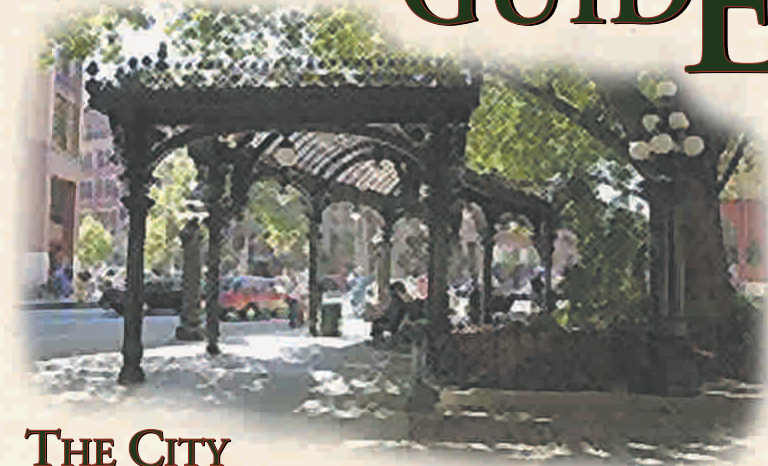


# SEATTLE DOWNTOWN URBAN LANDSCAPE GUIDE



**THE CITY** of Seattle now has approximately 400 parks and 6,000 acres of parkland. Amazingly, for its first 60 years, there were almost no parks in the city. Even today, most of Seattle's downtown parks are small and far between. Nevertheless, they are beloved gathering places for downtown residents, commuters and visitors alike.

## The Blue Ring: Connecting Places

Recognizing that Seattle's downtown open spaces are mostly small and isolated, the City of Seattle's CityDesign Office has recently proposed an open space strategy to create a series of linear parks ringing the downtown neighborhoods within the next decade. Called the "Blue Ring" because of its emphasis on preserving open spaces with water views, it refers to the historic "Ring of Green" vision for Seattle's park system proposed by the Olmsted Brothers 100 years ago. While it is expected to be implemented incrementally, the Blue Ring will eventually form a smaller concentric circle within the realized portions of the outer, city-wide Green Ring. CityDesign was assisted in this endeavor by private consultant Mithun (architecture, urban design and landscape architecture) along with the Lorna Jordan Studio, Coughlin Porter Lundeen and Heartland.

**South Lake Union Park:** Situated at the northernmost point of the "Blue Ring," South Lake Union Park is currently in the planning and design stages. Designed by Landscape Architects Hargreaves Associates of San Francisco with Mithun of Seattle, this waterfront park on Lake Union will contain maritime museums, including the Center for Wooden Boats. Its views of the active waterway, with seaplanes rising and landing as well as yachts coming into port, will also take in Seattle's celebrated Gasworks Park, designed by Richard Haag Associates, located on the opposite, north shore of the lake.

"Green corridors" & pedestrian links:

Symbols of significance of each park:

- ◆ - Social gathering
- ⌘ - Urban connectivity
- ⌚ - Historical
- ⊗ - Contemplative
- ☸ - Cultural

