

Seattle design Commission

Greg Nickels
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Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Raymond Gastil
Planning Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
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Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Julie Parrett

Nathan Polanski

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff



**Department of Planning
and Development**
700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000
PO Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

TEL 206-615-1349
FAX 206-233-7883

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

May 21, 2009

Convened 8:30 am
Adjourned 4:30 am

Agenda Items

DPD Planning Division Update, Ray Gastil
City Design Briefing
100 Republican Alley Vacation
Mountains to Sound Trail
Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement
Delridge Skate Park Plan Implementation

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Julie Parrett
Nathan Polanski
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Commissioners Absent

Julie Bassuk

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Jeff Arango

Celebrating 40 Years 1968-2008



May 21, 2009

Project: DPD Planning Division Update

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviewed: March 5, 2009

Presenters: Ray Gastil, Planning Director

Time: 1 hour

(220)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks thanks Ray Gastil for the information he provided on the Planning Division’s approach to neighborhood/station area planning, central waterfront planning, and Yesler Terrace redevelopment. Commissioners appreciate his drive to get people to consider what Seattle has done right in urban design, to see the potential of what Seattle holds, and to continue with its successes.

Presentation

The Department of Planning and Development is undertaking three neighborhood plan updates in the Southeast around the light rail stations— simultaneously continuing the outreach to groups traditionally under-represented in the planning process. Cultural and language barriers exist and the department is working to break down those barriers. They don’t have steering committees for these processes, which have been opposed in some neighborhoods so there was a question of who would be on the steering committee. Instead, they are trying to get people involved in the process early and to bring in both established neighborhood leaders and new people to the process. Recommendations will be completed by September. It’s been difficult to overcome the perception that the city has a “secret agenda”. The agenda is not secret, but rather is to increase density around the rail stations, which the city has been and must continue to be clear. However, the implementation of that goal can take many forms that need to be based on input from the local community. For the most part people seem to support increased density around the light rail stations and understand the benefits. Other priorities also need to be integrated into the process such as crime and safety. The recording of items, such as adding parking, was emphasized, but will not be implemented.

Open houses will be held throughout the summer in each of the neighborhoods. It is an opportunity for people to get to know their neighborhood plan better. A summary brochure will be provided at the meetings.

The Central Waterfront – The first central waterfront stakeholders meeting was recently held. The schedule has changed. They thought they were moving towards the RFP, but in looking at the schedule, it became clear that there will be such a long time until the viaduct will be removed. The seawall should be kept where it is and the road should be kept where the existing viaduct is and there will be a utility free zone closer to the waterfront. RFP will be issued in 2011. The stakeholder group is diverse and includes advocates for open space as well as industry.

It is important to recognize the design successes in Seattle, such as the IBM Building and Plymouth Congregation on University. One of the things that struck us about the Gehl study was that there was a lot of Seattle that may not have been seen – places outside the core including open spaces and neighborhoods.

Urban Design Framework for South Lake Union – not moving forward with an EIS yet. Discussing whether you can increase density to get more open space and the potential for investment in new public spaces.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

How involved are you in the Yesler Terrace Redevelopment?

They need so much money to redevelop the infrastructure that penciling out is a major issue. The current economy will make it difficult. It is a very interesting project, but I have not been extensively involved. It is an opportunity to introduce green on a larger scale such as a district energy system. The project has three concepts they are considering at this time. The project will require a project rezone. Density appears to be the biggest topic of discussion at this stage in the process.

At the meeting I attended on Yesler what I noticed is that there is a sense in the neighborhood that people feel dumped on, but by the end of the meeting that seemed to have shifted towards the positive.

We seem to have united people towards a common vision, achieved the impossible so to speak.

I found the biggest issues at the neighborhood planning meeting I attended were not density and zoning, it was economic development and community services.

There are some things we can do that may or may not make sense in the neighborhood plan update. The Office of Economic Development has a great program that may be referenced. We are also being much more clear about what the end result will be.

I think we should look at the downtown more critically, and there is always a tendency to come up with a big vision, but I experience the downtown on a much smaller scale. A block-by-block approach might lend itself to improving the design of the city and can provide a low cost method of improvements.

