



APPROVED MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Diane Sugimura
Director, DPD

Mary Johnston
Chair

Andrew Barash

Julie Bassuk

Graham Black

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Laurel Kunkler

Julie Parrett

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Tom Iurino
Senior Staff

November 19, 2009

Convened 9:15am
Adjourned 3:00pm

Projects Reviewed

Rainier Beach Community Center
Ballard Roadside Rain Gardens
Denny Way Access Program

Commissioners Present

Mary Johnston, Chair
Andrew Barash
Julie Bassuk
Graham Black
Brendan Connolly
John Hoffman
Laurel Kunkler
Julie Parrett
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Tim Trujillo



**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



November 19, 2009 **Project:** **Denny Way Access Program**
Phase: Concept Design
Last Reviewed: N/A
Presenters: Darby Watson, SDOT
 Geoff Wentlandt, DPD

Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
 AJ Yang, UW student

Time: 2:05pm – 3:00 pm

(000/RS0000)

ACTION

The Design Commission thanks Darby Watson and Geoff Wentlandt for the presentation on the Denny Way Access Program. The Commission is excited to see the close collaboration of SDOT and DPD staff on this effort to improve Denny Way. Both departments drew from and expanded on the vision and institutional knowledge of the other department leading to a strong set of ideas. The Commission supports the idea of recharacterizing Denny Way from a hard divide between South Lake Union and the Denny Triangle to a north-south gateway between the neighborhoods. The Commission has the following recommendations:

- Look for secondary pedestrian routes along the corridor to get a better understanding of the existing paths people take. It may be necessary to draw people out of their known path habits.
- Consider not just cars and pedestrians but also the potential for high capacity transit along the corridor.
- Encourage team to continue working with the Fire Department on issues of roadway width.
- Consider using more greening to enhance the north-south gateway character of the corridor.
- Analyze the proposed changes based on a full build out scenario of the properties along the corridor.

Project Presentation

Project Background

This project aims to improve speed and reliability as well as reduce collisions and confusion by reducing the number of low-volume side streets that allow access to and from Denny Way. Additionally, the goal is to fulfill the intent of the Complete Streets Ordinance.

Problems that exist are:

- Skewed intersections
- Inefficient mobility patterns
- Confusing to navigate

Project Design

Concept level street design aims to:

- Increase the amount of open space in the area.
- Increase way finding.
- Provide transit waiting space.

- Provide additional Denny Way crossings.
- Allow a series of pedestrian eddies.
- Maintain a consistent edge along the right-of-way.
- Allow for planted areas and pedestrian bulbs.

As a result, the design team:

- Suggests that a leg of right-of-way (ROW) be used as green space and could be used for non-vehicular activities.
- Intends to amend the Right-of-Way Maintenance Improvement Manual

The current goal is to begin street closures and reconfiguration in 2010.

A lack of fire access regulations has created a need for additional cooperation among departments. There are inherent design issues due to skewed intersections which provide opportunities. The design team is currently studying alternatives for improving the right-of-way.

Additionally:

- Traffic volumes are being reviewed along Denny as well as some neighboring streets and intersections.
- The design team would like to review the cumulative traffic impacts of their intended improvements.
- The design team will evaluate existing parks and accessibility and proximity in an attempt to determine whether there is a need to install a pocket park if green space is lacking.
- The design team will develop design criteria for surplus ROW.

Design alternatives will be developed and then the ROW Maintenance Improvement Manual will be amended.

Commissioners' Comments & Questions

Is there an overarching concept plan for the Denny Way corridor?

Denny Way is a major street connecting Cap Hill and Seattle Center. Improvements need to extend up to Cap Hill instead of ending at Stewart .

Is this the first time we have had this kind of cooperation between SDOT and DPD? We recommend that this type of cooperation continues. It is important for this to be continued with the incoming administration.

No, this is not the first time for this type of collaboration.

Stress the importance for these types and level of drawings.

The Design Commission supports the re-characterization of Denny Way.

Given speed and reliability, is there any consideration for mass transit in the future?

Not at this time.

There is some concern for a secondary, parallel pedestrian access system developing in some areas. This should be explored for its potential use.

There is some concern for messaging and signage for traffic moving north across Denny Way. New configurations will modify the existing structure and create confusion for some time.

Might Warren and 1st Ave be a good opportunity to close up and redevelop the intersection?

What are the building height limits in the area? This change in intensity will greatly affect the characteristics of the streetscapes and traffic volume at full build-out of South Lake Union, Denny Triangle, and Belltown.