## 1 Seattle Center

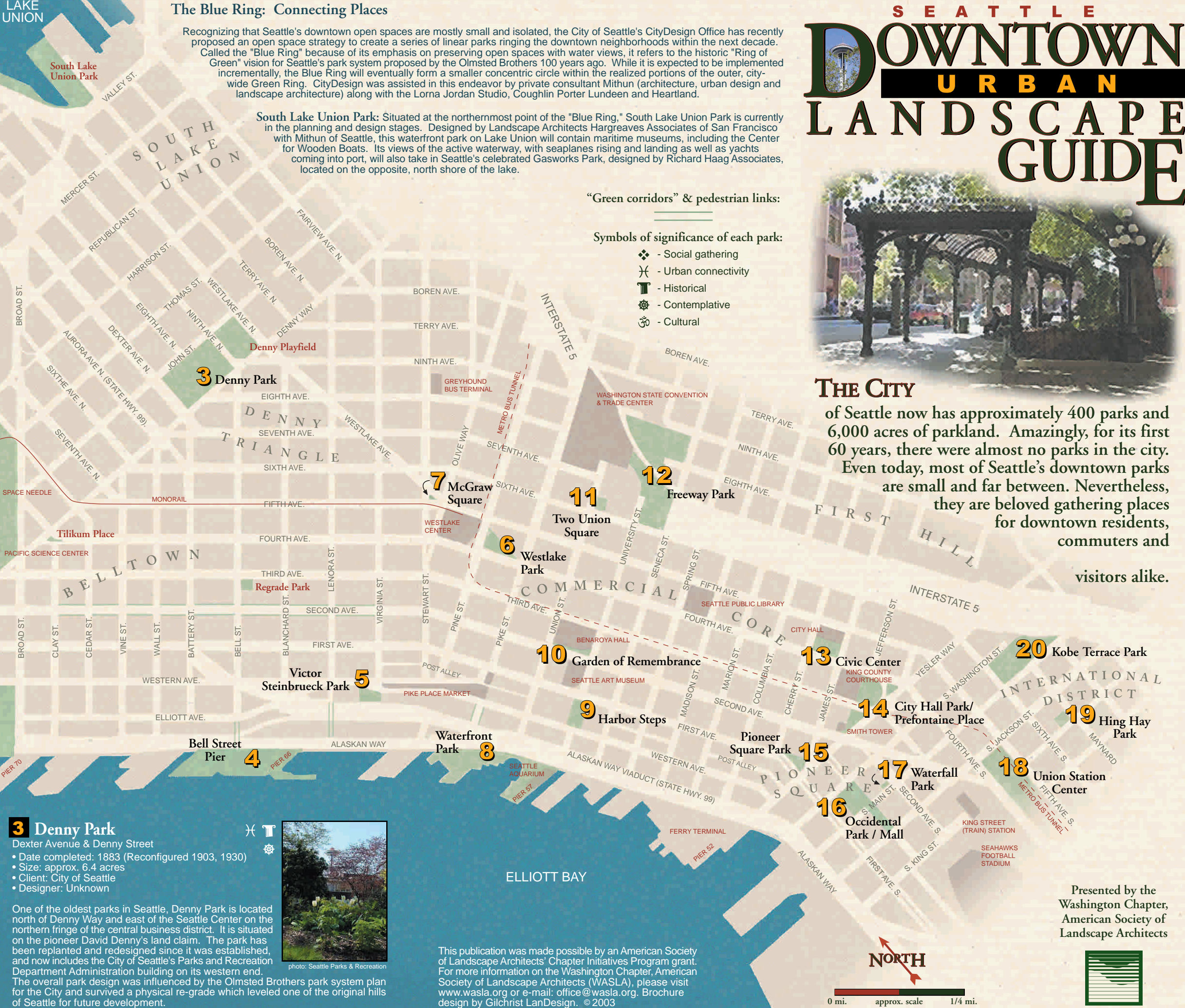
- 5th Avenue N. & Broad Street
- ◆ ⌘ ⌚ ☸
- Date completed: 1962 to present
- Size: approx. 74 acres
- Client: Seattle Center
- Designer: Paul Thiry, Architect; The Office of Lawrence Halprin; Richard Haag Associates; many designers involved in ongoing development

Home to the 1962 World's Fair, the Seattle Center continues to serve Seattle as a focus for cultural and sporting activities and a number of festivals/events, such as Folklife Festival and Bumbershoot. The Center has over 9 million visitors annually, second only in the U.S. to Disneyland and Disney World. The original fair site was planned and designed by Seattle architect Paul Thiry and San Francisco landscape architect Lawrence Halprin. The plan respected the existing street grid and to this day remains the underlying framework for continuing redevelopment and improvements. In 1964, Richard Haag Associates designed a series of urban parks, featuring a diverse selection of plant materials throughout the grounds. In 1991 the Seattle Master Plan was adopted and since then the Center has been in the throes of major redevelopment.

The Space Needle is perhaps the most recognizable symbol of Seattle, (designed by Victor Steinbrueck for the firm of John Graham, Jr.) and built for the World's Fair. Seattle Center's signature open space features the redesigned International Fountain (by Nakano-Dennis Landscape Architects) and recently completed Fisher Festival Pavilion (by Miller-Hull Architects). A ride on the Monorail, also built for the World's Fair, is a fast and fun way from Seattle Center to Westlake Center, the heart of Seattle's retail core. Other major highlights include the Pacific Science Center (by NBBJ with Minoru Yamasaki & Associates); Key Arena, home of the Sonics (basketball) and Thunderbirds (hockey) professional teams; the Experience Music Project (by Frank Gehry) and the Center House (former armory building) with its food court. The Theater District along Mercer Street is undergoing a major facelift with the renovation of the Opera House (by LMN Architects). Seattle Center is also home to the Pacific Northwest Ballet and three theater groups. Visit [www.seattlecenter.com](http://www.seattlecenter.com) for further information on the 5,000-plus events held here each year.



