



**Seattle  
Design  
Commission**

**APPROVED**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**

**15 May 2003**

Gregory J. Nickels,  
*Mayor*

Donald Royse  
*Chair*

Laura Ballock

Ralph Cipriani

Jack Mackie

Cary Moon

Iain M. Robertson

Nic Rossouw

David Spiker

Sharon E. Sutton

Tory Laughlin Taylor

John Rahaim,  
*Executive Director*

Layne Cubell,  
*Commission Coordinator*

Projects Reviewed

Joint Training Facility  
Street and Alley Vacation Update  
Utah Street Vacation  
Ravenna Creek Daylighting  
Commission Business

Convened: 8:30am

Adjourned: 5:30pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse, Chair  
Jack Mackie, Vice Chair  
Laura Ballock  
Ralph Cipriani  
Cary Moon  
Iain M. Robertson  
Nic Rossouw  
David Spiker  
Sharon E. Sutton  
Tory Laughlin Taylor

Staff Present

John Rahaim  
Layne Cubell  
Brad Gassman  
Anna O'Connell



Department of Design,  
Construction & Land Use

700 5th Avenue, Suite 2000  
Seattle, WA 98104-5070  
phone 206/233-7911  
fax 206/386-4039

**15 May 2003** Project: **Joint Training Facility**  
Phase: Schematic Design  
Previous Reviews: 16 January 2003 (Predesign)  
Presenters: Tony Gale, Fleets and Facilities  
Martha Turnbull, Fleets and Facilities  
Joe Chauncey, Boxwood  
Darrell Turner, Boxwood  
Attendees: Carolyn Salisbury, University of Washington  
Wes Simmonds, University of Washington  
Barbara Goldstein, Office of Arts and Cultural  
Scott Kemp, Dept. of Design, Construction, and  
Jeff Phillips, Boxwood  
Robin Laughlin, SvR Design  
Kristen Fritsch, Boxwood  
Brian Harris, TCA Architecture and Planning

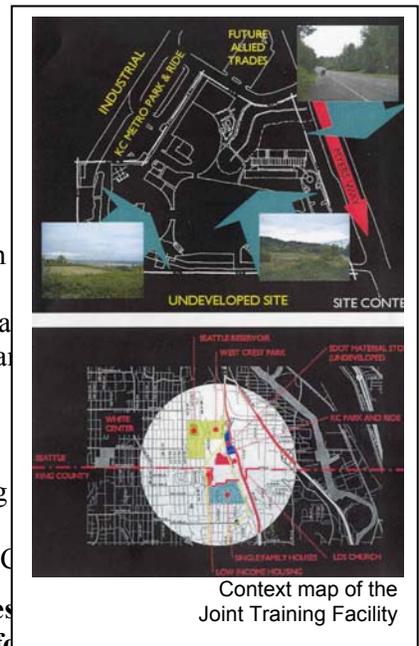
Time: 1.5 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC

**Action:** **The Commission thanks the proponents for the proposed needed public facility, and would like to make the following recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission applauds the fundamental and complete approach to the integration of architecture and sustainable principles throughout the project;**
- **commends the team's design solutions for their fit with the building functions and the formal resolution of construction and green components throughout the facility;**
- **encourages the team to consider public access throughout this fascinating project and the ways in which the public can interact with the various components of the project, but recognizes the need for security and that the essential nature of the project is to provide training for public employees;**
- **thanks the proponents for their response to the Commission's previous comments concerning minimizing the large areas of paving, better integration with the surrounding landscape, and the incorporation of art into the project;**
- **recommends that the team further study the ways that the public can look over, penetrate into, and interact with the site;**
- **suggests proponents reconsider the open landscape areas of the site and how these integrate into the campus facility as well as into the surrounding natural landscape; and**
- **recommends approval of schematic design.**

**Note: Commissioner Royse recused himself from the review of this project.**

The Joint Training Facility (JTF) is for the Seattle Fire Department (Fire Dept.), Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), and Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT). The site is located at the south end of Seattle city limits. A facility of this comprehensive scope is usually given a site twice the size of this, which will



be the first such facility located in an urban area. Currently the team is completing schematic design and will apply for a Master Use Permit in about one month. A SEPA checklist will be sent to the Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use, with the third-party recommendation of a determination of non-significance. The design team has some informal community meetings next week. The artist selection process, which includes representatives of the area community groups, will begin in one week and an artist will be on board by the beginning of July; environmental art is proposed. For funding, the project is a part of the Mayor’s proposed \$230 million Fire Facilities levy recently proposed to Council. Following Council’s review this summer, the agreed upon measure may be put to the voters this fall. The JTF is currently the Mayor’s prime design/construction project. The Fire Facilities team is working with Council over the next two months on the scope of the bond and this project scope may change as a result. Fleets and Facilities will know July 14 what will be proposed on the levy/bond issue. The sustainability goal for the facility is to achieve a LEED Silver rating.

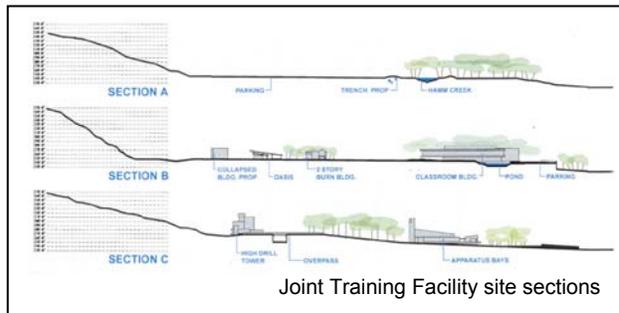
The design team has used a set of goals in the predesign as a filter for how the project will develop, and are continuing to use them as the design moves forward. The facility will be an environmental showboat for other projects of this type, establishing and demonstrating a high standard of sustainability in design, construction, and operation, most notably with the reuse of stormwater. Last time proponents presented, the Commission asked to see more of an understanding of the neighborhood context and the site’s topography, an art program, more community outreach, more green areas, and a reduction in the amount of impervious surface.

