

# DUWAMISH RIVERBEND HILL



MASTER PLAN  
MAY 2007

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*Master Plan process supported by 4Culture of King County  
and the Washington State Heritage Capital Projects Fund.*



# BACKGROUND

In 2001, the Cascade Land Conservancy (CLC), the City of Tukwila, and a local citizens group called Friends of the Hill formed a partnership to work for the preservation of an undeveloped parcel of land on the Duwamish River known historically as Poverty Hill. This property, now called Duwamish Riverbend Hill, consists of an unusual outcropping of bedrock rising over 140 feet above the Duwamish River and 600 feet of river shoreline.

The property is culturally significant for its association with Southern Puget Sound Salish oral tradition and mythology, as a key location in the stories collectively known as the “Epic of the Winds.” The property was proposed for industrial development by the previous owner, who planned to level the landform using dynamite to create a trucking and freight storage facility. The purpose of protecting this significant cultural site is to ensure that this place associated with Native American cultural history is preserved. It is one of the few regional “open space” properties that honors and interprets Southern Puget Sound Salish heritage.

Between 2001 and 2004, project partners raised \$998,700 and the 8.6-acre property was purchased in March of 2004 by CLC. CLC then transferred the fee ownership of the Hill property to the City of Tukwila for management as that city’s first cultural preserve. CLC retains ownership status through a permanent stewardship easement and has taken a lead role in fundraising and planning for site development.

Funds for the acquisition of the property were provided by:

- City of Tukwila Parks and Recreation 2003 Budget (\$10,000)
- 4Culture, the Cultural Development Authority of King County (\$10,000)
- Foster High School Drama Club—Proceeds from Duwamish Hill Play (\$1,200)
- Individual donors (\$500)
- Interagency Committee for Outdoor Research, Land Conservation Fund (\$71,000)
- King Conservation District (\$15,000)
- King County Conservation Futures Fund (\$500,000)
- King County Landmarks & Heritage Commission (\$25,000)
- Muckleshoot Community Charity Fund (\$5,000)
- SAFECO (\$10,000)
- Seattle Police Athletic Association (\$1,000)
- The Boeing Company (\$50,000)
- Washington State Capital Budget Fund (\$300,000)



# PROJECT PLANNING



Having preserved this significant cultural property, CLC and the City of Tukwila are now seeking funds to support environmental restoration activities and design and construction of site infrastructure which will make it possible to open the property to the public and interpret the cultural significance of the site. The master planning process was facilitated by Jones & Jones, and included an extensive public input process involving three stakeholder workshops, one large public meeting, and numerous working meetings with the Steering Committee. CLC and the City of Tukwila have also consulted with the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Duwamish Tribe, the Tukwila Historical Society, Hill neighbors, and various public agencies as site improvements are planned to ensure that changes are appropriate to their context.



Next steps include construction drawings and implementation of the first phase of development described on page 20. Duwamish Riverbend Hill will soon provide an opportunity for residents and visitors, including teachers and students, to learn about Southern Puget Sound Salish cultural heritage in an outdoor setting that is part of an indigenous cultural landscape. The public will have a rare chance to visit a site that is associated with Native American oral tradition that has been passed down for generations before being documented by anthropologists in the early 20th century. As an integral component of the planning process, an archaeological survey will be undertaken in consultation with the Muckleshoot and Duwamish Tribes, to identify and protect any potential archaeological resources that may be impacted by proposed site development. Additional surveys will seek to identify rare plants and other sensitive resources which need to be taken into account as project development proceeds and the property is eventually opened to the public. Efforts are also underway to ensure that habitat restoration opportunities for both the upland and shoreline portions of the Duwamish Riverbend Hill property are linked to larger efforts to improve environmental quality and restore salmon habitat in Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 9, the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed.



Duwamish Riverbend Hill will soon provide an opportunity for residents to understand the world inhabited by Southern Puget Sound Salish people prior to contact with non-Indians, as well as the cultural values of the contemporary Muckleshoot and Duwamish people, represented by epic storytelling and traditional geographic and environmental knowledge. The Hill also offers an opportunity to talk about the importance of preserving Native American cultural sites in Washington, both in rural areas and in our rapidly changing urban landscapes.