photo: Auston James/Seattle Center



## 2 Olympic Sculpture Park

- Western Avenue & Broad Street
- ◆ ⌘ ☸
- Date completed: 2005 (projected)
- Size: approx. 8.5 acres
- Client: Seattle Art Museum
- Designers: Weiss/Manfredi Architects; Charles Anderson - Landscape Architect



illustration: Seattle Art Museum

The public will soon be able to enjoy one of the largest open spaces in Seattle with the completion of the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park. Offering a flexible and broad artistic program in a distinctively Northwest inspired design, the new park will be located on the waterfront, just north of Pier 70. A work-in-progress, the current centerpiece of the park is Alexander Calder's "Eagle" that soars more than 39 feet above the ground. Constructed on a former industrial site, the park will also be home to landscape precincts that include an evergreen forest, open meadow and coastal plantings. The park's z-shaped design will connect three disparate sites, bringing art, people and landscape together while honoring the urban infrastructure that also characterizes Seattle's downtown waterfront. Outstanding views of the ship-laden Puget Sound are a highlight, especially as the sun sets behind the Olympic Mountains.

## 3 Denny Park

- Dexter Avenue & Denny Street
- ⌘ ⌚ ☸
- Date completed: 1883 (Reconfigured 1903, 1930)
- Size: approx. 6.4 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Unknown



photo: Seattle Parks & Recreation

One of the oldest parks in Seattle, Denny Park is located north of Denny Way and east of the Seattle Center on the northern fringe of the central business district. It is situated on the pioneer David Denny's land claim. The park has been replanted and redesigned since it was established, and now includes the City of Seattle's Parks and Recreation Department Administration building on its western end. The overall park design was influenced by the Olmsted Brothers park system plan for the City and survived a physical re-grade which leveled one of the original hills of Seattle for future development.

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0 mi. approx. scale 1/4 mi.



## 4 Bell Street Pier

- Alaskan Way & Bell Street
- Date completed: 1996
- Size: approx. 14 acres
- Client: Port of Seattle
- Designer: Hewitt Architects

Bell Street Pier is an important element of the City of Seattle's Central Waterfront Project, which began over 20 years ago. One of the landmarks of the pier/park is the collection of simple geometric shed buildings in the colors of cargo containers that is located on the water front side of Alaskan Way. The site and buildings' functions include an international conference center, 1,900 linear feet of deep-water moorage, public moorage, a transit shed, fish processing, Odyssey Maritime Museum, restaurants and retail space. At Pier 66, attractions include a waterfront public open space, a children's fountain, a roof-top plaza and public art. Bridges at Lenora and Bell Street connect visitors to the adjacent residential neighborhood of Belltown.



photo: Michael Shoppen

## 5 Victor Steinbrueck Park

- Western Ave. & Virginia St.
- Date completed: 1978
- Size: approx. 2 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Richard Haag Associates

Offering extensive views of Puget Sound and the Seattle Skyline, Victor Steinbrueck Park is located near the historic Pike Place Market, sitting atop a bluff and overlooking Elliott Bay. The park includes grass-covered mounds, benches and shelters for picnicking and viewing two totem poles created by Marion Oliver. The park is situated on the site of the former Washington State National Guard Armory which was partially destroyed by fire in 1962. It is named for Victor Steinbrueck, a local architect who championed preservation of significant urban spaces, including the Pike Place Market. The park attracts neighborhood residents, tourists and market-area workers, and occasionally hosts concerts and festivals.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 6 Westlake Park

- Fourth Ave. & Pine St.
- Date completed: 1989
- Size: approx. 1.0 acre
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Hanna/Olin, Ltd.

