



**Seattle
Design
Commission**

**APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
19 December 2002**

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

Donald Royse
Chair

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

South Lake Union Park
Transportation Discussion
Light Rail Review Panel
Leary Way and NW 46th Street Improvements
Design Commission Annual Debriefing

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 4:00pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair
Laura Ballock
Ralph Cipriani
Cary Moon
Iain M. Robertson
Nic Rossouw
David Spiker
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Anna O'Connell



Department of Design,
Construction & Land Use

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19 Dec 2002 Project: **South Lake Union Park**

Phase: Conceptual Design

Previous Reviews: 2 August 2001 (Design Development), 21 June 2001 (Predesign), 18 May 2000 (Scope Briefing/Update), 7 February 2000 (Briefing), 20 August 1998 (Briefing), 2 April 1998 (Briefing)

Presenters: Steven Wright, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Mary Margaret Jones, Hargreaves AssociatesAttendees: Steve Bull, Mithun
Erin Devoto, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Diana Hammer, University of Washington
Shaian-Ro Liao, Hargreaves Associates
Megan Mann, Hargreaves Associates
Janet Pelz, Pelz Public Affairs
Karen Tsao, Fleets and Facilities
Victoria Schoenberg, Seattle Parks and Recreation
Marcel Wilson, Hargreaves Associates

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00051)

Action: The Commission thanked the team for coming, appreciates how the project was presented, is especially thrilled with the thorough research and evocative analysis into the history of the site and how it is going to be used, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Design Commission supports the initial concept diagram and how it has evolved from the master plan approved by council in 2000;
- supports the concept of layering and hybridizing the histories of the site;
- suggests that proponents experiment with different design geometries to avoid compartmentalizing and getting locked into the rigidity of some of the diagrams presented;
- supports the way the team is conceptualizing the heart of the park and its shift west to the water space with the new main entrance on Westlake;
- endorses the strong north-south link and suggests proponents focus on the east-west connections, but in a looser way, especially in connecting Waterways 3 and 4;
- would like to see, at the next presentation, layers of drawings that show how the many park functions such as circulation, moments of activity, plantings, edge conditions, places where boats come ashore and people can get into the water, small intimate spaces, and larger social spaces work independently;
- looks forward to seeing how the team weaves the edge of the site into its borders and how gateways are created, especially at the park's key entrance on Westlake;
- encourages proponents to explore ways to express the dynamic between the water and shore and the strange hydrology and toxic quality of the water;
- urges the team to avoid screening or sanitizing the experience and encourages them to create a real and visceral space;
- supports the way the team is thinking about how travelers will experience the site as they drive by;

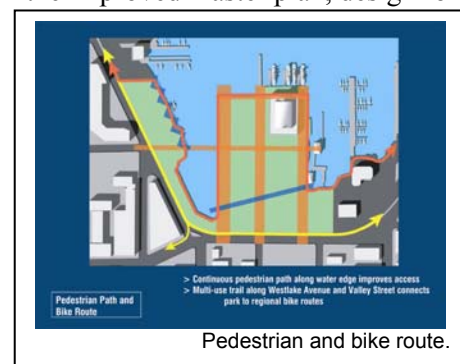
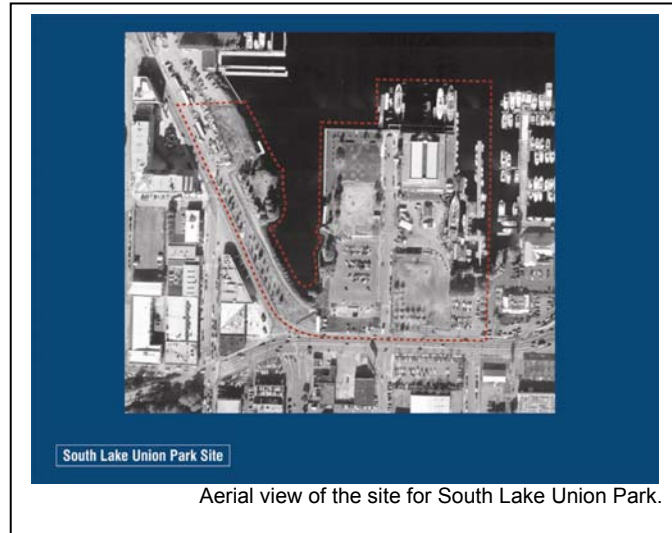
- encourages the team, the Parks Department, and SDOT to think of the surrounding rights-of-way up to the property lines as integral to and part of the park's spatial design;
- encourages proponents to not place the trolley stop within the park;
- is excited to see how the team develops a design vocabulary to address the above key points; and
- recommends approval of conceptual design.

The site for South Lake Union Park is a piece of land jutting into the very southern tip of Lake Union. There are several buildings adjacent to or on the site that create a context including the armory and its associated structures and the Center for Wooden Boats. In addition, the park extends around the Kenmore Air property. Directly across the lake from this site is Gasworks Park and South Lake Union Park's design will extend across the water to be visually connected with Gasworks.

The Parks Board gave the team detailed recommendations in June, which call for extensive public process. In response, a public advisory team (PAT) made up of local businesses and residents was formed.

The proponents recently presented their site analysis and conceptual design to the public and will develop a series of schematic alternatives to present next. In March or April, they will choose the preferred alternative. Once the preferred alternative has been determined and they have gotten the recommendations of involved groups, the team will refine the alternative and present it at public meetings in May. They will then determine if they need to come back to the Commission at that time. The team's task is to design the entire park at the schematic level, but there is not enough funding to build it all at once, so phasing will be part of the design. They are also collaborating with other City departments and involved businesses like SDOT, CityDesign, and Vulcan to make for a cohesive development. Proponents are collaborating with local firm Mithun and a broader team of consultants. The client group is made up of Seattle Parks and Recreation staff, the Maritime Heritage Foundation, and the Seattle Parks Foundation.

