

APPROVED

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
July 3, 2008**

**Seattle
Design
Commission**

Convened: 8:30am
Adjourned: 2:30pm

Greg Nickels
Mayor

Karen Kiest
Chair

Tasha Atchison

Brendan Connolly

John Hoffman

Mary Johnston

Juanita LaFond

Dennis Ryan

Norie Sato

Darrell Vange

Darby Watson

Guillermo Romano
Executive Director

Valerie Kinast
Coordinator

Projects Reviewed

Pedestrian Master Plan
Mayor's Office Briefing
DPD Director's Update
Alaska Way Viaduct - South End

Design Commissioners Present

Karen Kiest, Chair
Tasha Atchison
Brendan Connolly
Mary Johnston
Juanita LaFond
Dennis Ryan
Norie Sato
Darrell Vange
Darby Watson

Staff Present

Guillermo Romano
Valerie Kinast
Tom Iurino
Ian Macek



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3 July 2008

Project: Pedestrian Master Plan

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviews: 2/7/2008, 6/7/2007

Presenters: Barbara Gray, SDOT
Jennifer Wieland, SDOT

Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT
Riisa Conklin, DPD Planning Intern
Rebecca Herzfeld, Council Central Staff

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR169 /RS0606)

SUMMARY

The Commission made the following comments on the Pedestrian Master Plan briefing:

- **Encouraged by the comprehensive outreach.**
- **Interested in driver education and behavior modification, including both enforcement and education.**
- **Excited about the traffic safety corridor program.**
- **Concerned but encouraged by the breadth and scope of the project. The Commission supports subdocuments directed towards specific agencies, including action packages for policy, regulations, and education and specific actionable recommendations. Recommend an implementation strategy that focuses on small portions that can be accomplished sooner rather than later.**
- **Excited to see the enormous collection of information from the pedestrian perspective and the value it has to many people and programs.**
- **Interested to see how coordination will happen with neighborhood planning**
- **Interested to see additional press coverage as an outcome of this project**
- **Encourage the team to look to the Green Building Program or SDOT Art Plan as examples of how the program can continue after the recommendations are made.**
- **Encourage engaging engineers about innovative materials and solutions.**
- **Take maintenance concerns into account and have flexibility in standards for pilot projects or take advantage of new ideas.**
- **Encourage the team to explore features that could be incorporated within walking surfaces to assist people with disabilities.**
- **Look forward to a successful Pedestrian Master Plan.**

Project Presentation

Project Background

SDOT has convened the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Group (PMPAG) to consult on development of the plan. With input from the PMPAG, goals for the plan have been established. The overarching goal is to make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation, and four specific goals supplement this:

1. Safety: Reduce number and severity of crashes
2. Equity: Engage all people and ensure equal investment

3. Vibrancy: Create a lively pedestrian environment, and
4. Health: Promote walking

The final plan will focus on places people walk as well as nodes and connections. It will ultimately identify specific projects and implementation strategies as well as development of a prioritization process for future improvements.

The project team has taken a number of steps to collect a broad range of public input. Public engagement activities have included: connecting with specific groups to distribute a walking preferences survey in nine languages, partnering with the Department of Neighborhoods to ensure a balanced response from a variety of stakeholders, and contacting organizations that work with non-English speakers for assistance with outreach. More than 500 surveys have been received to date, and these are being tracked by zipcode and mapped in GIS to determine what areas of the city are responding. SDOT has also hosted roundtable discussions with youth, immigrants/refugees, accessibility representatives, and business owners; several additional roundtables are planned for the summer. The roundtables provide an opportunity for small groups to discuss pedestrian issues around the 5 Es: engineering, education, encouragement, evaluation, and enforcement.

The State of the Pedestrian Environment Report was completed in June and provides a snapshot of existing walking conditions, focused on physical infrastructure. The report identifies the benefits of walking as well as challenges and constraints to walking in Seattle.

