

# LAKE UNION PARK

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## RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

07.20.2021 (REV 2)

02.14.2022 (REV 3)



# INTRODUCTION

## THE ISSUE

South Lake Union is the geographical center of Seattle, with Lake Union Park recognized as a major destination here. With completion of the park in 2004, the neighborhood had just begun the cycle of development that would occur over the next 15+ years. Now, with the rapid growth of development--both commercial business and multi-family, residential properties--the neighborhood has matured, serving more people, and with it, demanding more attention. With this increased density, public space has become a primary asset, much used and valued by the immediate neighborhood, as well as visitors from other areas.

This rapid development of the neighborhood has largely been through private investment, with little property available for additional public amenity. This lack of any available land for public use means the three parks currently located in the neighborhood--**Denny Park, Cascade Park and Playfield, and Lake Union Park**--are the primary spaces available to offer public amenity, and serve the local community. Both Denny Park and Cascade Park are being leveraged in their sub-neighborhoods, but presently, little has been done to adapt Lake Union Park to its more developed surroundings.

The park's constructed design provides an excellent foundation and functions well, but with a constantly growing population, and a broader range of diversity among this population (age, gender & race), additional needs among the community suggest some adjustments be made.

## WHY NOW?

The Mercer Realignment Project and subsequent deletion of Broad Street created a new parcel of land at what is now the block bound by Dexter Avenue, 9th Avenue, Valley Street, and Mercer Street. With the city's sale and approved development of this "Mercer Mega Block", one requirement was the inclusion of a community center within the proposed project.

With the park and this new neighborhood amenity separated by only 2-blocks, there is an opportunity to establish a strong relationship and synergy between these two public amenities.

Further, the South Lake Union community opted into the city's Landscape Conservation and Local Infrastructure Program ("L-CLIP") in 2013, providing a fund source dedicated for just such improvements/investments in the neighborhood. These funds were originally earmarked for a community center at Denny Park (believing the Park's Department would eventually move to the city's offices at the south end of downtown), however, with the relocation and semi-private development of the community center at the Mercer mega-block site, reappropriation of these funds for other neighborhood improvements provides an opportunity to make the proposed park improvements in the immediate future.

## WHO IS INVOLVED?

The South Lake Union Community Council has been actively engaging the community over where these funds might best be used. The council consists of community residents and employees from across the neighborhood, including:

- **THE BIO-MEDICAL INDUSTRY** - The Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute and Seattle Cancer Care Alliance; UW-Medicine; and the Paul Allen Institute.
- **COMPUTER TECH GIANTS** - Amazon, Facebook and Google
- **DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY LEADERS** - Vulcan Real Estate Development, and others.
- **RESIDENTS** - From both market-rate and subsidized housing communities, as well as the active retirement community at MiraBella.

The SLU Community Council initially engaged with the City of Seattle Park's Department and Department of Neighborhoods to understand the opportunity that might exist. The Lake Union Working Group--including members from MOHAI, The Center for Wooden Boats, and The Historic Ships Wharf--was then engaged to capture their wants and needs, as primary tenants of the park.

With this broad input from across the community, the improvements proposed herein have been vetted and prioritized on the value and impact they contribute for the benefit of all park users.



# ANALYSIS

## PRIMARY ACCESS & CIRCULATION:

Major north-south axis runs the length of the park, aligning with Terry Avenue North; major east-west axis is the pedestrian pathway aligning with the bridge across the lagoon and Aloha Street. These two circulation routes connect to parking, pedestrian/cycle routes and transit stations at the street edges.

The SE corner of the park at Valley and Westlake is also a major entry point to the park from the neighborhood.

The future community center sited a couple blocks to the SW should be considered an important neighborhood connection, as well.

## CIVIC DESTINATIONS:

During the summer months, the beach and park space are primary draws to the park.

The major year-round activity generators of the park are the Museum Of History And Industry, and the Center for Wooden Boats. The Historic Ships Wharf is another point of interest, but currently less visible, therefore less of a known destination.

## OTHER FEATURES & OBSERVATIONS:

The south, gravelled end of the park is currently under-utilized, except during special events. The model boat pond, too, is a unique feature requiring special programming to encourage activity.

Although a testament to the success of the natural ecosystem the park provides, it suffers from over-pollution by the large resident flock of geese.



OVERVIEW OF PARK "ASSETS", CIRCULATION, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL USES AND IMPROVEMENTS.



