



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Raymond Gastil
Planning Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

Lauren Hauck

John Hoffman

Julie Parrett

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

September 3, 2009

Convened 9:30 am
Adjourned 3:00 pm

Projects Reviewed

Public Spaces – Public Life Study
Sand Point Magnuson Park
Maynard and Lane Green Streets
Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements Phase II

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
Lauren Hauck
John Hoffman
Julie Parrett
Norie Sato

Commissioners Excused

Dennis Ryan

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Jeff Arango



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Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



September 3, 2009 Project: Public Spaces Public Life Study

Phase: Briefing
Last Reviewed: N/A
Presenters: Robert Scully, DPD

Attendees: Diane Kincaid, Seattle Parks Board
Rachel Miller, UW College of Built Environments
A.J. Yang, UW College of Built Environments

Time: 1 hour

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ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Robert Scully for his presentation on the Public Spaces Public Life Study that was recently completed by Gehl Architects. The Commission has the following recommendations on how to followup on the study:

- Continue to follow a holistic approach to urban design.
- Reinforce the unique identity of Seattle's downtown, including its retail core, west waterfront edge, and Pioneer Square to the south.
- Create an inviting downtown, providing good connections between public spaces.
- Reinforce King Street Station as a public space.
- Increase the legibility of downtown with a clearer hierarchy of streets and their functions.
- Draw on the vibrancy of downtown that can currently be found on the waterfront, along 3rd Avenue and in the office and retail core.
- Focus planning in the wake of the Public Spaces Public Life Study on making downtown a dynamic place.

Presentation

Consultant for the project is Gehl Architects and Helle Soholt, Founding Partner and Managing Director.

Cognitive basis of Gehl Architects

The human is a walking being, with a ground speed of 3 mph. Average eye height is 5'7". People need a lot of stimulus; 1,000 stimulus events per hour or 1 per every 4 seconds. Human senses are a necessary planning consideration. Most cities have a design for 50km/hr, lack of human scale and details for people. Design for people at 3 km/hr, human scale, many details, and interactions among people. We need diversity, flexibility, proximity and human scale.

Qualitative measures or the less quantifiable aspects of place are important considerations. Aesthetics and design are not the only things that matter.

Goals

- Illustrate a way to have people in the centre of planning
- Offer inspiration
- Illustrate good examples and international best practice

Task

- Data collection and people survey



Important Elements of Public Life

- Identify overall potentials and challenges
- Illustrate potential visions and directions

Downtown Seattle has great potential for an improved public realm. The street grid is conducive to walking and there is a diverse population.

Two surveys were completed as part of the study. One of the surveys was completed by 50 University of Washington (UW) students that involved interviews of people downtown. The analysis included pedestrian movement and concluded there is a wide range of pedestrian activity in the downtown area on any given day or street.

Another part of the analysis was comparing Pine Street and 1st Ave. with similar streets in other streets cities. 1st Ave. and Pine, while they carry high pedestrian volumes compared to other Seattle streets, have quite a bit lower volume than heavily traveled streets in other cities.

Significant Patterns

- Pike Place Market is a popular destination.
- 1st Ave is the busiest of the numbered streets, busiest Ave. during summer, 3rd Ave. busy during the week, less busy on weekends.
- Stationary activities, Pike Place Market and Post Alley, many people standing, Westlake Park, many recreational activities, Victor Steinbrueck Park, people use every square foot.
- There is very little physical activity in downtown public places, hardly any children playing.
- Pedestrian Network, 75% are willing to walk more than 9 blocks.
- There are generally not good connections between public spaces for the most part.
- Street frontages – Blank walls were noted and their low stimulus for walkers.
- Access to downtown – inhibited by I-5 and the viaduct, need better connections to the waterfront.

