



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Ed Murray
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Marshall Foster
Planning Director, DPD

Osama Quotah, Chair

Shannon Loew, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Thaddeus Egging

Megan Groth

Martin Regge

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Michael Jenkins
Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Nicolas Welch
Planner

Joan Nieman
Administrative Staff

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June 19, 2014

Convened 8:30 am

Adjourned 4:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

Waterfront – Overlook Walk

Block 93 – Westlake Ave N & N Mercer St

Commissioners Present

Osama Quotah, Chair

Shannon Loew, Vice Chair

Bernie Alonzo

Brodie Bain

Lee Copeland

Megan Groth

Martin Regge (excused at 3:00 pm)

Ellen Sollod

Ross Tilghman

Commissioners Excused

Thaddeus Egging

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Nicolas Welch

Joan Nieman



June 19, 2014	Project:	Waterfront – Overlook Walk																																
9:00 – 12:00 pm	Phase:	30% design																																
	Previous reviews:	none																																
	Presenters:	<table> <tr> <td>Marshall Foster</td> <td>Office of the Waterfront</td> </tr> <tr> <td>James Corner</td> <td>James Corner Field Operations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tatiana Choulika</td> <td>James Corner Field Operations</td> </tr> <tr> <td>David Miller</td> <td>Miller Hull</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carly McArdle</td> <td>Magnusson Klemencic Associates</td> </tr> </table>	Marshall Foster	Office of the Waterfront	James Corner	James Corner Field Operations	Tatiana Choulika	James Corner Field Operations	David Miller	Miller Hull	Carly McArdle	Magnusson Klemencic Associates																						
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Recusals and Disclosures

There were no recusals or disclosures.

Purpose of Review

The purpose of this meeting was to review the 30% design of the Overlook Walk, a core project of the waterfront redevelopment and one of the east–west connections proposed along the waterfront. The Commission had seen the design concept for the Overlook Walk during its reviews of the Main Corridor North of Union and Central Public Open Space—two other core waterfront projects—and the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance. However, this was the first time the Commission looked closely and specifically at the 30% design for the Overlook Walk.

Summary of Proposal

The Waterfront Seattle team proposes to construct new open space, buildings, and pedestrian circulation between the proposed Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance at the PC-1 site and the waterfront promenade. This would create a new, legible east–west pedestrian connection to waterfront over the redesigned Alaskan Way.

The proposed open spaces include seating, play slides and climbing blocks, open lawn, meadow plantings, and a panoramic staircase. The design team proposes two structures—Buildings B and C—that would occupy the east and west sides of the new Alaskan Way. Building B would extend the small retail stalls of the Market and include a large event space. Building C would have a ground-level tenant space and operations equipment.

As the juncture between the historic district of the Pike Place Market and the central waterfront, the Overlook Walk proposal includes a paving and landscaping scheme that transitions between these distinct Seattle environments.

Summary of Presentation

Marshall Foster introduced the project and described the new pedestrian connections the Overlook Walk will provide. He noted that the design has developed significantly in recent months. James Corner traced this evolution, describing the concept progressing from a singular landform to an aggregation of elements.

Tatiana Choulika gave the presentation dated June 19, 2014, available on the [Design Commission website](#). Ms. Choulika showed the surrounding context for the Overlook Walk, identifying the other east–west connections to the waterfront, the steep and challenging topography the design must reconcile, and the proposal’s integration with the existing network and fabric along the waterfront.

David Miller described the three buildings that surround the Overlook Walk site: the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance (which isn’t part of today’s review) and Buildings B and C (which are). Mr. Miller explained the proposed phasing for the Waterfront Entrance relative to the removal of the Alaskan Way Viaduct and described the connection from the Overlook Walk up to the Pike Place Market as a wide, civic space. According to Mr. Miller, Building B would contain a Market Hall that continues the Pike Place Market retail spaces and an event space. Building C would contain a restaurant above a ground-level tenant space, operations and maintenance space, and a wastewater treatment facility.

Mr. Miller identified district-scale heating and cooling, solar PV, rain collection, green stormwater infrastructure (GSI), and water reuse as sustainability strategies under consideration. Carly McArdle detailed the GSI, water reuse, and water harvesting opportunities for the project. Results of a water audit indicate that the City would spend \$67 million to purchase potable water and pay to discharge wastewater over a 30-year period for the project. According to Ms. McArdle, the most cost-effective methods to reduce this cost is to use either an ecological wastewater treatment system or membrane bioreactor (MBR) to treat gray- and black water for irrigation and reuse on-site. Estimates suggest this could save \$17-22 million with a 10-year payback period.