A major intent of the design is to efficiently capture, store, and transfer stormwater. The motto throughout the project has been “triple duty,” meaning that the three departments are working together for maximum use of the site. The design team focused on reducing impervious surface and to better integrate the eastern part of the site where the building, parking, and pond are located. The physical site has reduced in size since the last presentation (by about one acre), but the design team has maintained the program and increased the green area. In the distant south, there is single-family housing and to the west, atop a steep bluff, is single-family and duplex housing. To the east and north is commercial and industrial including Shurgard Storage and a Latter Day Saints Church, as well as significant green space and sensitive areas; a portion of the Metro park and ride will remain. Much of the site is not visible until you are very close. There is significant vegetation approaching the site from the north and much of that will be retained.

Physical site components include the existing Hamm Creek and components of the new JTF campus—water quality and water holding ponds (habitat pond and detention/retention pond for use by the Fire Dept.), apparatus support bays, E.V.A.P., oasis building, urban road prop, burn building, collapsed building prop, overpass and vehicle extrication prop, high drill tower, training building and parking, and digging and confined space prop. Surface water and water used in training exercises is collected and cleaned through a bioswale that runs through the site and flows to the pond system. Groundwater is piped



through in-floor ducts and used to cool the building. At predesign, the site was 30 percent green; now, the site is 50 percent green space. Other than the engineered slopes to the southwest the site is relatively

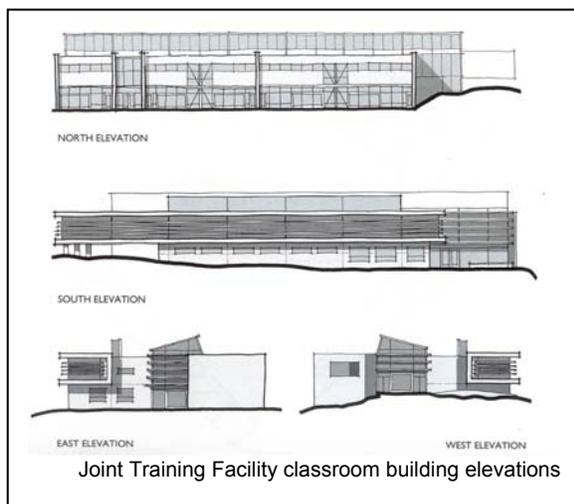


View Joint Training Facility campus from hilltop

flat. The design team will minimize grading by using the existing grade to their advantage and create the overpass prop using the natural rise in grade. The housing on the bluff is set back far enough from the edge of the embankment that one cannot see into the campus from any of those properties.

### *Training Building*

The training building is the heart of the campus and all areas surround this building. The materials to be used for the building and that set the language for all campus buildings are concrete, concrete block, steel, and glass. Parking for visitors is south of the building and daily parking will be shared with the Allied Trades building that is going in across the existing Metro easement road to the north. During concept development, the design team studied ways to decrease paving, provide daylight access, and incorporate parking. In one concept, “light scoop,” proponents liked the programmatic relationship of the spaces; in another concept, “clean dirty,” they liked the simplicity. These two concepts were integrated to form the current design of the training building. Rooms are organized along a central atrium. As you move from east to west the spaces go from public to private. At the east are building administration, the library, a computer classroom, two other classrooms, and public restrooms. At the west end, for city employees, are two “dirty” classrooms (like laboratories) and recruit locker rooms. The upper level of the building is private with the departmental offices, training staff locker rooms, work-hardening/physical therapy staff locker rooms, and a shared meeting room. Groundwater is being brought in and piped through the building and eventually ends up in the underground detention/retention pond. The piping system



Joint Training Facility classroom building elevations

circulates the cool groundwater throughout the building for natural air conditioning on warm days. A portion of the same piping system is used for radiant heat in winter. A natural ventilation system brings in cool air through at-grade ducts. This air moves through large shafts to solar chimneys that also collect light. Much daylight is being brought in on the north end throughout the year; the building will be shielded from south light in summer. Interior fins and the atrium light the interior and hard surfaces and glass are being used to reflect and bath the furthest interior spaces with light. FSC-certified wood is being introduced in the interior spaces to add warm elements. In addition, the design team is exploring the idea of using a green roof, but this must be balanced with the budget.

### *Apparatus Building*

The apparatus building is the other occupied building on the campus and replicates a fire station that has no living quarters. It houses vehicles; miscellaneous support offices; a training area for biannual training that requires a dry, controlled environment; a classroom facility; and a hose tower. A very basic

classroom serves all three departments and is located directly off the EVAP pad. A natural air ventilation system brings in cooler air from the north. A breezeway canopy is used to connect the classroom to the apparatus bay and provide toilet and phone facilities. The bay is 75 feet deep and has a ribbon of skylights that serve to daylight the interior.

#### *Oasis Pavilion*

This building serves as the central hub and offers shady respite to hot trainees and in-service staff. It has an informal gathering space, a covered work area to construct props, rudimentary first aid station, storage areas, and restrooms.

#### *Materials Storage*

This is a simple series of 12'x12' shed-like structure. Because it is going to be a messy area, it is tucked away in the back.

#### *Drill Tower*

The drill tower is a six-story prop that provides numerous options for all departments to drill in fire attack, search-and-rescue, scaffolding, climbing, rappelling, and rigging training exercises. It is probably the most universally useful and usable prop for all three departments, outside the classroom building. The notion is to be flexible and there are hundreds of scenarios that can be created including simulation multifamily, offices, and retail environments.

#### *Burn Building*

This area contains three burn props. Natural gas will be used to create fires in lieu of propane for environmental reasons. The building is two stories; one typical scenario is to use the building to simulate an attic, garage, and crawl space. The ground floor incorporates a kitchen burn room and the second story includes a den and bedroom burn rooms. While much of the building purpose serves the Fire Dept., they incorporated some of SPU's and SDOT's needs by creating access to a confined crawl space from the exterior.

#### *Collapsed Building*

The façade simulates the conditions departments will encounter in the event of a severe earthquake or fire or other catastrophic events. The building front is constructed of concrete masonry units. The hidden half of the prop is a constructed pile of recycled concrete and steel beams that can be endlessly reconfigured to pose new search-and-rescue scenarios, as well as deconstruction opportunities. It is equipped with non-functional gas, water, and electrical lines so that all departments can practice locating and shutting off supply lines in emergencies.

