

September 17, 2010

Robert Nellams, Director  
Seattle Center  
305 Harrison St.  
Seattle, WA 98109

Re: South Fun Forest Area RFP Review

Dear Robert,

Our Review Panel has completed our work. This letter and its appendices represent our recommendation and analysis. We were pleased to have had the opportunity to remain involved in the implementation of the Century 21 Master Plan that we developed.

In June, you empanelled us to design and oversee a process, including opportunities for public input that would analyze responses to the Request for Proposal Seattle Center issued in April, 2010 for development proposals for the South Fun Forest Area.

Our Panel has met four times since we accepted this responsibility. We presided over a community meeting and public open house held on July 7 that was widely attended and later posted on the Seattle Channel. We have read and considered hundreds of thoughtful emails and letters on this topic. We read in detail all of the proposals that were originally submitted; crafted a list of follow-up questions for each proposal based on public input and our own assessments; and then studied and discussed those responses. Most important, we strove to stay true to the Planning and Design Principles of the Master Plan that we developed in 2008 and which should guide the Master Plan's implementation in this decision and well into the future.

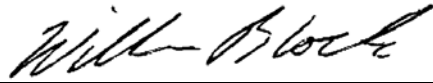
The RFP's criteria began with two overarching principles. First, it established a requirement that any successful proposal demonstrate that it will be revenue neutral to Seattle Center both in capital and in ongoing maintenance and operating costs. Second, it established a strong preference for proposals that demonstrate clearly their organizational readiness to raise necessary capital financing, design, construct, and open their project to the public by April, 2012, in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1962 World's Fair.

In addition to those principles, the RFP established nine criteria by which proposals were to be judged.

Our recommendation is based on these principles and criteria. In addition, however, in multiple public comments we were asked to consider whether some proposals if not successful here, should nevertheless be considered for other locations in Seattle Center's future. Our report provides discussion and recommendations on that topic. If these additional recommendations are helpful beyond our main recommendation, we hope you find an opportunity to take advantage of them.

We were pleased and honored to be asked to assist Seattle Center in this task and will be happy to continue our service if and when it is needed. In particular, we hope you will call on us to help Seattle Center as it pursues the most transformational element of the Master Plan – the acquisition of Memorial Stadium and its attendant addition of four acres to Seattle Center’s open space at the heart of the campus.

Sincerely



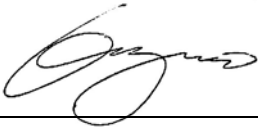
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Bill Block, Chair



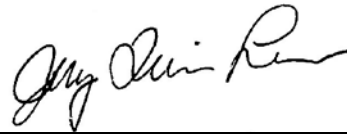
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Maria Barrientos



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Trish Dziko



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Jerry Quinn Lee



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Donna Moodie



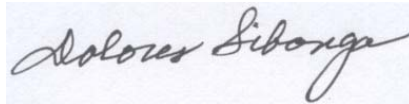
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Jeff Schoenfeld



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Bryce Seidl



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Dolores Sibonga

# Redevelopment of Seattle Center South Fun Forest Area Request for Proposals

## Review Panel Report

### Context of Recommendation:

The Panel was asked to analyze responses to the Request for Proposals for redevelopment of the 1.6 acre site south of the Monorail which has been leased since 1963 to a private entity, Fun Forest Amusements, for their pay-for-use outdoor “Kiddie” rides and their 20,000 square foot video games arcade building. Nine proposals were submitted to redevelop all or some portion of that site. The portion of the Fun Forest amusement park north of the Monorail was vacated at the end of 2009 and the City is considering a range of new uses for that site

At the outset of our work, and before any proposals had been submitted, the Panel discussed the forms our final recommendation could take. These included rank order, recommendations with analysis, recommendations and analysis with possible alternatives, or analysis only. We agreed to provide a final product that would include analysis with an accompanying recommendation of one or more proposals. This decision was critical to our process in that it created the possibility of recommending more than one if we felt that multiple proposals were similarly successful in meeting the RFP criteria. The Panel further agreed that our recommendations would be by “modified consensus,” with recommendations needing support of a substantial majority of the panel and with concerns of other members reflected in the discussion rather than by dissenting reports.