Ms. Choulika described the design team’s approach to transitioning the paving from brick at the Pike Place Market to the Puget Sound aggregate proposed along the waterfront. She then described the program and design for each section of the project. The Bluff includes slides, climbing blocks, and bench seating. Immediately to the south, the Bay Overlook offers views to the south and west and a mix of meadow and lawn plantings. A panoramic bench and steps would lead down to the Overlook Steps. Ms. Choulika discussed ideas for including art and lighting to the soffit under the Overlook Walk and noted that moving vehicle access to the Fix/Madore Plaza to the north significantly improves the pedestrian environment at the landing of the Pike Hillclimb and allows existing trees to remain. There will be future artist commissions, one of which focuses specifically on play spaces.

Summary of Discussion

The Commissioners had a robust discussion of the urban design and operations and maintenance components of the project. They appreciated the play features such as slides and climbing rocks included in the Bluff section. Combined with the tree canopy and meandering circulation in this area, the overall landscape strategy received strong support, particular for its richness and complexity. There was concern, however, that the proposed paving might be too complex and suggestions that a simpler, subtler approach might be more appropriate, particularly since brick and concrete delineate vehicle and pedestrian spaces, respectively.

The orientation of the stairs to the northwest was one focus of the discussion. Some Commissioners wondered whether a westward orientation would better capitalize on views and sunsets throughout the year and created a more usable space at the landing of the steps. Others suggested a southern orientation towards Aquarium Plaza. The project team responded that the northwesterly orientation intentionally links the Overlook Walk with Pier 62/63 and avoids orienting views towards the back of the Aquarium.

There was interest in the proposed program, architecture, and sustainability plan for Buildings B and C. Commissioners cautioned that designing and leasing a restaurant can be a challenge and encouraged the team to retain a restaurant consultant; they also wanted more clarity about the program for Building C. On sustainability, the Commission encouraged the project team 1) to address the city's challenges with sewer overflow, directly or educationally, with the stormwater the project will collect and treat and 2) to pursue a goal such as net zero ready for the buildings. There was also a suggestion to study how the architecture of Building C engages with and relates to Aquarium Plaza.

Lastly, there were several comments about the Bay Overlook portion of the Overlook Walk above Alaskan Way. The Commission saw opportunities to improve the views to the south by making the Overlook edge more dynamic; instead it feels like an overpass because it is cut perpendicular to the road below it. There were differing opinions on whether that edge should be buffed with or wrapped in vegetation similar to Freeway Park or allow visitors to get close to edge to see at the traffic below. Nevertheless, there was consensus that the project team should further study 1) the expression of the lid above Alaskan Way relative to the structures that are holding it and 2) other geometries for the orientation of the southern edge of the Bay Overlook.

Agency Comments

none

Public Comments

Cary Moon, Design Oversight Subcommittee, said that the design team has largely resolved the issues raised in recent months and thanked the team for their work. She asked David Miller if operable windows for the top level of Building B had been considered, to which he responded yes. Ms. Moon concluded that circulation from the Pike St Hillclimb to Aquarium Plaza works well.

Maureen Miller, board president at the 232-unit Waterfront Landings, presented a model of the Overlook Walk and stated that she wanted to talk about fantasy versus reality. She argued that the design drawings that contain beautiful depictions of the southern entrance to her building as an open airy, plaza in fact distort reality and ignore the harm being done to the building due to the design and location of Pine St. First and third floor residents, Ms. Miller said, will look at massive slab of concrete

totally out of character with the historic surroundings. She also took issue with the freight routing via Pine St to Pier 66 because these vehicles pass in front of windows often open since the building lacks air conditioning. She worries the zone under the new Elliott Way will be home to transients and drug users. According to Ms. Miller, the response from Council is that the design is approved and unlikely to change, but that Waterfront Landings will be entitled to mitigation. This prompted Ms. Miller to ask why anyone would support a design that requires mitigation for the only residents of the waterfront.