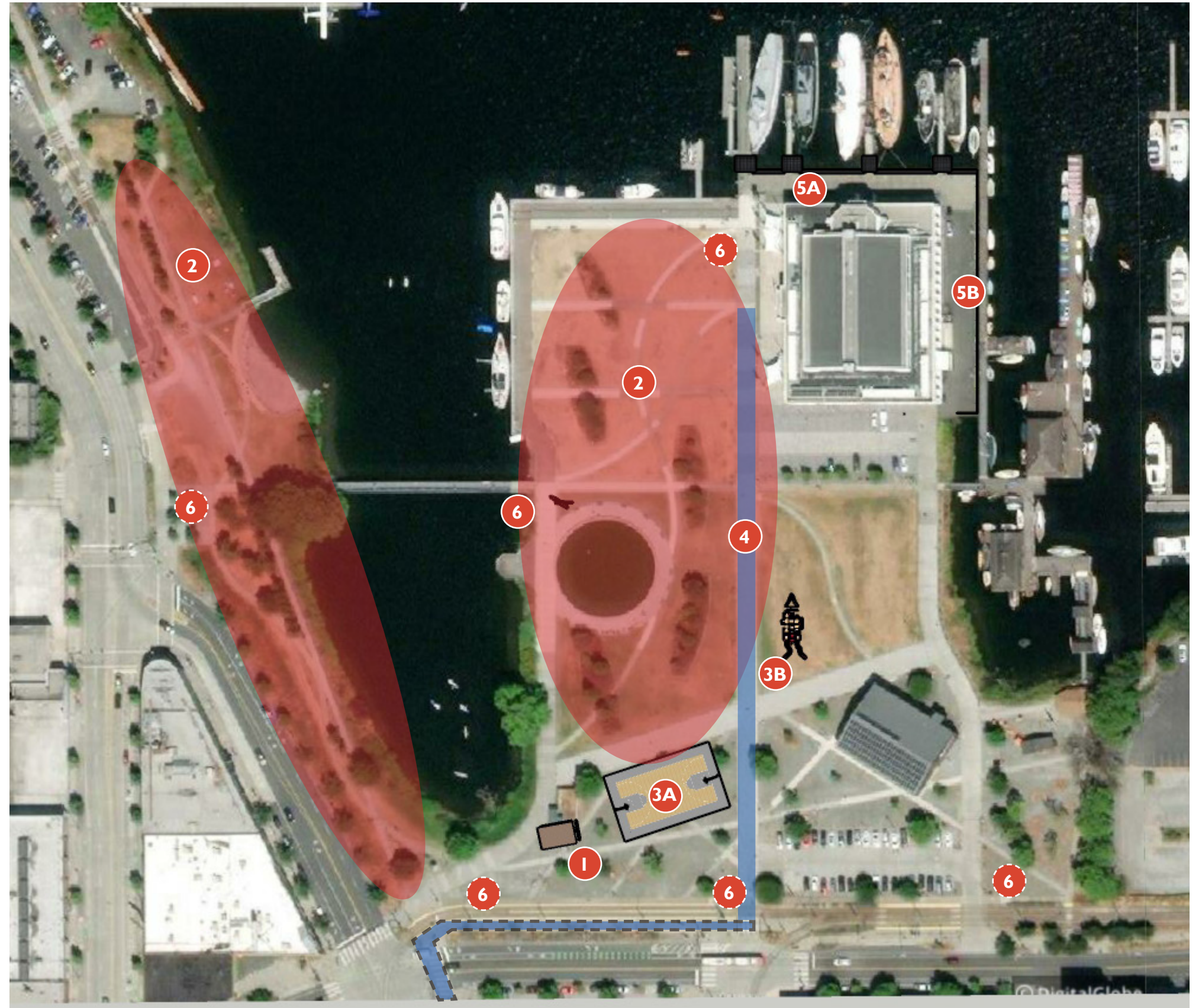


# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

Based on input from the community, the following list of improvements have been identified as priorities to improve the user experience of the park (in order of priority):

1. INDEPENDENT PUBLIC RESTROOMS:
2. PARK CLEANUP (FROM GEESE)
3. TARGETTED PLAY PLACES:
  - A. SPORT COURT(S)
  - B. PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT
4. MARKET-TO-MOHAI TRAIL COMPLETION
5. SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS:
  - A. HISTORIC SHIPS WHARF SCREENING
  - B. EAST BULKHEAD
6. SCREENINGS/SCULPTURAL/SIGNAGE/WAYFINDING ELEMENTS

Each of these items is reviewed in further detail on the following pages. This list is by no means exhaustive, with the appendices providing additional ideas for consideration from other neighborhood stakeholders; these items have been targeted as the most important items identified and discussed with all community stakeholders in our analysis.



LAKE UNION PARK - OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #1 - RESTROOMS:

## WHY?

Currently, the only restrooms at the park exist within the Center for Wooden Boats and the historic MOHAI building. For security reasons, the buildings are not open all the time, resulting in lack of restroom access during these closed hours.

Providing 24-hour restroom facilities outside of these buildings will help keep the park clean, encourage visitors to stay longer, and alleviate the current pressure on the park tenants noted above.

## FUNCTIONAL NEEDS:

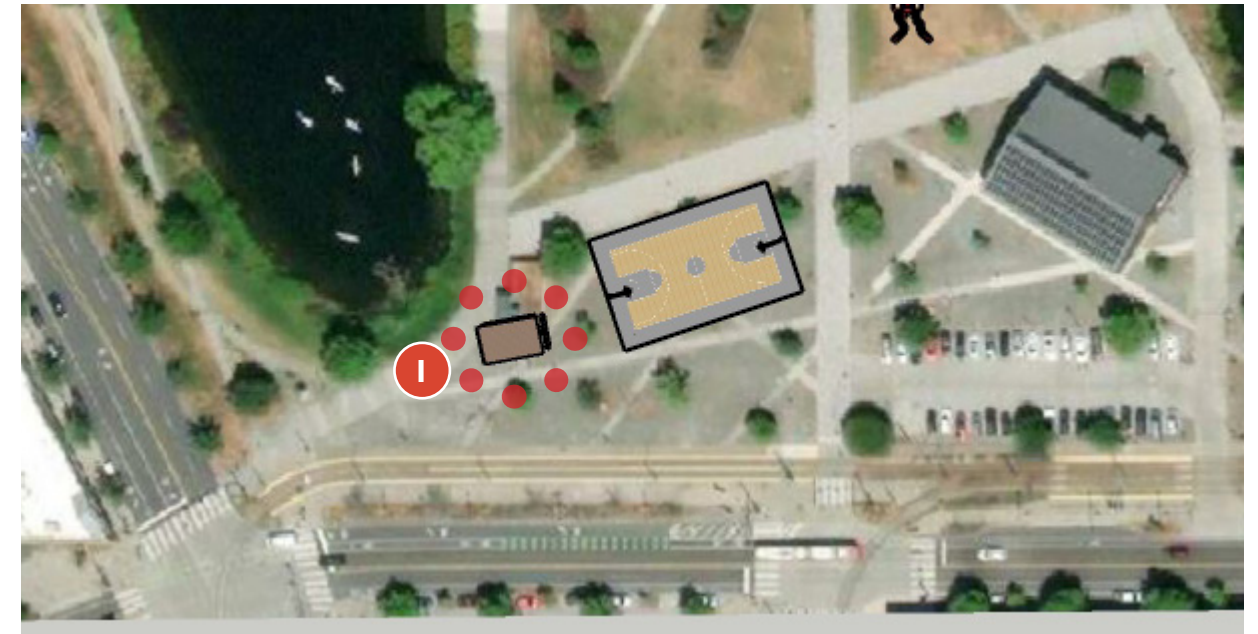
Discussions among various user-groups identified the following functional needs for these restrooms:

- Access to existing utilities (plumbing, electric);
- [Relatively] centralized location for users at all areas of the park
- Needs to be welcoming and safe (well-lit at night)

With much of the park located over the lake/fill, it is assumed there are few locations feasible for utility access. The pump house location indicated herein has been identified as one potential location providing access from both sides of the park. Presumably utilities feed to MOHAI from the south, making a location adjacent to the central promenade another simple and liked location. It is recommended further study be done to locate the optimum location, and consideration for additional functionality of this restroom "kiosk" in the broader scheme of the park design and improvements.