#### *Trench Prop*

The trench digging and rescue props provide all three departments opportunities to practice using heavy equipment in digging, shoring, trenching, pipe-laying, and backfilling safely and then rescue when tasks are performed incorrectly (safely). This and the following prop are the prime props for SPU and SDOT.

#### *Confined Spaces Prop*

This prop provides a certified course where workers in all three departments can obtain or renew their certification for confined spaces training.

#### *Overpass/Vehicle Extrication Prop*

This is located over a rise in grade and provides opportunities for vehicle rescue training by the Fire Dept. It is equipped with spider staging, which is scaffolding for working on the underside of a bridge for the use of bridge maintenance workers.

#### *Emergency Vehicle Accident Prevention Pad (E.V.A.P.)*

This is a large paved area for training all departments in how to drive and manipulate trucks, fire engines,

and all heavy equipment. Here, workers can take a course to obtain or renew certification for their commercial drivers' licenses. In addition to this function, the pad will be used for vehicle checks, hose-laying, and physical training.

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Believes that the site is going to be fascinating to see and would like to know when the public can come and watch what is happening.
  - Proponents stated that one of the major components will be education, including education for children about fire safety and utility road work. Due to safety considerations, the site will be secured. There will be no unescorted public in the training areas. In addition to school groups, a number of outside groups are interested in renting the site for similar educational activities. There will be a rentable portion of the main building that can be used by outside groups. Wayfinding may be done on the site and in the public part of the building to interpret what visitors are seeing.
- Encourages proponents to consider making a space for people to discover and watch on their own.
  - Proponents stated that this may be doable, but they need to make sure that people who live there 24 hours a day do not get upset. Because the site and activities are interesting and seductive, they must be careful with security.
  - Proponents stated that this type of project is considered an attractive nuisance with high potential for injury if everyone onsite is not accounted for at all times, so much care will be taken to ensure that ungoverned access is difficult. This need for security will spill over into visual access issues also. The public will be permitted and encouraged to view site activities at locations where their access can be controlled. The team is unlikely to provide overlooks from the bluffs, for example, as it may encourage illegal intrusion.
- Would like to know the nature of the fence around the site.
  - Proponents stated that it is most likely going to be a chain link fence. Along Myers Way where it is more public there may be some kind of haha so the fence is subsumed by the landscape.
- Would like to know more about human use of the site, who the users are, and what a typical day would be like. Would like to see an activity map of the site.
  - Proponents stated that groups typically arrive in company cars as part of a specific training session. Sessions are usually in four hour segments. Ninety percent of the people will arrive to the site via the freeway. People who work on the site will come in on Myers Way and park in the lot shared with Allied Trades. From there, they walk across the street and on a footbridge over Hamm Cr. The first time a person comes to the site they enter through the front door of the training building, which acts as the entrance to the site.
  - Proponents stated that a day on the site usually means that people arrive and do a morning training session, have lunch, and then have another training segment. Minimal training will take place on evenings and weekends and Allied Trades and community groups would like to rent some of the classrooms at these times. The building is arranged such that toilets, classrooms, and the atrium are available when the rest of the facility is closed. During breaks in the training sessions, trainees can go to the Oasis Pavilion to get out of the sun and drink some water. The lunch room in the main building will have vending machines and moderate cooking facilities. A landscaped area behind the

classroom is a green space for relaxing. It is removed visually from the rest of the site and gives people a space to practice hands-on what they have learned. There will be about 25 people per recruit session and classrooms accommodate 25–30.

- Commends the team on the environmental approach and use of sustainable materials in a meaningful way. Feels that perhaps on the Metro park and ride site there could be a viewing area for the public. Would like to know why the site was reduced in size.
  - Proponents stated that they originally purchased a 50 acre site and in order to make this project work financially, they sold off all but 12 acres. This is a \$34–35 million site and it's the economic model that drove the size of the site with \$18.5 million is for construction. When the team realized the size of the site was an issue, they did activity diagrams to figure out how to maintain the program within the smaller space.
- Would like to know what happens if they need to expand, i.e., to create monorail or light rail tunnel rescue props.
  - Proponents stated that at first they did want something more expansive and it is an issue because there is not a lot of room for growth. When they looked into the issue further, they found that a lot of training is also done in the real environments as well.
- Would like to know if the Seattle Police Dept. can use the facility as well.
  - Proponents stated that Seattle Police Dept. opted out and have their own facility.
- Feels that in looking at the project overall with the innovative nature of the site and the limited finances, it is reminiscent of Taliesin. Suggests that, like Taliesin, the proponents look into starting a foundation to help support and raise money for maintenance and operations of the facility.
  - Proponents stated that issues of operations and maintenance as well as their funding mechanisms are outside of the scope and responsibility of the CIP project or its team members.
- Commends proponents and feels that this project takes sustainability to a new level and going beyond just using green materials and integrating sustainable design. Finds the layering of uses fascinating and feels that the design for the tower and burning buildings epitomizes efficiency. Commends the departments and the design team.
- Compliments the Fire Dept, SPU, and SDOT on their cooperative effort. Would like to know if the timeframe of how long it will be until the trees will look as they are shown in the graphics.
  - Proponents stated that some of the trees that are shown are existing onsite or across the street, so there will be significant established vegetation surrounding. Hamm Cr. has a number of large fir trees around it.
- Would like to know if proponents considered the use of more active systems such as photovoltaics to decrease energy use.
  - Proponents stated that they are looking into using solar panels that will be placed on the south-facing slope of the roof for water heating. They are looking into funding for photovoltaic panels and are hoping that they can be used to pump water. If they can tie their use to that system, the initial costs can be eliminated.
- Would like to know about the space under the training building to the west.
  - Proponents stated that it is dynamic architecture and will shield occupants from the sun.