There are several principles for the project including building on the improved master plan, design for sustainability, planning for phasing to accommodate the budget, and creating a meaningful and memorable place on south Lake Union. In the future SDOT plan, it is anticipated that most traffic will be on Mercer St.—there are plans for a street car line and more buses. In addition, more trails will be added in the surrounding area for bikes and pedestrians. With existing traffic Valley St. is a major arterial, which does not provide a gateway or sense of entering into a unique area. This street will be downsized and made more pedestrian oriented with safer street crossings. They are hoping that the parking lot to be built by Vulcan across the street from the

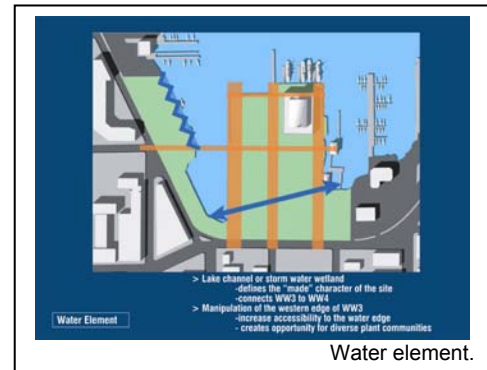
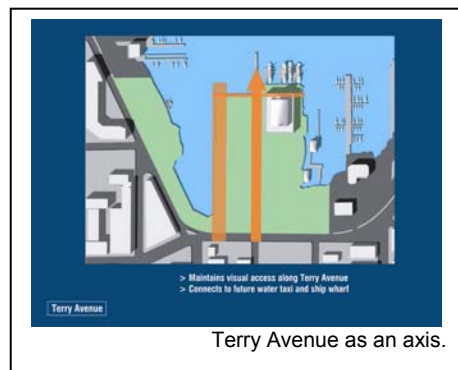
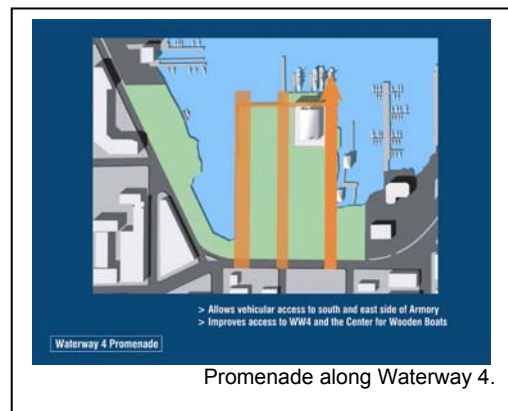
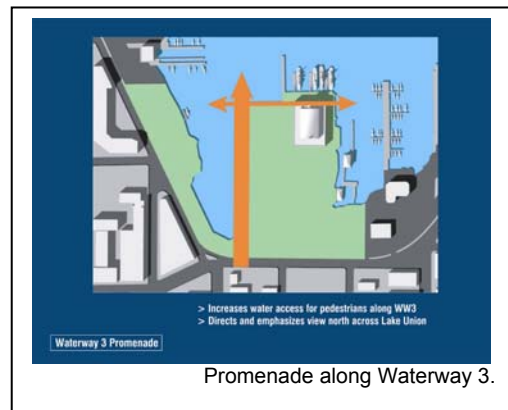


site will also be parking for the park. Proponents would like to have at-grade crossings from this lot to the park and avoid a skywalk. With the park site being at a low point and the bowl-shaped topography, there are not many outward views. At the site there is more a sense of being down at the water level and as you get expansive views as you move away into the neighborhoods.

Proponents are using the history of the site to inform design. In the 1800s the edge of the lake was built up and a very different shoreline emerged. The logging industry and long strips of buildings will inform patterns and materials. Currently, the site has an urban wall around it. The main quality of the site is that it is made of fill, which is important contextually and structurally—this will be expressed in the design. In the site inventory the team found significant storm drain outfalls and unstable quay walls. Both of these would be expensive to change or replace, so will likely be kept. The program from the 2000 master plan is being incorporated, but the team has added information such as new user profiles.

Four possible configurations are being explored. One configuration is similar to the existing master plan with the long view down the center of the site. Terry Ave. bisects the site and this division is used to delineate a hard/built half and a soft/landscape half. In other configurations, there is a promenade along Waterway 3 and the north end. Terry Ave. is an important axis, but does not necessarily have to be in the form of a street. Connecting the waterways is important and can be done as a promenade along the north end of the site. Proponents are also looking at connecting them via a canal that could be for kayaks and canoes, model boats, or stormwater treatment. The team is looking at “rattling,” or breaking up so that it is not so linear, the west edge of Waterway 3 and making it into a wetland. In one of the community meetings, the idea for a model boat pond came up.

Options for accessing the site include using Terry Ave., creating a new axis along Waterway 4, or just having a drop-off area at the armory. If the latter is done, disabled parking would be provided adjacent to the armory. The Center for Wooden Boats would like to see more buildings placed along Valley St. to make for a more processional feel down the street. The other option is to put buildings to the west of the existing Center for Wooden Boats and cluster them and a new skills demonstration area around the new plaza. The Native American Canoe Center, which is part of the master plan and has spiritual relevance, could be placed where the master plan calls for or be moved to the other side of Waterway 3 to help



connect to the bridge. With the second configuration, boats could go right from the water to the longhouse.

A use not outlined in the master plan, but that people have asked for is a venue for festivals and events. There is some space for that already, but it is important to actively accommodate that in the new design. For performances on site there will not be a formal amphitheater but a sloped, grassy plane with some terraces that would accommodate 1000 people. There are three alternatives for amphitheater arrangement:

- audience facing the water—the berms already buffer the area from Valley St. traffic, but this placement puts the amphitheater outside of the heart of the park
- in the heart of the park—provides counterplay with the armory
- on or right adjacent to the water

With the armory there are opportunities for roof terraces with views; the question is whether the views should be toward the city or the water or both. Outside the armory a maritime plaza will be created. In general, feedback from the public asked for the armory to be opened up to provide more public spaces like cafes, retail, community event space, and exhibition space. This amount of activity creates the possibility of needing another building (size and function to be determined), although this would not be a phase 1 element. Expanding the armory to the south would give it a presence on Valley St.