I don't disagree, that's why I mentioned the Plymouth building. Adding canopies instead of bus shelters is a way to improve the feel of specific blocks. The green alleys project is another example of more localized planning efforts.

In Redmond, they have an innovative housing program, but the public works department is requiring the same standards to be applied. A more integrated approach is needed. In Seattle, all departments are starting to talk to each other and combine to create an innovative project, such as the green street on Bell Street.

When you and Norie were talking about the experiential nature of Seattle I think there is a question of scale that we are missing, the design of the urban, the mezzo scale. If you look at the Philadelphia, the four major parks, as you experience the city you have these calls, and you don't get a sense of the whole. One of the struggles I've had is where does the urban form and conception come into the play.

In my view, the city has been a pioneer city that has impact the urban form. Philadelphia was methodically planned where as Seattle has reacted more to the times and economic pressures.

Our interpretation of how the dots are connected from our perspective in 2009, there is not any documentation of the thoughts of the planners back in the 50's and 60's dealing with Seattle Center or Pike Place Market and the neighborhoods we have, the bus tunnel, parks, Burke Gilman Trail. It would be good to have this in place somewhere so we can offer a rebuttal to the contrary notions of how things developed in Seattle.

Do we have time for the update to the Multi-family Code?

It's in the hands of the Council and if you would like an update I would speak to Council Member Clark.

May 21, 2009

Project: Center City Public Realm

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviewed: N/A

Presenters: Guillermo Romano, Executive Director Design Commission

Time: 1 hour

(168)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks Guillermo Romano for his presentation on CityDesign's Center City Public Realm concept work. Commissioners greatly appreciate that the group is looking at the conceptual level of how to approach public realm design of the streets in the Center City. The clear typology and hierarchy that will be provided with the concept is seen as a tool to guide planners in thinking through designs at a more detailed level. Especially when using an incremental, opportunistic approach this sort of framework can aid in achieving efficiency in how public funds are spent on improvements in the public realm.

Presentation

Guillermo went over the past efforts by the city to identify street typologies including The Blue Ring, Center City designation, and the SDOT street types. The Green ring is the Olmstead plan and The Blue Ring is a connection of streets connecting designations within the city. It also showed connections to areas outside the ring and was an urban design concept. The Center City Designation identifies the 10 neighborhoods in and around the center city and is aimed at a livable and walkable 24/7 downtown. SDOT street types identify major corridors, main streets, green streets, etc... Green streets were designated many years ago based on streets that didn't have high traffic volumes, but they are not part of a system or even connect to each other. Street projects include 3rd Ave., Bell St., Westlake, Pike/Pine, Madison Overpass and Denny Way. The approach thus far has been incremental and opportunistic. An urban design framework for streets includes numerous street classifications. However, the big picture needs a relationship between the two.

One concept that is being considered is creating a network of green streets as part of a public realm plan. Green streets should connect parks, but an overall framework is needed. A network of green streets between destinations should be completed. The challenge is that we need to define what we are looking to achieve. For example, should green streets connect parks or should major transit streets should connect two civic destinations? These types of questions need to be answered in order to establish a consistent framework.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

The key thing is where people are coming from and where they want to go. The risk is that you generate a green street because it's where no one is using it today. I think to understand those origins and destinations is important to take people where they want to get to.

More observation is needed to identify the existing conditions at the key intersections and perhaps little things are needed that can have a major impact

Where Broadway and Madison intersects is Seattle University and generates activities.

The key activity generators need to be mapped in more detail such as Westlake or Seattle University. As you are thinking of what you want to achieve, mapping these areas with precision will be important.

Celebrating these spots where streets cross keeps being mentioned, but I encourage you to think of other places to introduce place-making features.

It's not really about the intersections, but rather the nodes, one of the things that frustrates me, this reinforces a zone method or Blue Ring, and even though all these spokes are doing different thing, but they are all the same things in a way. One comment would be to look at the vectors as all achieving the same thing. It would be nice to build on what has already been done, such as the Blue Ring.

Let's look at this from the view of a citizen of Seattle, a set of guidelines that can be used when projects involving these streets are developed.

Yes, one of the applications will be for developers when new projects are approved and improvements that need to be done within the ROW.

