

FROM DISTRIBUTION YARD TO PLAY YARD

BEFORE THE PARK Jay Turner 3/15/2002

Our North Slope Historic District Park is located on a property that Tacoma City Light obtained in Nov., 1951. Tacoma City Light purchased a vacant lot for a “Distribution Yard”; the city was growing and needed more electrical capacity. A photograph taken in November, 1953, shows transformers with connecting power lines indicating that the “yard” was ready for service.

The term, “Distribution Yard” gave way to “Substation” and the K St. Substation remained in active service until late 1983, according to information obtained from Tacoma Power. When the method of power distribution changed and the K St. Substation was decommissioned, it sat vacant for years with the transformers still in place, but disconnected. After removing all the power equipment, the lot was still left vacant, on purpose, giving Tacoma City Light time to verify that the land was not contaminated and could be put to other use.

The local residents noted that Tacoma Power (the new name, since 1989, for Tacoma City Light) had a vacant lot and wondered what would become of it. There were many discussions on a method, any method, that would prevent another huge apartment complex from being built in the middle of our Historic District. It was Kelly Halligan who suggested a “Pocket Park”. That sounded like an excellent idea, but no one could figure out a way to purchase the property. Thea Foss bond money became the solution and source of funds for the purchase of the park.

At last, on July 26, 2000, Tacoma Power approved the sale of the property for \$30,000. According to Curtis Hancock of MetroParks, the City of Tacoma became the owner of the property in April, 2001. With the city owning the land, and an agreement that MetroParks would maintain the park, our North Slope Historic District Park was built these last few months.