

NW 39th St. Shoreline Street End *Sunset Point*

Public Improvements Plan and Documentation

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DRAFT 04/23/2023
NW 39th Ave SSE

NW 39th St. SSE (Shoreline Street End) Community Street Use Permit and Improvement Proposal

Site Location: Shoreline Street End of NW 39th St. ending at the Ship Canal in the Fremont neighborhood of Seattle. SSE #137 in the City inventory of shoreline street ends. [map]

What is a Shoreline Street End? Where public street Right of Way is platted into a water body. The City of Seattle prioritizes these special resources for public waterfront access. A major exception is given for maritime uses, which may take priority over public use. This particular street end is of note in that public and maritime uses have been mutually accommodated for many years - informally and unofficially, without fanfare and with little or no conflict. The maritime use neighbors have largely maintained the site over the years, including public access to the working waterfront views. Increases in social disorder over the last few years have created added burdens on the businesses owners and limited safe public access to the street end. This proposal hopes to increase Community involvement, improvement to and maintenance of the street end to safely reopen it to the public without conflict to the adjacent users.

City of Seattle Shoreline Street Ends Program

The Seattle City Council adopted Resolution 29073 in 1996, followed by Ordinance 119673 in 1999. In 2015 the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) made rules for implementation (Director's Rule 12-2015). Key sections:

2.7 "Shoreline Street End" means the land portion of street segments that provide, or could provide if improved, the public with visual or physical access to a body of water and its shoreline, which are listed on Exhibit A to Resolution 29370 that adopted policies guiding the development of public access improvements to shoreline street ends. (SMC 15.02.048)

4.1 An adjacent property owner, a community organization, individual volunteers, or another group of neighborhood sponsors may apply for a permit to improve a shoreline street end or views on an application form obtained from SDOT.

Friends of Street Ends (FOSE)

Since 1997 FOSE has worked to improve and maintain public access to shoreline street ends. They work with SDOT to recruit SSE site stewards, to permit and implement improvements, and to provide ongoing maintenance by organizing work parties.



*Local Shoreline Street End Map
(SDOT)*

Site History

Adjacent Properties:

KC Parcel No. 7442000705 Resolute Properties LLC (Snow Boat Building and Kvichak Marine)
Use: Industrial (Heavy)

KC Parcel No. 7442000835 Washington Asphalt Co. (Lakeside Industries) Use: Industrial (Light)

The still existing original warehouse on the Snow/Kvichak site was built in 1930. The current ownership of the gravel yard dates to at least 1995. It was previously railroad property. The railroad ceased operation through here in 1971. The City of Seattle acquired right-of-way from BNF in 1994 to build an extension of the Burke-Gilman Trail.

Both industrial users have permits for uses in the right-of-way. The Kvichak site added a concrete apron by 2005. Lakeside is most likely responsible for the asphalt pavement in the right-of-way, which took place even earlier. By 2012 Lakeside had also added an ecology block retaining wall, presumably to prevent gravel from overtaking driveway and emergency vehicle access. This sweeping, curved wall alignment was maintained until 2021, when the shore side curved wall was extended into an acutely angled corner configuration. There was previously a Public Access sign on site but it was removed by unknown parties in 2013.

(Aerials and parcel data source: King County Parcel Viewer)



1936



2021



2012



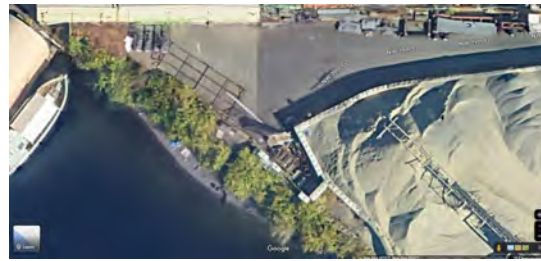
2005

Site Issues Preventing Safe Access

Since 2020, a confluence of societal crises have contributed to social disorders which have negatively impacted many public spaces, including this one. At the same time, the change to Lakeside's wall created a dangerous blind cul-de-sac which exacerbated illicit and unsafe behavior, such as drug use, trash dumping and illegal burning. In response, Snow began storing industrial equipment in that corner and along the shoreline, which largely prevented the negative behaviors but also inhibited public access in general. Community involvement in safety and maintenance, commitment to open access and cooperation with adjacent users is needed to safely reopen the site.



2019 (Google)



2023 (Google)



2021



2023



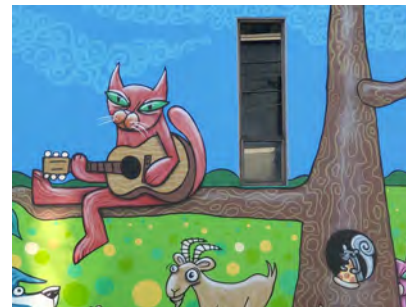
2023

Fremont Neighborhood

Fremont is an Urban Village, a densely populated mix of residential, small business, entertainment, arts, offices, and industrial uses. It is a local, regional, and far-flung destination with notable local landmarks and street festival events such as the Fremont Solstice Festival and the weekly Fremont Sunday Market. The neighborhood was initially founded on timber processing and other industrial uses and was a leader in wood shingle production.