Six Challenges

- Disconnected waterfront
- Weak public life patterns
- Minimal open space identity
- Unbalanced traffic system
- Office focused downtown
- Fragile urban culture

Potentials

- Fantastic setting
- Downtown placed in the center
- Distinct surrounding neighborhoods
- Fine base for walking
- Active during work hours
- Great coffee culture

Recommendations

- The need for a holistic approach to urban design
- Upgrade waterfront – waterfront city
- Links between downtown and waterfront
- East-west streets as green connectors

- Alleys as green lungs
- Green roofs and walls
- Stormwater filtration and recycling
- “The unique downtown”
- Three neighborhood-like districts: retail core, West Edge, Pioneer Square
- Identify hearts for each district
- The inviting downtown
- Public space network that links spaces, parks and open spaces
- The legible downtown
- First Avenue – a great “main street”
- The dynamic downtown

Commissioners’ Comments and Questions

In terms of application, where do we go from here?

We are trying to develop some small projects that are tied to the recommendations of the study.

How much did this study pay attention to other social services in our city?

It did not take that into consideration. It is a major gap in this study and I believe urban design needs to take this into consideration.

Many of the ideas are commercial in nature and will require the cooperation of the private sector.

I think that engagement from the private sector is always a challenge in these types of situations. Some of the good projects we have in town are predominantly private. City owned property will provide the best opportunity for a “quick win”.

I am interested in the idea of green alleys since they are city owned. Post Alley in Pioneer Square for example, issued and need to be used by trucks, but the truck traffic is not constant. It seems to me to be an opportunity.

Perhaps the commission could weigh in on one or two ideas from the report that we feel would be a good use of funds when they become available.

King Street improvements have been on the city’s work plan for several years now and it is an important project.

To me the presentation reminds me of projects like Bell Street and removing the viaduct. There are scattered improvements at various stages and there is a need to tie them together.

Perhaps the study could be used as an evaluation tool for current and past projects. The plan should get as much exposure as possible.

Is there an inventory of the physical features of each street in the downtown?

No, we have not gone to that level of detail in our planning efforts; it is usually done in the context of a specific street project.

Since we do not have the funds for large-scale public parks projects, instead the urban design strategy will be a network of open spaces.

One of the things I think about is the lack of hierarchy in terms of the street network. It seems like the goal is to have each street meet the goals of the plan and that seems to be too homogeneous. For example, Bell Street is going to be great, but every street cannot be Bell Street.

Maybe a way to identify key spots for connections and improvements is to have a key person in DPD that can pre-identify these spots and reach out to the development community.

September 3, 2009 **Project:** **Warren G. Magnuson Park and Sand Point Historic District Master Planning**

Phase: Briefing – Project Update
Last Reviewed: December 7, 2006
Presenters: Kevin Bergsrud, Senior Planning and Development Specialist, Partnership Unit, Seattle Parks
 Rebecca Salinas, Manager, Partnership Unit, Seattle Parks

Attendees: Diane Kincaid, Seattle Parks Board
 Rachel Miller, UW College of Built Environments
 A.J. Yang, UW College of Built Environments

Time: 1 hour

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ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Kevin Bergsrud for his update on Warren G. Magnuson Park and Sand Point Historic District Master Planning. The Design Commission expressed its support of the progress that is being made at the park and the historic district, and its understanding of the challenges involved at such a complex site. The Commission unanimously approves the direction of the work that is going on at the site and has the following recommendations:

- Encourage the provision of interpretive visitor information such as maps, signage, and perhaps a visitor’s information center or kiosk.
- Consider a ballot measure to fund renovation of buildings that the community values and would like to preserve, but where currently no funding is available.
- Pursue food vending possibilities to serve the needs of the many users of the site and to create a more complete mix of uses.
- Finding replacement space for artists’ space that could be lost with the redevelopment of Building 11 should remain a priority.
- Partner with the U.S. Navy on historic preservation efforts, enhancing the cultural richness of the site and the neighborhood. Continue to keep abreast of solutions that are being found in other cities in this regard.
- Discuss with NOAA the possibilities and importance of making the artwork on their site more accessible and well maintained.