- Suggests proponents consider the overlook as a Zen view. Also suggests the team look at fencing at the zoo as a precedent. Is excited about the celebration of water and feels it is demonstrative of how to build on Seattle soils. Would like to see more clarification of what the green spaces are.
- Believes that the landscape is not abstract, but is a living thing and is very place specific. Urges proponents to be specific to this landscape; the most important thing that has been done is to preserve the hydrologic system and green space, which allows for native plants. Encourages proponents to consider the green space natural environment, not landscaping.
- Feels that there are two possibilities for education: one for education in public safety and another in education of how to integrate the natural and built environment. Urges proponents to take advantage of these educational opportunities.

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**15 May 2003 Project: Street and Alley Vacation Update**

Phase: Briefing

Presenter: Beverly Barnett, Seattle Dept. of Transportation

Attendee: Virginia Beas-Garcia, Council Central Staff

Time: 0.5 hours

(SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00166)

**Summary: The Commission thanks the proponents for coming in and providing an update and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.**

- **The Design Commission applauds the efforts being undertaken to bring greater clarity to the existing policies, specifically to the definition of public benefits and its economic development aspects;**
- **is concerned that vacations have become too much a part of the development toolbox;**
- **urges the team to review and look into removing some of the incentives for vacations;**
- **encourages proponents to clarify in the policy revisions the importance of an intact street and alley grid for the long-term welfare of the City and that the elimination of alleys puts constraints onto the streets;**
- **encourages proponents to look at how other cities handle vacations and at the interaction of the land use code and vacation policies;**
- **encourages the team to include visual aids that demonstrate how vacations have affected the city over time in the policy document;**
- **encourages proponent to look at better integrating and defining the role of the Design Commission in the revised policy document;**
- **urges brevity and succinctness in the final document; and**
- **urges the team to consider viewing the Design Commission as custodians of urban design for the City.**

The proponent is here to start a series of discussions regarding street and alley vacations policy. The current document was begun in the late 1980s and its purpose was to provide consistency and predictability in the process. It was adopted in the mid 1980s and therefore does not reference the Comprehensive Plan or any of the neighborhood plans. Some small changes were made in the early 1990s, but on the whole the document needs to be updated. They are looking to create a small group of people to come up with a product for review. Today, the proponent would like to hear what the Commission feels needs to be revised or incorporated.

**Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know a little more about the historical context of the vacations policy because feels that it is too much in the toolbox for developers.
  - The proponent stated that the current document is very conservative and outlines a rigorous review process. The City is the trustee for the public and street and alley vacations are carefully considered and only granted under certain circumstances. A difficulty is that the policy often makes the public feel that projects do not meet requirements and proponents always feel that they do.

- Would like to know if the proponent would like the new document to have more of a single reading.
  - The proponent stated that that would be great, but it is difficult to accomplish that with such a breadth of projects and the value of the right-of-way involved.
- Would like to know if they have looked at regulations in other cities for comparison. Feels that these regulations are often being looked at because of codes forcing a project this way and would like to know if the intersection between revising this and revising codes is being looked at.
  - The proponent stated that in terms of land use, they are not looking at the codes. In the Harborview project, the only way they could grow was over the right-of-way because of height restrictions. There was a project where the developer looked at moving density credits across the alley. The proponent is working with DCLU on this process.
  - The proponent has looked at some other cities' policies, but cannot find any places with as extensive of policies and complex system as Washington.
- Would like to know, in the above example where it was suggested the alley would be treated as a street, if that was meant literally or if it meant that the developer might be given the development rights of the alley without a vacation.
  - The proponent stated that in this case the developer did not need the square footage from the alley to increase the development potential. They owned a half block and quarter block and wanted to do something small on the quarter and move what they were not using on the quarter over to the half. They could not do that because of the intervening alley. By vacating the alley so the lots were contiguous, they could shift the project around.
- Believes that developers use the fragmented way the land use code was written to justify going after alleys. Feels that it would be good to look at other jurisdictions and see if there are examples. Also feels it would be a good idea to join land use code and right-of-way regulations.
- Would like to see the document clarify the long-term importance of the flexibility of having an intact street grid.
  - Proponent agreed and stated that this especially important in looking at utilities.
- Believes that the lack of alleys is also a constraint that contributes to the problems with street tree plantings.
- Urges proponent to use a lot of visual aids to illustrate the evolution of different neighborhoods and show how vacations can change development patterns.
- Would like to know if there has been any attempt to analyze economic activity relative to vacations.
  - The proponent stated that there has not, but feels that it would be useful, especially when balancing land use impacts.
- Feels that better communication of the importance of the grid is a good idea, but believes the incentives need to be removed and not allow the space as FAR. Feels that services need to continue to happen on that space.
- Would like to know if there is differentiation between public and private facilities.
  - The proponent stated that the policies do not clearly address that. However, Council has been saying that, for example, in the case of Seattle University, just because they provide

education does not mean they don't need to provide public benefit. The public/private issue is a factor, but is not written in.

- Does not believe there is a discussion of the role of the Design Commission and that process written in and feels that the new document should discuss the purview of DCLU, SDOT, the Design Commission, and other involved agencies.
  - The proponent stated that that is a good idea and would like to engage the Commission specifically on the following: necessary/desirable changes to policy and language and the role of the Design Commission.
- Believes that a longer document is not necessarily clearer nor does it provide more information. Encourages brevity in the document.

