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## Team selected for conceptual design of Melrose Promenade on Capitol Hill

▪ *'Melrose Promenade already exists as an idea in people's minds, and little by little we're building it.'*

By LYNN PORTER  
Journal Staff Reporter

A group that wants to create a promenade along Melrose Avenue on the west side of Capitol Hill has hired a team to come up with a conceptual plan.

The team is Berger Partnership, Weinstein A|U Architects + Urban Designers, and Schemata Workshop.

The project involves improving about a mile of Melrose between Pike and East Roy streets that has great views of the city, perhaps by adding wider sidewalks, seating, lighting, art and landscaping. The promenade would continue north through Bellevue Place Park to Lakeview Boulevard East.

"I think it would change perceptions about really an underutilized area, making it more of a destination and a place rather than a place that gets passed through," said Jonathan Morley, a principal with Berger Partnership.

There are many facets to the project — urban streetscape, gathering spaces, parks and a retail area. "It's hard to put it in one box," he said.

The promenade, the popular Melrose Market and the Pike/Pine commercial district would all energize each other, he said. The promenade also would function as an urban trail, since Melrose is one of the flattest options for walking and biking from Lakeview Boulevard to Pike/Pine.

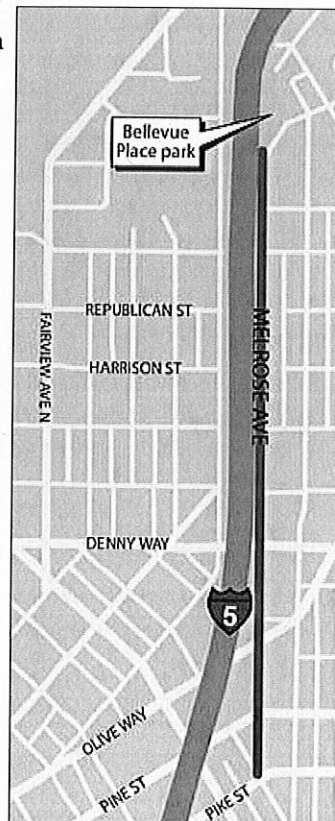
However, Melrose Avenue overlooks noisy Interstate 5. Morley said gathering spaces could be located toward the east side of the street, cutting some of the noise and placing more emphasis on the distant views. Also, some surfaces could be softened and vegetation added.

The project is the brainchild of Mike Kent, an urban planner and transplant from the East Coast, who now works as a project manager for Pastakia + Associates, a consultant to real estate developers.

Kent said he was taken with the dazzling views of downtown, the Space Needle, the Olympics, Queen Anne and Lake Union that he saw while jogging along Melrose Avenue from his home nearby.

Inspired, Kent got the idea of putting a promenade on Melrose, creating a "front porch" for Capitol Hill and connecting to neighborhoods on the north and south.

The project has become a community effort, with a website at [melrosepromenade.com](http://melrosepromenade.com). A \$20,000 city grant is paying for the consultants, who have until next spring to develop a conceptual plan based on community input.



Backers of the project would also like to improve some adjoining spaces, such as the grassy hillside north of Roy owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation, upgrade old staircases that provide pedestrian links to Melrose at East Republican and Harrison streets, and fix up the Melrose Connector Trail, which runs from Roy through the park to Lakeview, and is used by pedestrians and bicyclists.

Melrose Promenade supporters are seeking \$750,000 through the Opportunity Fund and another \$750,000 through Bridging the Gap, both run by the city. The group also is accepting donations through Seattle Parks Foundation.

Kent said the group should know in mid-2013 if it will get that funding.

He said he expects the promenade to cost at least \$1.5 million, but it could be built in phases.

"It's not like we need \$1.5 million or \$2 million in one fell swoop to make the project happen," he said.

The neighborhood already has held events, including work parties to clean up Melrose Avenue and open spaces to the north, and to remove invasive plants.

"Melrose Promenade already exists as an idea in people's minds, and I think that's as important as anything," he said, "and little by little we're building it."

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