Presentation

Overview of the history of Warren G. Magnuson Park

Two districts regulate land use and historic preservation. Sand Point Overlay District, regulates land use within the Sand Point Historic District and the western portion of Magnuson Park. It was created in 1997 and amended in 2008. Key land use standards: no new structures over 35 feet in height, no commercial signs allowed or internally lighted signs. 200 housing units limited in the Lowrise 3 zone, excluding University of Washington housing.

Amendments in 2008 allow more flexibility for existing non-conforming buildings, particularly for rooftop mechanical equipment. General retail sales are allowed, but limited to 6,000 sf per store.

The Sand Point Historic Properties Reuse and Protection Plan was approved in 1998. Since this plan was implemented 50 projects have been reviewed for their impacts to the historic district. This included 14 building projects, 4 landscape features and 1 master plan.

Current redevelopment projects, Sand Point Historic District – North.

- Building 11 LLC – Mixed use recreation – Mixed-use project consisting of retail, office and food
- Arena Sports – indoor participant sports – Indoor soccer, Indoor Hockey, Indoor basketball and a health club
- The Mountaineers Headquarters, completed in 2008 – includes a major outdoor climbing wall
- UW – Seattle Children’s – Building 25 pediatric dentistry

Current redevelopment projects, Sand Point Historic District – South.

- Seattle Court Sports Unlimited/Sand Point Tennis Center
- Seattle Office of Housing & University of Washington – Building 9 workforce housing
- Solid Ground – Site B low income and transitional homeless housing
- Seattle Parks - Phase 2 wetlands athletic fields project, completed in 2009
- Seattle Parks - NE 65th Street trail improvements

Future Projects

- Listing on the National Register of Historic Places, Sand Point Historic District
- Sign code amendment – create sign standards for the Sand Point Overlay District. Both Magnuson Park and the Historic District is difficult to navigate for those that are unfamiliar with the property, better wayfinding is needed and a plan was developed in 2004.
- North park access via NOAA Access Road (NE 80th Street alignment)
- Creation of Magnuson Park Advisory Committee

Commissioners’ Comments and Questions

Has there been any thought to converting one of the small buildings into an information or interpretive center?

Early on (mid-1990’s) there was discussion of developing a museum on-site.

You mentioned at the beginning of the presentation that many historic buildings have been considered for redevelopment projects. Does the ability of the tax incentives help with adaptive reuse?

Yes, it could provide financial help for proposed projects. Redevelopment costs are high as the Navy deferred building maintenance for many years prior to transferring them to city and UW ownership.

In a previous presentation, Magnuson was slated for a regional skate park. What is the status of that proposal?

Yes, it was identified in the Skate Park Master Plan, but funding has not been allocated.

I think it is great that you are thinking about food on-site. In terms of the location of Building 11, it used to have art studios, but I am not sure if it still does. In terms of the Park, it seems like food would be better in a more central location, are there no other options?

The tennis center, which is in the center of the park, does have concessions as part of their plan.

Is the plan to turn the upper floor of Building 11 to market rate office space rather than the current short-term artist space that’s being rented now?

Yes. The concept of developing market rate office space is to fund or subsidize spaces for recreation related uses.

One of the frustrations I have with facilities planning is that there is no public benefit of preserving buildings on restricted access property.

Has there been any discussion about getting public access to the art on the NOAA property?

Yes, there have been discussions, but there has not been any increase in access. The larger issue is that NOAA has not been maintaining the art.