Seattle is considered a national leader regarding pedestrian policies and facilities; however, there are still challenges to address in order to make Seattle the most walkable city in the nation. For example, enforcement and signalization have been recognized as challenges in the past, and SDOT hopes that these issues can be addressed through the Pedestrian Master Plan. The plan will also highlight the safety benefits of providing pedestrian lighting and the health benefits of providing convenient walking facilities.

Infrastructure opportunities and challenges include the importance of stairways as part of the pedestrian network, the value of buffers between the sidewalk and moving traffic, bridging neighborhoods that have been divided by highway construction, and mitigating sidewalk closures from construction zones.

The team is currently developing a toolbox of strategies and solutions that will explore programs, tools, techniques, and best practices covering many aspects of the pedestrian environment, including enforcement, design, land use, funding, and environmental concerns.

Commissioners' Comments

- The West Seattle group came to talk about their wayfinding and trails program. How are those groups being incorporated into the Master Plan?

- They are part of the network—or are the network for West Seattle. We still need to look at how a program in one part of the city can be integrated into the entire network and the connections that are required to make this happen.
- Is the signage resonating with what you will be coding?
 - We do have some wayfinding signs in parts of the city, and we will see more of them this summer/fall. There are some consistent elements across the signage, but wayfinding signs can still be distinct for each neighborhood.
- In Japan the sidewalks have tactile warning bumps down the center. It does help organize the conflict between pedestrian and bicyclists. Is that something the plan will be looking at?
 - We have had discussions about these types of sidewalk treatments with the PMPAG. The streetcar has done this type of banding. Also, Mercer designs had black banding at the 80% contrast. Copenhagen similarly had the banding, but not the contrast.
- Support the orange flags that assist pedestrians at certain intersections. Do pedestrians have the right-of-way at other intersections?
 - It is State law that pedestrians have the right-of-way at any intersection.
- What role will the plan have in driver education?
 - We are planning a safety education campaign that focuses on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. We may also work with the State to change portions of the driver education process. In addition, two pedestrian assessment actions have been completed in conjunction with the police department.
 - Bicycle education is also an important aspect of driver education.
- Marked crosswalks could be used as an opportunity to educate non-pedestrians that pedestrians have the right-of-way.
- Traffic calming device where the bump is painted on and seems 3-D to visually cause drivers to slow down.
- Reinforcing the rules is important, and remembering that it is not just individual intersections, but the entire network.
 - The Rainier Traffic Safety Corridor Program uses both enforcement and education, and has been successful. Enforcement is more effective when done as part of a broader program.
- Bus driver education is also an important aspect.
- Concerned by breadth and scope of the exercise. If the goal is to have a Master Plan the Council can approve, everything on the task list can't be accomplished by the end of the year. Encourage producing sub-documents that can go to the appropriate agencies.
 - The team has been making changes in prioritization methods and will think about developing project/action lists. We have a lot more work to go and don't want to create one large document to hand to people. In both the short and the long term, we will work with the appropriate agencies to move forward. The plan will be created online, in order to make the document as usable and accessible as possible.

- Where there will be a component that can be given to the neighborhoods when working on their plans?
 - The document is pulling from plans that have identified specific projects as well as working with the neighborhoods to establish their priorities.
- Finally collecting pedestrian information that doesn't exist in the city.
- Is there someone on your team that is coordinating with state agencies?
 - We have worked with Paula Reeves with WSDOT and will continue to work with her and others. The State's non-motorized plan talks at a high level about statewide facilities.
- Vetting things in the press is important, and creating/providing clear graphics can make projects more exciting.
 - We plan to capitalize on the Pro-Bike/Pro-Walk Conference in September, as well as Walk to School month in October.
- Green Building Team and SDOT Arts Plan are examples where the goals are kept alive after the planning process through activities. Also important to look at how others organize themselves and make things happen.
- With increasing material costs, it may be time to engage engineers about other material types and methods.
 - SDOT and SPU have implemented pilot projects with alternative drainage and materials. However, there is little that is standardized, and private development builds a lot of the sidewalk infrastructure. We are working on an alternative list and will be setting up some type of standardization.