As an overarching principle, the RFP made it clear that “Proposers are expected to fully fund all capital and operating costs of their Proposal. No City funding is available for redevelopment of the site.” The RFP sought proposals that paid rent or were “revenue neutral proposals which provide measurable public benefits in lieu of rent but do not result in net cost or expense for Seattle Center or the City.” The RFP further stated, “For this RFP, ‘revenue neutral’ means that the proposal will cover proposal-related Seattle Center operating expense and will not have a net negative budget impact.”

As a result, only those proposals that were able to document clearly and with supporting data how they would be revenue neutral to Seattle Center, both in capital and ongoing maintenance and operations costs, were considered to have met the minimum requirement for responsiveness.

We carefully reviewed revenue and expense assumptions of proposers to determine their credibility. We assessed the reliability of attendance projections that drive revenue by reviewing the data and/or market studies cited to determine whether these were based on comparable projects and appropriately adjusted for the local market. We noted that many studies’ estimates of per capita expenditures of food, parking and other services do not accrue exclusively to Seattle Center but rather accrue substantially to private vendors in the neighborhood. Regarding capital and operating expense projections, we assessed the accuracy of those projections in part by comparing them to the actual experience of Seattle Center projects and also by comparing proposal to proposal.

It is important to note here that with respect to this threshold criteria, the Panel evaluated proposals only to the extent they could demonstrate they would be revenue neutral. Profitability did not factor into those threshold discussions.<sup>1</sup>

The second preliminary element in our evaluation was the ability of proposers to demonstrate clearly their organizational readiness to raise necessary capital financing, design, construct and open their project in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1962 World's Fair. This was also stated in the RFP that "public use of the site . . . must resume no later than April, 2012."

All proposals determined to have adequately addressed the two threshold questions were further evaluated by the Panel under the RFP's additional criteria. These were:

- A. Compatibility with and contribution to the Seattle Center vision, existing facilities, and the unique mix of programs, attractions and open spaces at Seattle Center.
- B. Compatibility with the Century 21 Master Plan.
- C. The proposer's ability to create and operate a high quality experience for patrons.
- D. Proposer's financial condition.
- E. Proposed financial return to the City.
- F. Anticipated benefit to the public.
- G. Proposer's initial and ongoing investment in the site and future services.
- H. The Proposal's impact on future Seattle Center capital expenditures or increased net operating costs.
- I. How the proposer expects to partner with Seattle Center to achieve the Seattle Center vision.

### Panel's Recommendation

**The Panel felt strongly that the Space Needle LLC's proposal to construct and operate an exhibit space, event pavilion and art garden featuring the work of glass artist Dale Chihuly, with free educational opportunities in cooperation with the Seattle School District, financing of the construction and operation of an art play space at Seattle Center and the other supplementary benefits described below best satisfied the criteria and would most benefit Seattle Center. Recognizing the opportunity to make multiple recommendations, the Panel elected to make the Space Needle LLC its sole recommendation.**

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<sup>1</sup> An additional criterion in the RFP (criterion E) did ask for consideration of "Proposed financial return to the City." The Panel elected to give this factor lesser weight than other potential contributions to Seattle Center because we recognize that there is no clear corollary between positive revenue generation and an increase in Seattle Center's budget. Put in other words, the Panel understands that profits generated on campus may simply result in lesser general fund contributions to the Center, resulting in no net benefit to Seattle Center. A city-wide budget analysis might give financial return to the City greater weight, but because the Panel was focused on benefit to Seattle Center, it approached this criteria with great caution. This aspect of the recommendation could change if Seattle Center were assured the ability to retain as supplemental funding any revenue generated by the successful proposal. The Panel strongly hopes that would be the case, but could not assume that in its analysis.

### Analysis:

The Chihuly Glass Exhibition proposal received considerable public comment. Although the majority of those comments offered positive support for the project, several concerns were also raised, which the Panel agreed required response from the proposer. In addition to the two threshold questions (demonstration that the project would be revenue neutral and organizationally ready) the Panel asked the Space Needle LLC to respond to a number of these expressed concerns. The full list of additional questions to the Space Needle LLC and all other proposers can be found in Appendix 4, Review Panel Meeting #3.