# HISTORIC CONTEXT

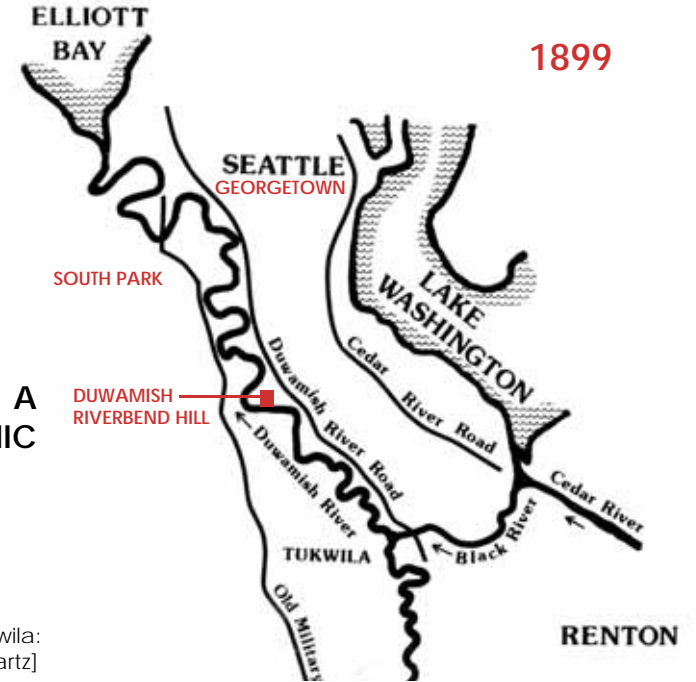


waiting for the Interurban, Allentown-style

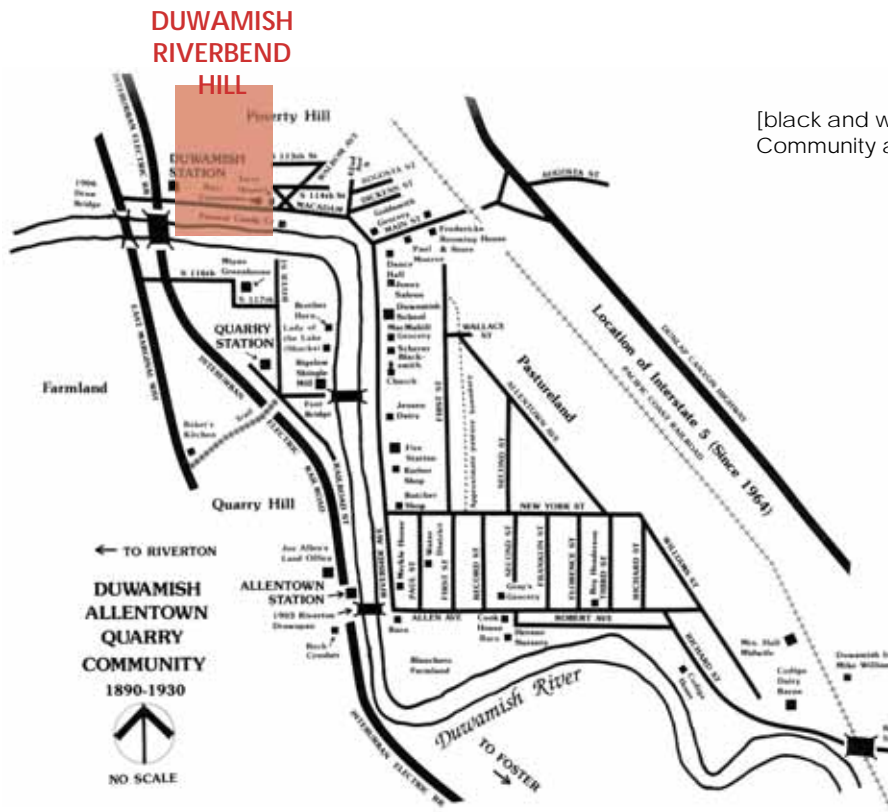


picking hops for Georgetown breweries

A CENTURY AGO, THE COMMUNITY WAS A CROSSROADS ON THE BANKS OF A DYNAMIC DUWAMISH RIVER



1899



[black and white maps and photos from Tukwila: Community at the Crossroads by Kay F. Reinartz]



bocce with the Carosino family by the Duwamish Gardens



flooding, back when we had a floodplain

# CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

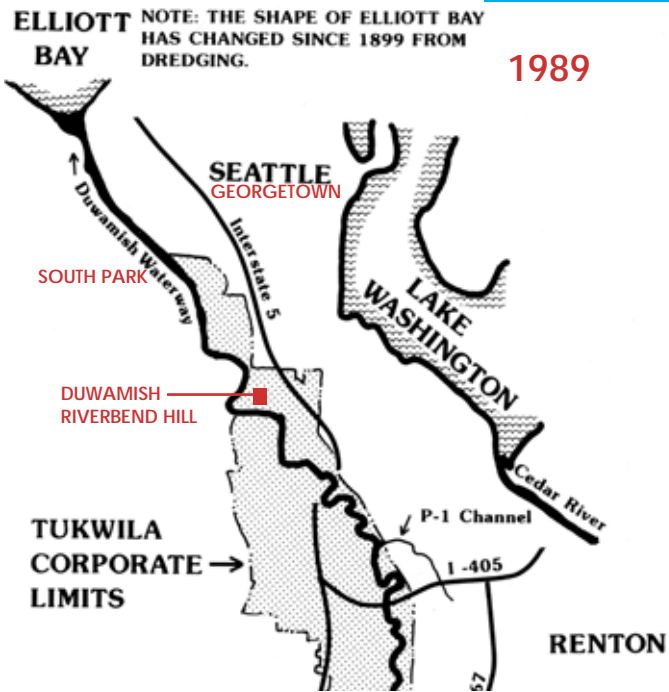


Photo by Aerolist Photographers Inc., courtesy of City of Seattle Duwamish Coalition



