

# Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation

**Jenny A. Durkan**  
Mayor

**Samuel Assefa**  
Director, OPCD

**Brianna Holan**, Acting Chair

**Justin Clark**

**Mark Johnson**

**Rick Krochalis**

**Amalia Leighton**

**Vinita Sidhu**

**Lucas Whitesell**

**Elaine Wine**

**Michael Jenkins**  
Director

**Valerie Kinast**  
Strategic Advisor

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## Commissioners Present

Justin Clark, Acting Chair  
Mark Johnson  
Rick Krochalis  
Vinita Sidhu  
Lucas Whitesell  
Elaine Wine

## Commissioners Excused

Brianna Holan  
Amalia Leighton

## Non-voting Commissioners Present

Elizabeth Conner

## Non-voting Commissioners Absent

Azzurra Cox

## Project Description

Seattle City Light (SCL) is petitioning to vacate a segment of Diagonal Ave S between 4th Ave S and the BNSF railroad tracks in the SODO neighborhood. This segment is adjacent to SCL's South Service center and is currently used for storage under a previously approved street use permit. The project team is proposing to use the vacated ROW to make improvements to the existing South Service Center. The public benefit proposal includes providing additional open space within the Georgetown neighborhood that will integrate with the Georgetown to South Park Trail. The proposed project will be reviewed as both a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project as well as a street vacation.

## Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) third review of the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the concept design phase (60% design) for the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project and the Public Benefit proposal for the vacation request. The SDC took two separate actions during today's meeting. The SDC approved, 6-0, the schematic design phase for the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation project and does not require any additional reviews. The SDC then approved, 6-0, the public benefit proposal for the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation project with several recommendations.

## Recusals and Disclosures

**Amalia Leighton** Disclosed that her employer is working with SDOT on the South Park to Georgetown trail project

**September 3, 2020**

9:00 - 11:00 am

**Project Type**

Street Vacation &amp; CIP

**Phase**

Public Benefit &amp;

Schematic Design (60% design)

**Previous Reviews**[7/2/2020](#), [10/3/2019](#)**Presenters**David Bader  
SPRTim Croll  
SCLEmily Griffith  
SPRRuth Meraz-Caron  
SCLHallie O'Brien  
SDOT**Attendees**Kim Baldwin  
SPRBeverly Barnett  
SDOTColin Campbell  
SPRDavid Goldberg  
OPCDKate Guenther  
Meeting AttendeeDeloris Marks  
SCLDanyal Lotfi  
SPREd Pottharst  
SPRHannah Rudin  
Designing UpwardLish Whitson  
LEG

Image 1: Project location (highlighted in dark gray & red on left and blue & red on right)

**Summary of Presentation**

Tim Croll, of SCL, Hallie O'Brien, of SDOT, and David Bader and Emily Griffith, of SPR presented the Schematic design and public benefit phase of the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation project. The project team first presented the capital improvements design for the South Service Center site where the ROW will be vacated (see image 1). The team discussed how the proposal meets the City's vacation policies. This includes the fact that the vacation creates efficiencies for ratepayers. The loss of the vacated ROW creates no impact to the street grid or utilities. The scale of the public benefit is large in relationship to the ROW being vacated, in size of property and development funds.

The team then presented the public benefit proposal. The team explained the scope and budget of the project need to provide land and to develop the flume site in Georgetown into community amenity. The site was previously identified in several community plans and included several overarching goals and visions for how the community wanted the project site to develop (see image 2). The development will include major design elements such as a trail and off leash dog area are proposed (see image 3). The trail will provide a connection between the Georgetown and South Park neighborhoods, increasing access to amenities in each neighborhood for community members SCL will provide \$3.8 mil of \$4.6 total cost. SDOT and SPR will each provide \$400,000.

**Agency Comments**

**Beverly Barnett**, SDOT, is pleased with how the public benefit proposal has advanced. Beverly recognized the projects need to balance benefits provided for SCL and the public and then stated that SCL has stepped up their obligation to the community. Beverly also mentioned that this was a low impact vacation request and that the project team had gone beyond what should be provided minimally as the public benefit proposal. Beverly stated the interdepartmental project team consulted with the community to identify the flume site, which had also been identified in several community plans, for the public benefit. Beverly then mentioned that SCL is providing lighting on the Flume site, which should address safety issues that were raised by community. Beverly also stated that the approval of public benefits should be done at the same time the vacation is granted and that the public benefit should be developed as a space that is safe and usable immediately, even without additional add-ons that might be provided at a later date. Beverly then stated there is still a need for the funding sources and timing of the flume work to be clarified.

