages, particularly on the railroads and in agriculture. Latine workers—from

Waterfront Park is a place for healing, for telling the truth about the past and its lasting impacts.

a mob of white men not only pushed the Chinese community out of their waterfront homes, but expelled many Chinese settlers from the city, forcing them to rebuild their settlement within Pioneer Square.

These violent exclusionary acts didn’t stop in the 20th century. In 1942, Japanese Americans made up Seattle’s largest ethnic minority—and yet they were forced



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, QWALSIUS-SHAUN PETERSON’S FAMILY

A clear understanding of history leads to a healthy future.

communities that traced mostly to families that fled the Mexican Revolution—replaced them, only to be subjected to terrible maltreatment on the job.

To look forward, we must continually look back.

Black Americans first started arriving in the 1880s in search of work, coming to Seattle for jobs left vacant by striking coal miners. The Great Migration followed, bringing a wave of Black people from the south to Seattle. They, too, faced violence and exclusion, including racist housing practices, such as redlining, that profoundly restricted their ability to own homes and build generational wealth.

In more than 50 years since then, Seattle’s communities of color have survived against

the steep odds of systemic racism, building cultural centers and mutual aid enterprises to protect themselves and their cultures. Enduring pain and inequities are evident in even the most recent chapters in our history: the pandemic, the homelessness crisis, and gun violence among them.

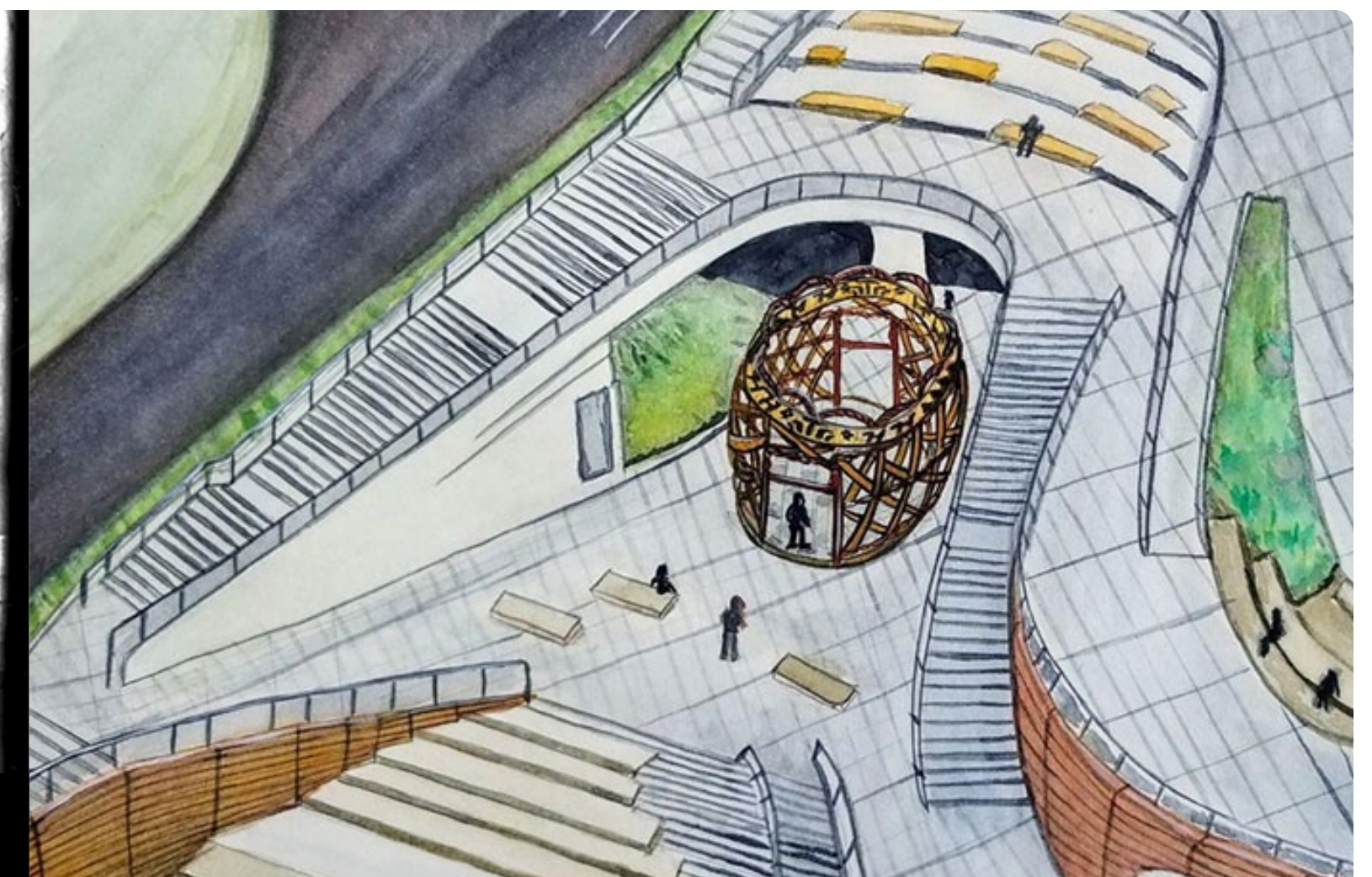
Why dwell here? Because to look forward, we must continually look back. Waterfront

Park is making space for people to heal and find sustenance—in reflection, art, communion, culture, food.