TODAY, THE COMMUNITY RETAINS SOME OF ITS HISTORIC CHARM, BUT MUCH OF THE RIVER'S FLOODPLAIN HAS BEEN OCCUPIED BY INDUSTRY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



## PARCELS

Duwamish Riverbend Hill refers to the undeveloped parcel to the west of an existing residential neighborhood known historically as Poverty Hill. The main portions—the Hill itself and the adjacent riverfront—are already acquired. We have also assumed the acquisition of two adjacent parcels—a notch to the southeast and a large flat area to the west, indicated by the dotted lines.

## TOPOGRAPHY

The most visible quality of the site is that it is a large hill in the middle of a relatively flat floodplain. The distinctive combination of volcanic and interbedded sedimentary geology was not eroded or quarried away so we have this remarkable feature and views of and from it.

## EXISTING TRAILS

A number of informal trails crisscross the Hill already. Every effort should be made to use these corridors and leave intact as much habitat as possible, but to get ADA access to more of the Hill some additional trails will be needed. Residents near the Hill use it for walking. Trucking yards to the west could be screened by landforms and vegetation. The sound of gunshots from the firing range to the north will be more difficult to mask.



**RARE HABITAT IN THE CITY,  
ESP. THE ROCKY BALD**



**DISTINCTIVE GEOLOGY,  
THE TUKWILA FORMATION**

**LARGE, RIVERSIDE AND HILL SETTING  
IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY**



**VIEWS TO DOWNTOWN  
SEATTLE AND MT. RAINIER**



**NATURAL DRAINAGE  
OPPORTUNITIES BY THE  
RIVER'S EDGE**



# SHARED DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Embrace the Native American significance of this location, but be **subtle**.
- Promote **direct** contact with the real place.
- Express **evolution** and enduring significance throughout time.
- Don't broadcast locations of fossils or artifacts. We want to **protect** them from vandalism.
- Invoke a feeling that this site is a **special** place. Like the tip of an iceberg, there is much more there that we can't yet know.
- Create a calm place for **reflection** and viewing the passage of time, seasons, and natural processes.
- Focus on preservation, **ecology**, and sustainability throughout the site.
- Design for safety and **accessibility**, even though these will be challenges on this site.
- Promote community awareness and **ownership** of the space to discourage vandalism and other unwanted uses on the site.
- Provide Tukwila residents and surrounding communities a place to experience **nature** in an urban setting.
- Support and encourage grassroots involvement in this community and use the site as an example of what can be accomplished in the river communities.
- Connect the site to issues of **water** quality and watershed health.
- Create an opportunity for **recreation and exercise** by offering various levels of challenge in walking and hiking trails on the Hill.

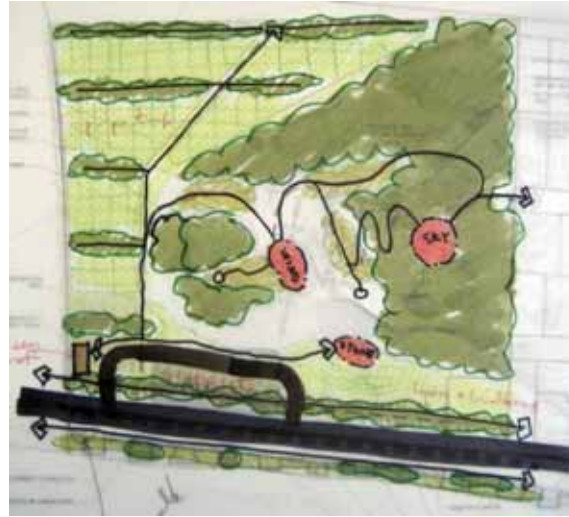


# MASTER PLAN OPTIONS

## WATER



## TIME



## PROCESSION



The preliminary sketches above reflect some of the design and interpretive themes that were explored for the Hill. Elements of each are visible in the final Concept Plan on page 11.

The first option explores **WATER**. The site offers a unique opportunity to get up high and get a perspective on the larger watershed and river system. At the same time, the site is like a sub-basin that drains to the Duwamish River and many aspects of water quality and drainage can be explored in the site itself. This could include education about sustainable infrastructure and water treatment, watershed health, salmon, and habitats associated with water, wetlands, and the riparian corridor. Perhaps the riverfront road could even be reconfigured to give more space for riparian habitat and water access.

The second option explores **TIME**. The site is part of a larger system that is continually changing. Cycles and transformations at many scales affect this place, including natural history, evolution, geology, seasons, tides, cultural and historical changes, and so on. The hill could be a place to experience these difference concepts of time. Perhaps the hill itself could reflect an indigenous or native sense of time with gardens and gathering spaces that highlight the natural cues—dogwood blooming, salmonberry ripening, winds changing—that tell of cyclical time. The flat lands around the hill might reflect a settler's sense of time in community gardens and passive recreation greens.