A strong majority of the Panel felt that the Space Needle LLC responded convincingly to these additional questions, strengthening the proposal's initial response to the RFP. The strongest assets we found in this proposal were:

#### Clear demonstration that the project would be at least revenue neutral to Seattle Center

- The Space Needle LLC proposes paying \$350,000/year in rent for years 1 -5 of occupancy and \$500,000/year for years 6 – 20. This is sufficient to assure that the project will be revenue neutral to Seattle Center from an operating perspective. Supporting data provided in the Space Needle LLC's response, including a feasibility study by ERA AECOM and indications of likely capital financing sources, provided satisfactory evidence that financing would be available both for capital improvements and to repay debt. The Panel was convinced that this project will result in no additional capital or operating costs to Seattle Center. Criteria D, G and H were satisfactorily met in this part of our review.

#### Organizational readiness

- The proposal clearly demonstrated the proposer's ability to obtain financing, to complete design and construction and to be available to the public in time for the 50th Anniversary celebration. The Space Needle LLC provided two comprehensive project schedules based on different decision dates by the City. Each schedule is inclusive of every stage of project design, permitting and construction required for completion by the 50th Anniversary.

#### Public benefit

- The Chihuly Glass Exhibition meets criterion A, contributing to the unique mix of Seattle Center programs, by bringing a visual arts experience to the campus. As pointed out several times during public comment, visual arts are not well represented at Seattle Center. The campus offers a rich variety of performing arts experience, with two music venues (and a number of music festivals), four theatres, ballet, opera and film, but the only visual arts offering is the limited experience provided by the Northwest Crafts Gallery.
- With respect to criterion C, the ability of the proposer to create and operate a high quality experience for visitors, the Panel was impressed by the updated design drawings supplied by the Space Needle LLC in their follow-up responses. These portrayed the dynamic and immersive visual arts experience the Exhibition would offer to its paid visitors and the non-paying public alike.
- The Panel was pleased with the inclusion of the public school partnership set forth in the proposal, including the detailed art and science curriculum and the free admission and

transportation to visit the Chihuly Glass Exhibition for all Seattle Public School students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. We felt this was an important element of the proposal and represented a substantial public benefit, per criterion F. The Panel also viewed as very beneficial the other community partnerships set forth in the proposal, such as weeklong exhibit opportunities for young emerging artists for students at Pratt Fine Arts Center and Pilchuck Glass School.

- Public comments in addition to the Panel’s own concern about perimeter fencing prompted us to ask the Space Needle LLC in our follow-up questions to describe how they intended to integrate the Exhibition into the Center grounds. The preliminary studies they provided demonstrated sensitivity to integrating the site and the glass art experience into Seattle Center. Preliminary studies show a visually permeable fence with attractive landscaping both within and outside the fencing. This provides the required level of security to the Exhibit’s outdoor glass installation while offering substantial visual access to the art and garden. These combine to enliven the experience of all Seattle Center visitors, whether they choose to enter the Exhibition or not. This is an important aspect of meeting criterion A.
- With respect to criterion I, partnering with Seattle Center to achieve the Seattle Center vision, the Panel recognized the substantial contribution by the Space Needle LLC in agreeing to invest \$1 million to fund an artist-designed playground “. . . that benefits the public and is available to everyone at all times and at no cost,” as well as \$50,000 per year to cover maintenance of that area. This helps Seattle Center develop a destination of active, free and low-cost family programming that will be especially attractive to neighborhood families with small children.
- With respect to criterion B, the Panel recognized that a number of public comments asserted that the Exhibition would conflict with the Century 21 Master Plan. Having been part of the group that created the Century 21 Master Plan, Panel members were well familiar with the overarching Planning and Design Principles of that document. We feel strongly that the Exhibition is compatible with these Principles, specifically the following:
  - Seattle Center should treasure its unique mix of programs, attractions and open spaces.
  - Long-term investments should enhance the Center’s ability to meet its mission, bringing people together to share our communal artistic, civic and cultural expressions.
  - The campus should be designed to draw people into the center of the grounds to discover attractions, and be exposed to new programs, people and activities.
  - Visitors should be encouraged to move through the campus through thoughtfully placed and inviting landscaping, outdoor dining and cafes, children’s play areas, water features, public art and dynamic signage.
  - Visual access into and through the campus should draw people to the center of the grounds.
  - The campus should provide programs, services and attractions for people of every age, background, heritage, culture and ability as well as for neighborhood residents and workers who may visit every day and for those who travel distances to get here.
  - Seattle Center should strive to enliven the campus throughout the hours of the