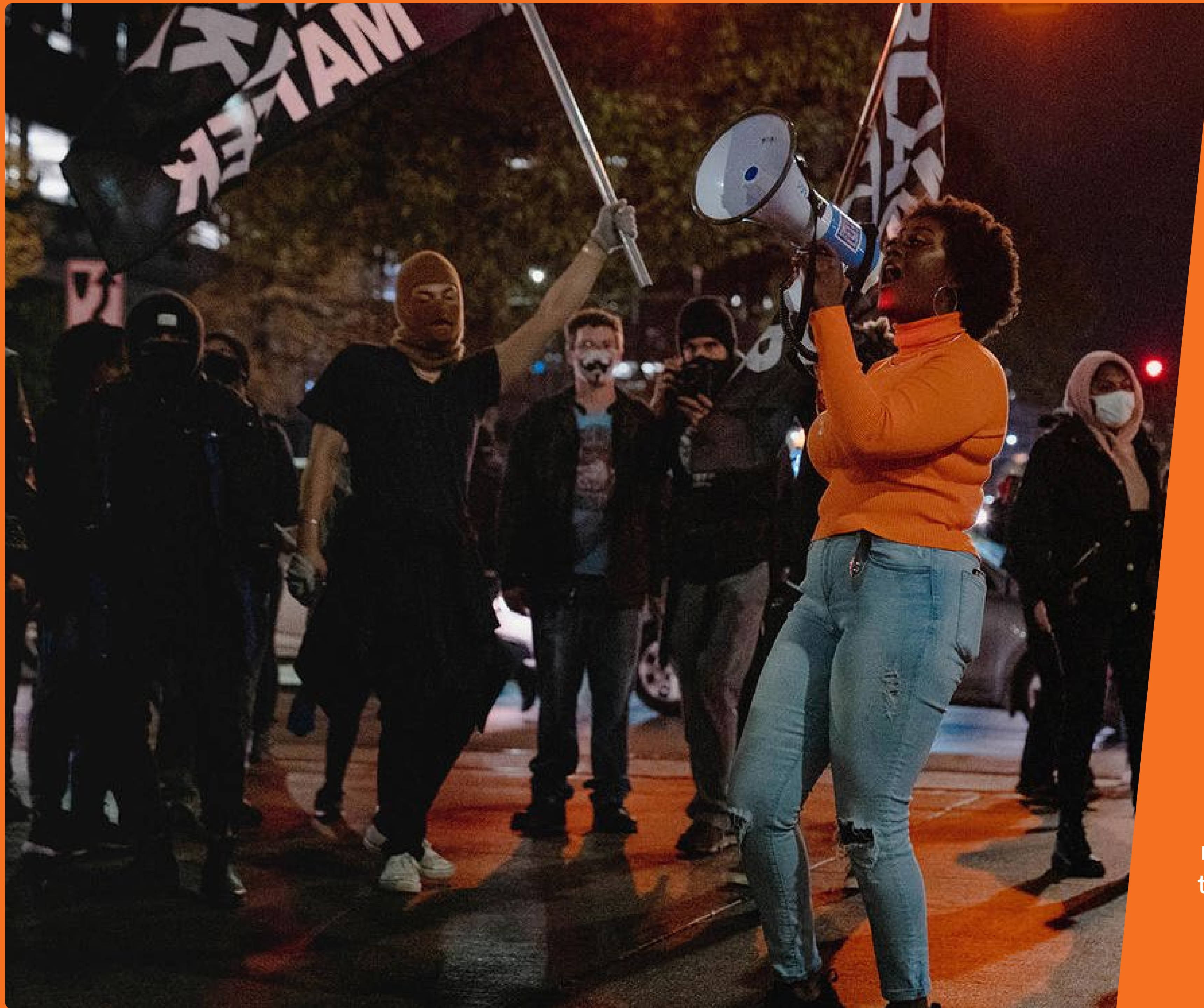
Note: For more information on these histories, we encourage you to visit [Densho](#), [HistoryLink.org](#), [Black Heritage Society of Washington State](#) and [Wing Luke Museum](#).



WEAVER ON THE SKOKOMISH RESERVATION, 1095. PHOTO BY ASAHIL CURTIS, COURTESY OF WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



RENDERING OF MTK MATRIARCHS ART AT SALISH STEPS



Racism as a Public Health Crisis

In June of 2020, as people across the country and the city were rising up against racism in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota, King County officially declared racism a Public Health Crisis, recognizing it as an underlying systemic root cause of negative and disproportionate impacts affecting wellbeing in communities of color. The county committed to centering Black and Indigenous communities—both of which face disproportionate health impacts—in developing solutions that aim to repair harm, and has since mobilized \$25 million in support of that effort.

Goals, Strategies & Outcomes

The goals, strategies, and outcomes below were developed through an extensive series of listening sessions and are intended to guide the way people experience Waterfront Park's programming managed by Friends.

Goal

Waterfront Park is a space that can bring people together across differences to reflect and address harms of both the recent and historic past.

Strategies

Be honest about history.

- Create artworks and wayfinding that tell the true stories of waterfront history, highlighting difficulty, resilience, and activism
- Reckon honestly with historic traumas to build deep trust and possibility
- Center impacted communities in programming and economic opportunities as a way to restore trust



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, PIER 58

Create space for moments of quiet and reflection.

- Establish areas for rest as a respite from the city and the more active spaces within the park
- Lean into discomfort with an open heart, accepting the full range of emotions with which visitors will enter the space

Strategies

Waterfront Park should taste like local communities from around the world.