It is transit rich, with frequent and express bus line service, and the Burke Gilman trail running along the canal and adjacent to the shoreline street end. It is represented through community organizations such as the Fremont Neighborhood Council, Fremont Chamber of Commerce, Fremont Arts Council, and service organizations such as Rotary Club.

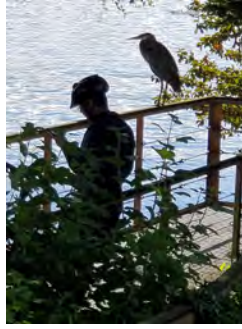
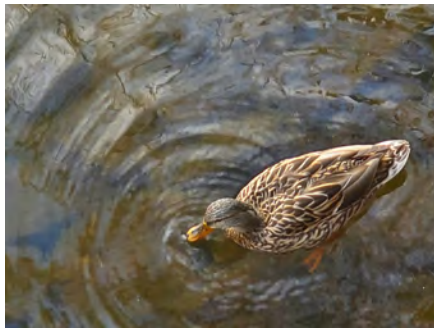


Lower Fremont/Canal Characteristics and Uses

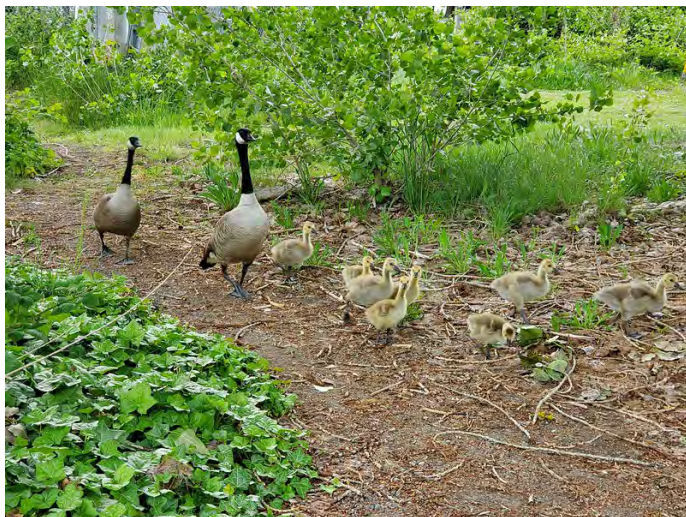
The canal adjacent neighborhood has every type of use - residential, small business, retail, small office, tech and business campus, parks, entertainment, and industry. This mix of uses contributes to a vibrant and lively as well as a peaceful and beautiful community.



The stretch of 3rd NW between 39th and 36th also serves as a staging area for the annual Fremont Solstice Parade, which proceeds from here to the 36th St. parade route.

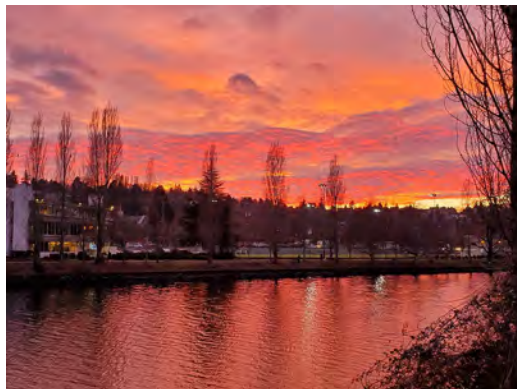


Wildlife also frequents the park and other canal adjacent areas, with sightings of beaver, otters, raccoons, seals, bald eagles, flocks of migrating waterfowl and many other birds.



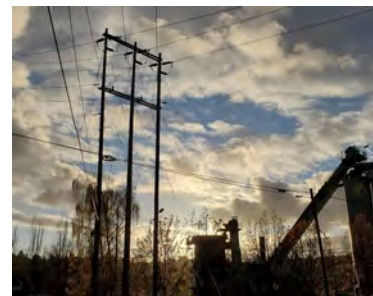


The canal itself serves a multitude of concurrent uses, industrial and recreational, without conflict. It also mirrors the sunset and famous Seattle cloud cover.



SSE “Sunset Point” Site Characteristics

A primary appeal of the site is its industrial adjacent location, with views of the working industrial waterfront as well as other maritime activities. Both recreational and industrial activities take place in the ship canal. This viewpoint site faces the sunset throughout the year. The shoreline views are always changing, with boats and barges that come and go. Across the water is the Canal Marina, with notable vintage wooden boats in residence. The 6th Ave NW SSE Park is also located there. Further west is the Foss workboat facility, although Foss no longer runs a local operation from there. Snow has some of the former Foss equipment, including a very notable large crane barge. Lakeside has a gravel barge which rides higher or lower in the water depending on gravel usage. Various wildlife usage has also been noticed at the site. Access is convenient from the BG trail and nearby neighborhood.