There are two concepts for approaching the landscape. The first is to create a plaza-like space adjacent to the street and have users cross the waterway to get to the heart of the site. Groves of trees would provide shade and an architectural framework for everyday users and to house maritime exhibitions. The second concept is more about the character of the site. The trees are an urban expression of a post-industrial space. They move through and cross into the park, an urban garden.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- The Maritime Heritage Foundation and the Center for Wooden Boats are struggling economically. Would like to know how this fits into the overall picture and how Seattle Parks and Recreation will move ahead with these organizations' episodic funding.
 - Proponents stated that the City is aware of the funding challenges faced by the Maritime Heritage Foundation, the Center for Wooden Boats, and other affiliated maritime heritage organizations. As a result, the City has asked the Seattle Parks Foundation, a stronger fundraising entity, to expand its commitment to South Lake Union Park to include major capital improvements related to a Maritime Heritage Center (specifically for now, the Historic Ships Wharf). This would allow the maritime organizations to focus funding efforts on operations and programming only. In addition, the City plans to allow the Maritime Heritage Center to develop in phases, to allow the organizations to grow over time.
- The Historic Ships Wharf on the north edge of the armory is already designed. Would like to know how the team will incorporate this.
 - Proponents stated that because of the delay in funding the completion of the wharf they have the flexibility to design the plaza/promenade and the water's edge around the wharf and modify details of the original design. However, at this point the plan does not suggest any changes to the details.
- Would like to know what the process is for determining what happens to Valley St.—whether it gets shut down, gets a bridge, etc.

- Proponents stated that no urban design or transportation work considers a bridge. The preferred solution is to make Valley St. a pedestrian street of no more than three lanes. Terry Ave. will be a full woonerf to give the notion that the park is extending to the south. The present version of the SDOT traffic analysis determined that Mercer St. will be eight lanes with possibly some parking, although Mercer St. will not solve the traffic problems. The final SDOT plan has not yet been completed. There is support for the parking garage that will be built to extend underneath three adjacent parcels, which will have 120 parking spaces for the park.
- Would like to know if Vulcan is considering mixed use for the building going in to the south on Valley St.
 - Proponents stated that is a prime consideration and will likely be mixed use with housing. The zoning is C65 with a shoreline overlay so it allows commercial uses, but with a waterway conservation add-on.
- Feels that there will be more of a bowl effect around the park with the higher buildings starting at Mercer St.
 - CityDesign staff stated that Mercer St. is part of the improvement concepts for the South Lake Union area. Although it will be big, it will have a median, wide sidewalks, and maybe even retail. Mercer St. will not be like Aurora Ave.; it will have a somewhat pedestrian feel.
- Feels that the site is more physically contained than originally thought.
 - Proponents stated that Terry Ave. and Westlake Ave. still provide long, axial connections.
- Is taken by the historical and industrial analysis and would like to know how it is informing the team's design and what the park will feel like.
 - Proponents stated that site underlay will be simple linear axes that become accessways. They will separate the site in some way from its surroundings to reflect that the land was added. Materials are important to reflect the character. They will use wood and steel and play off the linear patterns of the buildings that once existed. Proponents further stated that they are receiving and using much public input; for example, the Center for Wooden Boats suggested growing trees on the site that they could then cut and use.
- Would like to know about the geometry of the proposed canal.
 - Proponents stated that nothing specific has been determined at this point. These graphics show diagrammatically the two logical points at the bottom of each waterway being connected.
- Would like to know if the reason for the canal is to reestablish the notion of fill.
 - Proponents stated that it is.
- Would like to know where boats can come ashore and people can go down and touch the water.
 - Proponents stated that happens at the western-most edge of the site.
- The canal and bridge are not part of the master plan. Would like to know if proponents have ideas for what the bridge would be.
 - Proponents stated that it could be ephemeral and touch lightly so it does not obstruct

views. It could swing open to allow boats to pass through. Another option is to create a more permanent bridge, which sets up Waterway 3 as a safe place for canoeing and kayaking because there will not be any large boats.

- Would like to know if proponents are changing the shoreline at all.
 - Proponents stated that, for the most part, they are not because of environmental issues. They are making some changes along the western edge of Waterway 3 to improve habitat. If they were to make many changes, the dredging and significant activity would disturb sediments.
- Would like to clarify whether building the canal will disturb in the same way.
 - Proponents stated that it will not because it can be handled more surgically.
- Would like to know if Vulcan will extend any green space to the Burger King site.
 - Proponents stated that Vulcan is hiring architects to look at the site. There may be a connection across to the site or a connection to the small street end.
- Would like to know where people with canoes and kayaks will be able to unload/load their boats from/into their cars.
 - Proponents stated that may happen at the longhouse.
- Would like to know if the floats around the Center for Wooden Boats will be removed or impede boat mobility.
 - Proponents stated that those will not be removed, but they will be configured to make the space more accessible.
- Suggests, with hybridizing the concepts of displacement of urban land and natural evolution of land over time, that proponents use a looser geometry than their diagrams show. Feels that the north-south lines are obvious because they are continuous with streets, but other lines could be looser.
 - Proponents stated that the bridge connection is necessary, but whether it is a straight line and what the character of it is at each end has not yet been determined. For the canal, they will use something different from city geometry and it will reflect the geometry of water.
- Appreciates how the project has been presented and likes the idea of the water connection. Feels that is an issue in interpreting the city and so much of the land actively used is not linked. Supports the north-south links and would like to hear more about the bridge connection.
- Would like to know if proponents have investigated how much the storm drains are used and the level of pollution of the water Waterway 3.
 - Proponents stated that the storm drain gets activated during storm events. The water quality in Waterway 3 has a lot of room to improve. Proponents further stated that they are exploring the idea of incorporating treatment of tight-lined water, which is roof water, into the park.
- Would like to know how the water is experientially, how people will perceive it.
 - Proponents stated that it is fine.
- Congratulates the team on their view of layering and hybridizing of the urban and industrial, but encourages them not to separate. Would like to see the sacred and profane merged.
- Is troubled by the way the north-south axes create boundaries and urges proponents to have things bleed across like planting palate and treatment of topography. Would like to know how what proponents have learned about fish and water quality will be used in the design.
 - Proponents stated that the lake is salmon habitat. They are interested in creating access to

the water and exposing the relationship of this piece of land to the water. The bridge does have a sloped relationship to the water where there is a beach and wetland habitat. In addition, cutting the new canal through adds a new positive relationship.

