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MEETING MINUTES

200 Taylor Avenue N Alley Vacation

March 2, 2023

Convened 9:30 am

Adjourned 2:30 pm

Projects Reviewed

200 Taylor Avenue North Alley Vacation

WSBLE Update

Commissioners Present

Matt Aalfs

Adam Amrhein

Elizabeth Conner

Jill Crary

Puja Shaw

Erica Bush

Molly Spetalnick

Phoebe Bogert

Kevin O'Neill

Ben Gist

Commissioners Excused

Staff Present

Michael Jenkins

Valerie Kinast

Windy Bandekar

Juliet Acevedo



March 2, 2023
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

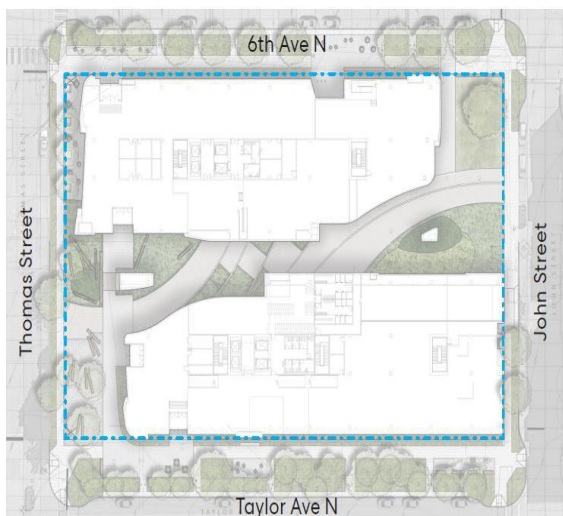
Project: 200 Taylor Ave North
Type: Alley Vacation
Phase: Public Trust Review – Meeting #2
Previous Reviews: Pre-petition review – 9/1/2021; Public Trust Review – 11/17/2022
Presenters: Ryan Bussard, Design Director, Principal – Perkins&Will (Architect)
Attendees: Brad Rock, Director of Development – BioMed Realty (Owner)
 John Moshy, Vice President of Development – BioMed Realty (Owner)
 Kelsey Blommer, Senior Project Manager - OAC Services (CM Consultant)
 Drew Graham, Director - OAC Services (CM Consultant)
 Christa Wood, Senior Project Architect – Perkins&Will (Architect)
 Tony DeEulio, Senior Project Designer – Perkins&Will (Architect)
 Jason Henry, Principal - Berger Partnership (Landscape Architect)
 Jordan Zlotoff, Associate - Berger Partnership (Landscape Architect)
 Jack McCullough, McCullough Hill Leary (land use counsel)
 Katie Kendall, McCullough Hill Leary (land use counsel)

Recusals and Disclosures

none

Project Description

200 Taylor Ave. N is a proposed full block development for new biomedical offices that includes one 9 story and one 8-story building with underground parking for approximately 400 vehicles. The site, bounded by Taylor Ave. N. to the west, Thomas Street to the north, 6th Ave N. to the east, and John Street to the south, comprises five existing tax parcels. The site is currently developed with a hotel structure built in 1979; three office buildings built in 1959, 1961, and 1962; and two surface parking lots. The site slopes downward southwest to northeast approximately fourteen feet. All the existing structures will be demolished.



Vicinity Map - Connections

The site is located along Thomas Street which is a principal green street connection downtown to the Seattle Center. The streets east and west to the site are 6th Ave. and Taylor Ave., with John St. to the south.

Bus service is available a block away on 5th Ave, 7th Ave and Denny Way, in addition to Dexter Ave. just 2 blocks away.

The project looks to engage the public at the pedestrian level and help stitch adjacent neighborhoods together.

- Connection Point
- Point of Interest
- Class I Pedestrian Street
- Class II Pedestrian Street
- Class III Pedestrian Street
- Green Street
- Bus Stop
- Bus Route
- Monorail
- Optimum Neighborhood Connect

urban context

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proposal

- two high-rise buildings: 8 & 9 stories for life sciences tenants
- alley vacation
- enhanced open space
- dedicated pedestrian connection

The proposal requires the vacation of a north/south alley that runs between John Street and Thomas Street. Automobile and truck access will occur in a single 22-foot wide curb cut on John Street, in a location that is at or near the southern terminus of the current alley. A key feature of the proposed project is a diagonal pedestrian path connecting Thomas and John Streets.

Summary of previous Commission Meeting - 11/17/2022

At the initial public trust review, commissioners were in favor of the diagonal connection, but they have some concerns about the need to move pedestrians from public spaces to this feature. They also asked for clarification on the program and use of public spaces, as well as a comparison of the no alley vacation option. Furthermore, the commissioners requested more information on the outcomes of the initial public engagement and more outreach to a diverse population.

Agency Comments

SDOT commented that the design feels very responsive to its previous recommendation and questions and is supportive of the alley vacation.

Public Comments

None

Summary of Commission Discussion

- Commissioners support the updated designs, including the work along the right of way and the diagonal pathway through the site. Commissioners want seating design and placement to create social spaces open to all members of the public.
- The drainage system was raised as a concern, with the recommendation to discharge the site to a dedicated storm drain to avoid overflow to Puget Sound.
- Commissioners support the location of the bike and fitness center, as well as the combined vehicle entrance.
- Commissioners appreciate the differentiation between the north and south courtyards based on access and activity, with the hardscape being noted as stronger and more consistent than previous designs.
- The commission expressed appreciation for the design's transition from public to private space and has requested that the design consider how the site connects with surrounding areas and what activities people may engage in on all types of days, including sunny days.
- There was concern about the interior spaces of the site, and the need for critical lighting to make it inviting and pull people through. There was also a recommendation to increase visibility through the corridor to ensure flow of people who are not familiar with the site.
- Commissioners want the design team to continue to work with SDOT on advancing onsite designs for Thomas Street reimagined.
- The strong focus on the pedestrian experience was appreciated, indicating that the design accounted for the needs of pedestrians in the area.
- The differentiation of vegetated spaces was also noted as nice, indicating that the design provided a good mix of natural and built elements.

Action

The SDC voted 10 to 0 to approve the Public Trust phase of the vacation, with the following recommendations:

- Explore more programming options for the southeast corner to increase public activity.
- Expand the idea of “public” to include nearby users, including people using the Skate Park to the north, and other groups that might not seem obvious.

- Explore the feasibility of separating stormwater out of the combined system into its own system.
- Continue to look at programming options for public spaces.
- Maximize visibility and wayfinding through the diagonal to ensure the space feels safe and looks open.
- Look for offsite Public Benefit options.