I suggest you talk to the bike community to find out routes used to get out of this part of town that are more bike friendly and over time have become the preferred route even though they haven't been designated.

How does this sync with the bike and pedestrian master plans?

It is not synced very well and there are conflicting principles.

I think part of it is simplifying it, it becomes illegible because we have so many definitions for different streets and functions. It just seems like we can't keep track of all the different systems.

What I'm looking for is what we are looking to achieve

I'm becoming confused in this discussion. What are you trying to achieve? Is it something you can take to other city departments or bring to the public? The plan needs more than just graphics and an overall framework.

My audience is city departments and I don't want to generate new street designations. It can be used to prioritize spending on street projects.

This city is good dealing with concepts, such as the connection to the waterfront from Seattle Center. Concepts are good, but they have a limit. Politically, in order to retain your credibility and the value of your office you are wanting to stay within some effective range and have some assistance from the commission in rethinking these concepts. The arguments for what you are wanting are there, but you have to stop short of cloaking them in a Blue Ring cloak that isn't really necessary. Let's assume the Mayor says "that's it, that's the plan!" What happens next?

The value of having a document like the Blue Ring, even though it wasn't adopted by anyone, when you have a developer that wants to do something and the SDOT says no, the plan can be referred to as a means to guide the development and street improvements.

I can't tell you how proud I am of you. I've been a crab apple about the Blue Ring and I fully support what you are doing here. The concept diagram is not for the public, but it's a way to conceive. The fact that you have great streets with certain emphasis and green streets with others gives a clear distinction an order to the network.

May 21, 2009

Project: Mountains to Sound Trail

Phase: Concept Design

Last Reviewed: N/A

Presenters: Brian Holloway, SDOT

Attendees: David Graves, Parks and Recreation
Vaughn Bell, SDOT
George Frost, SDOT

Time: 1 hour

(169/RS0605)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks Brian Holloway from SDOT for his presentation of the Mountains to Sound Trail schematic design. This segment of the trail is one of seven missing links in what is a multi-use trail that stretches 100 miles from east of Snoqualmie Pass to Elliott Bay. Commissioners are glad to hear about the public outreach that underlies the ideas in the plan, and the attention given to the topography, natural environmental and various stakeholders in designing the elements of the trail. The Design Commission approves the schematic design as presented by a vote of 7-2. The dissenting votes are due to the flaws in the routing, the decoupling of phases I and II and doubt about the safety of use Holgate as a bicycle connection to the sound. The approval includes the following recommendations:

- Please consider the proposed routing of Phase I and the cost of providing this temporary spur. Linking to Jackson, a well traveled bike route, might eliminate the necessity of the trail down to Holgate. Engage the future bike users of the trail in the discussion on usability and routing, and approach the Bicycle Advisory Board soon for their input on the issues.
- Commissioners are aware of the goal of Mountains to Sound to remain in the I-90 right-of-way and to provide natural vegetation and habitat, but ask that cost effectiveness and usability be given weight in the routing decision also, especially in consideration of the location in a more dense urban setting.
- Integrate art early on in the project. Consider perhaps lighting under the bridges when considering the possibilities for art.
- Give attention to the existing plants along the new trail and be certain that the plantings are healthy and sustainable.
- Integrate the Mountains to Sound trail with both regional and local needs.
- For Phase II consider connecting to the existing street grid and not constructing a new bridge crossing I-5 when there are two existing ones that can be used.
- If a bridge must be built, consider doing so at a narrower part of I-5 than what is proposed, if possible.

Presentation

Mountains to Sound is a non-profit organization and WSDOT, SDOT and Seattle Parks and Recreation are all involved. WSDOT is doing the design and providing funding, the city will own and maintain the trail.

Formed in 1990, Mountains to Sound was established to preserve wildlife and goes from Central Washington to the Waterfront. The project provides a missing link between SR 519 and the western terminus of I-90. The project

has two phases, one to Holgate Bridge and the second phase will cross I-5 to the west. Crime is a major concern just to the east of I-5. Adding people and activity to the area may help.

The project is in design, which will continue through the first quarter of 2010. The project budget includes money from the Parks levy and a PSRC grant.