day and the days of the year, balancing out the peaks and valleys of programs and activities.

- Buildings, programs and landscaping all should work together to create a sense of excitement and discovery, attracting people to the Center and encouraging them to extend their stay.
- Artistic expression should be integrated into the design and construction of new campus facilities, and public art should be featured prominently, compatible with current and future campus uses.

The Panel was sensitive to concerns expressed around the issue of what different proposals would do to the amount of open space at Seattle Center. Accordingly, the Panel directed staff to prepare an analysis of the open space acreage at Seattle Center. This analysis showed that of the 75 acre campus, almost 44 acres are open space.

Recent projects recently implemented at Seattle Center related to open space include:

- Seattle Center Skatepark: Removal of a building and replacement with an active outdoor use including public art and garden plantings.
- Theatre Commons: Conversion of a paved parking lot to a green north entry and activity area.
- Development of the previously privately leased north area of the former Fun Forest into a public Center Square.
- Negotiation of an agreement with Seattle Public Schools to turn the Memorial Stadium and adjacent surface lot into green space and a play field/amphitheatre adding four acres of open, green space to the campus. The agreement awaits Council and School Board approval.

We considered the proposed use of this site in light of the overall Master Plan intentions, including with respect to open space, and found that the Space Needle LLC's proposed use is supportive of the overall development of Seattle Center in the manner contemplated by the Master Plan.

Among the proposal's weaknesses the Panel noted:

#### An institution dedicated to the work of a single artist

- In comment offered at our public meeting July 7 and subsequently in writing, a number of people expressed a concern about an institution at Seattle Center dedicated to the work of a single artist. The Panel asked the Space Needle LLC to address that concern in our follow-up questions. In their response they described activities which involve emerging artists and students from Pratt Fine Arts Center and Pilchuck Glass School. This response satisfied all but one Panel member, who expressed a continuing concern that an institution focused primarily on the work of a single artist is not compatible with Seattle Center's efforts to create a community of diversity and inclusiveness.

#### Fenced property

- Although understanding the need to secure the glass, the Panel wanted to stress the importance of visual accessibility to the outdoor exhibit. The preliminary studies included in the Space Needle LLC's response to our concerns demonstrated both a permeability to the fencing and visibility of the art through and rising above the fencing. The Panel believes that the details of the final design must be part of the lease

negotiations and the Seattle Design Commission review process, so as to ensure that visitors to Seattle Center are able to share the experience of the sculpture garden regardless of whether they pay for admission to the Exhibition.

#### Primarily for the tourist market

- The Panel was initially concerned with the projected tourist/local percentage attendance projections, which showed a projection that only 30% of the visitors would be local. This concern fell into somewhat different perspective, however, when the underlying numbers were evaluated. The Panel reviewed the “Attraction Feasibility Study” performed by ERA AECOM and summarized in the Space Needle LLC’s response to our question, and felt that their attendance projections were based on comparable facilities appropriately adjusted to represent the Seattle Market. The projected local attendance is 133,333 people, 30% of a total projected attendance of 400,000, which represents a substantially higher local visitor number than the next highest realistic local attendance projection. On that basis, the Chihuly Glass Exhibition will serve more local people than the alternatives. In addition, the Panel believes that the commitments of the proposer to ongoing efforts to attract the local market, including its school program and scholarships and partnership with Pratt Fine Arts and Pilchuck School of Glass is likely to increase the number of young people and their families who attend the Exhibition. Additional exposure to residents will come through local catered functions. These programs need to be incorporated in some form into the lease. As noted above, the Panel did not give substantial weight to projected positive revenue because there is no assurance that positive revenue will be retained by Seattle Center rather than offset by general fund cuts (although the Panel strongly recommends that Seattle Center be allowed to retain revenue without offsets). Nevertheless, the Panel would be remiss if we did not note that the Chihuly Glass Exhibition does project a net positive revenue in rent (in addition to contributions such as the children’s play area) of \$350,000 to \$500,000 per year, thus addressing criterion E.