The third option explores **PROCESSION**. The topography, views, and storytelling suggest a concept that involves moving along a linear course to the top with periodic pauses to experience something special about the place. Markers could act as wayfinding and provide subtle interpretive clues. By lengthening the trail's route, we might also be able to increase the accessibility to the heart of the hill across the steep terrain.

# CONCEPT PLAN

## *PROGRAM ELEMENTS*

### **RESTORED WETLAND**

restoration of a natural wetland directing run-off to adjacent existing wetland to the north

### **INTERPRETIVE MARKERS**

series of columns or panels that share natural and cultural heritage of the place at key points around the Hill

### **VEGETATIVE BUFFER AND SCULPTED LANDFORMS**

with earth removed to restore wetland depressions, shape several landforms to shield site from adjacent uses, then plant heavily with evergreen trees and shrubs

### **NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILHEAD**

secondary access point for residents in the adjacent neighborhood to the east

### **ADA HILLCLIMB**

a shallow ramp (under 5%) zigzags up the back of the Hill to offer universal access to the primary gathering place

### **MIDDLE VIEWPOINT AND GATHERING PLACE**

informal amphitheater for teaching and ceremonies with Duwamish River overlook as a backdrop

### **BIORETENTION SWALE**

natural drainage feature for slowing and cleansing run-off from paved surfaces before the rainwater reaches the Duwamish River

### **STREETSIDE PARKING**

all parking is accommodated along the road for greater security and minimal impact to the site

### **RESTROOM AND CONSTRUCTED WETLAND TREATMENT SYSTEM**

restroom adjacent to primary entrance has a green roof and a subsurface-flow constructed wetland for treating wastewater

### **WELCOME PLAZA AND BUS DROP-OFF**

primary entrance, on South 115th Street, has an area for buses to drop off visitors, wayfinding signage, and a "decompression zone" for children to release energy and gather before entering site

### **RESTORED SHORELINE AND BEACH ACCESS**

river shoreline habitat expanded and a simple staircase extended down slope for hand boat launching on restored beach

### **REROUTED S. 115TH ST.**

roadway realigned to allow restored shoreline

## *CONCEPT PLAN LEGEND*

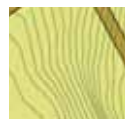
FOREST & TREES



NATIVE SHRUBS



NATIVE GRASSES



NATIVE GROUNDCOVERS



BIORETENTION AND  
CONSTRUCTED WETLAND



- RESTORED WETLAND
- INTERPRETIVE MARKER, TYP.
- VEGETATIVE BUFFER AND SCULPTED LANDFORMS
- NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILHEAD
- ADA HILLCLIMB
- UPPER VIEWPOINT
- MIDDLE VIEWPOINT AND GATHERING PLACE
- BIORETENTION SWALE
- STREETSIDE PARKING
- RESTROOM AND CONSTRUCTED WETLAND TREATMENT SYSTEM
- WELCOME PLAZA AND BUS DROP-OFF
- RESTORED SHORELINE AND BEACH ACCESS
- REROUTED S. 115TH ST.



SCALE: 1" = 120'-0"



# PERSPECTIVE SKETCHES



view south over restored wetland and Duwamish Riverbend Hill to Duwamish River Valley and Mt. Rainier