Design features – Landscaping with a 2 to 1 replacement. Visibility is important because of the history of crime. There will be a 30' clear area along with fencing in some locations to keep people away from the freeway and minimize encampments. Lighting will be added on the trail because of the crime concerns, which is not typical of most paths in the city. Cobra headlights will be used because they are cheaper and less vulnerable to vandalism. Way-finding signs will also be introduced. Rest areas that may include art and pedestrian furniture will be incorporated in further design development.

The trail will be extended under the Jose Rizal bridge to cross I-90 from north to south. The trail continues along the east side of I-5 headed south. Phase II will cross I-5 at the junction of I-5 and I-90.

The trail ends at Holgate Avenue for Phase I. Signage will be added to identify the trailhead along with landscaping.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

What is the plan to cross I-5 in Phase II?

The original plan was to have a pedestrian bridge across I-5. It is still the plan to have a pedestrian crossing, but we will need funding. Phase I will give access to the waterfront using an existing bridge along Holgate.

Why go through Jose Rizal Park rather than go over Jose Rizal Bridge and use existing streets?

My understanding is this is more attractive by using the forested area and the community believes it will help reduce crime.

Is anything going to happen from Holgate to the waterfront?

No. I would have to talk to the bike/ped people about this issue.

The route would be over Holgate and then head north up 4th Avenue and over the Edgar Martinez Bridge.

I'm trying to grapple with the logic here. The Phase II bridge is at a very wide crossing, could it be located further south at a more narrow crossing?

I have been focusing on Phase I so I don't have that information.

Wouldn't Phase I become obsolete once Phase II is built?

No, because it's the WSDOT access road and would continue to serve that function.

Will there be lighting under the Rizal Bridge?

Yes, it is too dark under there.

I'm wondering if there has been enough communication with people that use the trail and the bike community. I would really question whether people would use that spur rather than go a different route to get into the city center and places to the north?

The community was pleading for this at a community meeting I attended and we were contacted by the Bike Board for a presentation, but I don't feel the design is far enough along to have that discussion in the level of detail the Bike Board will want to see.

I encourage you to meet with the Bike Board to discuss the routing, which is essential to the success of the project and particularly relative to the topography. Only a small portion of the bike community will use streets with steep grades.

It seems there are some contradictions in the project, the wooded area is not conducive to wildlife because of its proximity to the freeways.

You talked briefly about the incorporation of artwork into the project. I encourage you to bring the artists on board early in the project to save costs and provide better coordination.

We are looking at funding for art now and looking at other sites that may be more conducive to art investment.

I encourage you to look at perhaps using interesting lighting under the bridge.

Is that green forested area healthy?

We have done some plant management in Jose Rizal Park and we've been removing invasive species. When you get south of that in WSDOT ROW that work hasn't been done and invasive species exist.

Make sure that the green component is sustainable and appropriate for the area. Its future depends on the nature of that vegetation and there is no guarantee that it will remain that way.

In some cases, areas are so overgrown with invasive species that the only option is to clear-cut the area and replant it with native plantings.

May 21, 2009

Project: Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviewed: January 15, 2009

Presenters: Steve Pearce, SDOT
Teresa Greco, WSDOT

Attendees: Susan Mueller, Aquarium

Time: 1 hour

(228)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks Teresa Greco and Steve Pearce for the update on the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement project. Commissioners believe that engaging an on call architect for advice on urban design issues that come up during the process is a very good thing to do. The predesign and programming may be the most important aspect of the planning effort. The Commission appreciates that the project leadership team will be having good visualization provided along the way, and encourages them to use the media to bring people into the process and keep them informed. Commissioners hope there will be opportunities to celebrate the processes every step of the way, and to push everyone beyond the usual modes of thinking on the urban design solutions. There is concern at the lack of confidence that the design quality will be good enough to endure a long planning process. In Commissioners' experience, although some ideas may fall by the wayside, the core ideas endure. For a complex of infrastructure that will last longer than a lifetime, a design period of eight years is not unreasonable.

Presentation

We have started three stakeholder groups in the north, south and central portions of the project. Much of the material being presented is still fairly informal and there are some areas that we are not quite ready to address. None of the options for the north portal will be presented until this evening with the stakeholder group.

