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Samuel Assefa
Director, OPCD

Ross Tilghman, Chair

John Savo, Vice Chair

Lee Copeland

Ben de Rubertis

Thaddeus Egging

Rachel Gleeson

Laura Haddad

Brianna Holan

Rick Krochalis

Jescelle Major

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Commissioners Present

Ross Tilghman, Chair
John Savo, Vice Chair
Lee Copeland
Ben de Rubertis
Thaddeus Egging
Laura Haddad
Brianna Holan
Rick Krochalis
Jescelle Major

Commissioners Excused

Rachel Gleeson

Project Description

The Center City Connector (CCC) is a proposed streetcar route linking the First Hill Streetcar at its International District terminus to the existing South Lake Union streetcar line. The CCC is a part of the Seattle streetcar system and will connect with the First Hill Streetcar line at 5th and Jackson, pass through Pioneer Square and along First Avenue, before connecting with the South Lake Union streetcar at 5th and Stewart.

Meeting Summary

This was the Seattle Design Commission's (SDC) second review of the Center City Connector project. The purpose of this meeting was to review the schematic design phase. After the presentation and discussion, the SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the schematic design phase for the Center City Connector project with several conditions and recommendations.

Recusals and Disclosures

Rick Krochalis disclosed that he helped in the revision and approval of the projects' environmental assessment and review of other project justifications while working for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Brianna Holan disclosed that her employer, LMN, was involved with very early renderings of the CCC.

March 16, 2017

1:00 – 3:30 pm

Type

CIP

Phase

Schematic Design

Previous Reviews

11/5/15

Presenters

Scott Kubly

SDOT

CJ Holt

SDOT

Roland Genick

Parsons

Tess Shiovone

GGN

Attendees

Susan Bartlett

Parsons

Ben Franz-Knight

Pike Place Market PDA

Louisa Galassini

SDOT

Andrew Glass-Hastings

SDOT

Michael James

SDOT

Carter MacNichol

SOJ

Genna Nashem

DON

Leslie Smith

Alliance for Pioneer Square

Liz Stenning

Alliance for Pioneer Square

Natalie Quick

Natalie Quick Consulting

Summary of Presentation

Tess Shiovone, of GGN, Roland Genick, of Parsons, and CJ Holt and Michael James, of SDOT, presented the schematic phase design. CJ Holt provided an overview of the project including the purpose, public outreach, and pending funding. The project team addressed how community input influenced updates to the proposed design, which included an additional crosswalk on Jackson St, bicycle safety improvements, modifications to on-street parking and loading, and the operations and maintenance facility location. The project will be partially funded through a small starts grant provided by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA).

The proposed 1.25-mile streetcar line will run along 1st Ave, adding to a multi-modal system which includes the 3rd Ave transit corridor, several RapidRide bus routes, Link light rail, bicycle lanes, and ferry terminals.

The proposed streetcar line will include four additional station platforms along 1st Ave and Stewart St prior to connecting with the Westlake street car station to the north and Jackson St station to the south. The proposed design includes a dedicated right-of-way (ROW) for the streetcar along 1st Ave. See figure 1 for more detail.

The streetcar will pass through three zones, each with its own unique character. The three zones include the Pioneer Square Boulevard, First Ave Balcony, and Stewart St Room. Considerations for the design of the streetcar line as it passes through each zone included the context, specific design elements, user experience, and bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The design of each station will include a system-wide material/element palette as well as materials that are unique to each zone. System-wide materials and elements include a platform shelter, vending services, tactile edge, steel railing, and a ROW delineator along the roadway. See figures 2 & 3 for more detail. Elements unique to each zone include landscaping and track paving along the roadway.

Proposed pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements include the implementation of raised, partially raised, and scramble crosswalks at intersections as well as the proposed realignment alternatives of bicycle lanes along the street car line.

The project proposal also addressed the overhead catenary system, maintenance facility, and Traction Power Substation facility (TPSS). The overhead catenary system will provide power to streetcars at certain locations along the system line. The catenary system will be supported by mix of existing and new street poles located within the ROW as well as by fastening support wires into the adjacent building facades. The proposal also includes an 1800 square foot (SF) expansion of the maintenance and operations facility annex located in South Lake Union as well as a TPSS facility in Westlake Square.