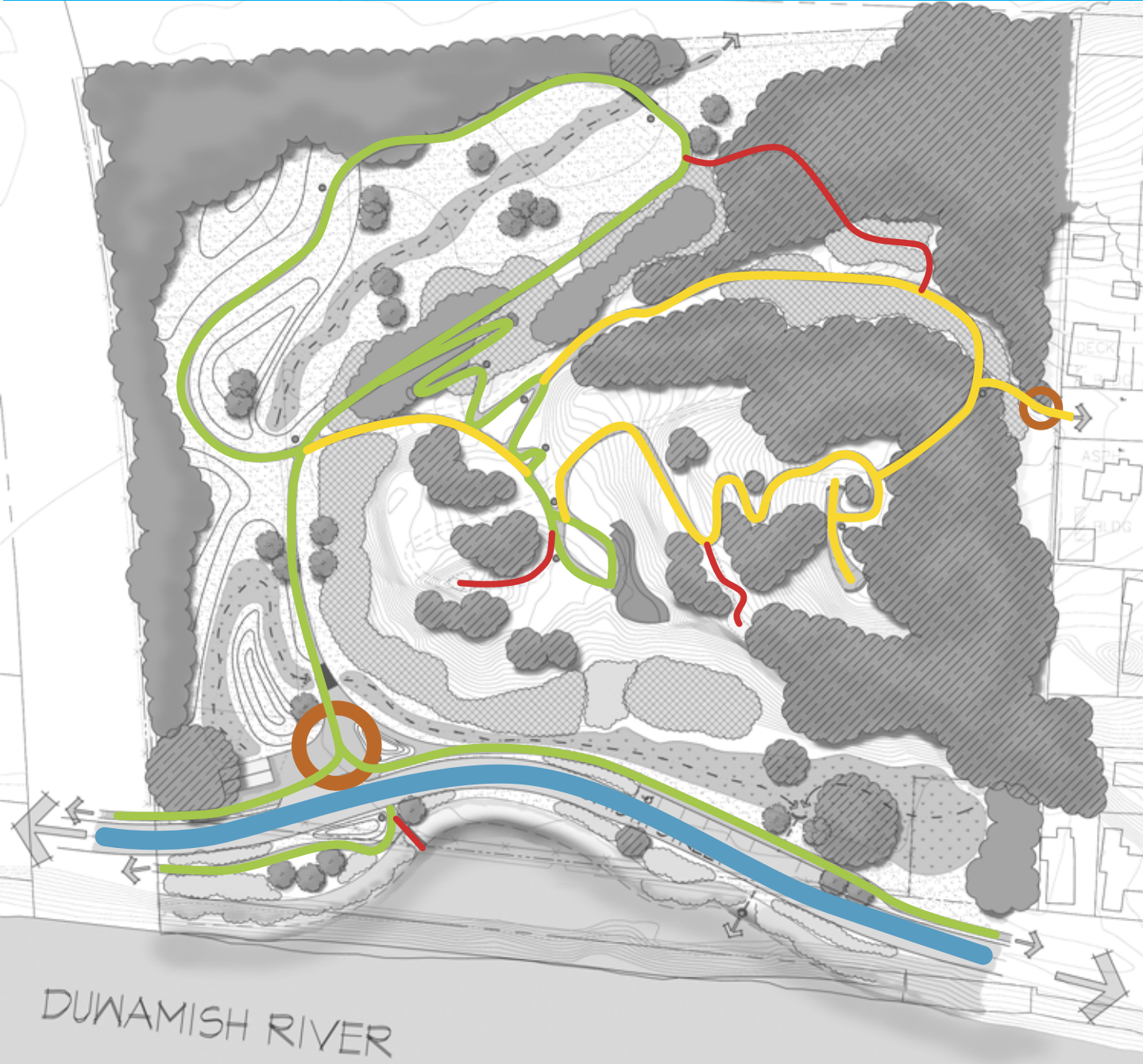
illustration by Stephanie Bower



view southwest from middle viewpoint to welcome plaza and shoreline restoration

illustration by Stephanie Bower

# ACCESS



## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ENTRANCES

Primary entrance is from South 115th Street. Secondary entrance is for local access from neighborhood.

## ADA ACCESSIBLE TRAILS & SIDEWALKS

6-8' wide ADA pathway material will be crushed quarter inch minus gravel. Sidewalks along the roadway will be porous pavements.

## FORMALIZED, BUT NON-ADA TRAILS


6-8' wide non-ADA pathway material will be crushed quarter inch minus gravel with a natural resin binder.

## INFORMAL TRAILS AND RIVER ACCESS

3-4' wide informal trails will be treated with a natural resin that will bind the native soils to create a path. Informal stone steps will lead to river's edge.

## REALIGNED S. 115TH ST.

A new asphalt roadway section for the length of the improvements will be ten inches of base course and four inches of asphalt.

SCALE: 1" = 120'-0" 

# INFRASTRUCTURE

## Stormwater

Stormwater runoff on the site will be managed through wetland areas and porous pavements. Natural drainage swales are proposed along the roadway to treat the runoff from the new pollutant generating surfaces.

## Wastewater

The small restroom will have a septic tank and a constructed wetland treatment system. The constructed wetland plantings will clean the wastewater through biological processes that remove nutrients and pathogens.

## Water Service

Potable water for use in the restroom and a drinking fountain will come from a water line in South 115th Street. Reclaimed water delivery is being sought for native plant establishment.