Westlake Park is a triangular plaza in the heart of downtown which hosts social gatherings and activities during the wintertime holiday season and serves as a venue for various civic events and rallies. Westlake Center, a shopping complex and the downtown terminus of the Monorail to Seattle Center, forms its northern border. The park features a water fountain and various structures and benches for observing people and activities. Granite pavers are arranged in a pattern reminiscent of a Salish Indian basket.



photo: Seattle Parks & Recreation

## 7 McGraw Square

- Fifth Ave. & Stewart St.
- Date completed: Unknown.
- Size: approx. 0.1 acre
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Unknown

One of the smallest parks in Seattle, McGraw Square is located near the Westin Hotel at the intersection of 5th Avenue, Stewart Street and Westlake Avenue. The square is named for John McGraw (statue) who was an influential figure in the development of early Seattle. Mr. McGraw worked as a Seattle Police Chief, Harbor Master, Fire Warden, and King County Sheriff, and, in addition, served as State Governor. He was a strong proponent of linking Puget Sound and Lake Washington with a ship canal. The design of the square was influenced by the Olmsted Brothers' park system plan for the City.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 8 Waterfront Park

- Alaskan Way (Pier 56 & 57)
- Date completed: 1974
- Size: approx. 4.8 Acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Bumgardner Partnership, Architects

Located next to the Seattle Aquarium and accessible by waterfront streetcar, this modern urban open space built on waterfront pilings contrasts—in a respectful manner—with the adjacent commercial district of old working piers. The original concept called for floating structures to provide direct access to the water. Featuring towers, docks and a fishing pier, the park is significant for its sweeping views of the Olympic Mountains, Elliott Bay, and the Washington State Ferries crossing Puget Sound.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 9 Harbor Steps

- University St. between First Ave. & Western Ave.
- Date completed: 2000
- Size: approx. 0.5 acre
- Client: Harbor Steps Properties
- Designers: Arthur Erickson Architects; Hewitt Architects

Serving both as a stairway promenade and an important path to Seattle's waterfront and the business center, Harbor Steps is one of Seattle's major open space parks. Its stair-stepped fountains, attractive planting and southwest exposure make it a popular lunch spot. The descending steps offer excellent amphitheater seating for Seattle's free summertime concerts and other festivals. Post Alley intersects the promenade providing pedestrian connections north to Pike Place Market and south into the Pioneer Square District.

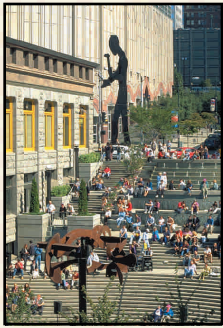


photo: Hewitt Architects

## 10 Garden of Remembrance

- Second Ave. & University St.
- Date completed: 1998
- Size: approx. 0.5 acre
- Clients: Seattle Symphony and City of Seattle
- Designers: LMN Architects; Murase Associates - Landscape Architect

Located in the heart of the downtown business core at Benaroya Hall (home of the Seattle Symphony), the Garden of Remembrance offers opportunities to reflect upon the citizens of Washington who gave their lives in the line of duty. The names of over 7,500 men and women are engraved in granite walls positioned to embrace the warmth and illumination of the western sun, surrounded by rich tapestries of northwest native plantings punctuated with falling water and artfully sited stones. The Garden skillfully integrates the contextual needs of the city and serves as a civic plaza attracting a sizeable lunch crowd on sunny summer days. The Garden also serves as an entry portal into the Metro bus tunnel.

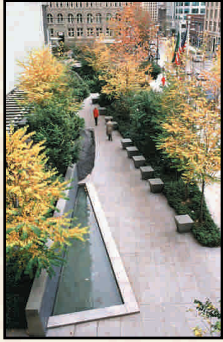


photo: Murase Associates

## 11 Two Union Square

- Sixth Avenue & Union Street
- Date completed: 1989
- Size: approx. 0.5 acre
- Client: UNICO Properties
- Designers: NBBJ Architects; Berger Partnership - Landscape Architects

Two Union Square is Seattle's second highest building. Two Union Square Plaza is cradled in the shadow of this postmodern skyscraper offering a pleasant reprieve from the busy city streets. The intimate multi-level urban park is often filled with summer time lunch crowds lingering amidst the lush and diverse plantings. Retail shops enclose the lower level as honey locust trees and a well-composed mountainous waterfall ascend your eye to the upper terrace. The upper level of the park allows one to gain a varied perspective of the streets below and extends south to the base of the aluminum-clad One Union Tower.



photo: Berger Partnership

## 12 Freeway Park

- Sixth Avenue & University Street
- Date completed: 1976
- Size: approx. 5.2 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: The Office of Lawrence Halprin

Freeway Park was designed in part to serve as a "bridge" between First Hill and downtown when the construction of Interstate 5 severed the two districts in the 1950's. It is located near the Washington State Convention Center where 6th Avenue intersects with University and Seneca Streets. The park is noted for its combination of concrete walls representing canyons, small intimate spaces, and the use of water (fountains and waterfalls) to create an area that diminishes the noise generated by the I-5 freeway. Overall, the park is a linear series of spaces that connects the Convention Center and downtown Seattle. It serves as a destination where residents, shoppers, downtown office workers and hotel visitors intermingle.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 13 Civic Center