INITIAL CONCEPT SKETCH



KEY PLAN - ENLARGED



PERSPECTIVE

## UPDATE:

Public Restrooms are currently being incorporated in the design of the Northwest Native Canoe Center; see page 11 and appendix E for additional information.





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #2 - CLEANUP:

## WHY?

For a seemingly substantial part of the year, goose poop covers the park, making it both messy and unhealthy to recreate and linger in the park. With so many residents and park users relying on this space for a break from their work and living spaces, a remedy needs to be found, to allow safe, sanitary recreation opportunities in the park.

## POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS IDENTIFIED:

- REGULAR PARK CLEAN-UP BY MAINTENANCE CREWS - This is understood to be very costly and a major burden on park resources, without really solving the issue of too many geese arriving and residing in the park at the same time.
- DISPERSION OF THE FLOCK TO OTHER AREAS AROUND THE LAKE - Perhaps the best long term solution to support the geese migration, while minimizing their impact to human amenity spaces. It is understood that surrounding properties have also had challenges with the geese, suggesting the best solution will require a broader, joint-effort solution, far beyond the scope of this analysis of Lake Union Park.
- PROVIDE A DEDICATED AREA FOR THE GEESE - This idea has potential, but with such limited space to serve a dense urban population, was beyond the resources of this preliminary design/analysis. Further study is needed to determine if there is an ideal location within the park that can be best suited for the geese, and attract them from their current areas around the park.
- INCREASED ACTIVATION OF THE PARK, TO DISCOURAGE THE SEASONAL FLOCK TAKE-OVERS - This was identified as the opportunity that this analysis and proposal could address to encourage dispersion of the flock and reduce their impact in the park.

## UPDATE:

Over the summer, the park tested a few different options for dispersing the geese; need to get an update from Andy regarding the success of these trials, if any, and how Parks is planning to continue addressing the geese presence.

2/11/22 - Parks proceeding with repairing of lights (this solution seemed to be working, before vandalism); Parks also installing filtration system at the boat pond.



LAKE UNION PARK - OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #3 - PLAY AREAS:

## WHY?

With an increased resident population, the demand for play space has--and continues--to grow. As vacant sites that previously provided recreational opportunity face development, there is a clear demand to replace these areas, and--if possible--provide more.

The neighborhood is also seeing more families and greater age diversity, suggesting play spaces be provided to address the needs for all age groups.

## WHERE?

Adjacent to the "fountain" promenade seems like a great opportunity to introduce additional structures and equipment for play opportunities. (These proposed areas are currently under-utilized areas within the park.)

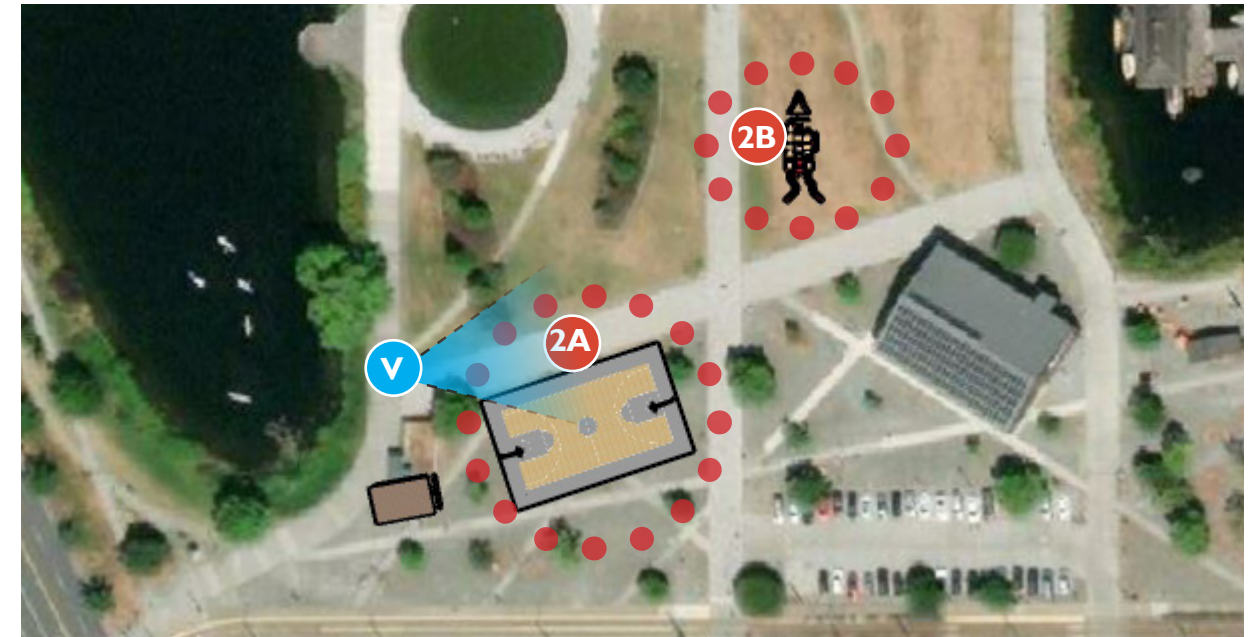
## CONCEPT IDEAS:

3A. A quick size test has shown that a basketball court could fit in this area fairly easily, and that this type of court is able to accommodate numerous other sports, as well (pickle ball, etc.) A lawn bowling/ bocce ball court (or two) was also discussed as additional recreation that could work well here. With minimal vertical structure requirement, these areas could continue to be used for other activities or events, if designed with this in mind.

3B. Children's play equipment comes in creative themes that could be geared toward the boats and waves theme established to the north of the fountain walk to contribute to the original design theme, with the added play opportunity.



PLAY EQUIPMENT - SHIP THEMED?



KEY MAP - ENLARGED



PERSPECTIVE VIEW - LOOKING NE ALONG FOUNTAIN PROMENADE

## UPDATE:

Further discussion of this idea has flushed out ideas of a maritime-themed playground; parks is stating that the current covenants do not include allowance for a sport court area, suggesting some additional process may be required to achieve this goal.