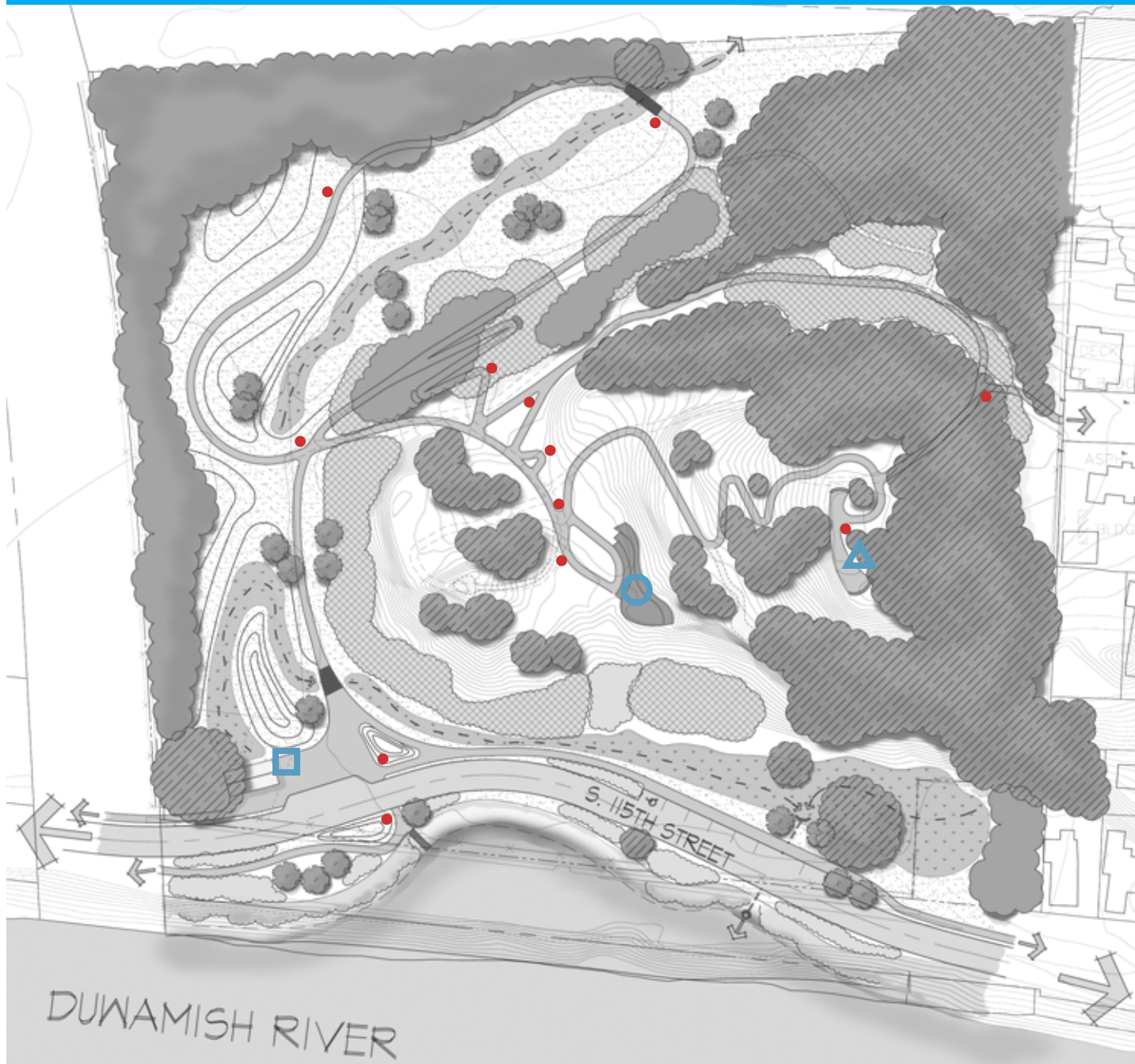
## Electrical

Electrical service to the site can be provided by the local electric company. Any power requirements for site lighting, probably only at the restroom, would be met by adjacent utility poles.

SCALE: 1"= 120'-0"



# INTERPRETATION



- **INTERPRETIVE MARKERS**

A series of columns or panels that share natural and cultural heritage of the place at key points around the Hill.

- **WELCOME WAYFINDING**

Wayfinding for first time visitors could be accommodated on one of the sides of the restroom building.

- **AMPHITHEATER**

Storytelling and interpretive events could be held in the informal stone amphitheater near the middle viewpoint.

- ▲ **UPPER VIEWPOINT**

Additional interpretation would be appropriate at the upper viewpoint because of the extraordinary views up and down the river valley.

SCALE: 1" = 120'-0"



## THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Ethnographic documentation identifies the Duwamish Riverbend Hill property as having the Whulshootseed or Southern Puget Sound Salish place name of *Stkaxu* (Beaver Lodge). The property is related to three other cultural sites in the immediate area: *Sq!u'lla'ts* (Grandmother's House), *Cxi'yaqu* (Mountain Beaver), and *Stu'bla* (North Wind's Fish Weir), all of which are part of the cycle of stories called "Epic of the Winds."

In these stories drawn from local oral tradition, the son of Mountain Beaver and South Wind grows up to become Storm Wind, and he battles North Wind to chase the cold winter weather away from the Puget Sound region. These epic transformation stories are rich in detail, take place specifically in this unique landscape along the Duwamish River, and convey complex themes of family, kinship, status, place, weather, wealth, power, revenge, and much more. The stories and the landscape represent a tangible opportunity to educate the public about Puget Sound Salish language, culture, and history.