**15 May 2003 Project: Utah Street Vacation**

Phase: Street Vacation

Previous Reviews: None

Presenters: Alan Cornell, Nitze-Stagen  
 Dale Nussbaum, Allworth & Nussbaum  
 Rick Arthur, Starbucks  
 Jeb Thornburg, Indigo

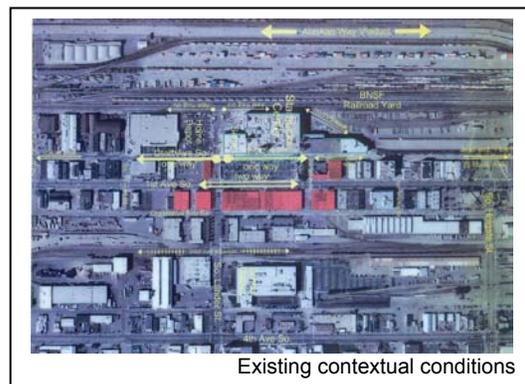
Attendees: Phyllis Shulman, Richard Conlin's Office  
 Beverly Barnett, Seattle Dept. of Transportation  
 Carol Proud, Dept. of Design, Construction, and Land Use  
 Norma Miller, Starbucks  
 Simone Steinhaus, Starbucks  
 Randy Allworth, Allworth & Nussbaum

Time: 1.25 hours (SDC Ref. # 170 | DC00305)

**Action:** The Commission thanks the team for coming and giving them an opportunity to comment early, and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

- The Design Commission applauds the wonderful placemaking effort and the generosity implied by the scheme;
- understands the team's analysis of the current context and recent lack of use of the street, the potential for agreements that would limit development and ensure access to utilities, and the proponent's claim that it is either this street vacation scheme or no improvements at all;
- however, recognizes that the Commission's charge is to look at long-term use and potential use of the right-of-way by the City, knowing that the area's population will increase and they must look to that future and protect the skeleton of the city—the street grid;
- encourages the team to look at alternatives to making the proposed design improvements, perhaps even lower cost ways, keeping the street so that it can be shared by pedestrians and allow vehicular access;
- encourages proponents to work with SDOT and the City to create a space that is mutually beneficial but does not involve a street vacation;
- feels that the street vacation is entirely inappropriate and does not recommend approval.

This proposal is to get a street vacation to create an open space and is a collaboration between Nitze-Stagen and Starbucks. The team is not seeking additional development rights. They feel this space would improve the quality of life in SODO. Currently, the SODO area has about 50,000 employees, several thousand businesses, and no open space. Starbucks is the second largest employer in the area and there is an increasing amount of retail coming in. Utah St. was closed because of the Nisqually earthquake and there have been adverse impacts with its closure. Starbucks is



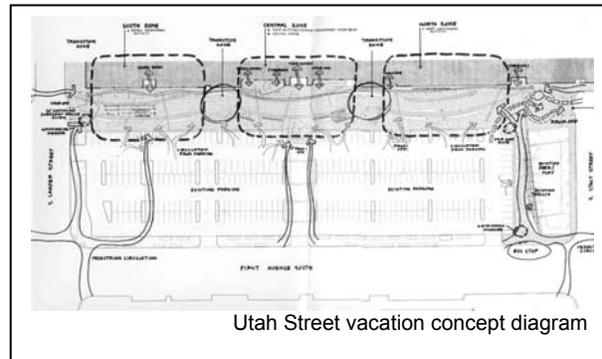
Existing contextual conditions

partnering because with the road closed for two years, their employees have been using the space and because what formerly was open green space that employees could use is now the play space at the daycare center. There are three primary interests in getting the street vacation:

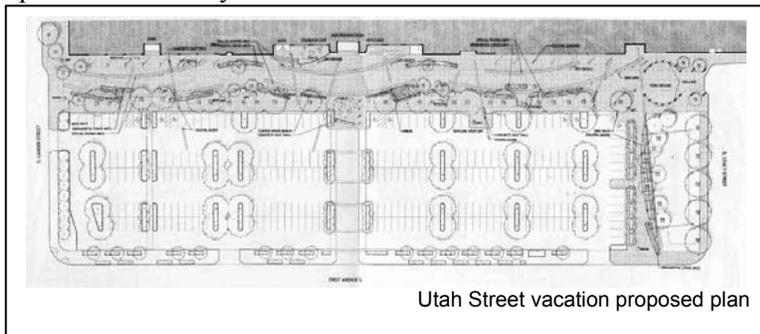
1. Increased security; decrease of pedestrian and vehicle conflict.
2. Space for employees to be outside.
3. Create a place in SODO where they can engage artists to create something that compliments the area's industrial nature. Make a more than a plaza with seats, but something that creates an identity so people know they are in SODO and the Duamish.

The team appreciates the qualities that the urban grid provides, but the block has already been altered and will not be further altered. Currently, the street is a one-way northbound in front of the building and a one-way southbound in back. Utah St. dead-ends at Hanford and Atlantic Sts. The block is mainly used by traffic servicing the building and proponents do not believe Utah St. is a thoroughfare. For the district as a whole, this could be becoming a retail hub with a variety of users and the vacation would benefit people by making it safer and better.

There are a number of established pedestrian corridors to the site from surrounding businesses. Currently pedestrians cross 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. and Lander St. from Home Depot. The circulation within the site is from the existing parking lot to the east and the play area at the north. The parking lot to the east has a permeable edge, so people flow in from many spots. People now use the arbor and trellis to sit by and the existing sidewalk brings people into Sears, Office Max, Starbucks, and the daycare. There is significant pedestrian activity and it begins to create three nodes of activity—at the south end is the primary retail pedestrian activity; the central area is the most complex and highest pedestrian activity; and the north end has the least continuous traffic with the Starbucks employees' entrance and daycare.

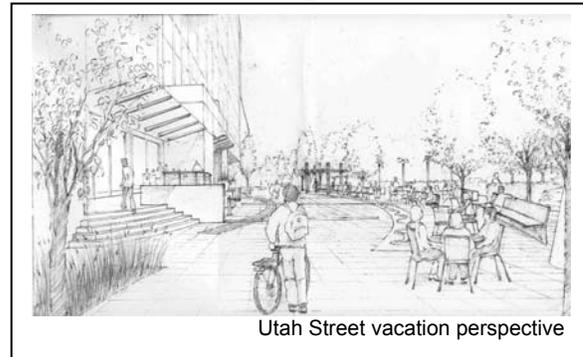


The goals of the proposed design are to respond the existing pedestrian circulation, primarily from the parking lot to the building; react to the three zones of activity; and reference the history of the Duamish and surrounding environment. The design team is also taking the linear nature of the street and making it more interesting to create a variety of types of spaces. The art will support and inform visitors and help define spaces with color and light. As users approach from Lander St. on the west, there will be a bosque of trees on the south end and a kiosk to serve as landmarks that can be seen from 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. At the north end, they are taking the existing urban edge where the Starbucks employee entrance is and making it more public. There will also be a kiosk here and trees that frame the view to the city. Because of the little pedestrian activity at the north end of Utah St. and the fact that it is currently a van drop-off area, this