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #4 - "MARKET-TO-MOHAI" TRAIL COMPLETION:

## WHY?

The Market-to-MOHAI corridor connects the Pike Place Market, Belltown, Denny Triangle, and the South Lake Union communities to lake union park with a wonderful pedestrian corridor. As it is on park property, the last stretch from the edge of the park to MOHAI's front door is not included in the scope of SDOT's project for this trail.

## WHERE?

- Along the primary access path from valley to mohai's entrance.  
(See area outlined at right)

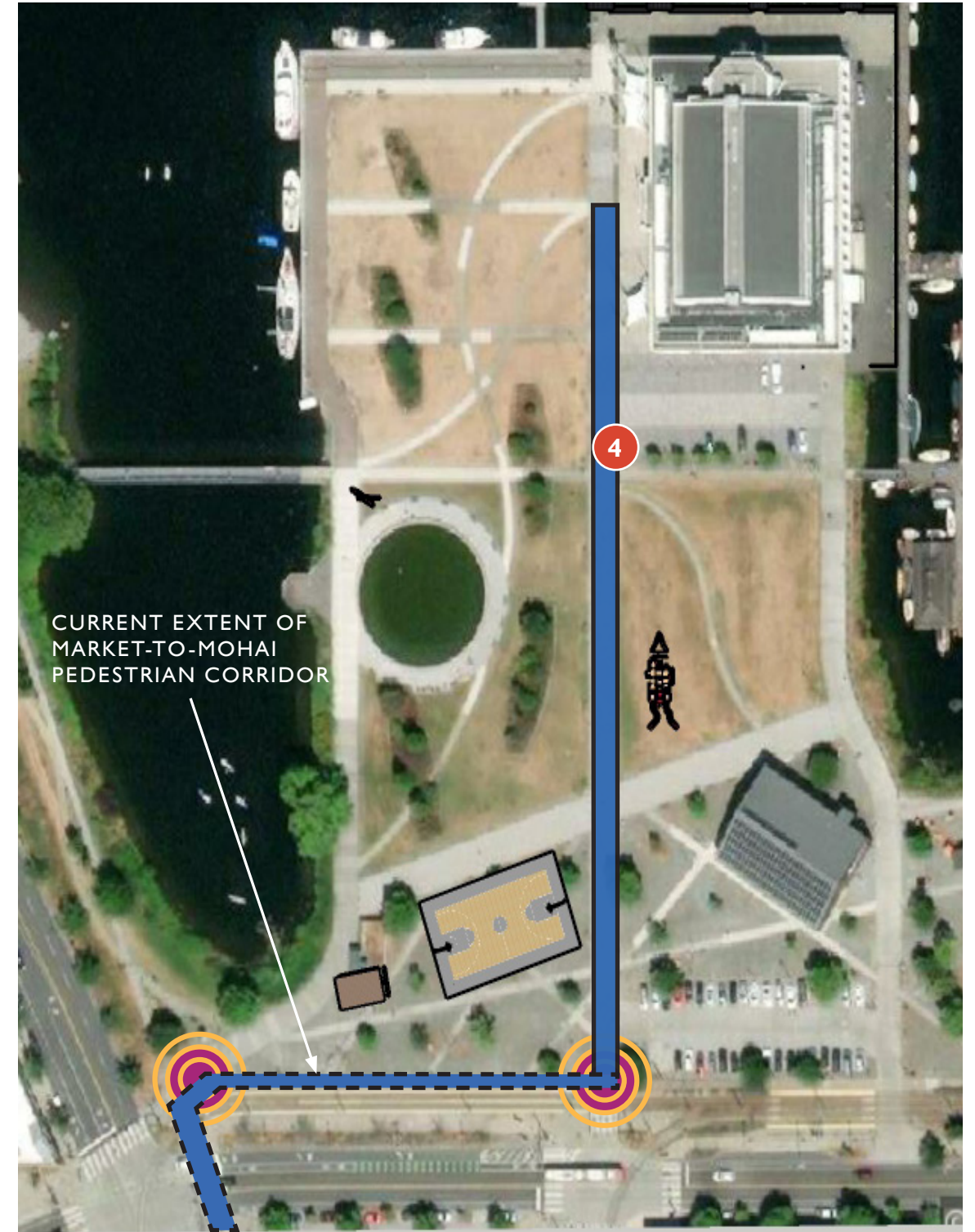
## CONCEPT IDEAS:

The urban trail currently incorporates history blade signage and sidewalk tiles as wayfinding devices and informational markers along the way. One or both of these elements could be incorporated along this final stretch consistent with the design of the trail along the street grid, creating a door-to-door completion of this route.

<https://www.markettomohai.org/>



BLADE SIGN ALONG THE TRAIL (FRONT AND BACK)



KEY MAP - ENLARGED





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #5 - SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS

## WHY?

The current barriers for the Historic Ships at the wharf and along the East Bulkhead to the Center for Wooden Boats pier are insufficient to present vandalism and damage to these treasured resources. Improving this security/protection, while providing additional information and visibility to these treasures will preserve these ships and improve public interest and knowledge of their value to our community and culture.

## WHERE?

- Along the north edge of the park, extending from the east bulkhead to the west pier providing access to the historic ships.
- The east bulkhead separating mohai's service/fire access road from the center for wooden boats pier.

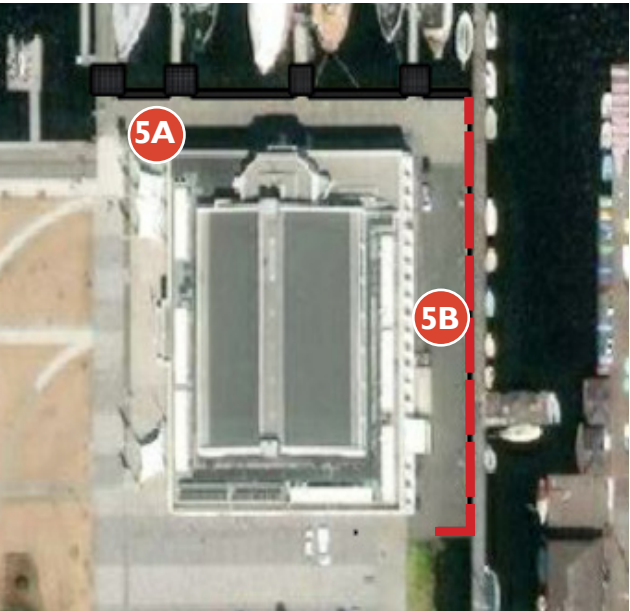
## CONCEPT IDEAS:

5A. At the historic ships, it is important to maintain visibility of the boats while providing the additional security and visitor amenity of weather protection: a 10'-tall, transparent barrier with canopy overhangs is proposed along the historic ships wharf.

