



May 31, 2017

Jesus Aguirre, Superintendent
Seattle City Parks and Recreation
100 Dexter Ave N
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Superintendent Jesus Aguirre and Board of Parks Commissioners:

Seattle Audubon respectfully requests that Seattle City Parks and Recreation decline to authorize the Fort Lawton Center for the Arts at Discovery Park as the Center's development is not reflective of Discovery Park's 1972 Master Plan. We maintain that the Center for the Arts would be very appropriate in another city facility, but its current proposed location would increase vehicular traffic, attract hundreds or potentially thousands of people for large concerts and result in development within the heart of Discovery Park, eroding some of its important natural values.

Seattle Audubon is a 501 (C) (3) organization, representing almost 4000 members, who leads local communities in appreciating, understanding, and protecting birds and their natural habitats. We envision a healthy environment in balance with nature, where people enjoy, respect, and care for the natural resources that sustain the community of life. We work with communities to connect and protect habitat from Puget Sound to Lake Washington and from the city of Des Moines to the King County line.

Seattle Audubon has recently initiated the Neighborhood Flyways program which seeks to protect unbroken habitat corridors throughout Seattle and connect urban residents with natural spaces within our city. While the Fort Lawton Center for the Arts mission is admirable, important and would likely be appropriate for another city facility, we maintain that Discovery Park is one of the key natural areas within the city and such a development would interfere with key tenets within the park's master plan.

Discovery Park's 1972 Master Plan states that its central purpose is, "to provide an open space of quiet and tranquility for the citizens of this city—a sanctuary where they might escape the turmoil of the city and enjoy the rejuvenation which quiet and solitude and an intimate contact with nature can bring." The Master Plan goes on to state that Discovery Park, "cannot satisfy all of the recreational needs of all of the citizens of Seattle" and that, "This park should not be asked to serve too many functions."

Under a section describing appropriate "Future Structures and Activities," the master plan states, "In the years to come there will be almost irresistible pressure to carve out areas of the park in order to provide sites for various civic structures or space for special activities," and finally that, "The pressures for those sites may constitute the greatest single threat to the park."

In conclusion, Seattle Audubon is not opposed to the concept of the Lawton Center for the Arts at another location, but we believe that its year-round education programs, associated increased traffic and noise, lodging, rehearsals and performances would contradict the intent of the 1972 Master Plan and would erode some of the key values the park has protected since its inception.

Sincerely,

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