design makes the space into a dedicated drop-off zone. The existing street trees along the edge of the parking lot and within the parking lot are being retained. The hedges beneath the street trees will be removed to decrease the linear quality of the street. The frameworks of the design include curved arc patterns. The interior will be brick or some special paving that refers

to the old train tracks. The outer bounds will have an environmental theme and stormwater will flow to them. The team might also incorporate reference to the old tidal flats that used to be here by planting grasses under the tree reminiscent of estuary vegetation. These begin to define the space and buffer between the parking lot and street, but do not visually block anything. The bands of paving pattern will rise up in some places to form seat walls. Transition spaces between the nodes will contain trees and artwork. This leaves little eddy spaces that are more for sitting and grass will be planted and benches installed. An arbor that also acts as a stage is industrial in style and serves as both a place to sit and a stage for performances.



Utah Street vacation perspective

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to clarify if what is now the daycare playground was more of a public plaza before. Would also like to know if, with the large number of parking spaces, how often the lot is full.
  - Proponents stated that the playground was a public plaza before.
  - Proponents stated that there are about 230 spaces and the lot is fairly used and does get full at times.
- Feels that the project in and of itself is wonderful in terms of design and in that the property owners and tenants have good community support. However, would like to look at a hypothetical situation in which five to ten years from now the property is sold and the new tenant takes out the plaza and develops what used to be the right-of-way. Would like to know if there is any safeguard the City has to stop this kind of development.
  - Proponents stated that the traffic configuration was changed because of Home Depot. The parking lot is made up of about 11 parcels and parking is the principle use, not tied the way accessory parking is and they could sell these lots. Access for future development could be on Stacy, Lander, and possibly Utah Sts. This area has historically been a commercial node and about six or seven years ago Council changed the types of uses allowed and limited it to 1G-1 and 1G-2. So, office and retail space is limited to 25,000 ft<sup>2</sup> and 50,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, respectively and could go 85 feet tall. The whole block could be developed, but Utah St. does have a function for loading and unloading.
- Feels that this was a nice presentation and good design work, and commends proponents for their generosity. However, the challenge is proposing this on city-owned property. The Commission must think about the long term use and potential use of the site and even in the short term, this neighborhood will change a lot. In the long term urban design of the city, cannot support giving up this piece of street because it is part of the continuous, intact street grid.
- Applauds the placemaking intent and believes that there are alternative ways to accomplish this. Would like to know what alternatives proponents looked at besides the street vacation.
  - Proponents stated that they did not look at any alternatives and this project was an outgrowth of limited transportation in the area.
- Sees that this does not need to be a thoroughfare, but still feels a similar thing could be accomplished in a different way.
  - Proponents stated that they talked about different solutions to acquiring right-of-way, but

a lot of money would go into making improvements and other solutions couldn't be put in. Proponents further stated that owners are not opposed to covenants being put in.

- Compliments the team on notion of placemaking and feels can achieve the same thing with retaining the one-way street the way it is. Feels that the team should put it on their backs to provide this space and pull back and take out the first row of parking to use as open space.
- Agrees that could use some parking lot space to provide open space, or put a deck over some of the parking.
  - Proponents stated that they have considered pieces of that in the past, but the retailers are opposed to taking out parking. People are also concerned with visibility in changing the configuration of parking. The addition of structured parking to replace lost surface parking would be prohibitively expensive and cannot be supported in this project budget.
- Supports the notion of what proponents are doing, but the street and alley grid is fundamental to the city. In the future, there will be substantial developments and the Commission must look to protect the intact grid.
- Sees that there are underground utilities such as sewer and storm drains. While the street on the surface serves limited traffic, the right-of-way is also part of the utility grid and we cannot discount the need for utility access.
- Is concerned that the only neighborhood meetings have been community council meetings that serve private interest. In addition, sees that there is high use of Utah St. during games and the Planning Committee talks about the high value of Utah St.
  - Proponents stated that the first meeting was the rededication of Starbucks and the other two were with the SODO Business Association. There have not been any meetings with the Admiral Neighborhood Community Council.
  - Proponents stated that easements would be provided for utilities.
- Would like to know how new utilities would be accommodated if the whole block was developed.
  - Proponents stated that when they did Union Station, companies were allowed to come in and work on utilities.
- Feels that it would be different though, if the buildings were on top, which is possible in this case.
- Likes what is on the boards, but in the long-term view of the city grid and functioning, does not feel this is feasible. Encourages a discussion between the landowner, developer, and City on something that is mutually beneficial for all.
  - Proponents stated that they appreciate the responsibility the Commission takes for looking at the long-term impact of a vacation on the urban grid, but the reality is that they will not create any space if they are not given the vacation. Denial of the vacation would push the project off the boards.
- Feels that if there is enough reason and continued pressure to provide a space, proponents could do something.

#### **Key Visitor Comments and Concerns**

- A representative from SDOT stated that it is possible to limit development potential in a vacation and secure the future of the property so it is not developed. It is also possible to have utility easements to

provide for access.

**15 May 2003 Commission Business**

**ACTION ITEMS**

A. TIMESHEETS

B. MINUTES FROM 1 MAY 2003—APPROVED

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

C. OUTSIDE COMMITMENT UPDATES—CUBELL

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

D. BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS RECEPTION—JUNE 9, 5–7PM  
BENAROYA HALL

E. DESIGN REVIEW/DESIGN COMMISSION TOUR—MAY 29, 4–  
6PM

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**15 May 2003** Project: **Ravenna Creek Daylighting**  
Phase: Design Development Update  
Previous Reviews: 18 July 2002 (Conceptual Design)  
Presenters: Virginia Hassinger, Seattle Parks and Recreation  
Peggy Gaynor, Gaynor Inc.  
Attendees: Elizabeth Martin, University of Washington  
Jaime Young, University of Washington  
Michael Merkle, University of Washington  
Michael Shiosaki, Seattle Parks and Recreation

Time: 0.75 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00279)

**Action:** The Commission thanked the proponents for the interesting presentation and would like to make the following comments and recommendations.