Duwamish Riverbend Hill is an important component of the Duwamish River valley cultural landscape which includes both ethnographic and archaeological resources. This entire landscape is visible from the Hill. In consultation with Muckleshoot and Duwamish tribal members, the Hill has been identified as an important strategic lookout and vision quest site, and traditional fishing sites have been noted nearby. Interpretive content for the site will be developed based on consultation with tribal elders, scholars, and community members, as well as published and archival documentation. Interpretation of the cultural significance of Duwamish Riverbend Hill and the surrounding area will be presented to visitors on-site with permanent signs, kiosks, artworks and printed guides, and off-site displays and Web content. While seeking to share this rich history with new audiences, we are aware of the need to protect any archeological resources that might exist at the Hill

## INTERPRETIVE THEMES

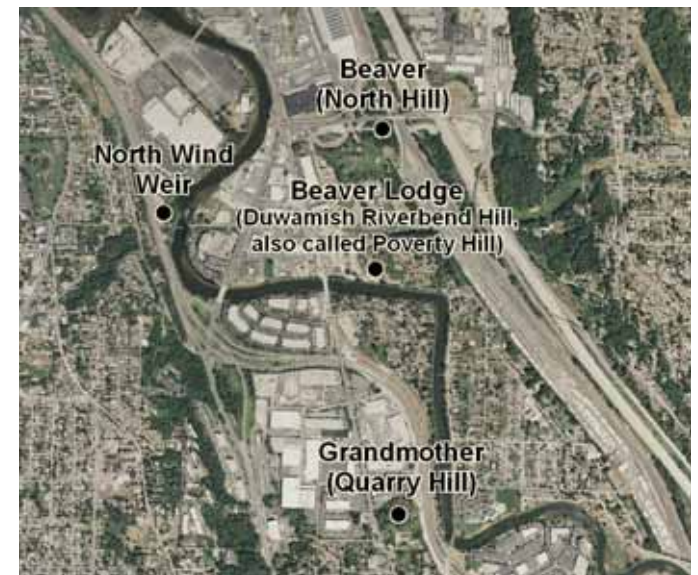
- Native American heritage in the Duwamish River valley—archaeology, language and culture, and place names;
- Puget Sound Salish oral tradition—the Epic of the Winds and other stories related to local tribal history;
- Ethnobotany & ethnozoology—traditional cultural uses for native plants and animals on and around the Hill, including contemporary restoration efforts;
- Environmental history and geology—connections between scientific and traditional accounts of transformation and continuity of local landscape;
- Recent history—Immigrant land claims, settlement of the Allentown community and Poverty Hill, straightening the river, the "fish wars" of the 1960s;
- Environmental restoration and education—contemporary Duwamish River clean-up efforts, native habitat restoration; watershed and salmon issues, LID (low impact development) and green infrastructure approaches to stormwater and wastewater management; and involvement of neighbors and students in stewardship.



Coast Salish Cedarbark Basket, Eastside Heritage Center collections



Mountain Beaver lithograph by John James Audubon from *Quadrupeds of North America*, Library of Congress collections



Cultural sites associated with the Epic of the Winds

# HABITAT



**1. Deciduous & Conifer Forest**  
Western red cedar, Douglas fir, Bigleaf maple, Madrone, Vine maple, Salal, wild strawberry, licorice fern, Oceanspray, Indian plum

**2. Conifer Forest**  
Western hemlock, Douglas fir, Shore pine, Western red cedar, Devil's club, Oregon grape, Pacific rhododendron

**3. Rocky Bald**  
[see more detailed list at right]

**4. Freshwater Wetland**  
Skunk cabbage, Sawbeak sedge, Slough sedge, Swamp laurel, Horse tail, Yellow monkey-flower, Twinberry, Wapato

**5. Constructed Wetland**  
Slough sedge, Yellow monkey-flower, Slender rush

**6. Bioretention Swale**  
Sawbeak sedge, Dewey sedge, Tufted hairgrass, Blue-eyed grass, Reed mannagrass

**7. Restored Shoreline**  
Lyngby's sedge, Hardstem bulrush, Pacific willow, Hooker willow, Red-osier dogwood, Nootka rose

SCALE: 1" = 120'-0"



### ***A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE ROCKY BALD HABITAT***

Duwamish Riverbend Hill hosts one habitat type that is particularly rare in this part of Puget Sound country, the rocky bald. Stewart Wechsler, a Seattle-based ecological restorationist, has compiled a list of native species especially appropriate for the rocky bald habitat at Duwamish Riverbend Hill. Here are some examples of his recommendations:

Western serviceberry	<i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>
Redstem ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus sanguineus</i>
Red flowering currant	<i>Ribes sanguineum</i>
Blue elderberry	<i>Sambucus cerulea</i>
Garry oak	<i>Quercus garryana</i>
Pacific madrone	<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>
Large-flowered agoseris	<i>Agoseris grandiflora</i>
Hooker's onion	<i>Allium acuminatum</i>
Pearly everlasting	<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>
Spreading dogbane	<i>Apocynum androsaemifolium</i>
Western columbine	<i>Aquilegia formosa</i>
Hairy rockcress	<i>Arabis hirsuta</i>
Harvest lily	<i>Brodiaea coronaria</i>
Great camas	<i>Camassia Leichtlinii Suksdorfii</i>
Small camas	<i>Camassia Quamash azurea</i>
Harsh Indian paintbrush	<i>Castilleja hispida hispida</i>
Field chickweed	<i>Cerastium arvense</i>
Short-styled thistle	<i>Cirsium brevistylum</i>
Edible thistle	<i>Cirsium edule</i>