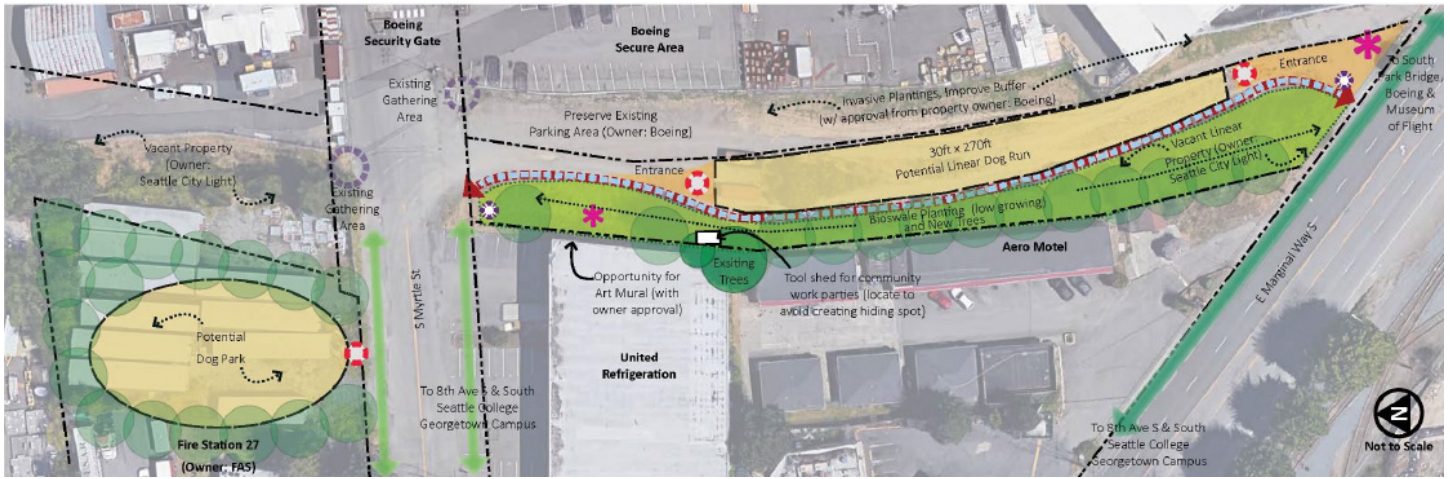


Image 2: Proposed design concept from Georgetown Open Space Vision Framework

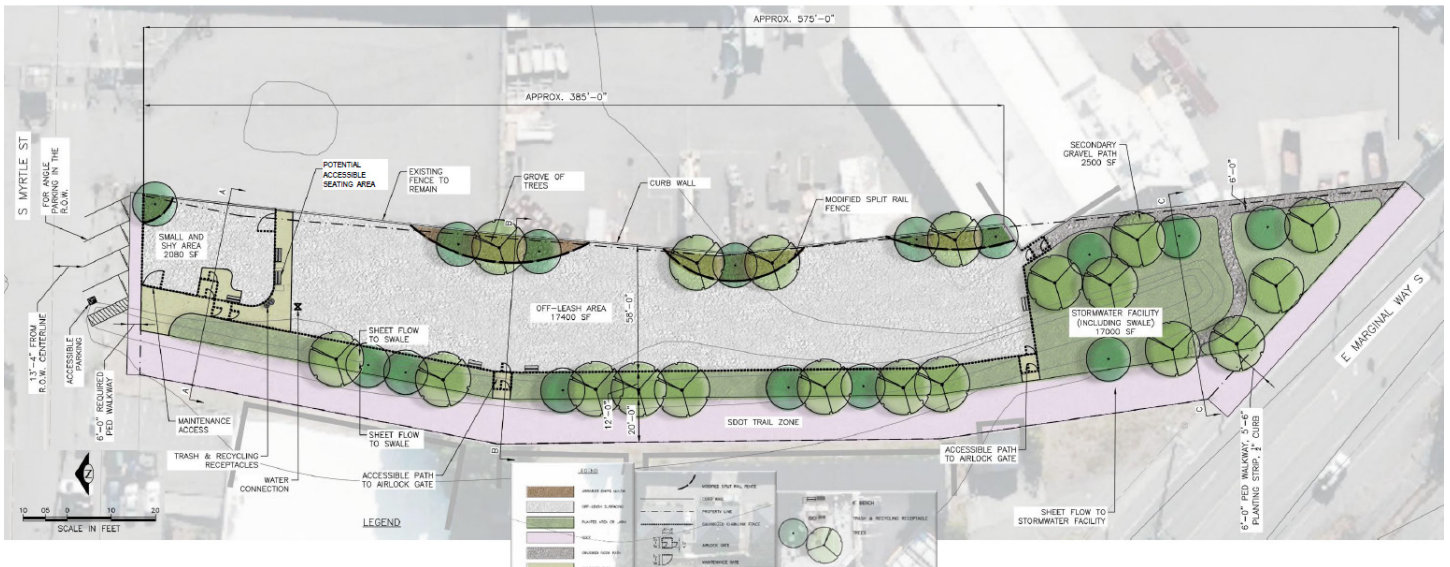


Image 3: Proposed design concept

**David Goldberg**, OPCD, commented that he worked with the community and with the partner departments. David applauded the interdepartmental project team, SCL, SDOT, and SPR, for partnering to make this project happen. David also acknowledged the support of community members and organizations who were instrumental in developing this project as well.