The project is moving forward very quickly. We don't have a strong tunneling aspect within WSDOT. Experts were brought in to figure out how to contract the work. A three-day tunnel contracting workshop was held in March. It will be the largest tunnel in design in the world. The total project budget is \$2.8 billion; Seattle property owners that will benefit from the bored tunnel will pay for any cost overruns.

South Portal – The working group to inform the design, including access into and around the south entrance to SR 99, urban design qualities, construction and environmental review.

The Design Commission expressed an interest in having one member on each of the stakeholder committees. Teresa Greco and Steve Pearce agreed to look into the possibility.

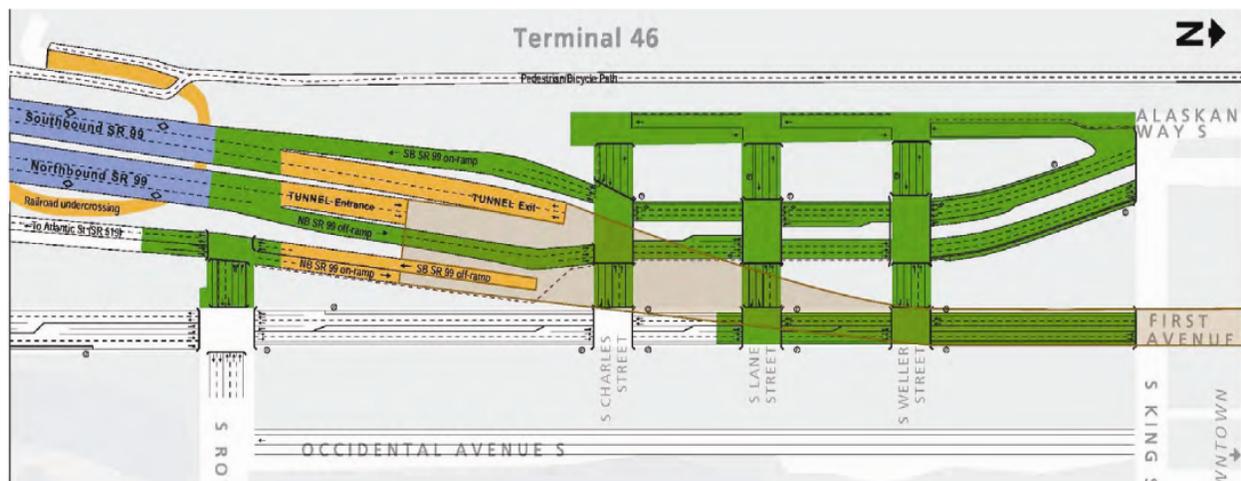
South portal – the launch site for the tunnel boring machine will be immediately west of Qwest Field at Royal Brougham Way. Making a graceful transition between the tunnel and SR99 is a major goal of the city including bicycle and pedestrian connections.

South Portal Concept A is the Preferred Concept. We like the graceful transition between the tunnel and surface streets in the city. New city blocks will be created. The concept minimizes elevated ramps and maintains an urban environment. The pedestrian bike trail will be included to the west of the southern terminus of the tunnel.

SOUTH PORTAL CONCEPT A

Goals

- Keep people and goods moving safely on SR 99.
- Maintain freight access to and from the port and the manufacturing industrial center.
- Provide access to/from SR 99 in all directions.
- Maintain efficient operations on the arterial street network.
- Enhance and/or maintain transit service in and through the SR 99 corridor.
- Improve bike and pedestrian connections to and through the area.
- Improve the urban character of the portal area.
- Maintain access to the ferry terminal.
- Open bored tunnel to traffic by the end of 2015.
- Complete improvements within the established budget.
- Minimize construction impacts.



South Portal Concept A

Advantages

- Reduces risk of settlement by tunneling under street.
- Roadway geometrics – grades less than 5%.
- Provides access for staging area at state property (WOSCA).
- Keeps Alaskan way viaduct open during tunnel construction.

Disadvantages

- Construction disruption along first avenue
- Utility relocation.

NORTH PORTAL

The north portal is less defined at this point.