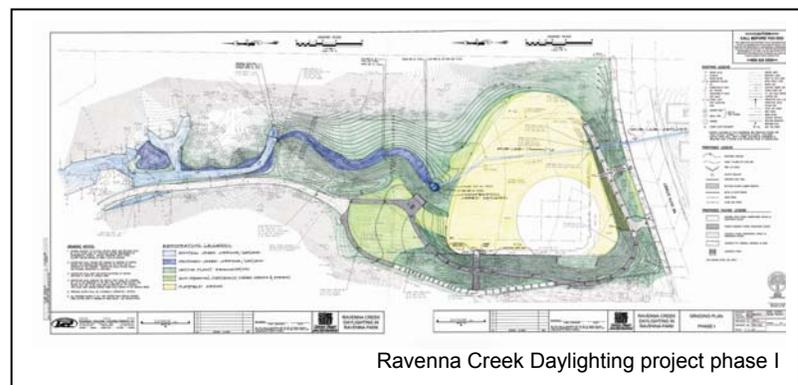
- The Commission has two minds about the success of the project and recognizes that there are strong and competing needs that the team is trying to accommodate;
- as a larger policy issue, recommends that the Seattle Parks and Recreation establish priorities in specific parks that reflect a vision for a 21<sup>st</sup> century city open space system that includes natural systems as well as social and recreational uses of space;
- strongly encourages Seattle Parks and Recreation to think about incorporating urban hydrological systems into that open space system;
- recognizes the fact that creek systems are integral natural systems in the city, comparable to the urban street grid; that they are related strongly to topography; and, in this particular case, that the location of the creek at the bottom of the valley is in conflict with putting a ball field there;
- acknowledges that the local community needs are at odds with the larger city needs of daylighting the creek in this project and notes that Seattle Parks and Recreation has done its best to reconcile those competing needs;
- supports the full and complete redesign of the open space in the near future and urges that strong limits be put on the phasing of the project so that the ball field does not become a permanent part of the park;
- strongly recommends that the management of the ball field be done so that it does not adversely affect the quality of water in the creek, specifically eliminating the use of fertilizers in the field;
- recommends that the design team look at other ways of achieving the objective of daylighting the creek such as letting go of the natural form, but retaining the natural function;
- supports the proposal for artwork to be used in clever ways to highlight and describe the problems of the successive burial of the creek; and
- recommends approval of the schematic design with a vote of 6 in favor and 4 opposed.

Ravenna Park is just north of the University District. The creek that flows through the park, Ravenna Creek, was originally part of the Greenlake drainage system, but is now isolated. In July, the team discussed several concept alternatives with the Commission, including daylighting the creek across the lower ball field. The challenge of the design was to come up with a natural restoration project that also accommodates a ball field. After two meetings and a Parks Board hearing, the team was urged to go in the direction of daylighting the creek while also retaining the lower ball field.

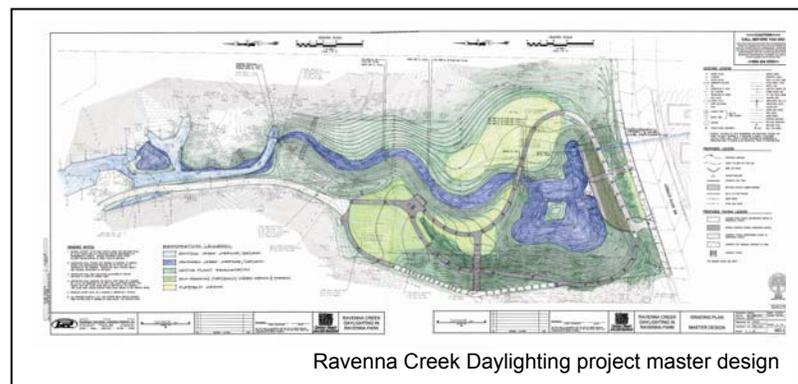
The goals/principles of the project are to reveal Ravenna Creek in the lower part of the park, create a park that celebrates the creek and the ravine, and design a welcoming entryway from NE 55<sup>th</sup> St. During a public workshop, people in the community stated that they felt that the upper and lower parts of the park were totally separate and did not want to change the upper portion. The design team feels that the reason for this feeling of two separate spaces is the 1930s regrading of the site created a sharp drop-off between them. As a result, another goal for the project is to knit the park back together using topography.

Although some people wanted to remove the lower ball field, many did not and a compromise needed to

be struck. Thus, in the new design, the daylighting of Ravenna Creek ends at the ball field. The edges between the two spaces are being softened and steps between them provide access and create visibility. Users enter the park at NE 55<sup>th</sup> St. A new meadow area with native plants will be installed and eventually a forest will be reinserted into what is now the playfield. A wetland area is located around the creek. The creek ends in a pond and from here the water will be released into a culvert. The culvert is part of the artwork and people will be able to see and hear the water being put underground. A blue line is proposed to demarcate the route of the creek along the Metro pip. The project is phased so that in the first phase the ball field is retained and in the second phase it is removed and the pond is put in place.



Ravenna Creek Daylighting project phase I



Ravenna Creek Daylighting project master design

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Would like to know what the small paved area is.
  - Proponents stated that there are two primary gathering areas that are paved—one is at the entrance and stairs and the other overlooks the habitat area.
- Would like to know if there is a barrier at the edge of the ball field and what makes the edge of the creek.
  - Proponents stated that there is a movable outfield fence, so it is not permanent. There is a small three-foot soil wrap that is planted to hold the edge of the creek.