#### **Recommendation Conclusion:**

The Panel concluded that the project’s contributions to Seattle Center and its visitors far outweigh its potential shortcomings. Further, the Panel determined that no other proposal was as successful in meeting the RFP criteria. Although at the beginning of our proceedings we agreed to the possibility of recommending more than one proposal, a substantial majority of the Panel felt strongly that the Chihuly Glass Exhibition should be the only recommendation and all of the panel members agreed that accordingly this report should be written with only one recommended proposal.

#### **Proposals meeting threshold criteria but not recommended:**

##### 1. KEXP Radio

- Although the panel put the KEXP Proposal in the “meets threshold criteria” category, it did so very cautiously and with reservations. KEXP’s financial information shows an incorporated non-profit organization with institutional support from the University of Washington. The proposal included a description of their efforts to secure bond financing to add to their existing cash reserve of \$1.8 million so as to pay for construction costs. KEXP has a growing donor base, including a number of major donors. They have no organizational history, however, of a capital fundraising campaign of the breadth this would entail.



- In their current location, it appears as if KEXP's rent payments are minimal and it is not clear that they would have the financial wherewithal to sustain the not-for-profit rent calculation that they included in their supplemental information. (The Panel did not analyze the soundness of that rent calculation, feeling that was more appropriately left to lease negotiations with Seattle Center were this proposal to be chosen.) Although that amount, which they propose at approximately \$80,000 only on the Arcade building arguably meets the revenue neutral threshold, it leaves the question to how the contiguous open space, which they claim to be part of the KEXP experience, would be financed and maintained. They offer a trade of free on-air advertising to supplement or offset rent, but the Panel noted that this offer supports a "revenue neutral" situation only if it replaces an expense currently within Seattle Center's budget, which it does not.
- The Proposal asserts that repeated on-air reference to their location will elevate the visibility of Seattle Center to a broad market. This seems to be the same market, however, that their free advertising would reach, and thus seems duplicative rather than additive as a benefit. In addition, their revenue projections seemed unrealistic. They project that every one of the visitors who come for a free performance will spend at Seattle Center (not at neighboring businesses or private parking facilities, for instance) either \$14.75 while here for in-studio sessions or \$19 while here for Mural concerts. This does not seem to be a realistic expectation for on-site expenditures, particularly for a younger audience member, or one that represents the 46% of KEXP's listeners who make less than \$50,000/year.
- In addition to skepticism expressed about the revenue projections, the major drawback found in this proposal is that the majority of the project is to be used as office space, with only a small part used to house the daily free performances (less than 2,000 of a 20,000 sq. ft. building is characterized as public space). The Panel felt that private office use of this central piece of the Seattle Center campus is not consistent with the principles of the Master Plan. They pointed to the other public media headquarters, that of KCTS-9, and noted that there is virtually no integration between their office and performance space and the rest of Seattle Center. The Panel was not comfortable recommending a proposal that could replicate that experience.
- With respect to the second threshold criteria, organizational readiness, KEXP is far more ready than most of the proposals. It was pointed out that they have been in discussion with Seattle Center for several years about the possibility of moving their headquarters to the campus. The Panel noted the level of program development and design included in their proposal as evidence of their preparation.
- The Panel felt that KEXP did not adequately address the logistical requirements of producing 500 – 700 concerts each year including the loading and unloading of equipment to a space in the center of the campus with no direct street access.
- Turning to the other criteria, the Panel noted positively that KEXP is likely to draw a younger demographic to Seattle Center and add to the unique mix at Seattle Center (criterion A). While several aspects of the Center focus on this demographic (including the VERA project and EMP), strategic planning discussions have identified a need for further work in this area.