Work Group Purpose

- Design, including access into and around the north entrance to SR 99
- Urban design qualities
- Construction
- Environmental Review
- Mercer West Corridor Design

Goals

- Keep people and goods moving safely on SR 99
- Provide freight access for Ballard/Interbay and port facilities
- Provide access to/from SR 99 in all directions
- Maintain access to downtown from Aurora Ave. North
- Maintain and/or enhance transit service and reliability
- Maintain efficient operations on the arterial street network
- Improve the urban character and reconnect adjacent neighborhoods
- Open bored tunnel to traffic by the end of 2015
- Complete Improvements within the established budget
- Minimize construction impacts
- John, Thomas and Harris will be reconnected across SR 99 at grade. The north portal will be just south of Mercer Street.

CENTRAL WATERFRONT

A timeline of the bored tunnel project was shown. Alaskan Way and waterfront promenade will be constructed between 2016-2018.

Goals

- Alaskan Way surface street function/configuration

- Connection from Elliott/Western to the waterfront
- Bicycle and pedestrian connections
- Construction
- Environmental review
- Seawall replacement

We need to address the design holistically including the seawall, Alaskan Way, the promenade and infrastructure. An interdisciplinary team is needed lead by urban designers and architects but also including engineers, habitat specialists, artists, and others.

Function of the Alaskan Way

- A through corridor
- Access to an through downtown from the north and south
- A freight route
- local access to the waterfront
- New north-south bicycle facilities
- Transit access
- Improved pedestrian access

Conceptual Design for Alaskan Way

- Be located where the existing viaduct sits today
- Have six lanes (plus turn lanes) between king and Columbia streets
- have four lanes (plus turn lanes) between Marion and Pike Streets
- Include an Elliott/Western connection over the BNSF tracks.

Total of 9 acres of new open space with the promenade, it's approximately 80' wide. Open spaces will be created to the north in Belltown.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

At the north portal, will developable land in blocks be created as at the south portal?

We are not disrupting the north as much as the south. In the south you have a large industrial site that will be redefined with the new street grid. There will be opportunities, but they will be subtler. It's more about connectivity up here.

This is an opportunity to develop a new method for doing things. It would be great if the news or information media could get attracted to documenting the process and bringing people into the city building process.

I'm discomforted with the concept that we are only comfortable with design that is ready to go at the start of the project.

I worked on the I-90 corridor and that happened to a degree when by the time the project was completed the community had a somewhat different notion of what they wanted.

It's critical to have designers within the working group so that it is a factor in the design of the project from initial conception.

May 21, 2009

Project: Delridge Skatepark

Phase: Schematic Design

Last Reviewed: N/A

Presenters: Fred Ogram, Abbotswood Design Group
Kelly Davidson, Parks and Recreation
Micah Shapiro, Grindline Skatepark Design

Attendees: John Schwartz, Keller CMS

Time: 1 hour

(169/RS0605)

ACTION

The Design Commission unanimously approves the schematic design of the Delridge Skatepark. The Commission thanks the design team for a wonderful presentation and appreciates the good contextual information and thought behind the location selection and consequent design. The community involvement that was elicited and followed is commendable, and it's great that there is so much community support for the project. It is great that even with the lack of percent for art funds, the park is looking for ways to involve artists, possibly from the neighborhood, and to look for other sources of funding for the artwork. The Commission agrees with the site selection within the park. The team seems to be responding well to the public's needs and creating a well thought out design within a limited budget. Commissioners appreciate that space was left to add to the facility later if possible and necessary, and that places for spectators were also included. The fact that all trees were preserved in the design is especially commended.

The Commission has the following recommendations:

- Please consider providing a "toddler barrier" between the skatepark and the adjacent wading pool.
- Amenities in that area (above) should be included in the initial project scope and not provided only if later funding can be secured.
- Consider using gravel for the paths around the outside of the skatepark to signal to users other than skaters that those areas are for them too.
- Explore ways to refer to or draw from Longfellow Creek, which is currently the subject of much community action and interest.
- Consider carefully how to involve the public in the design of the proposed art work. Be sure that the art is unique to this location and related (if possible and feasible) to skateboarding, is of high quality professional work which does not necessarily involve the public in the making of the artwork itself, but rather looks to the public for information, stories, and other input which might feed into the artwork conceptually or be otherwise reflected in the work.
- The grayness of the concrete might be visually boring, and we encourage thought about color, textures and other ways to add visual interest to the skating bowl and other elements.