Brian Frederick, a retired attorney and resident of Waterfront Landings, was concerned that the plaza at the base of the Overlook Steps harkens back to the urban renewal era when massive concrete plazas were built that robbed neighborhoods of vitality and created barren structures devoid of real human interaction. Yet, according to Mr. Frederick, it is this human interaction that defines our Market presently, and the scale and mass of the proposed plaza is inappropriate as an extension of the Market. He also suggested moving the new Pine St one block south to avoid the cost inherent in and barrier created by an elevated roadway and referred to a previous traffic plan to connect Alaskan Way and the new Elliott Way at Pike. Finally, Mr. Frederick said these changes would allow for a Market–waterfront connection at Union St, a cheaper and more appropriate approach in his view.

Kate Martin, Park My Viaduct, advocates for retrofitting the upper deck of Alaskan Way Viaduct to create a five-acre view park. Her concept, which she believes harmonizes with the present design, proposes a 0.75-mile promenade on the Viaduct’s upper deck. Ms. Martin noted new findings that the retrofit is inexpensive and the engineering feasible. Citing New York City’s High Line and Paris’s *Promenade Plantée*, she believes an elevated view park would change Seattle forever and is a superior to a waterfront promenade squeezed between buildings and piers. She also endorsed other comments about the project being out of scale and argued for granite pavers over grinding concrete.

Action

The Design Commission thanked the waterfront team for a thorough presentation of the 30% design for Overlook Walk. Overall, the Commission especially appreciates the amount of detail included in the presentation and the project’s evolution from diagrammatic early concepts to a thoughtful dialogue about how people will experience the project.

With a **vote of 7-1**, the Design Commission approved the 30% design of the Waterfront – Overlook Walk with the following recommendations:

Connections, transitions, and edges

- Explore how the accessible route might be naturally understood rather than reliant on signage.
- While the Commission appreciates the blending of the plant palette, consider a less deliberate, simpler, and/or subtler approach to transitioning the paving pattern between brick at the Pike Place Market Waterfront Entrance and Puget Sound aggregate on the waterfront. There could be zones for certain paving patterns without creating a seamless overall transition.
- The Commission appreciates the project team’s work with the Waterfront Landing property. Notwithstanding the need for Elliott Way to rise in elevation north of the Overlook Walk, continue this dialogue to ensure the long-term viability of the residence during and after the waterfront redevelopment.
- Further develop the design and program for the Bay Overlook. Consider opportunities to make the lid over Alaskan Way a more dynamic surface. Pursue greater integration of the architecture and programming of the Bay Overlook as an open space. In particular, explore the geometry of

the southern edge condition relative to the roadway below and the overall experience of the fold and the waterfront.

Buildings B and C

- In Building B, further blur inside and outside space and pedestrians flows through and around the building. Consider making the stair connection between the south end of Building B and Alaskan Way less of a hard edge.
- While the Commission appreciates the Makers Spaces, provide more detail and a clearer vision for how they can be sustained long-term as a viable program element. Continue to develop and show the pedestrian experience at the street level. Explore programming ideas to expand the life of the space and make it more hospitable rather than dark.
- Explore opportunities for a more direct connection between the Building B event space and the open lawn in order to enhance the viability of both spaces.
- Illustrate the circulation for each building so the Commission can better understand the experience relative to the Pike Place Market context.
- Provide a deeper dialogue about the programmatic relationship among the stairs, Aquarium Plaza, and southern façade of Building C so that the Commission can have greater confidence that the singular northwestern orientation of the stairs is right.
- Explore options for non-Aquarium use of the spaces in Building C.

Bluff

- The Commission believes this is a fantastic part of the project. Continue to explore ways to activate the space and ensure integrated play while facilitating the flow of pedestrians.

Sustainability

- Continue the comprehensive and ambitious approach on district-level opportunities for sustainability, particularly around stormwater.
- Consider a sustainability performance target for the buildings, such as net zero ready.

Commissioner Alonzo voted against approval because, while the overall project is well developed and headed in the right direction, the area of the Bay Steps landing is absolutely critical and not adequately developed.

The Design Commission anticipates reviewing the project again at 60% design. Because this is a seminal piece of the overall waterfront redevelopment, the Commission expects that at the next review the project team will include:

- Further investigation on how the buildings and land forms can continue to evolve
- Detail on how this project connects physically, programmatically, and visually to Pier 62/63 and how that connects to the rest of waterfront
- Exploration of the experience not only moving through or on top of the project but from below as well, both at Alaskan Way and further south along the waterfront