



Seattle Design Commission

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING 4 November 2004

Gregory J. Nickels,
Mayor

David Spiker
Chair

Charles Anderson

Pam Beyette

Karen Kiest

Hannah McIntosh

Anindita Mitra

Sheri Olson

Nic Rossouw

Donald Royse

Darrell Vange

Guillermo Romano,
Executive Director

Layne Cubell,
Commission Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Fifth Avenue NE Street Improvements
Northgate Open Space and Pedestrian Draft Plan
Environmental Action Agenda/Sustainable Design

Convened: 10:30am

Adjourned: 4:30pm

Commissioners Present

David Spiker, Chair
Karen Kiest
Anindita Mitra
Sheri Olson
Nic Rossouw
Don Royse
Darrell Vange

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Layne Cubell
Tom Iurino
Carrie Duncan



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Development

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November 4 Commission Business

ACTION ITEMS

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 07 OCTOBER: APPROVED—DUNCAN

DISCUSSION ITEMS

C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENTS—ALL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

D. WATERFRONT ADVISORY TEAM—11/10, 3-5 PM, RM. L280

E. MONORAIL REVIEW PANEL MEETING—11/8, 4-7 PM, RM. L280

F. DC/PC CHAIRS AND STAFF YEAR END CHECK-IN—11/23,
12-2 PM

G. COMMISSIONER FAREWELL/WELCOME RECEPTION—
11/19, 5-8 PM

H. DESIGN COMMISSION ANNUAL RETREAT—12/2, 8:30 AM-
12:30 PM, CENTRAL LIBRARY

4 Nov 2004 Project: **Fifth Avenue NE Street Improvements**
Phase: Schematic Design
Previous Reviews: 19 February 2004 (Preliminary Design)
Presenters: Jackie Kirn, Office of Policy and Management
Sandra Woods, Seattle Department of Transportation
Amy Yamabe, Seattle Department of Transportation
Shane Dewald, Seattle Department of Transportation
Attendees: Benson Shaw, Artist in Residence, Department of Planning and Development
Lyle Bicknell, Department of Planning and Development

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169| DC00327)

Action: The Commission would like to thank the team for presenting the schematic design for this project and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- Encourages proponents to take a bolder approach, work to clarify the design, and achieve a greater vision for the streetscape. States that the placement of street trees and medians appears ad hoc and inconsistent;
- Suggests that proponents make it clear that this is a commitment to a pedestrian-oriented environment;
- Appreciates the use of street trees along 5th Avenue, but encourages proponents to look closer at whether the current pattern of tree grates works to create the best pedestrian environment. States that longer, narrower planters would seem to be more effective;
- Further encourages proponents to make the planting areas and paving grid work together in a more creative and coherent way;
- Suggests that proponents explore ways to accommodate future streetscape improvements as the environment changes in the neighborhood;
- Strongly supports having all four crosswalks at the 5th Avenue/Mall Entry Drive intersection;
- Looks forward to reviewing the project again in Design Development;
- **6:1 in favor of approving schematic design.**

The SDOT team updated the Commission on the overall concepts of the Northgate Mall site, and discussed the following projects: unanimous consensus on the Thornton Creek Channel Project; the new Mithun/Lorig development at the South lot; the addition of new retail space at the mall; the Sound Transit Light Rail station and park-and-ride facilities; and the CTIP for the area. New urban design elements of the site include innovative storm water drainage, interlocking pavers at crosswalks, and an ecological approach to the site and street design in the area on a large scale.

Proponents reported the results of the 5th Avenue NE Streetscape Northgate Stakeholder Sub-Committee meeting that took place on 1 November, and stated that the team will respond to the sub-committee's report at a later date. The design approach taken with regard to street improvements include:

- Wider sidewalks: 13' wide on the east side, 8' clear and 5' tree grades;
- Winding asphalt path on 165th Street;
- Aligned curb cuts at the Mall and Civic Center;
- Planting strips;
- Ecological design and water feature.

The re-bidding of the Northgate Civic Center led to a delay of improvements, but construction will begin in January 2006.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Encourages proponents to look at the long term parking needs and garage plan and the full build-out desires of developers.
- Asks if there is funding for the Building Green Study.
- Asks about the lane widths on 5th Avenue NE, and if the scheme calls for bike lanes.
 - Proponents stated that the lane widths range from 10'-12'. The scheme does not include bike lanes.
- Asks if there is an on-street package.
 - Proponents stated that it is not precluded, but SDOT is conducting a larger transportation study.
- Asks proponents to clarify the size of the tree pit, stating the more generous the better. Asks about plant materials.
 - Proponents stated that they are 5' square, but could be reduced to 4' wide.
 - Plant materials include Norwegian Maples. The tree pits would include low plants at the edges. The project also calls for planted median strips that are modeled after Lake City Way's Multimodal Project. All plantings are appropriate to the urban area.
- Asks about bus stop locations.
 - Proponents stated that the location of the bus stops at the site will be coordinated with the Civic Center and METRO. The bus stops will include 20 pedestrian scale lighting fixtures in addition to streetlights.
- Asks if proponents have considered the tree pit intervals and the future package.
 - Proponents stated that they have been thought of, and can be fine tuned in the construction documents.
- Suggests that proponents try to match the pedestrian lights on both sides of the street.
 - Proponents stated that it can not be done in an unconventional style in a large area for maintenance and replacement reasons.
- States that proponents need to balance design goals, public safety, and standards.
- States that the design seems to be too haphazard. Suggests that proponents clean it up and make it more about design. As it stands, it seems to be too random and incoherent. All details seem to be

working against one another.

- States that proponents should strive for consistent geometries, tree plantings, and tree types.
 - Proponents stated that two types of trees will be used because they need to overhead the power lines.
- Suggests that proponents line up the trees and plants in the scheme to show design intervention.
- States that rarely do plans of systematic order get experienced on the street that way.
- States that proponents need to make the street more pedestrian-friendly. Encourages bold statements about the commitment to clarify pedestrians vs. vehicular efficiency. Both can not exist.
- Encourages proponents to think about the context of Northgate. It's not very pedestrian-friendly. Need to look at LT future as well.
- Suggests that the turning radius is the same for all entries and crosswalks at all four corners of the site.