- Fourth Ave. between Cherry & James Streets
- Date completed: 2004 (projected)
- Size: approx. 0.7 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designers: Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd; Swift and Company - Landscape Architects

The Civic Plaza presents a unique opportunity to create open space in the core of downtown Seattle. It will extend from the west edge of the new Justice Center, through City Hall to Third Avenue. The Civic Plaza is being designed to be an inviting gateway to City Hall with places for intimate meetings, large public gatherings and community celebrations. Additionally, the plaza provides wonderful opportunities for people to enjoy the dramatic views of Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountains.

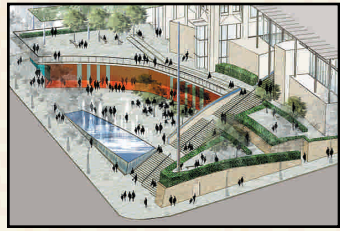


illustration: Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

## 14 City Hall Park/Prefontaine Place

- Third Ave. & Prefontaine Pl.
- Date completed: 1926; Prefontaine Pl. re-design: 1974
- Size: approx. 1.4 acres combined
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: City Hall Park: Unknown; Prefontaine Place: Richard Haag Associates

The two parks, located directly opposite each other on Third Avenue, link the grassy "front lawn" of the King County Courthouse (City Hall Park) with the southern entry portal to downtown at the Prefontaine Place Metro Tunnel Station. A former battlefield and military drill ground, City Hall Park is Seattle's first downtown park. Prefontaine Place is significant for its creative re-use of a small pre-existing open space as an entrance hall to Metro Tunnel. Including a fountain by the distinguished Seattle architect Carl Gould built in 1926, it represents a good marriage of open space value with pedestrian passage and public transportation amenities.

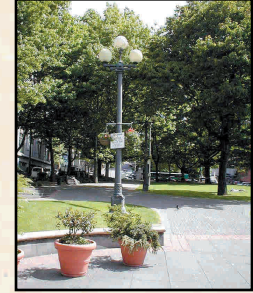


photo: Karen Kiest

## 15 Pioneer Square Park

- First Ave. & Yesler Way
- Date completed: 1909. Re-designed: 1970 and 1984
- Size: approx. 0.3 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designers: Jones & Jones (1970); Beck & Baird (1984)

Pioneer Square Park is second only to the Space Needle as a symbol of Seattle. Its large wrought-iron pergola, a significant piece of Victorian civic design, was recently restored after being damaged in 2001. The pergola was built in 1909 for the Alaska-Yukon Pacific Exposition, Seattle's first "World Fair," which celebrated the Klondike gold rush. The "square" (which is actually a triangle) is the center of the Pioneer Square Historic District and serves as an example of early urban design. Renovated in 1970 and again in 1984, the park features a fountain with James Wehn's bust of Chief Seattle (1909) and a copy of a Tlingit totem pole by Kyan-Kininook.



photo: Seattle Parks & Recreation

## 16 Occidental Park/Occidental Mall

- Occidental Ave. & South Main St.
- Date completed: 1972. Renovated: 1987
- Size: 1.0 acres
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designers: Jones & Jones (1972); Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation (1987)

These adjoining spaces were designed to uphold the historic preservation of the Pioneer Square District and to re-assert values of urban living and the urban environment. Cobblestones and ornamental iron light posts merge with modern design to create a refined atmosphere. Occidental Mall is a pedestrian street closed to traffic, lined with trees and features art galleries and restaurants. The mall has been designated a "green street" by the City of Seattle. Occidental Park is used as a gathering space for concerts and leisure. Its glass shelter which provides rain-protected seating, is a modern design expression that recalls the nearby Victorian pergola in Pioneer Square. Adorning the park are four Totem poles carved by Duane Pasco which were donated in 1985 by developer Richard White, a long-time resident of Pioneer Square.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 17 Waterfall Garden

- Second Ave. S. & S. Main St.
- Date completed: 1978
- Size: approx. 0.1 acre
- Client: United Parcel Service
- Designer: Sasaki Dawson DeMay

Commemorating the birthplace of the United Parcel Service (1907), the Waterfall Garden offers a high-style and very urban outdoor room enclosed by a tall, elegant ornamental iron fence. The essential formality of this space is contrasted by a dramatic naturalistic appearance of waterfalls found in the nearby Cascade and Olympic Mountains. This is an early example of an "eroded edge" between architectural and natural design elements which has become a significant theme in modern landscape architecture. An intimate, oasis-like refuge for seating and a contemplative "pocket park," the Waterfall Garden is Seattle's answer to the celebrated Paley Park in New York. While its 22-foot high rock waterfall wall appears to be highly natural, it can also be viewed as a modern interpretation of a traditional Japanese garden.