- KEXP is currently a valued programming partner with Seattle Center, producing the very successful summer Concerts at the Mural series and barbeque, and under this proposal they could expect to enhance their value, per criteria F and I.
- Although the Panel finds that the South Fun Forest is not the appropriate place for KEXP, we agree that the addition of KEXP as a resident organization on the campus would be a positive addition and we support the idea of exploring alternate locations on the campus for KEXP. We also encourage promoting more Mural concerts and creating a space where visitors can watch studio performances on campus. Although not in the scope of our work, we encourage Seattle Center and the City to continue their conversations with KEXP to determine whether a different space or spaces on campus might be available for the uses they propose and their logistical requirements.

## 2. Fun Forest

- Extending the lease on the current Fun Forest Kiddie rides meets the threshold criteria: they are organizationally ready to be in place for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and they generate enough revenue to cover their capital and operating expenses, especially now that they have sold off their more expensive rides. As a “pay for use” proposition, their proposal would also generate positive revenue for the City of Seattle. They meet criteria D, E and H.
- On the negative side, the Panel recognized that continuation of the Fun Forest means continuation of a paved landscape with no architectural improvements to the Arcade building to integrate it into the campus. Further, the outdoor rides are an activity open only during warm, dry weather. This is contrary to the intent of the Master Plan, and thus criterion B, which calls for spaces “. . . to enliven the campus throughout the hours of the day and the days of the year.”
- Extending the current Fun Forest lease is essentially a form of “No Action Alternative.” If no alternative proposal had come forward that would provide substantial benefit to Seattle Center, the Panel would have considered this No Action Alternative in spite of its drawbacks. There being, however, a very strong proposal that is not likely to survive extended delay, the Panel does not recommend No Action.
- Given the schedule for development of the South Fun Forest site, it may be possible to extend the Fun Forest through the summer of 2011, giving Seattle Center much needed revenue in 2011. If this can be done without impacting the construction schedule for the successful proposer, the Panel sees this as a positive opportunity.

### **Analysis of proposals not meeting the threshold criteria:**

The Panel determined that five of the proposals did not meet the threshold criteria of being revenue neutral and organizationally ready for the reasons below:

#### 1. Museum of Mysteries

- The Panel felt that this proposal did not demonstrate its ability to participate in a long-term leasing arrangement with substantial capital investment. This proposer provided no additional information beyond the initial RFP response to demonstrate clearly its ability to finance and operate a project that would be revenue neutral to Seattle Center. The

proposer could not demonstrate any experience raising funds at a level close to what would be required to construct this project. Their previous experience entailed raising \$10,000 – \$20,000 in a year. They provide no detail on their capital budget, suggesting “final costs (are) now at \$700,000.”

- The Panel felt that the proposer’s operational cost and revenue projections were unrealistic. With no organizational experience constructing or operating a restaurant, they project netting \$2.5 million in their first year from this source. Citing data from the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, they predict their number of annual guests to be 500,000. They provide no supporting data that suggest this number is an accurate predictor of this program in this market. The proposers predict all of these half million guests will pay the full entry fee, although discounted fares are available, raising \$2.5 million, and 25,000 more families will become members at \$25, generating an additional \$625,000. From the description of the program offered, the Panel thought this was an unrealistic attendance expectation. This is particularly problematic given that the proposers base their rent payment on 20% of admissions.

## 2. Northwest Native Cultural Center

- The Panel concurred with the proposer’s assertion that there should be greater representation of “Seattle’s heritage and Native people from whom its name comes” at Seattle Center. There are many good ideas in the proposal and the responses to the follow-up questions demonstrated an additional level of detail about design and operational costs, but we felt that this proposal did not demonstrate its ability to participate in a long-term leasing arrangement with substantial capital investment. Although there are noteworthy individuals supporting this proposal, there is no organization incorporated and overseen by a board of directors in place that can demonstrate a track record of raising the money necessary to complete this project on time. This absence of an existing organization also raises concerns about the lack of operational experience and curatorial track record required to make an institution like this successful. The Panel noted that the proposer expects that it would not pay rent and that its utility expenses would be paid by Seattle Center, thus making it doubtful the project could be revenue neutral.
- The Panel felt that expense projections for construction (\$3.6 million for both the Arcade building and the adjacent open space) was unlikely to create the quality experience required to sustain attendance.
- On the revenue side, while it describes itself as free to the public, it assumes a revenue stream from membership dues and public programs, which seems inconsistent.
- On the positive side, the proposer expressed an interest in developing a Cedar and Salmon Festival in conjunction with the World’s Fair Anniversary including “exhibitions and demonstrations with references to the original Century 21 exposition.” The Panel recommends that Seattle Center pursue this idea further and also include in long-term planning considerations the need to have a greater recognition of Native American history and contributions in campus programming and design elements.