### ***ETHNOBOTANICAL VALUE***

The Muckleshoot Indian Tribe's Cultural Resources Department has provided a list of native plants, shrubs, and trees that are preferred for use in landscape restoration projects. Here are some examples of their recommendations:

Salmonberry	<i>Rubus spectabilis</i>
Thimbleberry	<i>Rubus parviflorus</i>
Oceanspray	<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>
Wapato	<i>Sagittaria latifolia</i>
Vine maple	<i>Acer circinatum</i>
Soapberry	<i>Shepherdia canadensis</i>
Western red cedar	<i>Thuja plicata</i>

These resources will inform the strategies for revegetation efforts on the Duwamish Riverbend Hill property, as well as on-site interpretation of ethnobotany and environmental history.



# PHASING



## PHASE 1: THE CENTRAL HILL

neighborhood trailhead, some interpretive markers, trails, entrance bridge, stacked rock amphitheater, seatwalls at upper viewpoint, invasive plant removal and native restoration, interim parking and arrival area



## PHASE 2: RESTORED WETLAND, TRAILS, AND BUFFER

more interpretive markers, wetland restoration, vegetative buffer and sculpted landforms, wetland boardwalk



## PHASE 3: REALIGNED ROAD AND RESTORED SHORELINE

more interpretive markers, realigned South 115th Street, restroom with green roof and constructed wetland treatment system, bioretention swales, riverfront shoreline and beach restoration with hand boat launch, welcome plaza, entrance path, porous concrete sidewalks, streetside permanent parking

SCALE: 1" = 120'-0"



# STEWARDSHIP



Stewardship activities at Duwamish Riverbend Hill began in the summer of 2004 when the Tukwila Community School Collaboration led Foster High School students in a service learning project funded through King County. Students learned work readiness and site safety skills while removing invasive plants. In 2005, the Cascade Land Conservancy joined forces with the Collaboration to expand the educational portion of the program to include lessons on invasive and native plant identification, ecology, and the cultural heritage of the Hill.



A \$1000 Small Change for a Big Difference grant from King County's Wild Spaces in City Places program allowed the Friends of the Hill to purchase tools for work parties. With tools in hand, neighbors gathered on five different Saturdays in 2006 to pull blackberry, Scot's broom and ivy, pick up trash, and weed out the wild strawberry patch on top of the Hill. In 2007, volunteers continue to remove invasive plants and sheet mulch to prepare the site for planting native vegetation.

Starting in October of 2006, supporters of the Hill joined the Duwamish Alive! partnership, which includes the City of Seattle, King County, the Port of Seattle, Cascade Land Conservancy, Duwamish Clean-up Coalition, People for Puget Sound, Green Seattle Partnership, EarthCorps, and the Nature Consortium, to raise awareness and appreciation of the Duwamish River and improve its habitat for wildlife and people. The Hill was one of nine sites where volunteers gathered on Earth Day 2007 to clear invasive plants and perform other site improvements. In October, 2007, there will be a similar Duwamish Alive! event. The spring Duwamish Alive! events will continue to be focused on site maintenance activities and fall events reserved for planting. With the support of the City of Tukwila and the Cascade Land Conservancy, local citizens and businesses have created a strong volunteer core thus far, and each year brings new supporters.



Plans are also underway to work with the Tukwila School District to develop curriculum for an ongoing field study project at Duwamish Riverbend Hill, which will involve K-12 students in long term maintenance, environmental monitoring and other stewardship activities. This curriculum will integrate natural and cultural history with service learning projects and will be part of a broad-based community stewardship program for the property.

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North Wind overcame Chinook Wind. He established himself on the Duwamish River. That little mountain is called by us, *sto'toble*. He covered the earth with winter, with ice and snow, and desolation, up to the point marked by the old barrier which extends across the river.

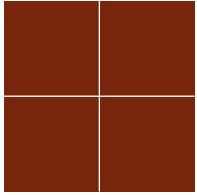
When Chinook Wind was killed, his wife escaped. She went up the Duwamish river to a place of safety. Here she gave birth to a boy... When he became a grown young man, he went down to the river. There he heard his grandmother crying. He went over to her house... The ravens, who were slaves belonging to North Wind, had been dropping filth on her. This had frozen into ice on her face...

His grandmother had no wood for her fire. He pulled up a tree and placed it upon her fire... Then the son of Chinook Wind went down to the river bank where North Wind had his fish-weir...

The young man blew. His grandmother began pouring on the rains; first the coarse drops, then the steady rain, and lastly the mist. He blew and uprooted trees. They beat North Wind. They chased him away. They melted the ice and blew it north. If the young man had not been born we should still have the ice here now.

—excerpts from one version of the Epic of the Winds told to Arthur C. Ballard  
by Charles Sotiakum, White River/Duwamish elder

J O N E S



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