September 3, 2009 **Project:** **Commission Business**

Phase: N/A

Last Reviewed: N/A

Presenters: N/A

Time: .5 hour

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DISCUSSION

- Commission will give out five design awards and visit a short list of sites prior to final voting. There will be a new award for an individual or firm that has distinguished with contributing to Seattle's built environment.
- Viaduct sub-committee will meet on September 24, 2009.
- Children's Hospital design guidelines subcommittee will meet on Sept 24th after the Viaduct meeting.
- By unanimous vote, Brendan Connolly was re-elected as Vice Chair of the Design Commission.
- Dennis Ryan needs to be replaced on the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAC).
- Mary Johnston was re-elected as Chair of the Design Commission via email vote during the week of August 3, 2009.
- No minutes were approved at this meeting.

September 3, 2009 **Project:** **Maynard and Lane Green Streets**

Phase: Pre-Design
Last Reviewed: N/A
Presenters: Robert Scully, DPD
 Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
 Rebecca Frestedt, DON
 Marc Stiles, Daily Journal of Commerce
 A.J. Yang, UW College of Built Environments
 Rachel Miller, UW College of Built Environments

Time: 1 hour

(121)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanked Robert Scully and Geoff Wentlandt of DPD for their presentation of the very early ideas for S Maynard Street and S Lane Street, and were glad to be able to provide some thoughts at this preliminary stage in design. The Commission has the following recommendations:

- Seize the opportunity and really plan for people and not just cars. Provide more space for walking, biking and placemaking.
- Provide education to the public and stakeholders on the value of the right of way and the benefits of using it for more people oriented uses.
- Consult with SDOT on the issue of removing parking in this area.
- Think about the meaning of the word “green” in green streets, and the context appropriate form it may take, especially in the culturally rich International District.
- Maynard and Lane streets are at second glance a good choice as green streets. There may be other streets that provide better connections within the neighborhood, but these streets have strong potential because they have less traffic.
- At the east end of Lane, pay attention to the potential for connecting to the community center and also consider the possibility of aggressively extending the Children’s Garden into the right-of-way. Lane in general might be a good candidate for more open/green space and fewer cars because it is already a bit quieter in character. The terminus at I-5 might be an opportunity for an artwork or other embellishment as a destination, perhaps, rather than just an eyesore or happenstance.
- The Mountains to Sound Trail changes direction at the Jose Rizal bridge, and bicyclists will be making their way to the waterfront or downtown from there. Be aware of this when thinking about the streets of the International District.

Presentation

Currently neither of these green street projects has funding for implementation. The presentation focuses on the existing conditions analysis that will support development of the concept design.

An advisory committee of concerned stakeholders was set up to help guide the design process.

A street network hierarchy was established for the International District that led to the identification of Maynard and S. Lane as green streets. S. Lane has potential for future development and building height increases are currently being considered. Maynard intersects with King Street where there is momentum for further urban design work and is another reason to support Maynard's designation as a green street. Photos of Maynard were shown that detail the physical design of the street. Blank facades and blocked windows are prevalent along Maynard. In the 1970's street improvements were completed along Maynard including new brick paving, public art and street trees.

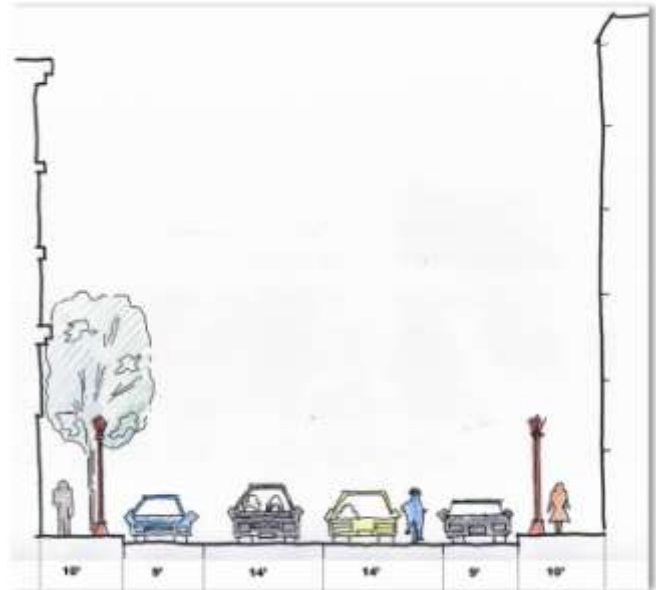
The street design on Maynard is not currently uniform or consistent. Some areas have curb bulbs and street trees while others do not.