## 3. Friends of the Green (FROG)

- The Panel found that the Proposer provided no information beyond its initial RFP response that could provide empirical data on capital or operating financing or

organizational readiness. Funding sources were deemed by the Panel to be unrealistic (e.g. Conservancy – not clear how or if this would be different than Seattle Center Foundation which already exists as a non-profit to support programs and open spaces at Seattle Center) or even perhaps inconsistent with City law (e.g. using Parks levy funds to support a non-Parks project). While the proposers declared that their project is revenue neutral, they provided no data to substantiate this claim. Although there are noteworthy individuals supporting this proposal, there is no organization incorporated and overseen by a board of directors in place that can demonstrate a track record of raising the money necessary to complete this project on time nor of successfully operating the space once built. Rather, FROG describes itself as a “midwife” that could help bring its idea to fruition while not accepting responsibility for the implementation of the project. With no city funding to implement the proposal and with any city money being needed for the much higher priority Memorial Stadium project, there is simply no assurance that under this proposal the area would do anything but languish as a paved eyesore.

- While the Panel recognizes that a green space here is what was originally contemplated in the conceptual drawings and description that accompanied the Century 21 Master Plan, we noted that the Century 21 Committee made clear in the development of the Master Plan that “New ideas and opportunities, which can’t be imagined or planned for now, are likely to be presented to Seattle Center sometime in the years ahead.” Most important, the key is not whether a particular area’s design complies with the initial design drawings, but rather whether the ultimate development adheres to the Planning and Design Principles set out in the Master Plan document.

#### 4. Open Platform

- The Panel finds that this proposal included creative ideas but didn’t supply realistic data to demonstrate that it could be revenue neutral. Adding 4Culture as their fiscal agent is a useful development, but Panel members pointed out that 4Culture has its own financial problems and can’t be relied on as a source of funds.
- The proposers suggest a very ambitious level of programming: five events, growing to 25 events every week; and attendance of an average of 100 people per event. Projecting this level of outdoor programming throughout the dark and wet seasons that Seattle has to offer does not appear reasonable and is not consistent with Seattle Center’s experience in trying to attract and support similar types of events. Further, their revenue projections suggest that every one of these 100 people will spend \$25 at Seattle Center when they come here for a free performance. They arrive at this per capita number citing the “Economic Impact of Nonprofit Arts and Culture Organizations and Their Audiences in the City of Seattle”. It’s not clear that this data is applicable to the types of performances and activities proposed by the Open Platform group. For instance, within the \$25 per person is included almost \$12 for meals and refreshments; \$3.40 for souvenirs and gifts; and \$3.92 for overnight lodging. These did not appear to the Panel to be realistic assumptions.
- The proposers don’t acknowledge that the types of programs they suggest for this space are similar, if not duplicative, of the programs Seattle Center already produces through its Public Programming office.

- On the positive side, the Panel acknowledged the group of individuals behind this proposal represented a good skill set with exciting ideas. Although beyond the scope of this RFP, the Panel recommends to Seattle Center that they consider discussing programming for the North Fun Forest area with the Open Platform Group and that Seattle Center also contact the Open Platform Group when the Memorial Stadium project is financed. In addition, there may well be opportunities for artists and design professionals, such as those who represent Open Platform, to contribute to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary programming.