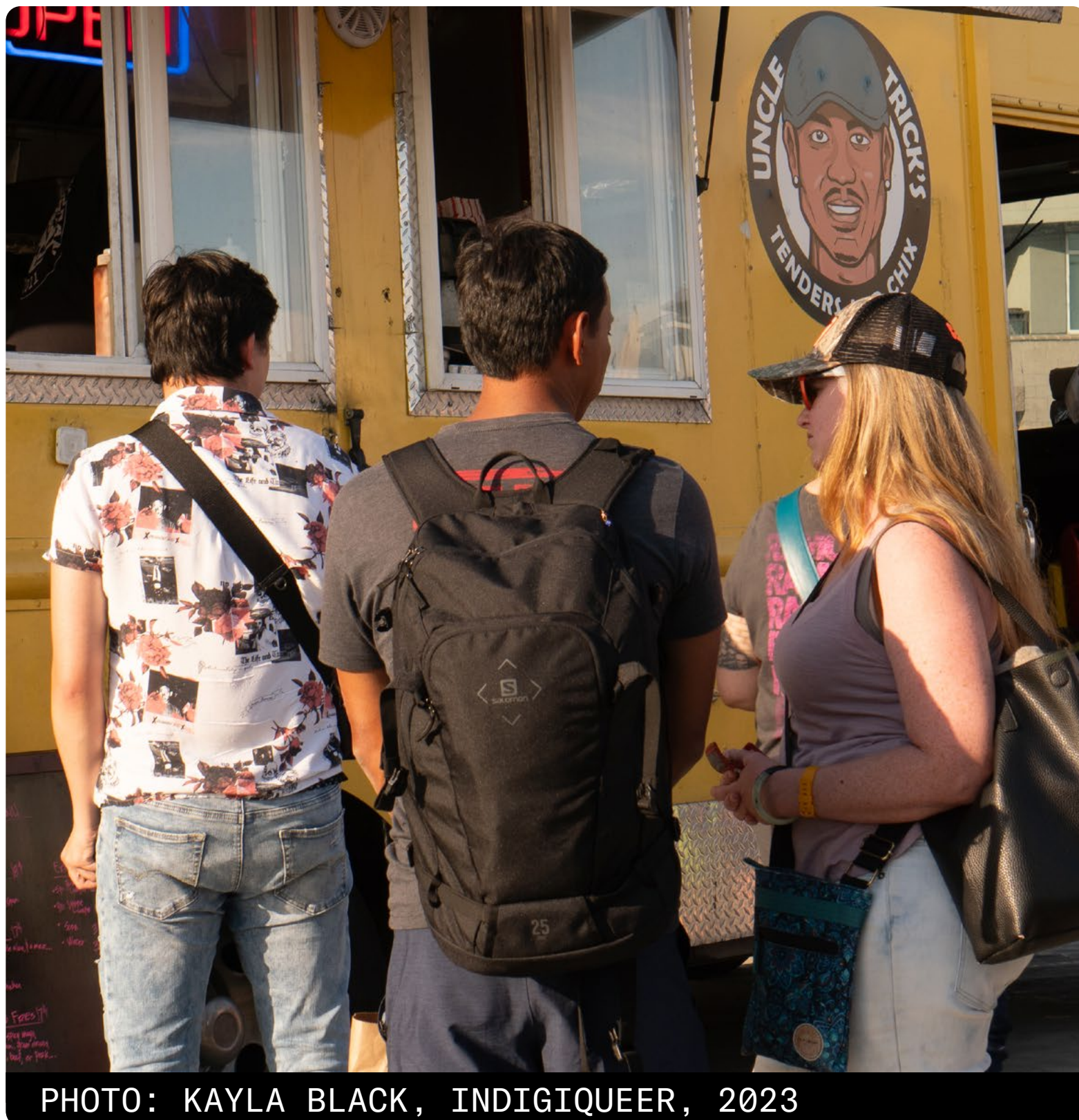


PHOTO: KAYLA BLACK, INDIGIQUEER, 2023

- Establish a robust food vending program that features diverse and international offerings that reflect the local community
- Make food vending locally focused, diverse, and easy to navigate with lower barriers to participation
- Feature food and music that represents the authentic histories and cultures of Seattle



PHOTO: BERHANU WELLS, ACLT SOUL ON THE WATER, 2023

Outcomes

True history is reflected, allowing new futures to be co-created.

Historical traumas are acknowledged, and healing begins to take hold.

Communities from all over our region and the world share their cultures through food and cultural activity.

What Community Voices Had to Say

You don't have to sacrifice who you are in these spaces.

Evolving is an important verb.

*Embracing change while not forgetting our hard histories.
We must tell a full story of this place if we want everyone to feel welcome.*

We are never going to forget the Indigenous history of this place.

Shift and replace the neo-colonial narrative.

Let's have an empowering narrative.

The Chinese Exclusion Act and Japanese internment weren't even 100 years ago.

Artists and cultural workers are at the heart of the waterfront.

Can the Waterfront be a project that pushes capital into people?

Pay the people who bring the soul power.

Can this be a place where people access Freedom, and that feeling of freedom?

This is your park.

History is storytelling, and the Waterfront is a story that is being re-written every day.

People want to be anchored here.

Nature has its resilience built into it.

*Life can return to these waters, and that would be a testament to changing the course
of history.*

Living Culturally

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: SUNNY MARTINI, XOPANTLA TIANQUIZTLI, 2023

Diverse traditions and experiences uplift and connect us.

Imagine a future day at the Park: It's morning, and several dozen people are unfurling their yoga mats on Pier 62, getting ready for their weekly, free drop-in class. As the daylight spreads over the Salish Sea, they sweep their arms above their heads in a collective sun salutation. Nearby, the cafe on Overlook Walk is opening up for a special day featuring slow and deliberate coffee rituals in partnership with a local small business. Already the nutty aroma of freshly roasting beans is drifting on the morning's breeze.

Imagine a future day at the Park

At the south end of the park, a bevy of food trucks is assembling for a lunchtime festival of Asian foods featuring local restaurants

and chef collaborations. By 11 a.m., people are queued up for everything from Vietnamese bánh mì to Filipino lumpia.

