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MEETING MINUTES

1305 Stewart Alley Vacation

November 16, 2023

Convened 9:30am

Adjourned 3:00pm

Projects Reviewed

1305 Stewart Street Alley Vacation

Bitter Lake Reservoir Covering Project

Commissioners Present

Matt Aalfs

Elizabeth Conner

Jill Crary

Puja Shaw

Molly Spetalnick

Phoebe Bogert

Kevin O'Neill

Ben Gist

Jay Backman

Commissioners Excused

Adam Amrhein

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Windy Bandekar

Juliet Acevedo



November 16, 2023
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Project: 1305 Stewart
Type: Alley Vacation
Phase: Public Benefit Review
Previous Reviews: Public Trust Review – 05/04/2023; Public Benefit 08/17/2023
Presenters: Mark Brands, Site Workshop; Rebecca Fuchs, Site Workshop; Jennifer Whelan, Perkins and Will; Alex Mason, Urban Artworks
Attendees: Katie Kendall, McCullough Hill PLLC; Ashley Smith, Perkins and Will; Mark Brands, Site Workshop; Ben Rosenfeld, PMB, Lish Whitson, Bill Jencks, PMB; Beverly Barnett, SDOT; Mertiss Thompson, Cascade Community Council

Recusals and Disclosures: none

Project Description

PMB is requesting an alley vacation on a triangular block located in the Denny Triangle neighborhood. The north/south alley opens onto Stewart Street to the north and Lower Denny Way to the south. Eastlake Avenue is the eastern side of the block. The prow of the triangle terminates at the intersections of Denny and Stewart.

The block is located at the intersection of two city grids, which is why the site is triangular. Lower Denny Way is a one block long right of way that is distinct from Denny Way, a major east/west arterial. Lower Denny Way abuts the portion of Denny Way that includes the western abutments for the bridge that crosses I-5.

The vacated alley would allow the construction of a life science research tower with fifteen stories above grade and four parking levels below grade. Access to the site would be provided at Eastlake Ave. The development would cover most of the block. A two-story building with surface parking located near the intersection of Eastlake Ave and Stewart Street will be retained. That site does not use the alley and is owned separately.

The existing alley is one block long. The abutments and bridge for Denny Way does not allow the alley to connect to the south. The north terminus of the alley ends at Stewart Street. There is no connecting alley north of Stewart.



- LEGEND**
- site
 - retail service
 - lobby entry
 - pedestrian street
 - bridge mural
 - new streetscape planting with amenities
 - new curb ramps and crosswalk
 - protected bike lane and tree allee
 - parking / loading / trash access
 - driveway cutback

retail service



Agency Comments

Beverly Barnett, representing SDOT and leading the street and alley vacations, provided an overview of her ongoing work with the design team to advance the project, based on City department staff and Commission review. Overall, Beverly expressed her support for the project including the advancement in project designs related to Eastlake Ave East, Lower Denny Way, the proposed artistic interventions on the Denny Way structural supports abutting Lower Denny Way, and the overall public benefit package. Beverly will continue to work with the project team as they advance to Council review and approval.

Public Comments:

The Cascade Neighborhood Community Council (CNC) and their representatives summarized their support for the project, including the proposed public benefit package and the specific improvements proposed for Lower Denny Way. CNC representatives indicated that they will continue to work with the PMB on goals for community activities and events to activate Lower Denny Way. In addition, Degale Cooper, CEO and Becca LaNasa, Sr. Director of Engagement and Workforce Services from Youth Care submitted a letter of support for the project.

Discussion Summary:

The design team presented a comprehensive overview of the proposed public benefit package on how designs have been advanced since the August 17, 2023 Commission meeting and a September 21, 2023 subcommittee meeting.

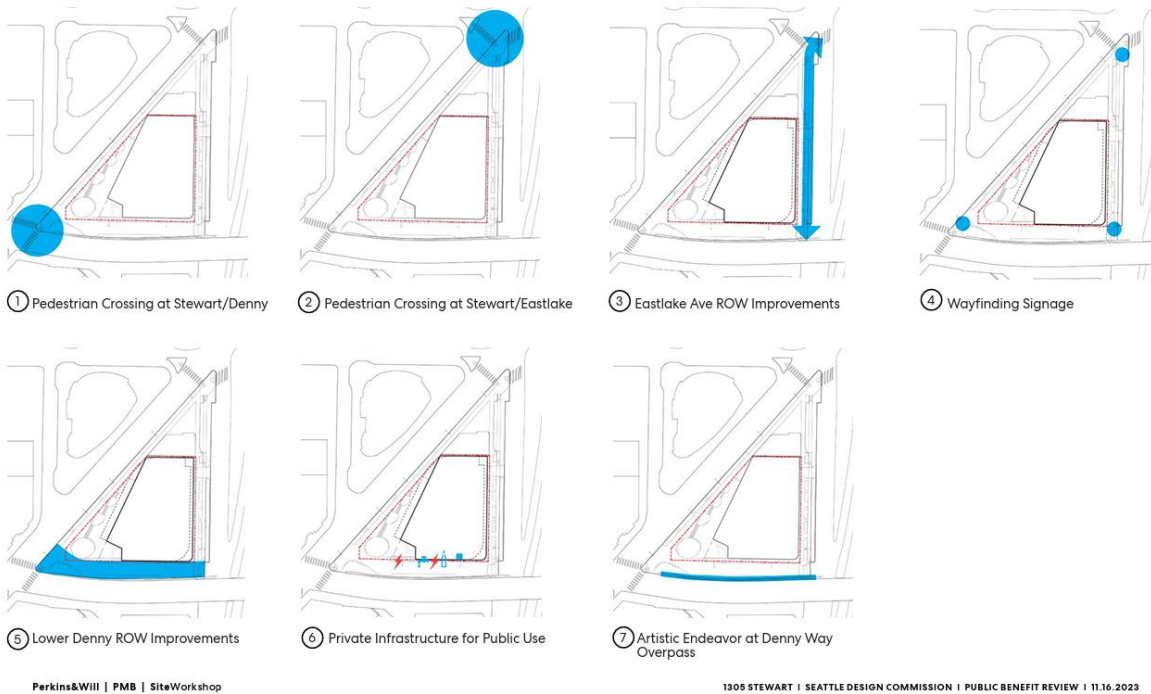
The design team highlighted substantive changes to the project designs including:

1. Refinements to the Eastlake Ave East landscape plan concerning tree species and location
2. Confirmation of the fire/emergency access route within the Lower Denny Way right of way improvements including lighting and removable bollards
3. Inclusion of a bike fix-it station and drinking/water bottle refilling station by the Eastlake protected bike lanes.
4. Refinement of the location of water and power hookups for temporary/intermittent uses, and the location of a storage space for events
5. Confirming that any mural or other artistic work will be confined to the portion of the Denny Way structure abutting Lower Denny Way only, along with updates on the artist selection process.
6. Confirmation that any artistic work applied to the wall abutting Lower Denny Way will have a 50-year term, along with the initial plans for maintenance.

Table: Public Benefit Proposal

public benefits

overview



Deliberation Summary:

- **Additional Public Benefit:** The commissioner asked if all items in the left-hand column of a slide represented additional public benefits beyond what is required by code. The response indicated that everything outside a specific box area was additional public benefit.
- **Building Materials:** A commissioner was curious about the orange-ish material on the building, speculating if it was weathered steel or just a finish. The response clarified that the entire building would have metal panels with a bronze-like finish that is painted, not rusted.
- **Power Access:** This question focused on power access for food trucks and maintenance, with a request for detailed explanations of the locations and methods. Concerns were raised regarding the management of power cords that would run from the power source to the food trucks. The project team mentioned using rubber speed bumps to safely house these power cords. This approach aims to minimize tripping hazards and maintain accessibility, especially for pedestrians and individuals with mobility impairments. The commissioner asked whether there was a possibility of having power cables run underground as a more permanent and aesthetically pleasing solution. The project team acknowledged this idea but also highlighted potential complexities and costs associated

with implementing such a solution. They agreed to explore the feasibility of this option further.

- **Bike Lane Connection:** A commissioner sought clarification on how the bike lane would connect to King County's work. The explanation provided details about the approach to the intersection, the use of bike signals, and the coordination with King County's existing traffic signalization.
- **Oversized Crosswalks:** Addressing the pedestrian and bicycle activity, a commissioner suggested making crosswalks bigger and more accessible. The response acknowledged the idea, indicating it would be considered in consultation with the transportation department.
- **Underground Power Cables:** This question focused on the feasibility of coordinating with Seattle City Light to get power cables underground. The response highlighted the complexity and substantial scope of such an endeavor, which was beyond the project's reach.
- **Pedestrian Level Illumination Analysis:** A commissioner inquired if an analysis for pedestrian-level illumination had been completed. The response confirmed that an analysis was provided, focusing on the placement of lights in relation to the bike lane and trees for optimal sidewalk illumination.
- **Art and Mural Committee:** Questions were raised about the process and planning for the mural, including the selection of artists and the narrative development. The response detailed the planned approach to engaging community members, the artist selection process, and the development of a narrative for the mural.
- **Public and Private Space Clarity:** A commissioner raised concerns about the clarity of what is public versus private in terms of activities, maintenance, and access. The response addressed the need for clear demarcation and understanding of these spaces, emphasizing the importance of clearly defining and understanding the boundaries and functions of public versus private areas.
- **Security Measures:** A question was raised about security measures, especially concerning 24/7 access areas. Security personnel and cameras will be included in the project, but project developer will not take responsibility for security within the public space.

- Perforated Metal Wall: A commissioner asked about the decision to incorporate a perforated metal wall and its relationship to the neighborhood's history. The team explained that the perforated metal wall was not an opportunity for expression of any relationship to the neighborhood's history. The avenue for collaboration with the neighborhood is only through the development of the mural.

Actions:

The SDC voted 9 to 0 to approve the Public Benefit phase of the vacation, with the following recommendations:

1. Safe and Clear Connections: Enhance the safety and clarity of connections to and from the site. This involves ensuring that pathways and access points are well-defined and secure, providing a straightforward and safe experience for all site users.
2. Clarity on Public and Private Spaces: Clearly delineate public and private areas within the site. This clarity is crucial to ensure that visitors can easily distinguish between spaces they are free to access and those that are restricted, enhancing the overall usability and experience of the site.
3. Conservation and Mural Lifecycle: Engage a professional conservator to oversee the maintenance and longevity of the mural. This will involve regular assessments and appropriate interventions to ensure the mural remains in good condition over its intended lifecycle.
4. Electrical Reconnection Opportunities: Work with SDOT to determine if they can provide stubbed up electrical access for food trucks on the south side of Lower Denny Way. This would prevent electrical access from needing to be run across the surface of the street and therefore would eliminate the ADA impediment that surface electrical presents. This would require that they run electrical under the pavers within the ROW.