

S 200th Area Artist Village Proposal

March 10th, 2013

For the past year I've been formulating a plan to develop a non-profit tourist attracting venue in the area near the planned Angle Lake Light Rail Station. I've discussed this with city and regional officials and received positive feedback. This plan has changed over time (all in my head) but I believe it has become a viable, dynamic proposal that could serve as a destination venue that would bring a focus of economic vitality and visitors to this Seatac neighborhood. I think that we could draw a group of large format artists to the area, people and partnerships creating large, outdoor sculptural works.

I hope that the development will have 2 components. The first would be to develop an artist village cooperative on a yet undetermined parcel of land near the station. Many area sites could be adequate. Hopefully we will attract artists specializing in large, outdoor sculptural and abstract works. I recently served on a Sound Transit commission that picked an artist to install large-form art at the Angle Lake Station. This gave me an opportunity to meet and talk with many people dedicated to this kind of work.

Why would these folks want to come to Seatac and work here? I envision the core of the village as a large shop building containing specialized equipment suitable for fabricating in many materials. There would be sheet metal forming tooling, machining tools, welding equipment, woodworking tools, cranes, forklifts, etc. This tooling is expensive for individuals to purchase but at the village it could be shared by many artists, allowing them freedom to create pieces they could not make in a basic studio. I believe also that the concentration of creative minds could spur collaboration and inspiration not possible in separate workspaces. Each artist would have separate studio space, possibly in rooms surrounding the shop, possibly in separate buildings on site. This would depend on the site layout and could work well either way. Also, the stereotypical artist is often drawn to areas where living costs are low. Seatac has many neighborhoods of modest, lower cost housing that should be attractive to many artistic types. Who knows, we may become the next Fremont or Georgetown. If they wanted to live in Seattle and work here they could just hop the train.

I believe that there should also be space for interested area residents to do their own creative work with the shop space, renting a studio for their own budding ideas. It could almost be like joining a health club except that you wouldn't have to sweat as much. Sculpt art, not your body. I would hope that space was available at the edges of the site for display of some works in progress as well as some finished pieces, bringing visual interest to the village area. Also, tours of studios could be a draw, focusing on artists creating their crafts. With a concentration

of sculptural studios this site could be a unique, vibrant, visual incubator for new as well as established sculptural artists. I have yet to find a similar project in the country that brings this type of focus to large form artists. Most work in their own studios and, while many are successful, they are known only to those with an active interest in sculptural work. This venue could bring them recognition with a broader group of people.

The second component of this concept is to start a major display space for this style of artwork. It would be a public sculpture garden. I believe the city owned Hugh's property, just south of Angle Lake Park, would be ideal for this purpose. It would become an instant tourist attraction. The proximity to the light rail station would allow people from the city to ride south to see this new installation and to experience our town. People staying in area hotels would actually have somewhere to visit in town that was interesting. As the garden becomes popular, restaurants, cafes and maybe a bar or coffee shop may find increased reason to set up shop. It could be the center of vitality in what is frankly a rather dull city.

While I call this venue a sculpture garden, it would actually be dual purpose. I envision this to be an art gallery as well, an outdoor art gallery. The displayed works would also be for sale, and would become a major revenue source for the artists as well as generate commissions for the village entity. Pieces would not be on permanent display like they are at the Seattle Art Museum Sculpture Garden. They would rotate in and out, providing a changing view that should allow continuing interest. I would like to display works from village artists as well as pieces from other established large form artists. Most artists working on this scale now do their work when commissioned by public and private entities for specific pieces or projects. I do not know of a gallery anywhere that focuses on displaying large pieces for sale. It would almost be like creating a new business model for these artists and their admirers. If this concept works, I also think it ideal to be located near a major airport. Interested buyers could fly in, stay at one of our local hotels and view multiple, available sculptural works for sale.

I hope to create a more detailed version of this proposal soon. While there are 3 years before the new rail station opens I think this project could be developed and sited sooner than that. I plan to bring this concept before the hotel / motel commission and explore the possibility of obtaining seed money for the village as a tourist related venture. I believe this type of project fits well within the parameters necessary for hotel / motel tax support. I also welcome comments from anyone with insight on how to help make this venue a success. I'm an optimist but I firmly believe this project could put Seatac on the map.

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