Community Input

- Safety and cleanliness are important issues
- Parking spaces are important. Do not remove parking.
- Many elderly persons walk in the area
- King Street is a cultural main street for Chinatown

Concerns/Questions

- Why the focus on these streets
- Address community safety and cleanliness
- Property owners



Existing Street Cross Section

Commissioners' Questions and Comments

Even with 9' of extra sidewalk area or for a green strip, is it really a green street since it differs so much from the Bell Street design?

Green streets may have different characteristics and one of the major factors for designation is that it not be an arterial. There are ranges of options for improvements for green streets and these would be on the low end of those improvements.

Your challenge will be to integrate the green street principles with the design characteristics of the ID.

What constitutes a green street?

The ones that are designated, we are constantly asking ourselves why they are designated as such particularly in terms of a network or coherent system. The 1995 park plan identified green streets as "street parks", but still had to accommodate some traffic.



Existing Conditions

"Green Street" implies a certain level of landscape, but I also think it implies to sustainable improvements.

It is not obvious to me what the network is of these two streets.

Maynard makes more sense to me, but I question the purpose of designation of S. Lane Street since it dead-ends on both ends of the street.

Let me ask you to revisit your logic on designating Maynard Street as a green street. S. Weller Street is also an important as a principal pedestrian street.

We see S. Lane as a future residential enclave and see a need to provide an amenity for that.

Could S. Lane become more a park street without on-street parking? I also think that adding the 9' of additional pedestrian/landscaping space on one side makes the most sense to get the greatest effect.

The existing 10' sidewalk has no amenities and the extra 4.5' feet will make it difficult to have a significant effect. In addition, the community may be more open to removing parking if they understood what could be gained.

I appreciate the comments about looking at removing parking intermittently and we will look at that further.

If we are looking at green streets as connectors, we really need to think about the terrace gardens as a green street terminus.

One of the tough decisions is what to preserve that is on the ground including the historic lampposts and the 1970's streetscape improvements.

I think to be designated a green street you have to draw a line in the sand and remove on-street parking in order to meet the objectives of green streets.

September 3, 2009 Project: Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements – Phase II

Phase: Schematic Design
Last Reviewed: March 19, 2009; June 4, 2009
Presenters: Celia Kennedy, SPU
Gail Staeger, Nakano Associates
Tom Finnegan, MWH

Attendees: Ruri Yampolsky, Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs
Michael Shiosaki, Parks and Recreation
Sylvia Cavazos, SPU

Time: 1.5 hour

(169/RS0607)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks Celia Kennedy of SPU, Gail Staeger of Nakano Associates and Tom Finnegan of MWH for their presentation of the Madison Valley Stormwater Improvements Phase II project. The Commission commends the project team for responding to previous Commission comments. The power of the story of the stormwater and its handling have become more integrated and readable in the design. While the Commission has recommendations for the next stage of design, the comments are specific in their nature.

The Commission approves the 60% Design Development Review with a vote of seven to one. The dissenting vote was on the grounds that the various geometries of the design specifically the paving pattern on the lid of the tank, the access hatches and the rhythm of the railing are not integrated and working well together. The Commission has the following recommendations:

- The Commission strongly encourages close collaboration among the artist, engineers, and landscape architect in resolving details and the design to work out the details to make all the elements feel considered. All drawings from now on should show the artwork on the wall.
- The Commission is excited that the artwork was integrated early into the other aspects of the design so that it helps express the story of the stormwater. However, the team including the artist should be careful to address the appropriate level of physical access to the art.
- The team is encouraged to review the legibility of how and where water flows to the wall, how it is expressed and how it relates to the wall. Close attention should be paid to the edge where the tank lid and the wall come together.
- The team is also asked to coordinate how the handrail along the edge of the lid and the other vertical and horizontal elements meet.
- The team is asked to resolve the conflicting radial geometry of the access hatches and the linear paving pattern.
- The Commission strongly supports providing seating on the top of the tank.
- Commissioners ask that the drainage issues around the truck turn around be examined and solved, perhaps by adding a berm and draining to the north side rather than across/under the path at the truck turn-around.