Figure 1: Proposed line along 1st Ave

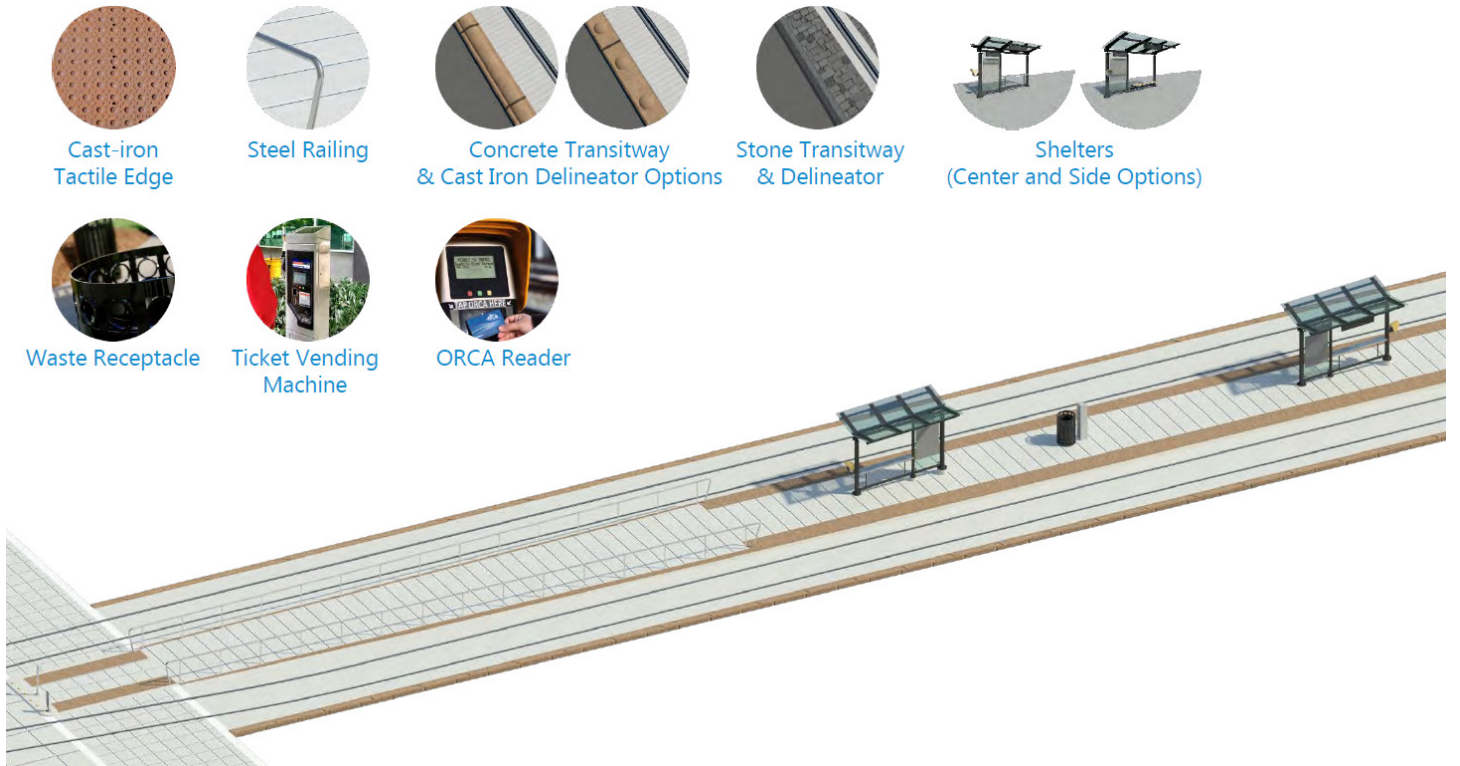


Figure 2: Example of system wide materials palette

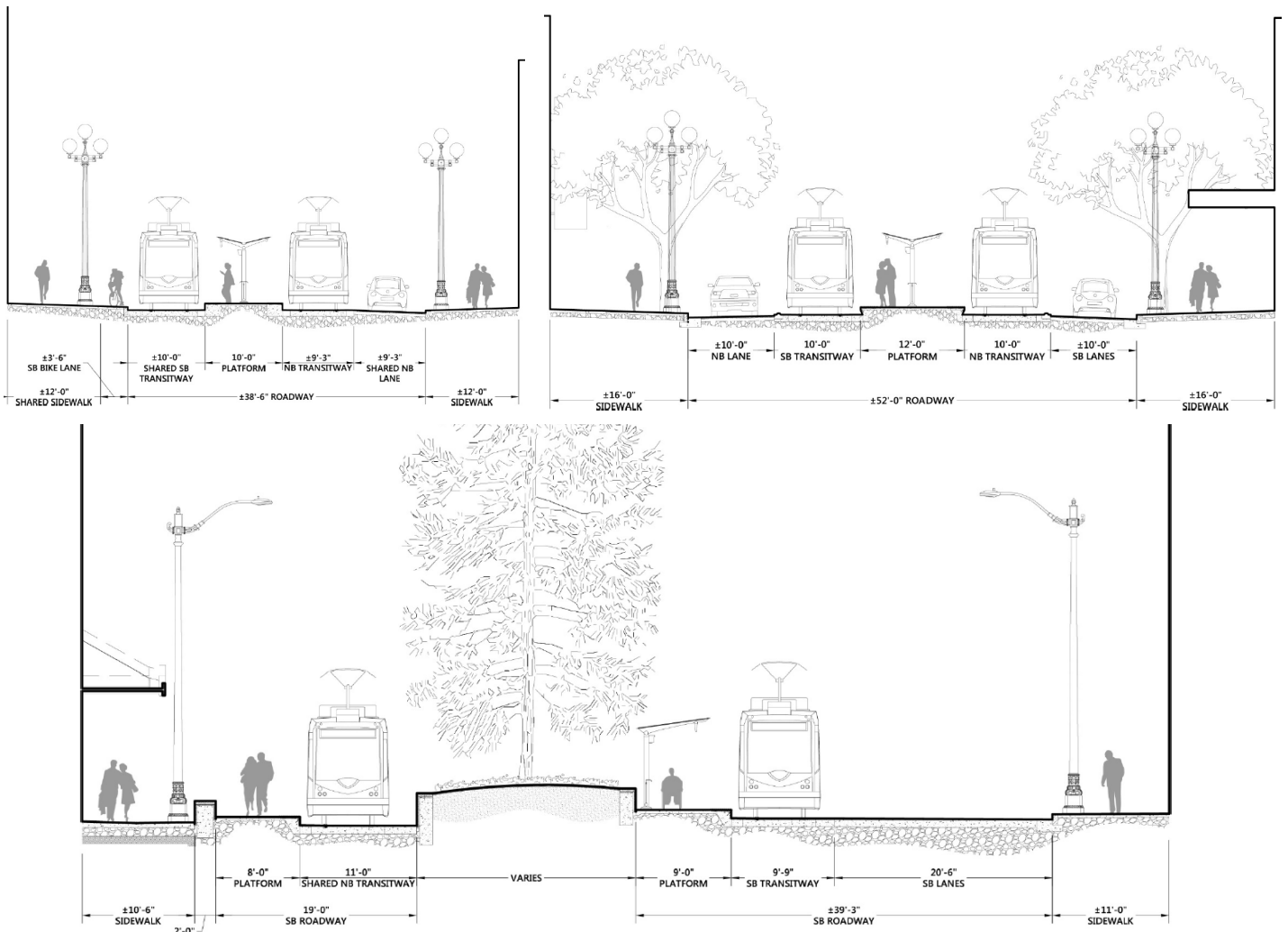


Figure 3: Examples of proposed station platform placement

Agency Comments

None

Public Comments

Leslie Smith, Alliance for Pioneer Square, stated that Pioneer Square continues to be a neighborhood out of balance with its residential population. Ms. Smith mentioned that there needs to be easier ways for residents and visitors to travel to and from Pioneer Square. Ms. Smith sees this project as an economic driver for the Pioneer Square Neighborhood. From a design perspective, Ms. Smith appreciates SDOT and their willingness to listen to the community in terms of how the project will impact the neighborhood as well as the attention to detailed design within the historic areas of the neighborhood. Ms. Smith also appreciated the level of detail taken to address pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the intersection of 1st Ave and Jackson St. Ms. Smith then mentioned that they have partnered with SDOT in providing loading alternatives for businesses during the project construction phase. Ms. Smith stated that she is an advocate for the project.