As the afternoon wears on, the day's buskers and street performers add to the atmosphere up and down the promenade: Puppeteers surprise tourists and locals alike. Singer-songwriters strum soulful tunes. Children practice Native songs at Habitat Beach.

Tonight also marks the opening of a new temporary art exhibit at Pier 62 celebrating the city's musical legacies, and by early evening a small crowd is forming for the celebration. There along one side, artists sell their handmade creations at a series of booths set up like a mini bazaar. Waves of kids play with the giant chess set and learn the hustle from a beloved local dance instructor. And as the sun falls behind the



Olympics in the distance, a DJ begins spinning records.

Every day all year long, Waterfront Park immerses the community in countless experiences like these. Always moving and changing, they offer a taste of the cultural richness that thrives in all corners of the city, uplifting its people, reminding us of who we are.



Soundtrack of the City

Seattle is a music town, and already many wildly diverse artists have performed in Waterfront Park, representing a dizzying array of local cultures and bringing people together for shared experiences along the downtown shoreline: singer-songwriters, rappers, electronic beatmakers, pop artists, soul singers, rockers, bossa nova guitarists, funk bands, fandango, folklórico and more. Both locally beloved and relatively unknown, these performers infused the park with the rhythms and melodies that bring the city to life everyday. A Spotify playlist compiled by Friends highlights some of the music that was heard on the waterfront from 2020 to 2023. Follow the QR code to listen for yourself!



Culture through Partnership

Diverse cultural programming in Waterfront Park taps into the great wealth of partnerships that Friends has with groups from all around the region. Whether hosting big events like the WABA Korea Expo & Festival, Africatown's Soul on the Water, and Massive Monkees' all-day breakdance battle or presenting two-hour performance takeovers by organizations like Northwest Tap Connection, Vera Project, Melody Institute, and Red Eagle Soaring, Friends provides a platform for Seattle's cultural leaders to shine.



PHOTO: RAMZEY STAPLES, MASSIVE MONKEES, 2023

Goals, Strategies & Outcomes

The goals, strategies, and outcomes below were developed through an extensive series of listening sessions and are intended to guide the way people experience Waterfront Park's programming managed by Friends.

Goal

Waterfront Park should feel like an immersive cultural experience, one that amplifies Seattle's authentic stories to the city and the world.

Strategies

Foster cultural and economic self-determination through both formal and informal programming.



- Support and incubate vendors and performers
- Curate special marquee events and festivals as for a dynamic range of year-round programming of different scales



- Structure and support busking and street performance without over-regulating them
- Offer economic opportunities by providing space and place for community-led programming
- Facilitate the exchange of stories, personal and historic, through dance, music, and play

Strategies

- Empower community to shape the park's curation, in particular the Pulling Together Committee, the Community Connections Committee, the Accessibility Advisory Committee, and the voices of partners' youth-driven programming committees. Support their work with both budget and authority



PHOTO: JO COSME, INDIGIQUEER, 2023

- Establish a temporary public art program that includes interactive artwork
- Create opportunities for community to participate in art-making
- Amplify smaller organizations
- Offer year-round programming



PHOTO: BERHANU WELLS, ACLT SOUL ON THE WATER, 2023

Develop responsive, relevant, and emergent programs and processes.

Outcomes

Friends of Waterfront Park amplifies overlooked cultures and stories.

Waterfront Park is a destination for authentic Seattle cultural experiences of all kinds.

Programming is both intentional and flexible, meeting emerging needs over time.

What Community Voices Had to Say

*Local artisans as vendors
Passive art and music to enjoy
Pop-up experiences
Busking- it doesn't always need to be amplified sound*

Bikes and less cars

World-class cities should, on some level, have an attraction to the rest of the world.

We will have physical and emotional safety at all areas of park.

Stand on the overlook walk, and see

A place youth have to belong.

Activations from dusk to dawn.

BIG concerts next to space where you can have quiet conversation.

Sea lions

Places to work on our fitness.

Community gardens

Lots of languages

Music and clapping

Waves, and wind



PHOTO: BERHANU WELLS, ACLT SOUL ON THE WATER, 2023
PERFORMER: ZHANEA JUN

READ THE FULL POEM "WHAT MAKES A WORLD CLASS CITY?" ON PAGE 61.

Neighborhood Reciprocity

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: JOSH HILD / PEXELS

Activity multiplies throughout the city.

Up and down the length of Waterfront Park, Seattle pulses with movement in every direction: People streaming down the Harbor Steps at University Street, people making their way from Pike Place Market to the aquarium via the Overlook Walk, people walking up and down the steep streets that lead from the shoreline into the heart of the city.

Transportation infrastructure of every kind brings them here by the millions. Ferries



sail in and out of Colman Dock beside the West Seattle water taxi. A summertime Waterfront Shuttle goes from one end of the park to the other. Light rail stops at four nearby stations—from Westlake Center to the Chinatown-International District—as do hundreds of buses that travel to every corner of town. The monorail links to Seattle Center, the streetcar runs up Jackson Street through Pioneer Square to First Hill and beyond, and Sounder and Amtrak trains move passengers from around the region.

All of these people are the lifeblood coursing through the circulatory system of the city. Whether downtown dwellers, city residents, regional commuters, or tourists, they arrive not just from out of town, but mostly from the city's 80 officially recognized neighborhoods, each of which has its own distinct character and culture.

Waterfront Park is a conduit for those cultures. Sparking celebration and exploration, it not only provides space for neighborhood businesses and artists

People are the lifeblood coursing through the circulatory system of the city.

to share what they love about where they live—it also inspires people to visit the city's unique neighborhoods. This reciprocal exchange generates economic and cultural activity throughout Seattle, forging and strengthening relationships that benefit people, neighborhoods, and the park all at the same time.