- **The Commission also cautions using crushed rock on the pathway with slopes of 14% or more. Appropriate research should be done to ensure the path will be secure and that installation will not conflict with the goal of preserving the native woodland trees.**
- **The Commission commends the use of native plant species and encourages the team to consider planting mixed aged/height trees to create a greater illusion of older woodland. The team also encourages the inclusion of a few madronas.**

Presentation

The project is in response to significant flooding in Madison Valley in the vicinity of 30th Avenue E. and E. John St., the low point in the basin. In August 2004 and December 2006 were two of the largest storms on record which caused significant flooding in that area, and the city paid out a large sum of money on damage claims.

The project has had heavy public involvement largely in response to the damage from the two storms. In response to the 2004 storm, a 1 million gallon detention basin was constructed as an interim measure and two weeks before the detention basin was completed there was another major storm that caused significant damage, though the new detention basin helped reduce the overall impacts of the flooding.

The site is located on the south side of the Washington Park Arboretum.

Planting design – All the trees in the construction area have been surveyed including the condition of the trees. The design saves as many trees as possible. Most of the existing trees are deciduous and more conifers will be added to tie into the Pacific Northwest.

Wall Art - The wall art will have cavity-nest bird sites integrated into the wall. Weep holes drain upper lawn and rectangular stonework that is rough-cut and angled will define the wall surrounding the tank. A rain garden will be blow the moss on the sides of the overlook.

Water will be collected on the top of the tank near the railing, which will be channeled along the wall to the rain garden.



Rock wall surrounding tank with art installation

Commissioners' Questions and Comments

Can you discuss in detail the proposed plantings?

A planting list was distributed to the Commissioners.

In relation to the art piece, will people be able to get up close and touch it?

It depends on the intention of the artist, but I am not entirely sure.

Can you describe the paving pattern and grass on the top of the tank and the design intention?

We looked at lots of different patterns but I think the proposed pattern has an interesting relationship to the north-south street grid and the gentle slope of the tank.

I think the birdhouses should be restricted to prevent people from disturbing the birds.

Could there be something on the top of the tank to show where water is traveling down the wall?

Yes, we could explore that with some sort of symbolic paving pattern.

The art concept is fantastic, but I think there are some opportunities to tie together the horizontal and vertical planes. The other question I had was in regards to the access hatches and their relationship with the paving pattern.

I am limited in the potential locations in order for them to function properly. I do not have any flexibility on the size of the hatches.

Are there any seating opportunities on the top of the tank?

We cannot provide actual benches, but we are considering placing a few boulders in strategic locations to provide informal seating.

I am disconcerted by the geometry of the paving pattern and the fact that most people would not get its relationship with the street grid. I am also concerned about the entrance from the truck turnaround at an angle to the geometry of the paving.

On the south end of the tank to the west of the truck turnaround, have you considered using a berm there to drain the water around the tank?

Be careful with crushed rock on the 14.5% grade from E. Madison on the pedestrian path.

I appreciate the carefulness in preserving the trees on the site and use of native plantings. I encourage you to use multi-sized and multi-aged trees during planting to make it look much more mature much faster.

In terms of the steel guardrail, perhaps there is more of an opportunity to provide a more unique and inspiring design.

We are disappointed that there was no update as requested on the Phase 1 project to see how the artwork is coordinating with the design and the integration of the elements.