Presentation

The Delridge Park Skatepark scored very high on the city's rating system for parks. The neighborhood has shown tremendous support for the park at the public meetings that have been held.

The next public meeting will be at the end of June to get feedback on the schematic design. Public art has not been designated yet, but the community has been awarded a small and simple grant to try to bring more people into the community that will include a call to artists, develop a design and apply for the \$100k for art.



Delridge Park Skatepark Site Plan

Site is located to the east of West Seattle Golf Course in West Seattle. Existing site is a mature park with existing elements including park, a splash area and play fields. Our program is to develop a 10,000 square foot in-ground concrete skate park. They developed three potential sites within the park for the skatepark.

Site 1 was chosen by the community as the preferred site. The site was then analyzed to determine the most appropriate location within Site 1 for the actual skatepark. The next objective was to develop the program for the elements within the skatepark.

The design of the bowl was influenced by the feedback from the community. They wanted something that beginners and experts would enjoy. The park includes a skate way on the perimeter that is linear and doesn't create conflicts with cross traffic. The park is designed to be integrated with the rest of the park. No lighting is part of the current plan, but the skateboarding community has requested it.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

How many trees will you have to cut down?

None.

Can you skateboard in the rain?

No, you can't skate the bowl when it's wet.

In the spectator area between the spray zone and the skate park, perhaps some benches that look both ways could be incorporated.

There is a bit of tension between the spray area and the skate bowl and the potential for young kids to fall into the bowl.

How will the benches be paid for and provided?

The Parks Foundation has benches that can be used to be provided for the project

Low plantings or some other buffer to prevent toddlers from running towards the skate bowl might be a good addition to the project and should be included as part of the project budget.

I was intrigued by the grayness of the concrete. Do you ever work with other colors?

Yes, we have used it. It doubles the price of the concrete. We are considering it with this project

The paths that you are showing adjacent to the skatepark, are those gravel?

Yes, they are gravel as that is what is existing in the park.

A few hundred feet to the west is Longfellow Creek, where there has been a lot of effort to restore. Perhaps a wayfinding element to tie into the park should be considered.

Will this be the largest skatepark in the city?

No, the Woodland Park skatepark is 17,000 sf.

Skateboarders like to take photographs and be able to identify the location simply from the photo, have you considered this?

We design each skatepark to be unique, so that will be an identifier, but the budget is a limiting factor in creating a unique identify that is easily identifiable from a photo.

Of all the sites, if you had not had the community vote, which site would have been your first choice?

I like this site, it's shaded and you can get a bowl fairly easy because of the grade change. Site 2 is obviously much larger, but it would've been difficult to get a bowl, some would need to be above ground.

May 21, 2009

Project: 100 Republican

Phase: Alley Vacation

Last Reviewed: April 2, 2009

Presenters: Brian Runberg, Runberg Architecture Group PLLC
Jason Henry, Berger Partnership

Attendees: John Schwartz, Keller CMS
Courtney Kaylor, McCullough Hill
Melissa Wechsler, Runberg Architecture Group PLLC
Bob Burkheimer, Burkheimer Family, LLC
Beverly Barnett, SDOT

Time: 1.5 hours

(170)

ACTION

The Design Commission approves the public benefit package of the 100 Republican Alley Vacation project, except that if the setback to the townhouses along Warren Ave N is necessary to meet code it shall not be considered a public benefit. The Commission thanks the design team for yet another very clear and concise presentation. The following recommendations were made:

- Coordinate with SDOT on marking the pedestrian crossings at Republican and Warren either with striping or by raising the paving at the intersection.
- Extend the curb bulb that is proposed at Republican and Warren further west on Republican to the west edge of the plaza.
- Better integrate the art piece into the site, considering its relation to other objects in the plaza and right-of-way. Optimally it might be placed in the right-of-way as a finale to the axis of August Wilson Way.
- Reconsider plans for rotating the art pieces in the plaza. Compensation of the artist, and the decision-making on the art are of concern
- Be diligent in how the stairs are integrated, paying attention to avoiding edges that appear “gnawed out.”
- The bike racks that are provided should be simple and functional, and not compete with the art piece.