Leading People into Neighborhoods

As crowds descend on Seattle's waterfront for major events like MLB All-Star Weekend or the World Cup, Friends has a crucial opportunity to help visitors explore the city beyond the shoreline. Guided by special maps, recommendations, and other helpful resources, people can discover local gems while providing essential support to small businesses. A meaningful influx of customers at restaurants and shops—particularly in nearby neighborhoods like the Chinatown-International District and the Central District—can play an important role in preserving the character and vitality of communities outside the downtown core, sharing the prosperity generated along the waterfront.

Goals, Strategies & Outcomes

The goals, strategies, and outcomes below were developed through an extensive series of listening sessions and are intended to guide the way people experience Waterfront Park's programming managed by Friends.

Goal

Waterfront Park should be a space that all Seattle residents feel an authentic connection to; this means building and maintaining meaningful relationships with communities and neighborhoods throughout the city.

Strategies

Draw visitors from throughout the Coast Salish region, while also circulating park visitors back into Seattle's diverse neighborhoods.



PHOTO: JOSH HILD / PEXELS



PHOTO: PNW_PHOTO_REPOSITORY, PIXABAY

- Create a circulatory system between neighborhoods and the waterfront through programming, transit, and pedestrian infrastructure
- Work with stakeholders in all of Seattle's areas, encouraging people to explore surrounding neighborhoods
- Feature and amplify neighborhoods and their diverse cultures in the park

Strategies

Embrace intermediary roles that Friends is uniquely suited to play.



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, SALISH STEPS

- Waterfront Park can provide an unparalleled platform for neighborhoods to share their unique cultures
- Explore a “village concept” for combining multiple businesses, performers, and vendors to showcase a neighborhood’s retail, cultural, and residential identities



PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER, WATERFRONT BLOCK PARTY, 2023

- As the largest civic project in 100 years, Friends can steward regional philanthropic and corporate relationships for an evolving downtown

Outcomes

Connections are built and maintained between Friends of Waterfront Park and Seattle's neighborhoods.

Relationships between Waterfront Park and the surrounding communities experience mutual cultural and economic benefits.

What Community Voices Had to Say



RENDERING: FIELD OPERATIONS, OVERLOOK WALK

We need...

Places to check out boats, bikes and equipment

Pedicabs

A place that locals go and tourists

A balance of nature and city

Transportation shuttles

Bring the streetcar!

Tables with and without umbrellas

To Highlight different neighborhoods

We have

All kinds of life,

Plants, animals, and all kinds of humans.

A place that gives as much as it receives.

We See

A place that looks like a pre-colonial history, without the trauma and harm.

Community Murals

Natural and clean

trees and birds.

Lots of ferries and boats

Bring the maritime back

Conclusion

Waterfront Park should be welcoming spaces for all who call Seattle home.

Recognizing Seattle's history, Friends of Waterfront Seattle is leveraging public park programming to intentionally foster community healing, belonging and shared prosperity.

Appendix:

Community Co-Design

As this plan was being developed, the conversations we had with community generated a wealth of ideas and inspiration for Waterfront Park in the years to come. Here's a deeper look into this collaborative effort.

As Waterfront Park continues to evolve in the years and decades ahead, we look forward to continuing these conversations, which are powerful drivers in our ongoing effort to co-create this community space.

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: WELCOME TABLE AT PIER 62, 2023

Community Co-Design

WARMTH
OF
COLLECTIVE
JOY



PHOTO: ?AL?AL CAFE ROUND TABLE

Shade and
green cover
from now
established
plantings



PHOTO: PIER 62

THE YOUNG AND THE
OLD TOGETHER
IN A WEB OF
ACTIVITY AND
LIFE.