#### 5. Seattle Center Foundation

- Their proposal includes only Area C, the kiosk space, and just for the interim period 2010 -2012 through the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The proposers have demonstrated their ability to run a storefront gallery and retail shop in Center House since April 2010, and previously from 1997 – 2003, but their responses provided insufficient data to demonstrate that their capital and operations would be revenue neutral. They could be a great back-up plan if any proposer should not want Area C, but the Panel agreed that their proposal was on the whole non-responsive and too small and specific to fit the needs outlined in this RFP.

#### 6. Paul Kragt

- Paul Kragt submitted a response to the RFP as an individual. He included many interesting points about the importance of integrating the Fun Forest site into the Seattle Center campus, and urged Seattle Center not to enter into a long-term lease with any new tenant. He did not include any financial data and did not respond to the follow-up questions, so the Panel determined him to be non-responsive, though we greatly appreciate the amount of energy and thoughtfulness this individual applied to Seattle Center.

#### **Summary of recommendations to Seattle Center outside the scope of the RFP evaluation:**

- The Panel encourages Seattle Center to continue their conversations with KEXP to determine whether a different space or spaces on campus might be compatible with the Master Plan Design Principles and more appropriate for the uses they propose and their logistical requirements.
- The Panel is interested in seeing Seattle Center pursue the idea of a ‘Cedar and Salmon Festival’ in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1962 World’s Fair, including “exhibitions and demonstrations with references to the original Century 21 exposition.”
- The Panel recommends that Seattle Center consider contacting the Open Platform Group both with respect to the North Fun Forest and when the Memorial Stadium project is financed and also in conjunction with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.
- The Panel supports a temporary extension of the Fun Forest through 2011, and the possible temporary use of Site C by the Seattle Center Foundation, provided this use or uses does not interfere with the permanent redevelopment of the site as outlined in the RFP.
- The Panel urges the City to allow Seattle Center to retain earnings from new programs as new revenue without general fund offsets. This can encourage a greater element of entrepreneurialism by Center staff and enhance the overall vibrancy of the campus.

- The biggest, most transformational element of the Century 21 Master Plan still lies ahead, and that is the acquisition and redevelopment of the Memorial Stadium site. After many years of negotiations with the Seattle School District, Seattle Center has arrived at an agreement that can allow this property to be used for maximum public benefit. The additional four acres of green space extending from the International Fountain to the realigned field can be used by the public year-round and the field itself can be programmed for Seattle Center except for school-year game times. The proposed amphitheater creates a wonderful concert venue, and the opening of the perimeter of Seattle Center to Fifth Avenue and the new Gates Foundation campus creates the visual and physical connections that the Century 21 Committee identified as critical. The Panel enthusiastically urges the Mayor and Council take this long-awaited opportunity and make it a reality.

## **In Closing**

This process was an extraordinary demonstration of the depth of feeling and commitment this community has to Seattle Center as well as the breadth of creative ideas that exist for Seattle Center's future.

The Panel's work to evaluate the merit of these new ideas was guided by the Master Plan Principles and by the criteria set forward in Seattle Center's RFP. These documents, in combination with prolific public comment, drove our discussions and ultimately our recommendation. We feel that our process provided significant opportunities for responders to clarify how their proposals met the RFP criteria, offered the public full opportunity to comment on their priorities for development of this space and offered Panel members the opportunity to draw from their extensive experience in developing the Century 21 Master Plan.

Throughout this process we were mindful of the words that introduced the Planning and Design Principles in the Master Plan: "New ideas and opportunities, which can't be imagined or planned for now, are likely to be presented to Seattle Center sometime in the years ahead. The Planning and Design Principles, as well as the specific Master Plan map, will work together as the critical tools with which to evaluate the merit of these new ideas." Indeed, as one Panel member pointed out, "The number of inventive ideas that have come from this RFP is a good example of how a master plan can evolve. At Seattle Center, new ideas are constantly generated."

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Background and Timeline
- Appendix 2 - Fun Forest S RFP & Addendum
- Appendix 3 - Public Comment
- Appendix 4 - Review Panel Meetings
  - Review Panel Meeting #1
  - Review Panel Meeting #2
    - Questions to Proposers
  - Review Panel Meeting #3
    - Proposers Responses
  - Review Panel Meeting #4
    - Review Panel Final Report
- Appendix 5 - Seattle Center C21 Master Plan