3 July 2008

Project: Mayor's Office Briefing

Phase: Briefing

Last Reviews: 9/20/2007, 5/3/2007, 1/18/2007

Presenters: Tim Ceis, Deputy Mayor

Attendees: Diane Sugimura, Director DPD

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR220)

Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis visited the Design Commission and a discussion took place on the various projects happening throughout the city. Below is a summary of the discussion.

Station Area Planning

Station area and transit corridor planning will have a higher precedence over the neighborhood plan updates. Initial focus will be on Othello, McClellan, and Beacon Hill station areas. The Department of Neighborhoods will help with community engagement. The Commission stated that they are concerned with University Station as there is incredible potential, but the station is located in a parking area. Clarification was given that the investment is for ridership, as this area is a major employment center and destination.

Discussions are taking place to have an initiative on the ballot that would expand the light rail system to Northgate, and perhaps as far north as Lynnwood; thus providing more station area planning in U-District, Roosevelt, and Northgate.

The Commission stated that the plans are visionary, but as they go through the neighborhood process building heights and densities are lowered. Livable South Downtown doesn't really provide the density it promised. The goal is to put the growth where people will accept it and where it can be serviced by current transportation networks and the reason station area planning is so important.

SR-520

The project has been segmented into three pieces (east, center span and west) to expedite the construction process. A decision could be made in early winter, or the environmental process may be used to sort through the alternatives. Since the University station is underground, it isn't terribly impacted by the SR-520 decision.

King Street Station

Restoration of the station is currently taking place. Work has been done in thinking about how King Street Station can function as a multi-modal hub, but only to a small extent. The Commission stated it's important to start the planning process now on the future of King Street Station, especially given surrounding development. The Design Commission is looking forward to helping and encouraging the transportation portion of the project as well as reviewing the project before then.

The city is looking at how the station integrates with the redevelopment of North Lot, which is an important component of Livable South Downtown Plan. It was stated that

there are concerns over the height limits and what the impacts will be on surrounding structures.

It was determined that a workshop would be a successful way to bring city agencies together to look at King Street Station, surrounding development, and how to move the planning process forward.

Alaskan Way Viaduct

By September or October the various Viaduct options will be narrowed and it would be beneficial for the DC to be briefed beforehand and weigh in on the choices. The Commission stated that it has been encouraged by the urban design oversight and following the engineering team early on with South Viaduct project. It is excited by the ability to create a pedestrian realm out of the project.

3rd Avenue Design Work

The city has received funding to work on 3rd from Denny to King. Workshops have been conducted on both Denny and Pike/Pine on how to make improvements.

Bus shelters and street kiosks were mentioned as a design element that needs to be considered. Both types of structures create pedestrian congestion along the sidewalk as well as incubate crime. Designing elements that blend into the streetscape rather than stand out may be a solution. The city is working with developers, property owners, and other stakeholders on the subject.

Market Levy

Market levy is moving along. The Victor Steinbrueck Park improvement money is in contention. The Steinbrueck family feels that the park design should not be changed despite serious public safety issues concerning the park design.

Parks Levy

The Mayor has concerns over the timing and substance of a parks levy. He would like the levy to wait until 2010 and combine it with work at Seattle Center due to the current economic condition and concern with ballot overload this fall. A decision will be made by mid-July.

The Commission asked if the Mayor has a plan for park funding and acquisition between now and the next levy. It was stated that reservoir lids have created a substantial amount of park space that amounts to more than what was created through the parks levy. The city will need to be opportunistic when park space comes available. Right now the focus will be on the restoration of existing facilities, and how the city can be a better steward of existing properties. In addition, maintaining and sustaining facilities from the current parks levy, improving connections to parks, as well as facilitating the redevelopment of six community centers are issues. Work needs to be done to prioritize the information and projects.