- Would like to see, in the next set of drawings, the layers separated out and the edge conditions so they can better understand how it works from these various perspectives. Would like to see stronger transitions into adjacencies.
- Compliments proponents on the presentation and is happy to see the concern for connections as was demonstrated by the initial discussion of surroundings. There is the perpetual problem in Seattle of moving east-west and feels that the diagrams show tentative movement this way. Is concerned about the diagonal lines on the diagrams and feels that these are more variations on a theme rather than true alternatives. Would like to know where proponents think the heart of the site is currently and where they see it in the future.
 - Proponents stated that it is hard to find now and is more moments of activity than a heart. These moments of activity happen at the armory, Center for Wooden Boats, where there is parking, and where you can get to the water, but the rest of the site is a wasteland. The hearts of the future park will be at the west corner of the jutting piece of land and the southwest corner of Waterway 4.
- Believes that Seattle has a lot of jewels of open space, but the experience of getting to them or from one to the other is boring or frustrating. Most people who see these places are passing through in cars and would like to know if the space is going to be transparent for drivers so they can see through to views of water and mountains or if the park will be something architectural itself and the focal point.
 - Proponents stated that they did do user profiles of people driving and biking by. The park will not be totally open for views, but will create more louvered views, which will have different characters.
- Would like to know how big the park is.
 - Proponents stated that it is 12 acres.
- Feels that coming down to the park via Westlake, you go through both business and residential areas. Would like to know if proponents have looked at ways to engage SDOT to help make the surrounding streets part of the park.
 - Proponents stated that in the urban design analysis, one alternative was to have gateways and Westlake is definitely a major gateway.
- Would like to know what the issues are with regard to the two options for the trolley stop placement.
 - Proponents stated that if they put it on the south side of Valley St. and that side of the street gets developed as mixed-use retail, the stop will help enliven that neighborhood and urban edge. If the stop is put in the park, it brings people directly into the park, but it would require they give land up for the line and stop. The line does need to accommodate possible extension along Fairview Ave. and Eastlake Ave.
- Feels that the changes Valley St. create a new edge and spatial condition, which provide an immediate connection to the new park. This is critical to the success of the project. Feels that there is a rare opportunity here to change the block lines with the change of Mercer St. and Valley St. and that has to be positively conceptualized.
 - CityDesign staff stated that their working assumption, from the private development side, is that there needs to be a very strong urban edge on the south side of Valley St., Fairview Ave., and Westlake Ave.
- Believes that this notion must get to SDOT so they understand the edges of these streets are unique.

- Would like to know if proponents are changing the design of the previously approved wharf design.
 - Proponents stated that the first phase of that project, replacement of piling structure and installation of floats, is complete and funds are being raised to complete the project. There are opportunities to adjust the detailing structures on top of the decking, railings, and site furniture so that it fits with the park, but not specific changes are identified at this time.
- Is concerned with the grid of trees because this is filled land with poor soil conditions. Both landscape schemes rely on uniform, well-developed trees to form a grove and the trees may not grow uniformly in these conditions. Would like to know how this fits into the team's design approach.
 - Proponents stated that the wall structure, although it needs improvements, will not go away. Behind this wall, the earth has sunk and will have to be filled so they can put in better soil. Proponents further stated that they have experience planting trees in brownfield redevelopment sites and are confident they can create a system for healthy tree growth throughout the park.
- Understands the logic of the street through the middle of the site, but feels like it divides the street.
 - Proponents stated that they did start a scheme without the street, but brought it back because it is very strong. It is the only street that crosses directly into the park.
- Believes that the idea of a grove is a borrowed form and meaning. If the team wants to exaggerate real versus made and dirty versus clean, feels they should explore more unique, evocative forms.
 - Proponents stated that the grove can be agricultural, 17th century, etc., but it transcends all of those. They are looking for structure on a chaotic site, which the trees provide.
- Suggests the possibility of using a grove of native evergreens.
- Is concerned that the north-south lines are wide and thick and the grid is fragmenting the site.
 - Proponents stated that they hear the concern for rigidity and width of paves surfaces. The wide streets are merely diagrammatic and are supposed to represent the underlying idea of connections.
- Feels that for full integration, use, and functional sense of the site, the east-west connection makes sense.
- Supports the shifting of the main heart of the site so that the water more central.
- Feels that without the bridge the west area is orphaned.
 - Proponents stated that they cannot put the longhouse over there if there is not a bridge.
- Would like to know what the arts plan is for this.
 - Proponents stated that this project has been identified as a 1% for Art, but they it will receive more than one percent. An artist will be brought on in the spring as they get to selection of a preferred alternative.
- Feels that at Gasworks Park, you know when you have arrived. At the South Lake Union Park site there are more difficult conceptual problems and the site is more on the receiving end of things. Would like to know where the terminus or arrival point is.
 - Proponents stated that it will be toward the northwest corner of the jutting piece of land and will be more of a place than an object.
- Would like to know if it will be more of a built rather than a park solution.
 - Proponents stated that it will be, especially if they can transform the armory. There will be numerous termini, not just a single space.
- Suggests that a landscape solution should be considered and next time would like to see small social

spaces in the design.

19 Dec 2002 Project: Transportation Discussion

Phase: Staff Briefing

Previous Review: 5 December 2002 (Staff Briefing), 7 November 2002 (Staff Briefing), 3 October 2002 (Staff Briefing), 19 September 2002 (Staff Briefing), 5 September 2002 (Staff Briefing), 15 August 2002 (Staff Briefing), 1 August 2002 (Staff Briefing)

Presenter: None

Attendees: Sara Nelson, Richard Conlin's Office
 Lisa Rutzick, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use
 Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

Time: 0.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00231; 169 | DC00242)

Summary: The Commission appreciates the updates on the Viaduct/Waterfront planning effort and the Monorail project, and would like to make the following suggestions and comments.