- Would like to know how accessible the site is.
  - Proponents stated that everything is accessible except for the stairs. The path grade is five percent or less and there is accessibility to the top, bottom, and into the field.
- Would like to know if the ball field is treated with pesticides.
  - Proponents stated that there will be no pesticides associated with this project. They will seed everything with lupine to fix nitrogen in the soil.
  - A proponent from Parks and Recreation stated that they do typically fertilize playfields. The bioswale at the edge of the field will biofilter some of the water.
- Feels that Parks and Recreation is attempting to do two contradictory things. The initial goal was to daylight the creek, but in the end this is really a half born again creek. Does not feel this current direction has anything to do with what was happening last time and feels that both the creek and ball field are being compromised.
- Urges Parks and Recreation to look at what SPU, the Fire Dept., and Fleets and Facilities are doing with water at the Joint Training Facility. Believes that this is an excellent example of green design that Parks should emulate. Feels there is too much on the agenda for this small space in Ravenna Park.
- Believes that there are potential alternatives to this project. The team could not do anything until there is money to complete the whole thing correctly and daylight the creek with no ball field. Or, the team could look to try and find a way to integrate the two. The creek does not need to look natural and there might be ways to get the water to move around the field and look like an urban creek. Lastly, the team could push back on the ball field people and stick with the original vision because this project is about daylighting Ravenna Creek.
- Is wary of the concept of phasing and temporary solutions. Gets the sense that if the ball park is built, people will want to keep it. Believes that the team needs to do away with the ball field now or live with the fact that it will be there.
- Supports the proposed scheme if all phases are built at once.
  - Proponents stated that the permitting and CEPA cover the final scheme.
- Would like to know if there has been community discussion on the proposed scheme.
  - Proponents stated that there has been and the public voted for the most naturalistic forms.
  - Proponents stated that the whole project is based on the premise that the creek will be daylighted and the ball field retained. If the first part is done right, the ball field will be moved later.
- Does not feel as strongly about extending the creek because feels that the solution is extending it a little, and then a little more. Does not see issue with the compromise given that the big move is regrading the topography between the two areas. Is not as opposed to this solution.
- Feels that there is progress here and appreciates the tongue-in-cheek approach to the artwork, which refers to what should happen with the water.
- Feels that Parks and Recreation needs a different mandate; when they try to make spaces that are all things to all people, these places can fall flat. Feels it is important for Parks and Recreation to establish priorities for city parks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are both social and environmental; this would

be true to the larger mandate for the whole city.

- Would like to clarify whether there are a lot of ballparks going into Magnuson Park.
  - Proponents stated that there are.
- This is the second time the Commission has seen the project and this is a different alternative than what has been presented before, which had a full valley at the bottom.
  - Proponents stated that that alternative was assuming the ball field could be moved, which did not happen.
- Would like to know if that alternative was ever a viable alternative.
  - Proponents stated that much of the community did not want that option and the Parks Board decision was “No.” The issue is divisive in the community.
- Feels that this is another example of a local situation at odds with the broader public purpose.
- Would like to know if the Commission can recommend a sunset for the ballpark to ensure it is not permanent. Feels it is important to recommend a closed track for meeting the overriding City goal of daylighting the creek.
- Feels that the city’s objectives cannot be met if fertilizers continue to be applied to a ball field immediately adjacent to a creek and wetlands.
- Believes that the Commission should send a strong message that this is a compromise that did not work.
  - Proponents stated that building the first phase is \$900,000 and the whole project is about \$1.6 million. According to the City, that money does not sunset, so there would still be construction funds for the project in the second phase.
- Believes that most of the creek in Ravenna Park is daylighted and the proposed scheme daylights a little more. Has a hard time with having the daylighted creek be the Holy Grail and the ball field not be a priority. Feels that in 20–30 years there will be a different agenda that is unknown now.
- Feels that there is a connection between this project and a street vacation. In a street vacation, the goal is to maintain a built system. In this case, daylighting the creek is reclaiming a natural system that has been interrupted by development. Even if it is only a small amount, daylighting a creek is as important as maintaining the whole city grid.
- Believes that if the environmental policy for the city in the long term is to daylight creeks, it either needs to be carried out or abandoned. Feels that the lack of equitable treatment of these policies and priorities is a problem.

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**15 May 2003** Project: **Commission Business**  
Phase: Staff Briefing

Time: 1 hour

**Summary: The Commission discussed recommendations for improving the format and running of Design Commission meetings including familiarizing guests with the meeting format, explicitly stating whether or not the Commission needs to see the project again, and how to communicate larger policy issues brought up in a project presentation to City department decisionmakers. In addition, the Commission spoke about their agenda for what will be discussed with the Mayor, who will be attending the next meeting.**

### **Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns**

- Feels that the Commission should remind proponents at the beginning of each presentation about the meeting format and not assume that they have been to a meeting before.
- Feels that, as people begin to do more PowerPoint presentations, the linear quality of such presentations can be difficult. Would like proponents to be asked to hand out presentation materials at the beginning, so commissioners can go back and look through them during discussion.
- Believes it would be good to formalize that an action is being taken just before it starts so the action is not interrupted.
- Believes it would be helpful for the Commission to formally conclude whether the project proponents are expected to come back for another presentation or not.
- Would like to know why proponents do not always bring what the Commission has asked for in the informational documents.
  - CityDesign staff stated that there may be information overload and it might be helpful to streamline this in some way.
- Wonders if there should be two actions when a project brings up larger policy issues that the Commission would like addressed.
- Feels that there need not be separate actions, but just make clear the comments that are policy recommendations.
- Believes that the action is what everyone looks at and if policy recommendations are buried in the minutes, they will not be seen. However, feels that it is important to distinguish between the project recommendations and policy recommendations.
- Believes that the ambiguity of split votes and friendly amendments can be confusing for proponents.
- Does not feel that split votes can or should be eliminated.
- Believes that something that would clarify the actions would be for the person who makes the action to remain in control. When amendments are made, the person making the action should go back and

restate what is to be included in the final action.

- Also feels it might clarify if, on a split vote, those with a dissenting opinion state why.
- With regard to the Mayor's visit at the next meeting, feels it would be beneficial to have a deeper conversation about just a few topics, rather than discuss a wide breadth of issues for a short time.
- Feels that the Commission could use the Joint Training Facility as a showcase study of what good things are happening in the City.
- Agrees and feels that this project would also give the opportunity to discuss economic and neighborhood growth, and the importance and potential success of cooperation among agencies.
- Feels that the waterfront should be discussed.
- Believes that High Point is also an excellent example of collaboration and innovation.
- Feels that a focus on the waterfront is a good idea.