ALL OF THE LOCAL
ARTISTS, AND ALL OF
THE LOCAL PLACES
TO SEE AND EXPERIENCE
THE ARTS -



PHOTO: WASHINGTON HALL ROUND TABLE

NIGHT CONCEPTS

DEEPENING
EMPATHY
FOR OTHERS

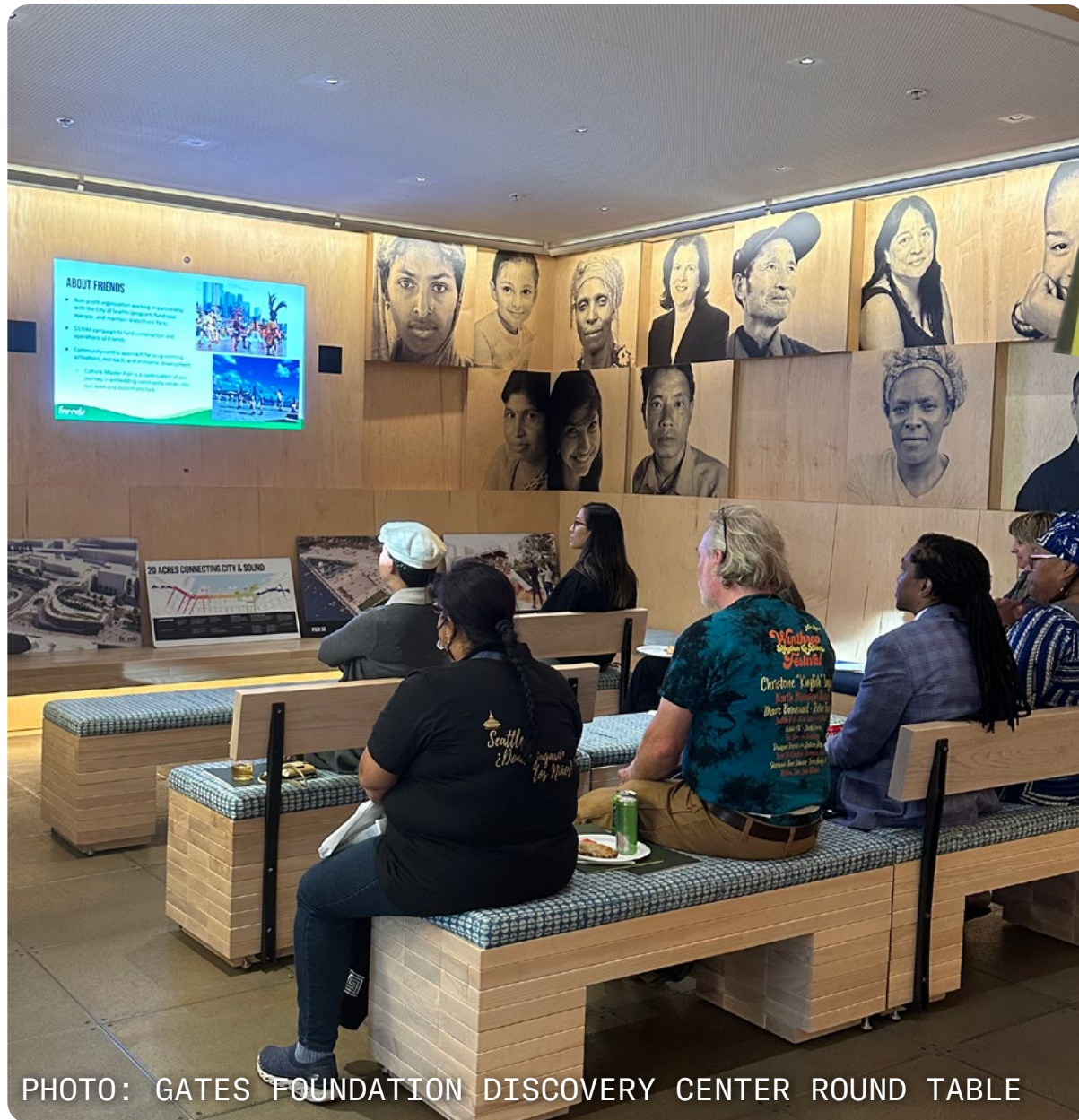


PHOTO: GATES FOUNDATION DISCOVERY CENTER ROUND TABLE



PHOTO: FRYE ART MUSEUM ROUND TABLE



Friends of Waterfront Park

C-3 MEETING



This is the Park Seattle Has Been Waiting for and Deserves

By Washington Hall Round Table
9/15/2023

After 12 years, we are finally bringing this place to life.

*It is a living sea, with seafood.
Food can be a lens for activation and engaging culture
and allowing it manifest.
Port Like an orgasm of street food.
Street food from around the world.
Everything from tasting French fries to mangoes with
tajin.*

*We are known for music.
There is almost no where you can go without hearing
music.
And the Waterfront will be music in motion, rolling down
the street asking me if I am ready for it.
Next to the silence of no cars.*

*The waterfront should go from hard surfaces to a
softness and lushness.*

*This is a co-created space that can't be bought.
To... Build deep relationships with lots of local people.
To highlight the global cultures represented here in
Seattle.*

*The many languages
Fresh clean air and green spaces.
With Benches for the grandparents to watch their
Grandchildren enjoying community events*

*Can it be a place that isn't dead at 6pm?
Most waterfronts all over the world, is an international
exhibition, a mix of locals and tourists.*

*People will be there because they will receive an
invitation, or they will know there is a standing invitation.
"Where do you want to go out tonight? Let's go to the
waterfront."
It will be a space that is alive with lights, stilt walkers and
fire breathers.*

*A continuation of the sculpture park, that transitions from
contemplative space to busy active space.*

*Make tech part of the family.
Where we grow our participatory culture.
This is a place where people want to contribute.*

*Port and portal
A little dirty and industrial and not too perfect.
Space that can hold multiple experiences and identities.
Grandchildren enjoying community events.
The healing nature of salt water
Most waterfronts all over the world, is an international
freak show, a mix of locals and tourists.*

If we could capture some of the authenticity that we have

*at the ...
CID and Pike Place
The sound garden.
Magnuson dog park.
Old Bush Garden
Joe Bar
Station Café
T-dock
Space needle
Seward park
Easy street records
Roanoke park
Red apple in CD
El Centro de la Raza
Vera Project
Waterfall park
The Ave
Imperial Lanes
Center house
Golden gardens
Carkeek
Seamonster lounge
The Smith Tower
These places that through magical confluence, and then
community emerges.*

*20 acres surrounding by sea and sound, where we all can
leave a part of ourselves behind, for the future.*

Dream City

By Northwest African American Museum Round Table
9/13/2023

*Let's start a collective dream for our city?
One where you can create belonging and connection.
Where we can hold that in Perpetuity?*

*I feel like I live a city built into a forest.
If you are walking in a park, you will eventually end up
back into community.*

*When you ride your bike along the pathway you smell
different food and hear music.
Rush hour bike traffic is actually enjoyable.*

*The water will attract people who want to move here,
people from all over the world.
The waterfront should taste like the whole world.
But with places to sit.*

*I love the smell of the water.
We will hear laughter and a multitude of languages.
All around the fire pit.
There should be drumming circle, an inviting space for
music to begin and live.*

*People will remember going there in the third grade.