Other ways to gain open space were also discussed, including opportunities through downtown building developments as well as the Green Factor. Little Saigon was also indicated as a way to creatively look at public and private space and what could be done in the right-of-way.

South Lake Union

The city is working on putting out the three alternatives. Putting together the bookends of high and low options to move forward with the environmental assessment. The assessment will look at Mercer and Valley changes. Aurora is being dealt with through the viaduct, signalizing several of the intersections and restoring the grid system. CityDesign can recommend subtle changes to the pedestrian realm along Denny.

Streetcar Network

The two most likely segments to move forward are First Hill and the 1st Avenue alignment. The 1st Ave alignment would have more ridership than the waterfront line and be used by more than just tourists.

Civic Square

The Mayor's Office receives regular client updates and has frequent conversations with the developer. The Commission stated its concern over the tower design. It was stated that the Mayor wants great design, but is relying on design professionals for guidance, and respects the work that is happening. The Commission also asked if the technology is as sustainable as possible, noting that the chosen design firm is notorious for going above and beyond typical measures. The Deputy Mayor stated the design must also be economically viable.

3 July 2008

Project: DPD Director's Update

Phase: Briefing

Last Review: 11/1/2007

Presenters: Diane Sugimura, Director DPD

Attendees:

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR121 /RS0611)

SUMMARY

The Commission thanks Diane for the briefing and the following is a summary of the discussion:

- **The DC shares objectives for strong, appropriate, exciting design response with the Civic Square project.**
- **Appreciate being involved in the search process for the new Planning Director, look forward to working with him.**
- **Interesting exchange on the urban design future of Yesler Terrace and the challenges and opportunities that surround the project. Look forward to a green success story and participating in a workshop for early city input into the project.**
- **Appreciate the Station Area Planning as an update for neighborhood planning, but recognize it is starting late.**

Project Presentation

Discussion

Civic Square

A discussion took place on the Civic Square project and its design progress. Concerns were stated over the overall design of the project and how it is moving forward. The Commission recognized the difficulty of dealing with multiple clients, and feels that the city has not had a unified voice. They also voiced concerns on the overall design of the project, specifically the disconnect between the tower and the ground plane, the uncertainty of the building's sustainable features, and the lack of attention to pedestrian connections beyond the project site. The design team is known for their sustainable architecture and exceeding expectations, but is unclear if this is the situation with the Civic Square project.

Sugimura stated that it is a complex space due to the sloped site, public and private partnership, and diverse functions in the towers, and that cost may be driving some of the decision making. Despite the challenges, if major design concerns continue, it will be hard to rectify later. Even if the Design Review Board were to continue to work the process, the result will likely be tweaks to minor design elements, rather than a significant change to the overall building.

The Commission feels that design review has been an issue because the DRB process is too prescriptive and the right questions are not being asked. The client group, which no

longer has a designer in the group, is concerned with the viability of the project, but less about the strength of the design. Fleets and Facilities Department has a mandate to make sure the development works and functions for the people of the city. They are not necessarily looking at the design issue. Certain questions should have been addressed long before the DC was involved. The Commission's purview is creating a successful plaza. Where the project is today isn't horrible, but it's not to the level it could be. The changes in the public plaza have been received positively, but the conflict with the towers and the porosity of the block still need to be resolved.

Sugimura stated that responding to the joint DRB/DC meeting minutes may be the best venue to provide feedback as it is important for the DC to voice its design concerns.

New Planning Director

Ray Gastil is the new Planning Director and starts August 25, 2008. His previous work was as Manhattan Planning Director. DPD and UW jointly brought him out here to talk about waterfront development a few years ago. He has hands on planning experience working with neighbors as well as at a higher level.

Yesler Terrace

There is no HOPE VI money to redevelop Yesler Terrace, so it will be a challenge to figure out how to fund the housing redevelopment. The low-income housing will be replaced both on-site and in nearby neighborhoods. There may need to be significant changes in the zoning, which could include reassessing surrounding areas where there is a hodgepodge of zoning. The overall project provides the opportunity to do sustainable infrastructure in the area as this is one of the last large properties so close to downtown.