5B. At the east bulkhead, a less transparent, possibly shorter barrier (8'-0" shown) with a fritted or textured screen to reflect the natural lakeside environment could be used to provide the necessary security while creating an aesthetic in keeping with the park's original design concept.



5A - TRANSPARENT SCREENING, WITH [PV-INTEGRATED?] CANOPIES



KEY MAP - ENLARGED



5B - FRITTED SCREENING ALONG THE EAST BULKHEAD

**UPDATE:**  
Parks also suggested this might be a challenge, as the park guidelines require views and connectivity to the water be paramount. Despite these rudimentary and conceptual images, I believe security can be designed to encourage and improve viewing of the historic ships, rather than hinder this activity or block views to the water; this will be a task for the designer to solve when brought on board.





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENT #6 - SCULPTURAL WAYFINDING

## WHY?

The size of the park and distance from the roadways (and the neighborhood) challenge visitors who may not be interested in visiting MOHAI, but don't immediately see other attractions at the park. Providing some additional large-scale, visible sculptures or signage elements would help draw people further into the park, and provide better opportunity to see and interact with the less obvious park features.

## WHERE?

Numerous opportunities exist, including primary entry points indicated on site analysis diagram, and remote areas where drawing attention could improve the park experience. Further, in-depth analysis is likely needed once the scale of this concept is determined (how many, what size, etc.)

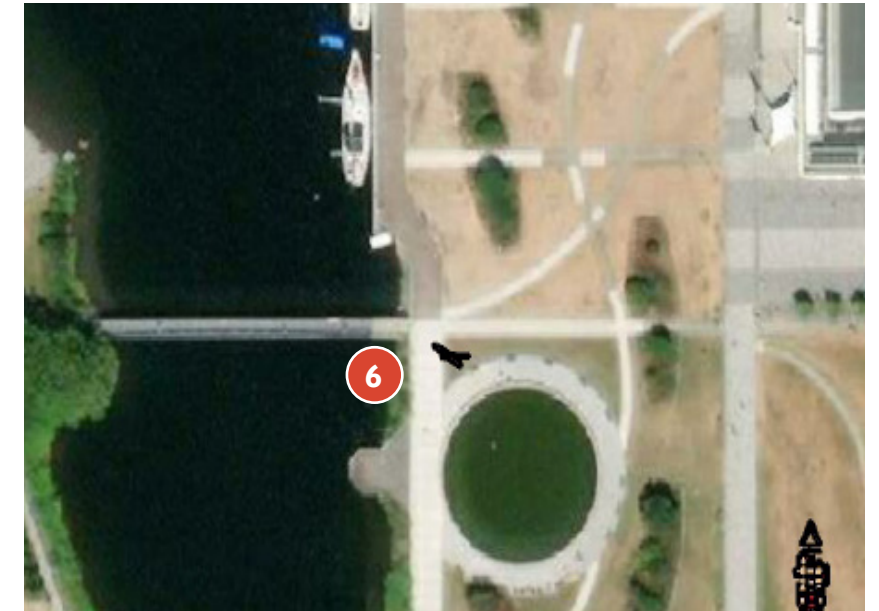
## CONCEPT IDEAS:

- MOHAI has a vast collection of possible landmarks, including the old rainier brewery "r" sign, the torch light from the washington gas company building, and the recently acquired elephant car wash sign (shown in concept at right), among others.
- Custom art pieces from local artists that are compatible with the park's original design concepts, such as maritime related themes.
- Build on the sister city's program with elements expressing these relationships.
- Establish a COVID-19 memorial at the park for the lives lost in our area.
- Iconic brand signage and wayfinding to the park's attractions.

## UPDATE:

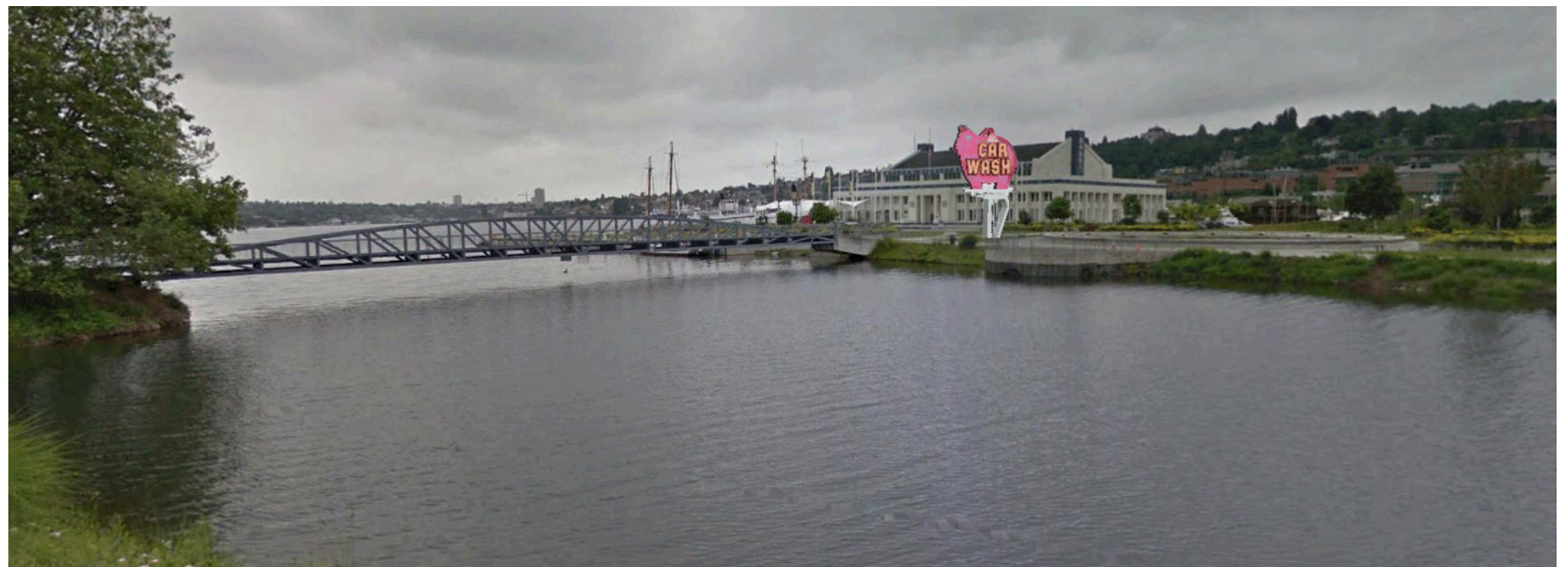
The Elephant Car Wash was in the media back when this presentation was originally put together; since then, the maritime theme of the park has been re-enforced, suggesting that other elements from MOHAI's collection (or other signage ideas) might better suit the original concept for the park and reduce the challenges to get a feature like this incorporated.

