



A landscape architecture firm led the design for a decades-long endeavor to transform a Superfund site on Tacoma's waterfront into a multi-layered recreational space that celebrates both its industrial past and the region's natural history.





The project site was home to the ASARCO copper smelter for over 70 years, and the community saw its 571-foot smokestack as a symbol for jobs and an ominous source of widespread pollution.





The ambitious 46-acre waterfront redevelopment is a major expansion of the historic, 760-acre Point Defiance Park and includes a pedestrian bridge that provides a long-missing link to the Downtown-to-Defiance multi-modal trail.





The heart of the project is an 11-acre park built over the man-made peninsula that was formed by the gradual accretion of slag routinely dumped by the smelter into Puget Sound day after day for decades.





With an emphasis on flexibility and inclusion, the site design integrates a variety of gathering areas, art installations, and paths for strolling, jogging and cycling, all while enjoying the breathtaking natural beauty of the region.





The park features three sculpted landforms that frame panoramic views of Mt. Rainier, Vashon Island and Puget Sound—shaping the visitor experience. The landforms, referred to as “sail mounds”, are built up with contaminated fill and capped with clean soil.





The peninsula design concept was framed around the process of accretion that originally formed the landmass. The idea shaped a design methodology and language that appears throughout the park in custom furnishings, art pieces, and the sail mounds.





The design captures the site's *genus loci*, or "spirit of place," by revealing its dramatic relationship to the natural world through the human processes that created it. Engaging details like the slag kettle above connect visitors to this story.





A feature sculpture by the project artist uses steel pipe arranged in a series of increasingly smaller pieces to reference the disintegration of the iconic smokestack that once towered over the site.





The development is animated with curiosities that inspire exploration and unstructured play including this intimate overlook space where kids can climb a giant boulder, scramble on a log jam, and watch eagles land on raptor snags.





A 550-foot pedestrian bridge—designed by the landscape architect—connects the broader Point Defiance Park to the redeveloped waterfront, serving as a critical missing link in the long-planned, Downtown-to-Defiance multi-modal trail.





The elegant, minimalist design remains visually light over the landscape, while providing a rich experience from the center of the bridge, a “moment” of pause perched out around the bluff with views to the peninsula and Mt. Rainier





At the crest of the bluff where the pedestrian bridge lands, a grand staircase connects to the marina parking lot below and includes a network of slides playfully integrated into the 60-foot hill climb—a real-life Chutes & Ladders.





At the north end of the peninsula park, the sail mound slope and an open lawn forms an amphitheater associated with a concrete stage that supports multi-use, outdoor events capable of hosting up to 2,000 people.





Heralding a new beginning for the peninsula, native prairie blankets the sail mound slopes, providing valuable urban habitat, along with educational opportunities to support conservation and approaches to low-maintenance public landscapes.