

# SAVE MYERS PARCELS

WHAT: Myers Parcels is 32 acres of undeveloped surplus land owned by the City of Seattle. It has steep, wooded slopes, wetlands, and a meadow.

WHERE: The land is located in the south and east end of West Seattle. It is between White Center and Highland Park. It is adjacent and south of the Joint Training Facility, 9401 Myers Way South and Arrowhead senior housing.

WHAT'S THE DEAL: The City of Seattle intends to sell the land for commercial development, most likely to LOWES, very soon. Seattle Parks has indicated it does not want it. If 500 people say they want it to become Discovery Park South, they will reconsider.

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HELP: Send an email to the Mayor and/or your councilmember saying you want Myers Parcels saved as Myers Park, a natural area.

COME: If you want to do more you are invited to the first ever gathering of SAVE MYERS PARK, to discuss it on March 14<sup>th</sup>, 10-noon, 210 S. Hudson. Call Cass to find out more, 206-783-9093. Or email [cassturnbull@comcast.net](mailto:cassturnbull@comcast.net).

The story

The Myers Parcels

The Myers parcels may be the last large, undeveloped piece of property that could become a major park in Seattle. It is 32 acres of surplus land already owned by the City. It is located at the south border of West Seattle, between White Center and South Park. It is an easily ignored piece of land, it seems remote from the industry, the homes, and certainly from the building boom that is elsewhere. You can see 509 from it and it is surrounded, and locked up entirely, by a chain link fence. You might not even notice it when driving north to get to the 1<sup>st</sup> Ave Bridge.

I noticed it because it has woods, fields and as I found out, water. And because of my work on the Save Our Substations project I knew it was City owned surplus land. After researching its history I can say that Myers is a much abused piece of God's green earth. For most of its modern history it was mined as a gravel pit. Nintendo owned it for a while and insisted that Seattle buy all 50 acres of the property if they wanted to buy any of it. The best piece, the centrally located flatland, became the Joint Training Facility

over

Then in 2007, just before the great recession, the rest of the land was put up for sale by the Council. The City wanted to pay off an interdepartmental loan on the land and stimulate the economy in underserved south Seattle. For various reasons the deal with LOWES flipped.

Development has recently begun to nibble at the corners. The property just adjacent to the North has become a spiffy new building complex for retired people. Above the steep cliff and to the west the King County Housing people decided to turn over large swaths of their land to build Greenbridge, which is the latest thing in mixed use housing, invented to deal with Seattle's affordable housing problem. The steep greenbelt to the north of the retirement complex got taken by parks as part of the Westcrest Park, thank God. It extends the Duwamish greenbelt to, you know, Myers. On the east side, of Myers Way, located behind an inconspicuous hole in the chain link fence is a trail going down the steep wooded hill to 509. A homeless camp is hidden there.

As for Myers proper, the Firemen decided they needed to build their own dream training facility (for \$33 million of your tax dollars, about the price of the entire pieces of land. A local environmental hero, John Beal, fought to stop the development because Myers feeds Hamm creek, one of the tributaries of the Duwamish. He had spent 22 years of his life restoring the Hamm. Some say that losing the battle against the training facility caused the heart attack that killed him shortly thereafter. Seattle was fined, but the construction continued and was finished. Now you can see the center. You can't enter the Firefighter's facility itself, its security gated and fenced, but sometimes you can see pink smoke arising from a concrete tower. From Google Earth you can see roads lined in big red tucks. A tiny duck pond at the visitors parking area is what remains of the wetland.

Money is always the problem. The State Accountancy Act says you can't just give or transfer property from one dept to the other. I'm investigating several possible 'work-arounds' to make the land affordable, or perhaps even free. But no one is holding their breath. I applied for grants to create a think tank of a lawyer, a strategist, and policy analyzer to check out the feasibility of various possible options.

It's quite likely that Myers will slip through our hands before I succeed in getting my think tank. And it's even more likely to happen as there is no large constituency nearby to fight for the park or greenspace. And that is what it takes if the City doesn't to keep a piece a land. With incredible effort, the City finally relented to citizen's outcries and saved the Soundway in West Seattle. Cal Anderson was hard fought for. And various little pocket parks have been set aside because someone collected of 500 signatures spent many years of donated time working to get push through the resistance of bureaucracy

The kids of future Seattle will not have what I had as a girl growing up in Seattle. Because of the avalanche of density headed our way, there just won't be the backyards, the vacant lots and the empty campgrounds of my youth. Exploring the vacant lot next door is how I came to love nature. I

want the kids of Greenbridge to be able to bike to Myers Park, to climb trees, build forts, play in mud, and pretend they are in some distant wild place. I want a place, where there might be frogs and grasshoppers to hear and to catch or to see a salmon spawning.