DPD is interested in conducting a workshop and moving forward with the project that would include the DC, Planning Commission, Parks, SDOT, SPU, DPD, and CityDesign. It is important for the DC to become involved due to the project's relationship to downtown and integration of the street network. The goal is not to create another layer of review, but work collaboratively on the early concept. City rights-of-way will also be reviewed by the DC.

Station Area Planning

The Commission felt that the Station Area Planning seems late. Ideally it would have been done sooner, and the City is trying to figure out how to respond more nimbly for those that have assembled property and are looking to develop. A further discussion of the Station Area Planning took place with the Deputy Mayor.

3 July 2008

Project: Commission Business

Time: 1.0 hours

Action Items

- A. Submit Timesheets
- B. Minutes of June 19, 2008
 - Approved
 - Commissioner Sato abstained due to absence.

Discussion Items

- C. Outside Commitments
- D. 40th Anniversary Update
- E. Possible Parks Levy participation of DC
- F. Commissioner Sato's Award

3 July 2008

Project: Alaska Way Viaduct – South End

Phase: Schematic

Last Reviews: 4/3/2008, 12/20/2007, 10/04/2007

Presenters: Boris Dramov, ROMA Design Group

Bonnie Fisher, ROMA Design Group

Mike Johnson, SDOT

Ali Amiri, Washington DOT

Attendees: Vaughn Bell, SDOT

Riisa Conklin, DPD Planning Intern

Mike Merritt, Port of Seattle

Harold Miller, Jacobs

Lee Roberts, DPD Planning Intern

Time: 1.0 hours

(SR169 /RS0606)

ACTION

The Commission unanimously approves 60% design development with the following comments:

- **Appreciate the clarity and honesty of the project status and its challenges.**
- **Strongly support the material selection and hope it survives the budgeting process and request that maintenance costs be incorporated so the design integrity can be realized long-term.**
- **Support the team’s efforts to develop a flexible design and encourage development of a construction phasing plan that can respond to the uncertainty of the central waterfront.**
- **Recommend broader thinking about the role that art and artists could play in this project. Look at areas under the structure currently slated for gravel could be considered for art, and the “art pads” as currently represented seems too prescriptive. Connect as soon as possible with the SDOT Artist-in-Residence to begin developing ideas, so perhaps some ideas might be built as part of the construction budget since there is no percent for art funds here. Recommend more vertical volume in banded landscape areas and recommend more deliberate markings as gravel may not survive as intended.**
- **Encourage art integration into the design concept as a whole, such as opportunities in the plazas, walls, signs on port fence, etc.**
- **Recommend further design of plazas at street ends rather than relying on art to dictate the space.**
- **Support fence design on west greenway, specifically the Port fence (except the spikes and signs every 50 feet) and the porous character of the City side fence.**
- **Support tree selection direction.**
- **Support the light fixture selection.**
- **Support grading if permitted by SPU**
- **Encourage giving an artist free reign to do their work all along the corridor.**
- **Support fewer seating areas for better overall material quality.**

- **Would like follow up on project as Viaduct replacement strategy is better determined.**

Project Presentation

Project Background

The project entails replacing the southern mile of the viaduct from South Holgate Street to South King Street. The new road is being designed to improve safety and connections to and from SR 99, create an underpass for freight traveling to the Port of Seattle, and provide additional paths for bicycles and pedestrians along both sides. The project is currently at 60% design and the team is solidifying the design into contract plan documentation. Construction is scheduled for the end of 2009.

As the impending central waterfront decision is made, the project will respond accordingly. Drainage plan has not been fully completed; therefore some of the final grading has not been integrated. The City recently issued a letter to the State that trees were important to put in this section. The State is looking at moving the utility lines in order to facilitate tree planting. The direction looks to be positive. The bridge structure at the U-tube and load capability is being looked into. The railroad has the desire for separation between the tail track and the pedestrian path. There is nothing included right now, but the team is in the process of resolving this issue. The opportunity for art has been included in various areas of the design.