**Public Comments**

None

**Summary of Discussion**

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Schematic design proposal
- Public benefit proposal

**Schematic design proposal**

The SDC first discussed the Schematic Design of the CIP project. Commissioners agreed that the schematic design proposal for the CIP portion of the project was straightforward and provided no recommendations. The Commission then stated that it was not necessary to review the CIP portion of the project again during the Design Development Phase.

**Public benefit proposal**

The SDC found the overall advancement of the design very positive. The Commission then stated the need to

see further advancement to be sure that the various project elements were advancing well together and that amenities that were considered as optional would be provided. The SDC then conditioned that a project team return for a subcommittee once the design has been advanced. The presentation should include information on what is fully funded and how the following aspects of the design have been addressed:

1. Accessibility
2. Site furniture and dog park elements such as water, the fixing zone, and the kiosk
3. Planting plans
4. The stormwater and sustainability approach, and its place in the Duwamish watershed

Commissioners commended the project team for their inter-agency and interdepartmental collaboration. They were glad that the City provided planning in this underserved neighborhood, which this project could help advance.

While the Commission acknowledged the positive development of the overall design, commissioners were concerned with the limited details provided for specific design elements such as swales, gate width, and seating opportunities and recommended the project team continue developing these elements. Commissioners also recommended the project team develop a planting palette that would tie into the overarching sustainability and stormwater design concept.

Commissioners then recommended the team consider coordination with DON to bring an artist onto the team to work with the community. Commissioners stated that art would go a long way in making this a space people would be drawn to and enjoy.

The Commission also suggested that the project team continue to think about who will benefit from the public improvements and to make sure that they have a voice as the design develops.

The SDC agreed that the public benefit as proposed was commensurate with the ROW being given up with the vacation. that the Commission acknowledged that their decision was based on SCL's ability to provide full funding for the public benefit. Without their commitment to fully fund the public benefit proposal, it would have been difficult to provide the level of assurance needed that the public would truly receive the new trail and off leash amenities.

### **Action**

The Commission thanked the project team for their presentation of the concept design for the South Park Plaza project. Overall, the Commission appreciated the context provided to highlight historical and ongoing challenges within the neighborhood. Commissioners also appreciated the project's goal of providing connectivity between Duwamish River and South Park Business area and that the project team has already provided opportunities for activation and programming on the project site. The SDC voted, 7-0, to approve the concept design for the South Park Plaza project with the following recommendations:

The Commission thanked the project team for their schematic design and public benefit proposal presentation for the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation and CIP project. Overall, the SDC appreciated the collaboration between City departments as well as the ability for SCL to provide full funding for the development of the flume site as a cohesive open space and mobility amenity for the community. The Commission also appreciated the project team's coordination with City departments and neighborhood organizations to plan and identify a public benefit that aligns with the Georgetown Open Space Vision Framework.

The Commission took two separate actions during today's meeting. The first action was taken for the schematic design for the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation & CIP project. A second action was taken for the public benefit proposal for the Street Vacation component of the project.

The SDC thanked the project team for their schematic design presentation of the SCL Diagonal Ave S Street Vacation project. With a vote of 6 to 0 the SDC approved the Schematic Design of the Diagonal Ave S CIP. The project does not require another CIP review.

With a vote of 6 to 0 the Design Commission then voted to approve the Public Benefit phase of the Diagonal

Ave S street vacation with the following condition:

1. Provide a presentation to a subcommittee of the SDC once the design has been advanced. The presentation should include information on what is fully funded and how the following aspects of the design have been addressed:
  - a. Accessibility
  - b. Site furniture and dog park elements such as water, the fixing zone, and the kiosk
  - c. Planting plans
  - d. The stormwater and sustainability approach, and its place in the Duwamish watershed

The Commission also provided the following recommendations:

1. Continue to consider accessibility as the design advances.
2. Consider providing art, and involving the community in a holistic way.
3. Continue to consider who is being impacted and reach out to them intentionally.
4. Strongly consider additional seating opportunities to encourage community members to gather and spend time in the space.
5. Consider increasing the width of the gate.
6. Green infrastructure is especially important at the south end of the site in relation to the Duwamish river.
7. We encourage partnerships with Duwamish river related organizations.

The approval of the vacation is completed in two phases and this is the final review. With this approval the SDC agrees to move the vacation forward to the City Council for their approval.