See Appendix C for the "Sign Garden" concept, presented by the Berger Partnership, in conjunction with MOHAI.



KEY MAP - ENLARGED

LEFT - VIEW FROM THE NORTH



ABOVE - VIEW FROM ACROSS THE LAGOON





# FUTURE PARK DEVELOPMENTS (ALREADY IN THE WORKS):

## NORTHWEST NATIVE CANOE CENTER:

In the Spring of 2021, the design team of the Northwest Native Canoe Center (in conjunction with the Seattle Parks Department) presented the current design for this Cultural Center included as part of the original intended program for the park design.

This cultural center was received as a positive addition to the various built structures within the park boundary, and enhancing many of the comments and concepts identified as potential for improvement at Lake Union Park.

Advancement of this project has included incorporation of public restrooms, accessible 24/7--see Appendix D for current floor plan of this structure.

This project is currently scheduled to begin in 2022.





# FUTURE CONNECTION

## SLU COMMUNITY CENTER:

The Mercer-MegaBlock Sale required inclusion of a neighborhood community center.

As this project has developed, the SLUCC has also tracked the progress of the design team on this "Mercer Megablock" project. The importance of a strong connection between Lake Union Park and this new community resource/asset has been identified as another neighborhood opportunity and priority. Along with the current design of the Megablock Project, the Blocks to the north side of Valley Street between 8th Avenue and Westlake are also in early design phases and at an appropriate stage to consider this connection and integrating streetscape improvements to enhance and strengthen this corridor.





# OTHER SURROUNDING CONTEXT:

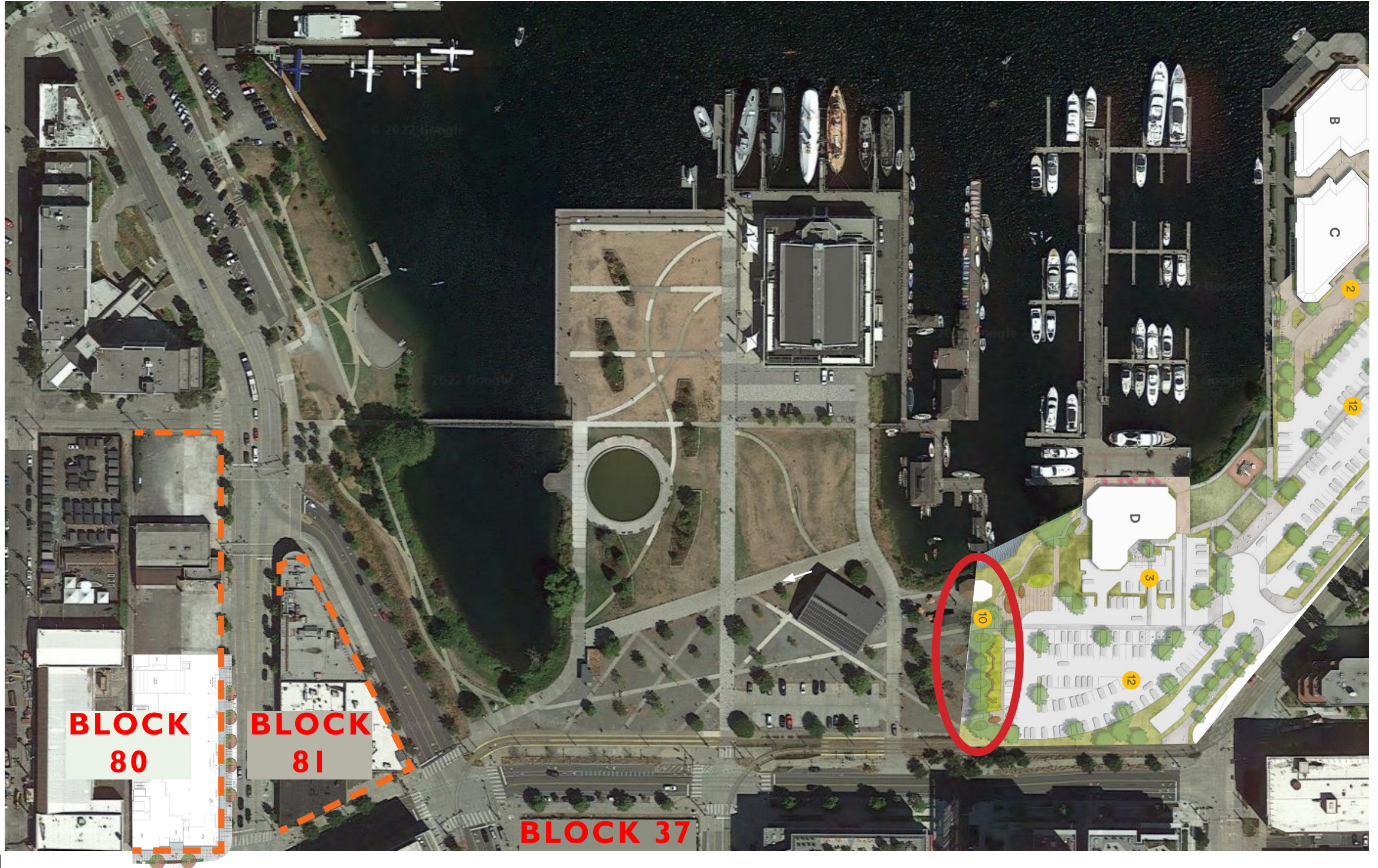
## EAST PARK BOUNDARY/"STREET END"