Presentation

The last meeting with the commission was to review the design merits. This meeting is to review the public benefit package.

Peter Donnelly Gardens will be developed to the east of the project site, which is located between 1st and Warren Ave. on Republic Street immediately to the north of Key Arena.

Public Benefits:

- 2,000 SF public plaza located to relate to Seattle Center and August Wilson Way
- SE Corner setback opens up to Seattle Center and the Theater Commons

Design Commission recommendations from review of design merits (April 2, 2009)

- Explore traffic calming on Republican Street in response to consolidation of driveways across the site
 - Curb bulb has been added the corner of Warren and Republican to reduce the widths by 6' on Republican
 - 8' setback on Warren
- Consider building on public space potential on the SE corner of the site
 - 18-19' height on the first floor retail space on the corner. An additional 3' to 8' voluntary setback to add 210 sf of space
- Explore moving the curb cut on Warren Ave. to the south to consolidate townhouse development and further separate vehicle access to the site to increase pedestrian safety.
 - They moved the curb cut to the south, access to 60 stalls on one level. 171' between the new alley and the new curb cut. The new curb cut is 101' from the Warren and Republic Intersection.
- Lend more attention to the art component of the project, including consideration for how an artist will be selected
 - A space has been provided in the front of the plaza along Republican. They are looking for small footprint vertically oriented pieces.
- Extend the thoughtful and dynamic landscaping along Warren Ave to the plaza and other street frontages
 - The uptown alliance has its own street light of historic character that must be included in new developments and we've worked with them to develop locations and spacing. Banners will be included on the existing cobra headlights. Bike racks are incorporated along both Republic and 1st Ave. Hanging baskets and small-scale planters will be incorporated on 1st and Republican. Custom bike racks will be used in the project.
- Street trees, bike racks and lights will be added and the sidewalk goes from 10'6" to 13'6" minimum.

Commissioners' Comments and Questions

What is the intent or attitude about crossing at the corner of Warren and Republican?

It is not marked currently and we are meeting with SDOT on this issue as well as the introduction of curb bulbs.

Is there a second plaza above the ground level plaza?

Yes, but it's private and there will be a gate at the top of the stairs perpendicular to the stairs so it won't be visible from the bottom of the stairs.

Do you intend to have parking in front of the plaza on the street?

We haven't addressed that issue with SDOT, but we could envision it for loading or short-term parking.

Could you go into more detail on the landscaping in the plaza?

The planting will soften the edges and be located adjacent to the seat wall in the center of the project. A larger tree will be incorporated into the larger bed near the seat wall. Tree grates will be used in the high traffic area along Republican.

I don't mind the idea of temporary art in the plaza, but I suggest there be a program and management structure to maintain it over time. I really feel you need to commit to the artists if you are going down this path to pay them some kind of rental fee and prepare the site for them. You might want to consider whether temporary is the way you want to go.

Even if it is temporary, it will be displayed and installed as if it were permanent. I certainly understand your concern on this issue.

The standing planters on Republican, they look pretty small. Are they large enough?

They are small footprint, but very vertical. The space is already cluttered and hard to negotiate. We definitely want it to be big enough without taking up a large footprint.

I support the curb bulb and consider it a wonderful additional. Moving the driveway is a great move. I like the plaza and the steps as a seating area. I'm not sure the art is enhancing the space as much as it could be. I would rather see more energy in nice places to sit and more greening of the space.

Consider extending the curb bulb to the east of the plaza and to the driveway to the north at the new curb cut along Warren. Another idea is to add another seating area to the east of the stairs to provide book ends and another view of the art installation.

The curb bulb is a contradiction. It still gives 36' on Republican that creates 28' in travel lanes with an 8' parking lane. It's too wide.

We've had a lot of discussion here about bike racks and I would suggest that you not get too cute with the bike racks, that they are clean and simple.

I do support the public benefits. I like the Spanish steps concept and the sun exposure, but the little lobby building entrance on the side seems to be a bit flimsy.