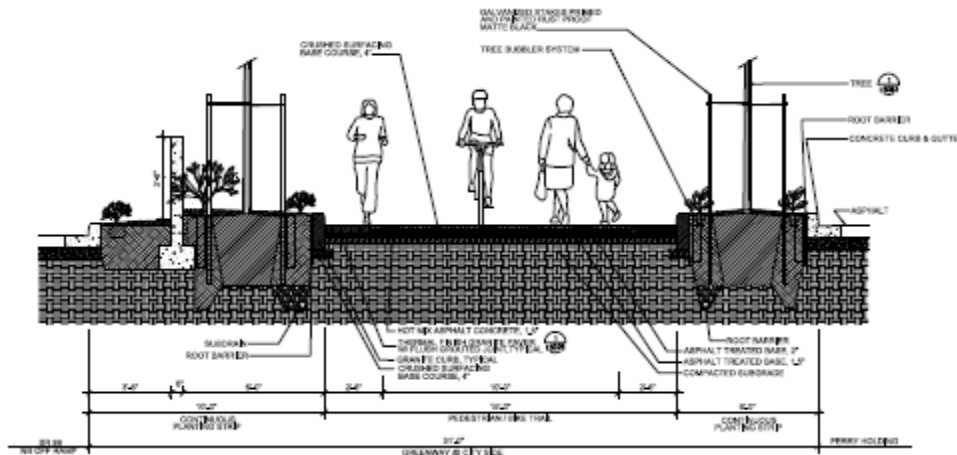


Figure 1: Typical Greenway Detail: City-side

Four rest areas have been created and concentrated in the most accessible and most likely places where people would stop. People waiting for the ferry may also use the respite spots. There are bicycle areas included in the rest areas, and the capacity to add more.

In response to earlier DC concerns, the team is looking toward a bolder landscape plan. This was interpreted as focusing on the street trees rather than the ground cover. A combination of the trees was used to add texture and variation in color.

Two tree studies were conducted; the first with a seemingly random tree pattern and the second with a more formal massing of tree species. The team is looking into using two

maple tree species rather than the dogwood on the Port side. By reducing the amount of variety a greater impact can be achieved.

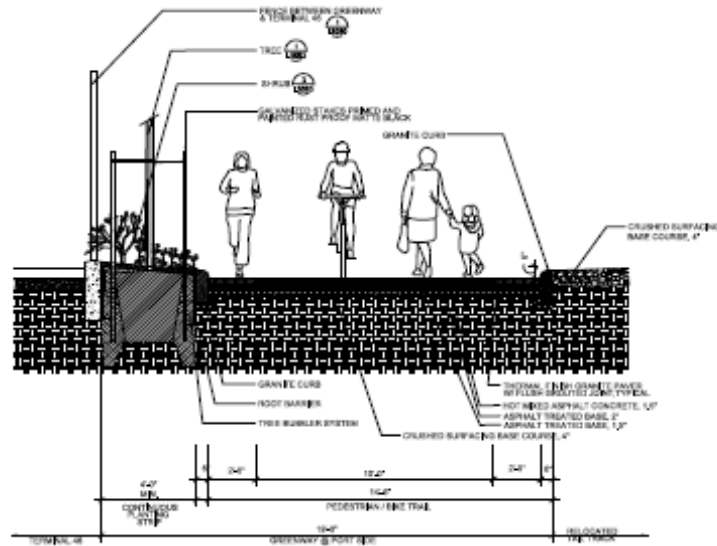


Figure 2: Typical Greenway Detail: Port-side

Exploring ways to incorporate the best approaches to sustainability. However, there is very limited space. The team will be using plant materials that work well in the PNW. The team looked at the possibility of incorporating swales and other natural drainage features, but these were not possible due to the space constraints. There have been discussions between central waterfront team and SPU and how to integrate sustainable measures.