We get to see mount Olympic,
Public art,
Vendors being a representation of the city.*

*We are still in the City, we are still Downtown,
surrounded by sounds.
Diverse communities like colorful kites.
Sketchy magicians and musicians,
Solitude and celebration can co-exist.
The price for entry here is free.*

*How do we create an opportunity for people to come
together despite the weather?
I have some ideas in mind.
It starts with the children and locals.
Get out of the books and get to the waterfront.
Incubating new ideas.
The food cart, to the food truck, to the brick and
mortar.
Amplify that.*

*Early communication so people feel cared for.
Be clear you are centering a community, but all are
invited.*

Being in the surprise.

*I kinda love the fall in Seattle, sorry.
It's where the party is at with a hint of nostalgia.
You can only eat so many fish and chips and get
trinkets from the Ye Olde Curiosity Shop
That's why we need a kid's walking tour that shows off
bits of history*

*Authenticity is hard to come by.
It means it is being used and provided by community.
Judkins, Seward park, and Alki.
Bear Sheva, Rainier Playfield, Cal Anderson,
Sick's stadium pre-Lowes,
The Station,
Pho bac,
7 star women's Kung Fu,
Farmer's Market,
Rollaround Sea-Town,
Taking Black Pride,
Chinatown-ID,
Capitol Hill,
Family run restaurants,
And Dirty bathrooms*

There is not a lot left.

*We must understand and attend to the harm that has
happened before.*

*There is something about locals reclaiming this space
so we can show off our city.
What do we want this waterfront to be, for us?
There should be cultural significance for everyone.
We have never been in this moment before.*

A Hub for Beauty and Positivity

By ʔálʔal Café Round Table

8/23/2023

*Diverse,
Laughing,
Locals and visitors are welcome.
Frankfurter and fresh waffle cones,
Energy exchange,
Economic prosperity.
Clean air and sea,
Free medicine,
Warm and inviting,
Mountains and Water
Not infrastructure over culture.
Can we build a place that feels like it's "of this place?"
Whose ancestral land is this?
Not what government proclaimed but who does the land
remember? Where are we?
We should really know this place?
Consistency & sustainability,
Hub for the free community building and arts.
We need to prioritize our own people.
The people who wake up to the mountains and the ocean,*

*Plants grow,
We need to continually feed a place.
Open invitation
It's going to become our home too.
This was my neighborhood.
I got \$5.99 teriyaki plate there.
There were gathering places there.
I want my people represented,
Not just our artwork.
The visual cultural language of Coast Salish people has
been lost. Everyone should know this is Coast Salish
territory.
How do we right the wrongs of 150 years?
Sustenance
Food, sovereignty, and place to keep our traditions alive.
Medicinal gardens,
Natural systems of balance.
The park has to be a living and breathing entity.
Land Back.*

There are Many Important Histories on the Waterfront

By Mithun Round Table
10/6/2023

*There are many important histories on the Waterfront.
Including the history, we are creating right now.
Everything should be woven together, community and
place.*

The park can be canvas for our collective dreams.

We will smell clear air and not smoke

Hear the sounds of nature and music

Experience Good lightning

Hear the ferry whistles

See artists responding to place

Container ships with sails

The Seawall covered with critters and plants

Sealife that isn't polluted

Amplify the importance of the port's industry

*We will see familiar faces, and the people I grew up with
there.*

Hear children laughing, different languages

*Layer arts in culture into the waterfront like the layers of
the mountains.*

Human-centered,

Elderly couples walking

Old fisherman laughing

Parents teaching kids how to ride a bike

Teens and young adults, making the space their own.

And way less cars.

*Temporal art, murals, and people can come back and see
the mark they made on the waterfront.*

The future doesn't have to be worse.

People want to be anchored here.

Nature has its resilience built into it.

*Life can return to these waters, and that would be a
testament to changing the course of history.*

Authenticity is hard to come by, but it looks like;

Pike Place Market, the soul of Seattle

Washington Hall, that sense of history being key

Jimi Hendrix Park

Alki beach, a come as you are location

Seattle Center and the monorail

Gasworks park

Ballard and its working class and fishing history,

It is an example of balancing history and growth

The C-ID, a place that serves their elders

Rainier beach community center

Red apple of beacon hill

Pow wow at discovery park

The Central library has become a home.

*Each neighborhood in Seattle, has aspects that makes
them true to themselves.*

You don't have to sacrifice who you are in these spaces.

Evolving is an important verb.

*Embracing change while not forgetting our hard histories.
We must tell a full story of this place if we want everyone
to feel welcome.*

*We are never going to forget the Indigenous history of this
place.*

Shift and replace the neo-colonial narrative.

Let's have an empowering narrative.

*The Chinese exclusion act and Japanese internment
weren't even 100 years ago.*

*Artists and cultural workers are at the heart of the
waterfront.*

*Can the Waterfront be a project that pushes capital into
people?*

Pay the people who bring the soul power.

*Can this be a place where people access Freedom, and
that feeling of freedom?*

This is your park.

*History is storytelling, and the Waterfront is a story that is
being re-written every day.*

What Makes a World Class City?

By Frye Art Museum Round Table

9/22/2023

What makes Seattle a world class city?