- **The Design Commission recognizes that the key challenge facing the City is getting appropriate policies in place for managing the large upcoming transportation projects—it is not yet about what the systems will look like in detail, but what the relationships will be between the different entities charged with oversight;**
- **believes that how the Design Commission relates to CityDesign and the City's work needs to be clarified;**
- **acknowledges that a crucial step in the waterfront planning process is getting staff on board and a process in place in a timely fashion to coordinate with the work of the Viaduct design team and influence the EIS;**
- **believes that it is crucial to figure out what the Design Commission's relationship to the Viaduct and waterfront planning is and to what extent they will be involved in the Monorail so they can best strategize how to respond to both projects; and**
- **urges that, as a lesson from Light Rail issues in the Martin Luther King corridor, any technical questions about the Monorail with design implications be addressed early on.**

Viaduct/Waterfront Planning

There are four alternatives for the future of the Viaduct, the most recent and unique being the surface alternative. Details are not as fleshed-out as the other options, but it would be a six-lane surface boulevard. The City has some funding for the project for next year, but more is needed from the state to move forward with the project. The draft EIS will be done in about one year and at that point design freezes and the alternatives on the table must be tested.

There is support for going ahead with phase 1 of waterfront planning, which will start next year. The Mayor's office and SDOT are supportive as long as the planning meets the Viaduct schedule. So far, the first phase consists of public events sponsored by the Planning Commission and Design Commission, the first of which will be in the spring. These will lead up to a larger conference in September. There is one position funded for CityDesign that will be dedicated solely to waterfront planning. There will be a session in January the focus of which will be the surface alternative.

Monorail

A design team has been selected for the Monorail—VIA Suzuki. In addition, Norton-Arnold & Company will be working on public process and Parametrix will be the environmental consultant. A board has been appointed with several new members that represent the Ballard and West Seattle areas and there will continue to be more appointments.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

Viaduct/Waterfront Planning

- Would like to know how what the Design Commission and Planning Commission do should respond to those who want to fix what is there.
 - CityDesign staff stated that, according to consultants, base-isolation technology to brace the Viaduct and reuse it would not work. What is being talked about now with regard to using the existing Viaduct is just a temporary solution.
- Feels that the Commission discussion should focus on the value of the waterfront to the city and how that can best be expressed.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the Viaduct team has said the waterfront planning process helps them because if it comes down to making a decision between a couple alternatives, the principles and approaches for the waterfront developed in the planning process can inform that decision.
- Would like to know if the seawall issue is going to be addressed.
 - CityDesign staff stated that the problem is not as big as was originally thought, but is still big. Portions at the north end are in okay shape, so they are looking at dealing with it more surgically. In addition, there is the possibility of getting funding for this project from another source.
- Would like to know what the surface alternative capacity is.
 - CityDesign staff stated that it is about 70 percent of the current traffic.
- Feels that the option of tearing down the Viaduct while constructing the new structure should be explored because building the new and keeping the old functioning adds a lot of cost and two years to the project construction.
- Feels that waterfront planning process could be used as an example to clarify what the Design Commission does versus what CityDesign does.
- Would like to know how the question of what to do with the land on the east side factor in.
 - CityDesign staff stated that is a big part of it and is a hot-button issue because there is a public perception that that land is just going to be given away to developers.

Monorail

- Would like to know when there will be staff at CityDesign to work on the Monorail project.
 - CityDesign staff stated that that is being discussed, but has not been decided yet.
- Encourages CityDesign to consider how the Design Commission will be involved.
 - CityDesign staff stated that is a discussion they are having now, too. They are looking at

models of how it might work.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A representative from Richard Conlin's office stated that it is unclear now if the Monorail will be dealt with in a transportation committee or if a new committee will be formed. It is such an interdisciplinary project that there is a lot of interest from different people to be involved.

19 Dec 2002 Project: Light Rail Review Panel

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: 3 May 2001 (Update); 3 August 2000 (Schematics); 20 July 2000 (Schematics)

Presenter: Cheryl Sizov, CityDesign

Attendees: Kristin Jackson, north Beacon Hill resident
Sara Nelson, Richard Conlin's Office
Lisa Rutzick, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use

Time: 0.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 220 | DC00014)

Summary: The Commission appreciates the update on this project as work on the South Link winds down and looking ahead to early reviews of the North Link, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- **The Design Commission recommends that the Light Rail Review Panel (LRRP) staff refine the project summary matrix presented and offer it, along with the “Lessons Learned” document developed last year to the Seattle Monorail Project for their consideration;**
- **urges, as Sound Transit moves forward into further design and final designs on McClellan and Beacon Hill stations and in the north end, the City and Sound Transit to work together and respond to neighborhood conditions and concerns as were witnessed in the Martin Luther King corridor;**
- **recommends that the Martin Luther King Jr. Way (MLK Way) corridor and the issues/lessons learned that surrounded it serve as a model for how the City can lead corridor design and urban design issues with regard to other large transit systems, such as the Monorail.**

The LRRP was formed in fall of 1998 by the City and Sound Transit. The purpose was to consolidate reviews of the project by the Design, Planning, and Arts Commissions. Sound Transit funded one staff member, Cheryl Sizov, at CityDesign. The scope of what is to be reviewed is all aspects of the project within the City limits and some review has been done outside this for issues that require unification like signage. Originally, it was meant to be a two- to three-year effort, but it has gone on longer and they are now completing their fourth year of review. The panel has put together several reports including a “Lessons Learned” piece in response to the Monorail coming up. They are now working with Sound Transit to figure out the role of the LRRP in 2003 and talking about how and when the panel should be involved in physical engineering work because that is something that is decided early on before architects are hired and yet it affects the design.

2003 will be a light year. If there is funding for the North Link, an in-depth design review will take place in 2003–2004. A new staff person will be hired to take on the LRRP because Sizov will move to working more on Design Review Board. Staff is currently working on a survey to talk with panel constituents and ask how well they feel the job has been done so far. With 2003 being a slower year, the cohesiveness of the panel could dissipate, which will be the challenge for the new staff member. A summary of reviews shows that with many stations, multiple reviews were done in each phase and, in general, schematic design proved most troublesome. It is worth looking at more closely to figure out why certain stations require more review. In addition, there are other aspects that require individual review, not just the stations.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know when construction begins.
 - CityDesign staff stated that they have started construction of the maintenance base. Martin Luther King Jr. Way corridor will be started in the middle of 2003 to 2004.
- Believes that since the project is shifting gears to construction, there is an opportunity to get positive publicity. One of the problems is that the people-at-large do not see anything and are not told that anything is happening.
 - CityDesign staff stated that she agrees. For example, at the 90 percent review for the MLK Way corridor, the panel was very pleased with the outcome—they felt that it had very high-caliber art and was well integrated.
- Believes that there is a wealth of images that are not put forth yet, such as completed station area plans, that the public would really like seeing.
- There are system and miscellaneous elements like aerial guideways that the panel only saw to 30 percent because all the decisions had been made at that point; therefore feels it is important to emphasize with regard to the Monorail the importance of early involvement of commissions.
- Feels that this example/lesson could help prepare people involved with the Monorail and believes the board would benefit from hearing this information.
 - CityDesign staff stated that they are looking back and trying to figure out better ways to do this kind of review.
- Believes that Light Rail demonstrated that public process on a big project like the Monorail is a component that should be considered in the beginning.
- Feels that there is an opportunity for the Monorail project to glean lessons learned from Sound Transit and there needs to be some recognition that some of these could conflict with the fast-moving pace of the Monorail project.
 - CityDesign staff stated that there are many non-traditional design issues that affect design.
 - CityDesign staff stated that scope briefing and concept should be looked at because it might be more efficient to do some things all at once when they are not yet to design details. Schematic design is often where things broke down in Light Rail.