The physical characteristics of the site are industrial. It is entirely paved up to the shoreline bank. There are no trees. The shoreline bank is held mostly by invasives such as blackberry and fennel. It has a primarily southern and western exposure.

Other Issues of Concern

Shoreline access: This site ends at a steep waterfront bank that is not suitable for people accessing the water, and is meant only for viewpoint access. There is currently a steep trench to the water. This started as a small animal trail through the blackberry but in recent years has been increasingly used by people to the point that it is eroding and undercutting the pavement. It is sometimes still used by wildlife as well. There were tracks of an adult otter and kits as recently as 4/21/2023.



Proposed Improvements

A Public Improvements Plan is contingent on working with the neighboring sites to restore some street end access. This would entail working with Lakeside to restore the previous long-standing curving wall alignment in order to improve sightlines for safety and for usable space at the street end. It would also involve asking Snow to remove the stored industrial equipment so that the site may be accessed.

Phased Plan

A permit with plan and supporting documents is required for work in the public right of way. In the initial phase, for public safety and preservation of use and access by the industrial neighbors, we are proposing paint-on-pavement to delineate a small, approximately 1200 sq ft public viewpoint area at the street end.

A “Solar Arc” is proposed, to:

Delineate public space

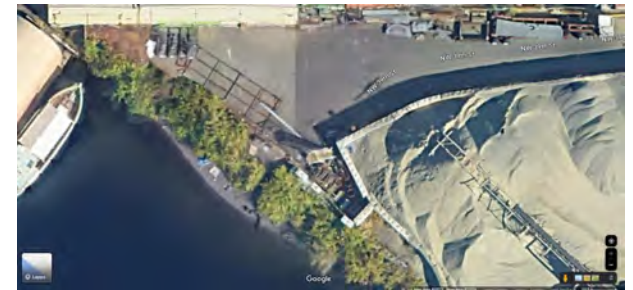
Celebrate the community use, sunset and other views at “Sunset Point”

Pay homage to the Fremont Solstice Festival

Materials: Durable cut stencil (Mylar) to paint designs on pavement, durable paint (such as curb paint)

Maintenance: Trash pickup, pavement sweeping, and repainting as needed, pruning blackberry as needed. Regular visits to monitor activity at the site.

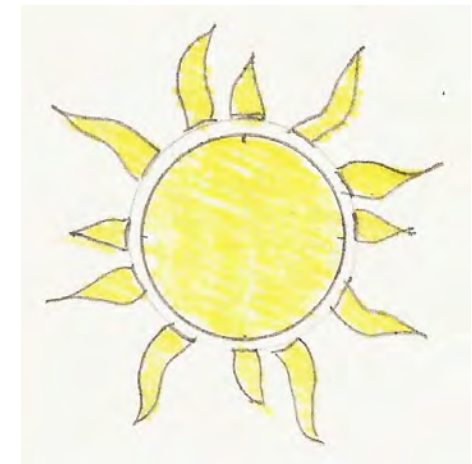
Responsible party(ies): Site Steward, Friends of Sunset Point and other community members on a volunteer basis.



Current



Previous



SNOW

Building

Snow yard

Snow concrete apron

Driveway and emergency vehicle access

SDOT Public Right of Way
95' width

"Solar Arc"

LAKESIDE

Gravel Storage

Lakeside Eco Block wall

Ship Canal



30"

Stencil



Scale: 120:1

DRAFT 04/23/2023
NW 39th Ave SSE
Page 11

Other Potential Improvements

Discouraging water access is somewhat urgent and would ideally be part of Phase I, if such work can be designed without triggering other types of permits. King County used temporary rustic split rail fencing to protect new plants when they restored shoreline habitat at the base of the Fremont Siphon.

A larger pavement mural could also be part of Phase I or a later phase. “Rustic Perch” seating in the form of log sections or boulders would also serve as bollards to prevent vehicular access as well as discouraging other antisocial activity. These could be part of Phase I if materials can be acquired. Other seating possibilities are cast concrete such as was used at the 11th Ave NW Street End Park. The Fremont Arts Council currently has bird nest boxes available; these would need to be installed on posts set at the top of the bank and could also be part of Phase I if no additional permitting is required.

Shoreline Habitat Restoration

This would need to be a separate, later phase due to planning, potential additional permits, and acquiring plants at the right time for planting. The King County site is again an example. The plants shown were installed in 2017 and include Snowberry, Oregon Grape, Nootka Rose, Rosa Pisocarpa, and Vine Maple.



Credit: Cool School



Credit: Justin Martin



**NW 39th Ave Shoreline Street End “Sunset Point”
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Community Project Partners:

Friends of Sunset Point

Fremont Neighborhood Council

Fremont Arts Council

Friends of Street Ends

Groundswell NW

Photo Credits Lydia Heard unless otherwise noted.