With Vulcans redevelopment and re-branding of "Lake Union Piers" (Formerly Chandler's Cove, also incorporating the Daniel's Broiler site), there is an opportunity to strengthen the Chesiahud Loop corridor from the Park to the east. Strengthening this corridor, will also strengthen the programmatic connection between Lake Union Park, and the Fairview Ave Street End; a public property

## SOUTHWEST PARK BOUNDARY (BLOCKS 37, 80 & 81)

Development of Block 37 - between is currently on the boards, completing the street edge opposite this primary entry point into the park. Although not directly adjacent to park property, the street frontage will provide cues and relationships to the park that provide both an opportunity and potential inspiration for the transition from the urban to the park's open space.

Kitty-corner to block 37, block 81 is a collection of lots occupied by 2-story, zero-lot-line structures. West of this block, block 80 is a similar collection, with at least one project already proposed (plan included on diagram at right). These blocks are adjacent to the corridor between the park and the future Community Center, as well as having frontage directly opposite the park, with similar inspiration and opportunity noted above.





# APPENDIX A:

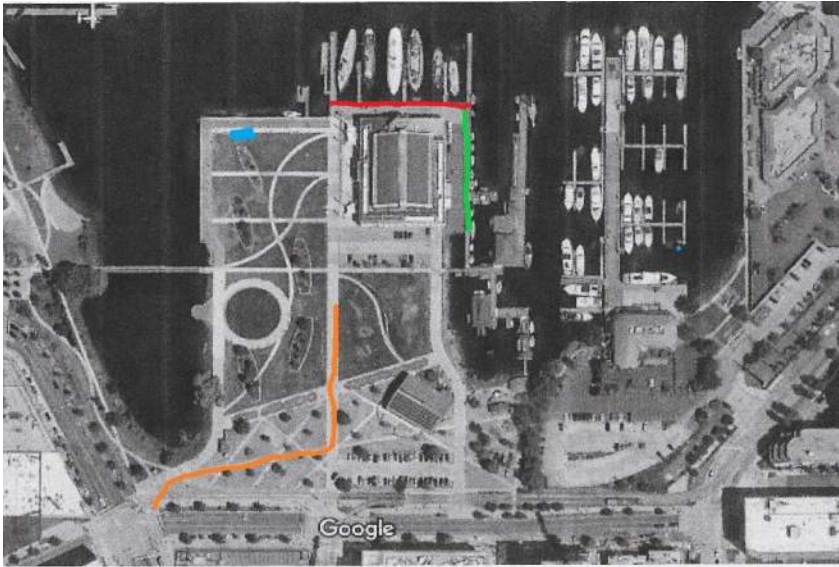
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LAKE UNION PARK WORKING GROUP ANALYSIS DOCUMENT





**Lake Union Park Improvement Projects**  
**Developed by the Lake Union Park Working Group**  
**As of October 20, 2020**



- A. **RESTROOMS:** Build more public restrooms in the park. The only restrooms in the park are in CWB and MOHAI buildings. When these buildings are closed, the park has no restrooms.
- B. **SECURITY EAST BULKHEAD (GREEN):** Build a security fence/barrier along the East bulkhead between MOHAI and CWB to reduce the parks liability and risk of injury for visitors who jump from the bulkhead to the docks. There is already a design for the fence/barrier that is currently used across the north end of the historic ships wharf. The new fence/barrier could be similar but might need to be taller. This fence/barrier could also contain interpretative signage similar to that on the north barrier/fence and also directional signage to guide visitors to the historic ships wharf.

- C. **SECURITY SHIPS WHARF (RED):** Increase the height of the railings along the wharf in front of the ships and at the entrance to each gangway (or along the pier beside V5) to something high enough to prevent easy climbing over. Keeping the same design as what is there now could even be done, with a slope to further discourage attempts at climbing (the fence along the wharf in front of the ships already has this). Add tall lockable marina-style gates with fence extensions on either side to prevent climbing around. Improve the lighting around the Ships Wharf.
- D. **MARKET-TO-MOHAI (ORANGE):** Continue the “Market-to-MOHAI walking tour” from its current end on Valley Street into the park and connect the tour to MOHAI. The tour is identified by unique historic sidewalk markers, banners, benches, plaques, etc.
- E. **SCULPTURE / FLOW (BLUE):** To improve traffic flow in the park, build an eye-catching artistic kinetic sculpture at the north end of the park to attract visitors to the north end of the park so they will then also see the historic ships wharf now somewhat hidden by MOHAI building. The sculpture would have a Maritime theme. Some have suggested that it might be a representation of the Wawona sailing ship that was part of the park for so many years.
- F. **PLAYGROUND:** Build a children’s playground area (a playful learning landscape has been suggested) in the park with a maritime theme.

*For questions, comments, or updates, contact Steve Greaves, Chair, Lake Union Park Working Group, [sgreaves@cwbc.org](mailto:sgreaves@cwbc.org), 206-371-0486.*



# APPENDIX B:

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MINUTES FROM MEETING WITH GOOGLE SLU CULTURE CLUB





# MEETING MINUTES

WEBER THOMPSON

900 N 34th Street, Suite 200 | Seattle, WA 98103  
206.344.5700 | weberthompson.com

PROJECT: Lake Union Park Improvements MEETING DATE: 3/16/2021  
SUBJECT: Special Meeting with Google's SLU Culture Club to solicit feedback  
LOCATION: Online (via Goggle Meets)