Key Visitor Comments and Concerns

- A resident of North Beacon Hill stated that she is concerned with the design of the Light Rail station in that area because the architecture does not fit with the Craftsman-style homes. In addition, four homes and five businesses will be lost and there are bad feelings in the neighborhood.

19 December 2002 Commission Business

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|-------------------------|----|--|
| ACTION ITEMS | A. | <u>TIMESHEETS</u> |
| | B. | <u>MINUTES FROM 21 NOVEMBER</u> —APPROVED |
| DISCUSSION ITEMS | C. | <u>PUBLIC OUTREACH UPDATE</u> —CUBELL |
| | D. | <u>HIGH POINT MUP DECISION</u> —CUBELL |
| ANNOUNCEMENTS | E. | <u>COMMISSION RETREAT</u> —JAN 9 TH , 2003, 9AM–3PM, SEATTLE
CENTER, CENTER HOUSE ROOM B |
| | F. | <u>TERRY AVENUE PLAZA OPEN HOUSE</u> —JAN 29 TH 2003 |
| | G. | <u>PONCHO</u> — CALL FOR ARCHITECTS |
| | H. | <u>ZOO CONSULTANT SELECTION PANELS</u> |

19 Dec 2002 Project: Leary Way and NW 46th Street Improvements

Phase: Schematic Design

Previous Reviews: none

Presenters: Mark Cole, Reid Middleton
Pat McGrady, Reid Middleton
George Frost, Seattle Department of Transportation

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00293)

Action: The Commission thanked the team for coming, appreciated the thoughtful analysis of the corridor, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- **The Commission supports and commends the places proponents are making improvements;**
- **supports making the street more comfortable and pedestrian-friendly with the use of street trees, parking patterns, curb bulbs, and lighting;**
- **commends the team for recognizing neighborhood plans, integrating their work into those, and conducting proactive public outreach; and**
- **recommends approval of schematic design.**

This street improvement project, which addresses Leary Way from 36th St. to 15th Ave. NW, is at 30 percent design and has had a previous City review. A value engineering study has recently been completed and out of that more recommendations have been made. The main purpose of the project is to provide more mobility and pedestrian safety with improvements in paving, curbs, and sidewalks. In addition, all signals will be upgraded and illumination and drainage will be enhanced. The completed improvements will leave Leary Way uniform all along this corridor.

The City hosted an open house in October for people to voice comments and concerns and give ideas of what they would like to see. The project area is a unique mix of uses: to the east and north there are dense residential areas and to the west a south it is a mix of industrial and some retail areas. In addition, the Burke-Gilman trail goes through this area. Leary Way cuts through at a diagonal making creative intersections with creative challenges. The proponents are familiar with this area and the traffic issues because Reid Middleton also worked on the Fred Meyer in this corridor. The last time the street itself received significant work was about 20 years ago and the street is not up to current standards including its lack of ADA access. Parts of the sidewalk are not there and some of what is there is heaved.

The traffic signals on Leary Way do not communicate with each other and these will be changed with all new controllers to coordinate throughout the corridor. The lights will all be brought up to current standards to provide a better flow of traffic. There are spots that are very light or very dark, so the lighting will be changed to create comfort and continuity. There are spots where the curb returns are six inches and places where they are one inch because over time asphalt has been added for patching. This has also limited the road's ability to carry water, which will be repaired. Additional inlets for catch basins in some places and maintenance of catch basins in other places will also improve drainage. There is currently a landscape strips in some areas and more will be added where there are outdated curb cuts leading to a net decrease in pervious surfaces. In these strips both grass and trees will be planted to create a continuous and uniform feel. While the goal is to make the corridor more pedestrian friendly, heavy trucks must still be accommodated. Curb bulbs will shorten crosswalks in some places to provide pedestrian refuge and one traffic signal will be added at NW 46th St.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Would like to know how big the right-of-way is.
 - Proponents stated that it is a total of 50 feet.
- Would like to know if they plan on reducing the sidewalk width.
 - Proponents stated that that decision has not yet been made and they will decide using the value engineering study.
- Would like to know more about the stormwater and sewer system.
 - Proponents stated that there are both dedicated stormwater systems and combined systems in the corridor. Places for an extra inlet or where curbs will be moved will be decided on a case by case basis.
- Is pleased that proponents are working with Shane DeWald. Believes that she is bound by strict rules and urges proponents to be flexible in favor of planting. Would like to know proponent's sense of net effect of traffic speed.
 - Proponents stated that the only thing that would impact vehicle speed is the signal system because the right-of-way will be the same width. From field observations in some intersections there is no reason for cars to slow, so they build up or maintain pretty fast speeds. The challenge is to figure out what to do to make cars slow.
- Would like to know if the timing of the signals is what would slow vehicles.
 - Proponents stated that the signals will be coordinated to minimize delay. A timing plan needs to be created that would minimize queue lengths.
- Would like to know if proponents are adding any parking patches along the street.
 - Proponents stated that there are typical parts along the street where parking is currently allowed from 10am to 3pm and they are keeping these but do not plan on revising the pattern. The only thing that would impact this is that people park in outdated driveways, which will be removed and planting strips added so a little parking may be lost.
 - Proponents stated that Shane DeWald emphasized her desire for not necessarily more grass, but more trees along the corridor in planting strips.
- Believes that there are not that many street trees in the photos presented. Would like to know if the hope is to get continuous tree-lined feel along the corridor.
 - Proponents stated that that is a hope and they will see how far they can get toward that end. They will end up with an inventory of existing trees, which will help point out where there is room to add trees. Another consideration is the impact of trees on illumination; placement of trees will need to be coordinated with placement of light fixtures.
- Would like to know if there are overhead powerlines on both sides.
 - Proponents stated that there are.
- Believes that these require 16-foot clearance and has practical concerns with the height of the trees.
 - Proponents stated that whatever is done above-ground will be reviewed Seattle City Light to make sure it is appropriate.