*It starts with the literal space of the Waterfront and its
Openness*

*Trees blowing and birds chirping
The smell of flowers and dirt
Smells like fried chicken, butter popcorn and kimchi, and
sea air*

*I would like to have tacos
Cultural dishes upon cultural dishes
Savory and spicy
I want to taste celebration*

*Travel down the path to ...
Children playing
Intergenerational groups and family
Melanin everywhere*

*Local artisans as vendors
Passive art and music to enjoy
Pop-up experiences
Busking- it doesn't always need to be amplified sound*

Bikes and less cars

*World-class cities should, on some level, have an
attraction to the rest of the world.*

*We will have physical and emotional safety at all areas of
park.*

*Stand on the overlook walk, and see
A place youth have to belong.
Activations from dusk to dawn.
BIG concerts next to space where you can have quiet
conversation.*

*Sea lions
Places to work on our fitness.
Community gardens*

*Lots of languages
Music and clapping
Waves, and wind*

*The Waterfront should be like...
The Station Coffee shop, everyone knows your name.
Wa Na Wari, for the same reasons. Free and welcome.
Musang, every time I go there, the staff gives me hug.
Randy's house, a vision of possibility.
It's weird and awesome that people come from all over
the world to watch people throw fish at each other.*

*Langston
Seward
Judkins
Alki Beach
Corner of Pike and 10th, slice of old City
Places that retain their essence
Madaraka festival*

*Fremont troll and the Fremont weird
Pike place market and the people who live and work
there*

*Authentic space is not scalable
Snoqualmie Falls and storytelling and history keeping
A space that is cared for and not exclusive
There is a way in which these places and people let us
know we belong. Keep this.*

*I want to feel the warm of the sun and the salt of the sea.
And the warm of people being gathered together.
A play to stay dry.*

*If you want to be world class,
You have to have multi-lingual signage.
Figure out the rules, to explore possibility.
Keep the governance local.
Provide support and help community navigate systems to
make the magic happen.
You should highlight what's great in all your
neighborhoods on the waterfront.
Amplifying Seattle's culture through a value's lens.*

*A world-class city should be able to construct,
deconstruct, reconstruct while keeping its identity
A place where anyone can show up and do something.
Community taking up space in the way they wish to.*

We Are Building a Road Map

By Gates Foundation Discovery Center Round Table
9/20/2023

We are building a road map.

*And we aren't actually done yet.
Anything is still possibility.*

North

This is prime real estate, so we know we need to be intentional about how we bring people into this space.

The smells of the seasons. Chocolate, cinnamon and chanterelles

We can help so many communities with fun.

Iconic art to make it destination.

Where you can get right up to the water and touch it.

Barbecue there.

I think of the waterfront as a tourist trap, so to change that would be so amazing.

Seeing dance and storytelling from every community.

I have to say I loved how we all connected with each other's ideas.

Accessibility and affordability.

Go South and East

The first Latin restaurant in Seattle was on the waterfront.

Authenticity looks like...

White center- its so community based

Blue collar roots of Seattle have been taken for gratitude

Hat and boots park

Arboretum

West

Imagining what we want to feel. We want to feel the whole spectrum of human emotions. Can this be an every feeling place?

I am always thinking about a village concept. I am brewing a dream that can happen there. Rotate organizations

throughout the year around culture that can touch many

aspects of life. Youth, food, clothing and economy.

Little Vegas. You can be in this whole park and not need anything.

Youth, elderly and the wise.

We are focused on bringing people to the waterfront. That brings us back to food, of course. And activities.

This is Seattle's amplifier.

Now backwards map these dream into a reality.

It is a Journey and a Destination

By Community Connections Committee Round Table
9/6/2023

We Feel...

*It must be effortless to go there and be there.
The Hand of my friend in a high five*

*Vibrant a colorful waterfront
Culture*

*Lots of happy people
technology*

Like a party and a carnival.

Cool seating and railings.

Exercise equipment

Many versions of home

Good flooring.

Healing

Like the old Seattle Center

Safe and accessible

Areas of rest and play

A place to be alone

*Everyone should feel included in what is being created
and shared.*

Feels warm even when its cold

We Taste...

*New foods to try from underrepresent underrepresented
communities.*

Celebrate heritage months and foods.

Indigenous food.

Affordable and delicious.

We hear...

Live music and DJ's

Kids playing with elders

Conversations

Water fountain, with music like Vegas

Laughter

*Elliott way can be sensory pollution, we want clean air
and ocean smell*

People and music not overpowered by hustle and bustle.

Different colors, blue ocean, green tree

History and storytelling

We smell...

Smells like cultured food.

Smells like clean bathrooms

We need...

Places to check out boats, bikes and equipment

Pedicabs

A place that locals go and tourists

A balance of nature and city

Transportation shuttles

Bring the streetcar!

Tables with and without umbrellas

To Highlight different neighborhoods

We have...

All kinds of life,

Plants, animals, and all kinds of humans.

A place that gives as much as it receives.

We See...

*A place that looks like a pre-colonial history, without the
trauma and harm.*

Community Murals

Natural and clean

trees and birds.

Lots of ferries and boats

Bring the maritime back

Can we have little paintings on the road signs?

Ongoing interactive artwork, that include audio

Signage and wayfinding

Direct people down to the water.

Statues and sculpture

Shared ownership

A illuminated marquee that says

"Welcome to Seattle."

***All roads lead to the Waterfront,
getting here,
being here,
is part of the beauty of living here.***

Community Co-Design



PHOTO: PIER 62

The sense
of a
small town
in a big
city

Different spaces
— loud over
here, quiet
over there

I feel proud!
Probably shedding
tears of joy!
♡



PHOTO: MITHUN ROUND TABLE



PHOTO:
PIER 62

Balance
OF
SOUNDS: music
people, seasonal terms

YUMMY
FOOD FROM
SIDEWALK
VENDORS + SMALL
BUSINESS
OWNERS



PHOTO: NAAM ROUND TABLE

Seattle's acknowledgement
of past inequities
and the initiative
to dismantle and
create spaces for all
residents and visitors
love the art, culture
and sense of
community

a feeling
OF HOME

Credits

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of this plan.

Friends of Waterfront Park

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Friends of Waterfront Park



Thank You.

Friends of
Waterfront
Park



PHOTO: ERIK HOLSATHER, WATERFRONT BLOCK PARTY, 2023