1. AS walked the Google Culture Club team through the draft presentation of SLU Park Improvements, to solicit feedback and any additional ideas. The Club was generally supportive of the proposal, with discussion of the following in greater detail:
  - a. They supported any effort to clean-up the goose droppings;
  - b. They suggested that there was already a playground located just east of Daniel's Broiler, adjacent to the park's east edge, suggesting that perhaps instead of another playground, the solution is greater connectivity and wayfinding aids to the existing playground.
  - c. They supported the idea of adding sculptures and "beacons" to draw visitors further into the park, and provide better wayfinding signage for some of the lesser known/visible features (the historic ships wharf, in particular).
2. They proposed providing improved food truck service at the park, suggesting permanent power, seating, and other service amenities be installed that vendors can rent/access, making for a better experience (as opposed to current practices of using noisy generators, and having limited seating via benches scattered around the park). This could also be used for larger events held at the park, like the Seattle Design Festival and Independence Day Festivities, among others.
3. Another major area of discussion/concern was improved safety for pedestrians amid the growing numbers of fast-moving cyclists making their way to SLU/downtown and around the south end of the lake. This is particularly challenged by the vague route to the Westlake Cycletrack and the narrow pathways along the westside of the park.
4. There was also a suggestion to provide more exercise space/equipment as many people are coming to the park to exercise and workout when the weather is nice. (This could perhaps be integrated into a par course that follows the Chessiahoud Loop around the lake.)
5. We also discussed the Mercer Mega-block project and the future community center, with the group supporting a logical, meaningful connection between these two community assets.



# APPENDIX C:

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"SIGN GARDEN" CONCEPT PRESENTATION BY BERGER PARTNERSHIP







**MOHAI**  
MUSEUM OF HISTORY & INDUSTRY

**DRAWING** PEOPLE TO LAKE UNION AND BRINGING  
THE MISSION OF MOHAI OUTSIDE ITS WALLS



**MARKET  
TO MOHAI**





THE DREAM OF SIGN GARDEN





# APPENDIX D:

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NORTHWEST NATIVE CANOE CENTER - CANOE CARVING HOUSE (PHASE I) FLOOR PLAN







# NW Native Canoe Center

## Carving House



United Indians of  
All Tribes Foundation  
Seattle, WA

**JONES JONES**

ARCHITECTS & LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
PLANNERS  
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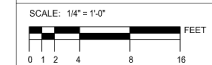
### MUP APPLICATION

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

DATE: 29 JANUARY 2021

REVISIONS:

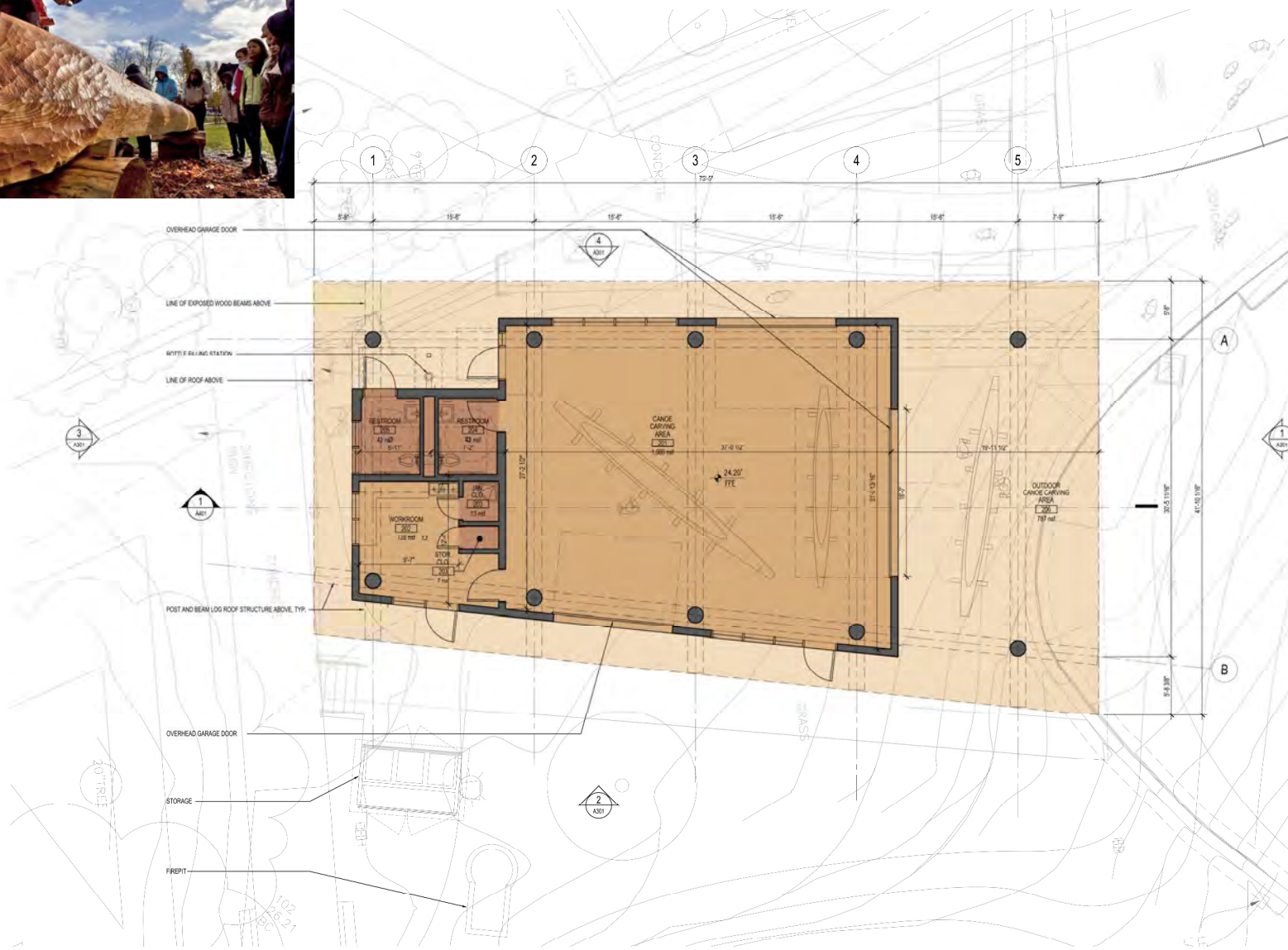
### FLOOR PLAN



DRAWN BY:  
CHECKED BY:  
JOB NO.: 20300.109

SHEET NO.: **A201**

All drawings and material appearing herein are the original and unpublished work of the architect and may not be duplicated, used, or disclosed without the written consent of Jones & Jones.



**1 FLOOR PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0" BLDG. AREA = 2,880 SF



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