- Would like to know if the project includes the cost of the trees.
 - Proponents stated that the Neighborhoods Program of SDOT will generate the landscape plan and that will be incorporated into the bid package.
- Compliments proponents on cleaning up a chaotic situation. Feels that one way of looking at the street is that it is crazy and ignores the grid, but it can also be viewed as unique and distinctive. Believes that the latter should be the goal and it should be memorable because of the craziness. Is happy to hear the discussion of the pedestrian experience and that curb bulbs and narrowing of intersections will be used.
- Supports the traffic-calming efforts, but is concerned that the scale is so great and they are not conceding that. There is not much scaled for pedestrians. Would like to know if there are opportunities for lower-scaled lighting, how the trees will relate, and whether the continuity of parking could also bring down the scale.
- Would like to know what the plan is to improve safety and mobility for bikes?
 - Proponents stated that it takes an experienced cyclist to ride this road. A piece of the road has been barricaded so bikes can come across and up 8th Ave.. Proponents are hoping to calm one of the intersections to make it easier for cyclists to maneuver. They are looking at spots to make more bike-friendly, but are not able to make the entire corridor good for biking.
- Believes that improving curb cuts will make it safer for biking.
 - Proponents stated that the focus of this project with respect to bikes is to make it easier for them to get east-west and west-east.
 - Proponents stated that at 30 percent this is not a standard project. They are maintaining character, adding trees, and bringing the street up to code. In addition, they are looking at isolated areas for other improvements. With the Fred Meyer project, there was a mitigation fund, which will be added to this project's budget and likely be used for further traffic-calming work along the corridor.

19 Dec 2002 Project: Design Commission Annual Debriefing

Attendees: Erin Devoto, Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks and Rec)
Tony Gale, Fleets and Facilities Dept. (FFD)
Alex Harris, Seattle Public Libraries (SPL)
Sara Levin, Dept. of Finance (DOF)
Stu Nelson, Seattle Dept. of Transportation (SDOT)
Marilyn Turkovich, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use (DCLU)

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00009)

Summary: The Commission discussed issues and ways their work can be most helpful with representatives from several City departments they work with frequently. Department representatives acknowledged that it is good for the Commission to encourage and identify interdisciplinary partnership opportunities in projects, which elicit good responses from design teams, but partnerships do emerge on their own, as well. Department representatives noted that some questions raised by the Commission are beyond a project manager's scope and power and offered a couple of suggestions for realizing better dialogue, including conducting mutual information exchanges between new project managers and the Commission. The Commission vowed to be clearer about its recommendations and to clarify project-related comments from larger policy ones. There was general agreement on the merits of getting projects to the Commission early on, starting with pre-design. The Commission would like to see more small projects given to less well-known or younger firms and discussed the benefits of mentoring smaller/newer firms. Commissioners also suggested that departments might identify design liaisons on their staff to serve as key points of contact with the Commission and others on critical design issues. Department representatives suggested that the Commission do more with its public relations to make the general public and others aware of their work and purview. Commission staff pledged to follow up with each participating department in the next year on all the ideas and recommendations brought up throughout this discussion.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Is encouraged by the interdisciplinary links and opportunities that have come up and are reflected in City departments. Would like to know how even more work between departments could be made possible.
- Believes that, because the Commission sees all CIP projects, they see where City departments have opportunities to work with each other. Would like to know if it's fair for the Commission to make recommendations for departments to seek partnerships with other City departments.
 - A representative from SDOT stated that those recommendations are helpful. Feels that they do a lot of work with City Light and SPU, but not with other departments so there is not a lot of information flow.

- A representative from FFD stated that they do get together every few months with other departments to discuss projects. In addition, they are trying to come up with standards for this and are putting together a technical council made up of people from different CIP departments.
 - A representative from SPL feels that it is appropriate for the Commission to encourage collaborations, and stated that partnerships do emerge on their own, as well. Believes that there are different ways of doing business between departments and there are challenges in working with different departments, but it does make sense for some projects to be brought together.
- Acknowledges good Parks and Rec examples that are exemplary such as South Lake Union Park. Feels that they put together a good RFP to attract good thinkers/designers from all over the country. Also feels that for Oxbow Park, Parks and Rec found an interesting designer who came up with a fascinating and fun design.
- Believes that the City can nurture the next group of designers as in the wall at the Seattle Center. Originally, it was supposed to be done by a big designer and the Commission encouraged Seattle Center to get a smaller firm and the smaller firm came up with a great, creative solution. Feels that it is worth the risk on a small project to break the mold and nurture the next generation of designers.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec stated that that can work, but there is a rub in some cases because they need to develop a spending plan and schedules and once that is set into motion, they are held to that schedule. With less-experienced firms, the process can take longer and if things have not moved along as scheduled it can affect funding. Believes that mentoring at the front end for younger firms would be helpful so when they come to the Commission the first time it is fairly successful and the project is not held up.
- Believes that the selection process itself and the age, not size, of the firm help a project stay on schedule.
- Likes the idea of mentoring and acknowledges that CityDesign staff does counsel teams, but believes that the Commission could be involved in this, too.
- Believes that with a big project, smaller pieces could be given to less well-established firms. The larger firm with the big part of the project could mentor the smaller firms.
- Would like consultants to follow the Commission handbook like a roadmap.
- Believes that part of what the Parks and Rec representative was talking about is pre-design. The schedule does not always allow for this part of the process, but feels it is very helpful when it can happen.
 - A representative from SPL stated that the firms do not feel that they can defend themselves. Would like it made clear that it is okay for them to speak up and explain how they got to where their design is.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec stated that some of this stems from the implied assumption on the Commission's part that new firms know the procedures.
- Feels that it would be helpful for new/younger firms to come to a Design Commission meeting to help them understand how it works.
- Sees the value of mentoring, but this implies that if designers are responsive they will get an

expedited and good review, which is not necessarily the case.

