EDITORIAL

The newspaper’s view

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IN WATERFRONT PARK, THE SEEDS OF A BETTER SEATTLE

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When the final pieces of the new Seattle Waterfront Park are completed in 2024, it will be a corridor with trees, art, public-bench access and bike lanes where the Alaskan Way Viaduct once loomed. An architectural rendering of the Seattle Waterfront Park along University Street looking north.

More information
For more information, go to: waterfrontparkseattle.org

No major project ever turns out exactly like its architectural drawings, but Waterfront Park is delivering on its promises. With more private fundraising needed, has the opportunity to create a corridor between sixes and art and public-beach access and bike lanes. It will be far better than what existed before.

In history shows, nothing about the waterfront has been easy. Piens and millennials displaced Na-

tive gathering places in the 1800s. A plan to build several parks along the waterfront failed in 1912, and the area was given over to manufacturing. An industry moved to the north and south ends of Elliott Bay after World War II, the central waterfront became fodder for count-

less professional and citizen committees. Should the area be a tourist “little strip”? Should it include fish processing and light manufacturing? Should it embrace its industrial surroundings, or attempt to create a more pastoral setting? Eventually, a park was de-

signed from Pier 57 to Pier 59 that featured docks, a fountain and public space on Pier 58. The faltering Alaskan Way Viaduct, once slated to be built at Golden Gar-
den Ballard, moved to Pier 50. At the dedication in 1974, Seattle Times reporter John Hanson thought what kind of noise drowned out each speaker: a freight train, passing traffic, a row of moving ferries.

The 2001 Nisqually earth-quake set in motion a decade of arguing about the viaduct and waterfront. After the decision to replace the hulking structure with a tunnel was made in 2009, James Corner Field Oper-

ations, based in New York, was brought in to redevelop the corridor. Taking strike-related delays into account, those guiding the project hope to open new lanes on the east side of Alaskan Way up to Union Street later this year. That will allow the current roadway to be removed and replaced with green space, bike lanes and pedestrian walkways.

A new Union Street Pedestri-

an Bridge is anticipated to open later this year. Construction of the new Marion Street Pedestrian Bridge is slated to begin in 2022. Pier 62 opened in 2020 and Pier 63 a year later, a corridor that feature-

docks, a fountain, panoramic views, as well as pedestrian access to Pike Place Market via a pathway leading from street level.

Waterfront Park and the Ocean Pavilions are worthy of philantropic support. Now in its final stages, the project kept on track despite different may-

ors and Seattle City Council, a truck tunnel boring machine and various political challenges. In the long view, the welcoming figures along Pier 58 might say this, too, is transitory, but another chapter of Seattle’s history until something else comes along.

For even more, it affirms that after all the arguing and hand-

haggling, the city can accom-

plish great things.

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