Commissioners' Comments

- How far east do the street improvements go?
 - They are limited to the south side of Atlantic, but there would also be trees on the north side as part of another improvement project. Both sides of Royal Brougham will be finished, which is a continuation of the existing standards.
- Is there an opportunity to narrow Atlantic or remove the barrier?
 - It will be addressed later once the decision is made on the central waterfront. There is an opportunity to narrow the swath, or it may be used as an off-ramp if a surface treatment is recommended.
- How will things be resolved schedule wise?
 - Schedule for contract to build in August 2009. If a decision on the central waterfront is made in December, there is enough time to make adjustments. The project could be downsized and only built to Royal Brougham. May have to break down into two contracts to build.
- How freight, traffic, and pedestrians move is clear.
- What is being done with the artist selection?

- There is not an art element in the State's budget. The team is working with Arts and Cultural Affairs to figure out the art space, and working with the artist in residence at SDOT.
- Support art that is integral to the trail and interacts with people as they are traveling the corridor.
- Appreciate SDOT and design team's support for incorporating art within the project despite a lack of budget. Would explore ways that early work with the artist and potential ideas might be funded by construction funds.
- Concern over gravel treatment where nothing will grow. Wondering if it could also be treated as an art opportunity or a Zen rock garden so it seems intentional.
- If the utility relocation is possible on the east side, where will it be?
 - Looking at putting the two underground lines into one and into the street. This will free up space for plantings and trees.
- Has a cost estimate been developed?
 - It is still coming. A review process is starting soon, and the cost estimate is due afterward.
 - Issues have come up with intersection spacing, tail track location. The issue should have been resolved earlier, but talks with BNSF have been slow and taken long.
- How does the U-tube work when not in use?
 - There is no gate or fence, it is controlled with cameras. It is designed to clear the traffic out. When there is no train there, one would want to take the shortest route, therefore not taking the u-tube.
- Are there utilities under the designated art areas that might hamper foundations for sculptures?
 - There is the potential for that; we will need to look at what the urban design team came up with when making recommendations.
- Appreciate the utility relocation.
- Challenge is creating an area that has been designed, but does not have too much going on. The areas with the bands do become an important treatment, and could be stepped up a bit. Possibly creating grades in those areas.
 - Need to get clear direction on what can be done over utilities. It isn't only weight; it is also access and root systems. Will look at the areas closer.
- Banding should be explored more.
- The formal pattern of trees is resonant of the banding in other areas and ties them together.
- Appreciate exploring different tree patterns.
- Does the State maintain projects like this now?
 - Under agreement with the City to maintain SR 99 and SR 519. It would most likely be under SDOT, not Parks.
- Have future maintenance concerns been taken into consideration?
 - The basic concept of greenways has addressed maintenance concerns. Must design with regard to maintenance.
- Have the chosen materials made it through any cost reviews?
 - Have only done an initial estimate on what the urban design elements mean and how to justify them.

- The durability of materials described does speak to something that won't fall apart given the surrounding environment.
 - The city is trying to implement the concept that the team has proposed and supports it.
- If the tress were able to be along the eastern edge, light bollards wouldn't be included.
- The design concept has strengthened.
- What else can be done to celebrate the connections into the system at the plazas at Atlantic Street and Royal Brougham?
- What are the pedestrian lights on the Port side?
 - The proposed light is a Seattle City Light standard.
- It would be helpful to see the tree choices.
- The tight mesh seems to work, although the wire is a little foreboding. Do the warning signs needed every 50 feet?
 - They do not need to be. Aesthetically the fence is better than chain link, and functionally it is harder to climb and cut.
- What is happening with the fence along the railroad?
 - The railroad feels the drop-off to the tracks is a safety hazard. The team does not want a fence to provide a means of escape and keep the area less confined.
- Support not having the railroad fence along this segment.
- Desire to have durable materials with less seating areas if it comes down to cost.