- Has a concern with mentoring because it can become meddling and the boundary between is unclear.
- Believes that the Commission feels that crossing that line is not right and try not to give specific design suggestions.
 - A representative from SPL stated that that is the right thing to do and feels that it is appropriate for the Commission to ask a lot of questions. Understand the intent of this method and that the Commission does not want to take ownership of projects.
 - A representative from FFD stated that the most effective involvement can be outside the Commission meetings. Further stated than for the next major project they would like to see a regional firm selected and feels that the Commission can help set a precedent. If the Commission feels that it is objectionable to require a regional firm in the RFQ, would like to know early on.
- Believes that other agencies such as federal courts do not typically set location of firm as a parameter, but sometimes select younger firms and follow these closely.
 - A representative from SPL stated that, as an example, a accepting a proposal from a firm who had done mainly residential work was a risk, but resulted in intriguing and original work.
- Feels that some situations can be anticipated, such as if the firms has never presented to the Commission. Would like to know if there can be a more direct dialogue as to what is expected of them. Would like to come across as colleagues and have there be a back and forth dialogue.
 - A representative from FFD stated that having a member of the Commission as part of the interview team helps a lot.
- Believes that it makes sense for the Commission representative to sit in on an early meeting with the selected firm to talk about the Commission.
 - A representative from FFD stated that a scoping dialogue would be good.
- Points out that there are examples of projects where mentoring failed and the team came back with something no better than what was originally presented. Believes that there is not an equal level of awareness of design among departments and suggests that each department consider formally designating an individual who can act as a design liaison.
- With regard to the question of requiring a local designer in an RFQ, feels that the designers should give the possibilities and location not be a factor. A great local designer might win, but it should be kept open so the field is not narrowed unnecessarily.
 - A representative from FFD stated that local firms do not have the same opportunities as nationally-significant firms.
- Believes that Seattle is often a world-class city with an inferiority complex. The message, if the RFQ required a regional firm, is that it is closed off.
- Feels that some projects are self-selecting and that there is already a “we versus them” feel.
- Feels that, as a student, a dedication to regionalism and regional pride is exciting and the spirit of looking toward local designers is encouraging.

- Believes that sometimes someone from outside the region is able to capture the spirit of the place as well or better than someone within the area.
- Suggests that the Design Commission do a survey like the one planned for the Light Rail Review Panel to assess what they can do better.
 - A representative from FFD stated that a lot of project managers are fearful of coming in front of the Commission. Feels that an educational component describing the Commission's work and purview would allay these fears.
- Acknowledges that Commissioners do sometimes make a design suggestion and then back up and apply a principle to make it more general. Feels that it is sometimes easier to talk about physical changes to introduce a principle.
 - A representative from SPL stated that the Commission should think more about their role with regard to the general public. With many projects where the community is involved, the Commission only sees one or two people and do not hear all the conflicting voices. SPL goes through an exhaustive process with the community, hears many different points of view, and must respond to vehement advocates and opponents. It is important for the Commission to espouse a general philosophy and not tell someone to design in a certain style.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec suggested that when they get new employees who will be encountering the Commission, it would be helpful for these staff members to come in for a one-on-one session so they feel more relaxed and familiar in Commission meetings. Often project managers feel caught between a rock and hard place because they listen to a diverse public with diverse needs and the conflicting thoughts come across as confusing. There are questions that the Commission brings up that are interesting, but are beyond the scope and power of a project manager or architect.
 - A representative from FFD stated that some recommendations of the Commission ask for a change in scope of a project and the project manager and project designer cannot do that.
- Believes that the Commission does not understand the programming and policy concerns in some projects that come in. Feels that it would be helpful for small, low-key projects to be set in the context of the neighborhood so the Commission can understand how these add up to city-wide change. In addition, sometimes the Commission asks questions to get them back to Council.
- Feels that the Commission does need to be disciplined in speaking to the record rather than to the project manager. Would also like to see more discipline in hearing the public who motivates to come to a meeting and clarification that this is not a place for public debate.
- Believes that the Commission's message on projects is for the Council, Mayor, and the project manager and agrees that project managers need to know that they are speaking to the record.
 - A representative from SPL requested that the Commission, when a diversity of opinions have been stated, be clear in what has met expectation and what has not.
- Feels that, because every few years there are new Commissioners, there is not a lot of continuity. Believes that this used to be better and would like it to improve again.
 - A representative from FFD stated that there is not a huge difference and feels that the Commission provides high-quality feedback. Recommends that there be more PR around what the Commission does such as going into communities and talking to groups about

how it works and its purview.

- A representative from Parks and Rec stated that if there are overriding themes that emerge every year, it would be good to summarize those and let involved departments know.
- Would like some clarification as to where the design review realm fades and the owner/client kicks in.
 - A representative from SPL stated that, using the Greenwood Library as an example, toward the end of the review the Commission discussed the interior of the building. Understands that you cannot divorce the interior and exterior totally, but feels that the focus should have been on the exterior because it is more the public realm. In addition, the Commission should view the clients as public servants and recognize that they are more aware of the programming needs. Does not feel that there is a clear definition of where a project is handed to the Commission.
 - A representative from FFD feels that the interior of a building needs to be expressed in the exterior and vice versa. Believes there are buildings where this might not be the case, but feels the Commission should consider the interior at the early stages.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec stated that it is hard to divorce the interior and exterior, but when it comes down to it, programming may have to take a higher priority.
- Believes it is just a matter of who tells the architect/designer to go back to the drawing board.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec stated that the Commission Actions are confusing because they take a vote, but it is an advisory body.
- Agrees and would like to clarify that these are recommendations.
 - A representative from FFD stated that the Commission will see attempts to change bid contracts for design build, believes this could be a negative change, and would like the Commission to get out ahead of this situation.
 - A representative from Parks and Rec stated that they could use help from Commissioners in informing them of up and coming firms because they are continually asked to try to increase the use of new firms.