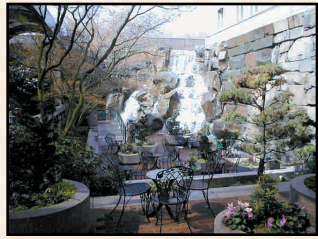


photo: Brooks Kolb

## 18 Union Station Center

- 4th Avenue S. & 5th Avenue S. (South of Jackson St.)
- Date completed: 2001
- Size: approx. 7.5 acres
- Clients: Vulcan Northwest
- Designers: NBBJ Architects; Murase Associates - Landscape Architect; John Hodge - Artist

Built over Metro's International District bus station, the Union Station Center is comprised of four buildings linked together through the use of rich materials, Pan-Asian plantings and well composed spaces. A primary open plaza is located along Fifth Ave. S. at Weller and Lane Streets. A series of stone sculptures, water features and landscape successfully weaves through the plaza and corridors. Located at the north garden is a Zen-influenced introspective garden composed of granite slabs. Further south, flanking a narrow passage, are tranquil reflecting pools at Opus Center.

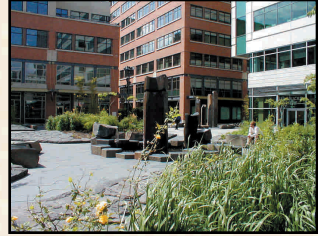


photo: Karen Kiest

## 19 Hing Hay Park

- Maynard Avenue S. & S. King Street
- Dated completed: 1973
- Size: approx. 0.3 acre
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: Sakuma James & Peterson - Landscape Architects

This urban park is a focal point for the International District. The park features an ornate, red tile-roofed Chinese pavilion that was a gift from one of Seattle's sister cities, Taipei, in 1975. On the wall of the Bush-Asia Center is a large dragon mural by artist John Woo. The park is utilized as a community gathering place and is home to several annual events and festivals, including the Seafair International District Summer Festival, held every year in July.



photo: Karen Kiest

## 20 Kobe Terrace Park

- S. Washington St. above 6th Ave.
- Date completed: 1975
- Size: approx. 1.0 acre
- Client: City of Seattle
- Designer: William Teufel - Landscape Architect

Part of Seattle's Sister Cities program, Kobe Terrace Park contains plaques inscribed in both Japanese and English that speak of the good will between Seattle and one of its sister cities, Kobe. Highlights of the park are the cherry trees and the 200-year-old Yukimidoro Snow Viewing Lantern which was donated by the citizens of Kobe. The park features panoramic views of Mount Rainier and an overview of Seattle's International District. Adding to the flavor of the park is the adjacent community gardens (Danny Woo Memorial Garden) which are maintained by over 100 low-income elderly residents of the International District.



photo: Karen Kiest

## Seattle's Olmsted Legacy

The City of Seattle now has approximately 400 parks and 6,000 acres of parkland. Amazingly, for its first 60 years, there were almost no parks in the city. Around the beginning of the 20th Century as Seattle grew, city leaders began to recognize that there was a need to build a park system. In 1903, they commissioned two brothers—John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.—from Brookline, Massachusetts to develop a plan for the City. They were the sons of Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the primary designers of Central Park in New York City and also considered to be the nation's first landscape architect.

The Olmsted park plan involved a network of parks connected by parkways, all positioned so that residences (at the time) would be no further than 1.5 miles from a green space. Two continuous loops were planned from Seward Park to Discovery Park and back and from Seward Park to Alki (West Seattle) and back. In 1910, Seattle voters approved a city bond issue for park construction based on the Olmsted plan. The enactment of the plan provided an important and long-lasting legacy to the City, increasing the amount of green space for future citizens to enjoy. The legacy includes Washington Park Arboretum, Volunteer, Woodland, Greenlake, and Seward Parks, Magnolia, Ravenna and Lake Washington Boulevards, as well as over 30 other parks and boulevards within the city limits.



J.C. Olmsted



Lake Washington Boulevard



F.L. Olmsted Jr.