Ben Franz-Knight, Pike Place Market PDA, stated that this project is important especially because it focuses on providing transit modes along 1st Ave, which is a fundamental piece in making sure the city serves the businesses and workers in Pike Place Market. Mr. Franz-Knight then said that this is a huge opportunity for the market to be connected to South Lake Union and Pioneer Square. Mr. Franz-Knight mentioned that the city and market businesses still need to work out a plan for the preservation of loading and services at the market. He then said that there needs to be a balance all of transit modes across the different streets so that specific transit modes can be placed where they are the most appropriate. Mr. Franz-Knight then mentioned that he is on the Friends of the Benson Trolley Board, which recently retained two historic Benson trollies. The Friends of Benson Trolley Board launched a fundraising campaign to connect neighborhoods with Seattle's history by having the historic trollies run on the streetcar track.

Summary of Discussion

The Commission organized its discussion around the following issues:

- Overall planning and zones
- Integration with other plans
- Materials and details
- Art, sustainability, and social equity
- Operations

Overall planning and zones

The SDC commended the design team for an improved, well thought out plan.

Integration with other plans

The SDC encouraged the design team to continue to integrate the Center City Connector project with other mobility plans, including the One Center City plan, Bicycle Master Plan, and Waterfront. Commissioners recommended that the team incorporate wayfinding signage on east-west streets as an easy way for pedestrians to navigate between the different transit modes and facilities. The Commission highly recommended that the project team clearly delineate different uses and modes of transportation within the right-of-way (ROW), specifically between rail, vehicular, and pedestrian space. Commissioners encouraged the design team to delineate these areas through the use of graphics and materials.

Materials and details

The SDC appreciated the integration of similar station materials throughout the entire system. Commissioners agreed the proposed material palettes allowed the stations to maintain their own sense of identity and function while blending in with the context of the surrounding neighborhood. The SDC recommended that station elements (signage, shelters, lighting, etc.) are the same throughout the system, while other, smaller elements are designed within the context of the surrounding neighborhood. An example of this would be the proposed Pike Place Market stop, where the team could use design themes that are unique to Pike Place Market and its identity. The commission also recommended additional details that include seating beneath station shelters, well-marked scramble crosswalk intersections, and ensure the custom tactile zone meets ADA regulations.

Art, sustainability, and social equity

The SDC agreed the project connects several social services located throughout the transit corridor, which could be

important for serving its residents and other users. Commissioners also agreed the proposed tactile zone is well thought out and will serve as an additional sidewalk for pedestrians. Commissioners requested more information about how the project team is addressing equity and sustainability issues. The commission recommended the team continue to use a palette of locally sourced materials.

Operations

Although there were differing opinions, the SDC recommended the project team utilize existing poles and buildings before placing additional poles within the streetscape. The SDC agreed that the Temporary Power Substation (TPSS) needs to be designed to better incorporate it into its location and context at Westlake Plaza. This could include the use of art and lighting as well as independent programming.

The SDC will review the maintenance facility addition and TPSS facility at the subcommittee level.

Action

The SDC thanked the project team for their presentation of Schematic Design phase for the Center City Connector. Overall the SDC appreciated the effort to connect the streetcar lines. The commission also appreciated the level of detail in the planning and design of each zones as well as the minimization of clutter within the ROW. The SDC voted, 9-0, to approve the schematic design with the following condition:

1. Prior to the next review, return for a subcommittee meeting to review the maintenance facility expansion and TPSS facility

The SDC also provided the following recommendations:

1. Continue to coordinate with the One Center City Plan and other modal plans for the downtown area
2. Incorporate wayfinding on east-west streets as an easy way for pedestrians to navigate between the different transit modes and facilities through the use of materials and graphics
3. Confirm the custom tactile zone meets ADA requirements
4. Be open to more material palettes for the design of individual blocks, intersections, etc., while allowing the station signage design to serve as consistent element across the program
5. Include seating elements at each station
6. Provide striping and/or material to delineate scramble crossing areas at intersections
7. Maintain the current color palette for the station design
8. Provide detailed information regarding equity and community outreach